



Middle School Principal of the Year: *Debra Gately, Principal of Dedham Middle School Honored*

Ms. Debra Gately, Principal of Dedham Middle School, has been selected as **Massachusetts Middle School Principal of the Year** by the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association (MSSAA).

This program annually recognizes principals who demonstrate exemplary skills in instructional leadership, supporting a safe learning environment and fostering a collaborative culture of decision making among all members of the school community. Ms. Gately will be honored by her peers at the annual MSSAA Summer Institute at the Hyannis Resort and Conference Center on July 29.

Ms. Gately has been lauded by peers, students, community members and her superiors for her influence on school culture, student achievement and shared leadership since assuming the position of school Principal in the fall of 2009. Using her collaborative leadership style, she addressed needs in a variety of areas. With support from her math department, she introduced pre-algebra and algebra into seventh and eighth grade classes, respectively. A Technology/Engineering class was added to Grade 8. Second Step was initiated through guidance to assist in the college and career readiness program. And, after much research and professional training, a co-teaching course took shape in Grade 8 English/Language Arts. A very exciting school-wide implementation of a 1:1 Chromebook initiative stands ready to begin in September 2015.

As is often the case with middle school principals, Ms. Gately is involved with all aspects of the school. She uses her communication skills to keep a constant pulse on the needs of all members of the Dedham Middle School community. She meets with staff classroom team teachers each week in order to hear about student issues/achievements and teacher concerns in order to support and provide positive change when needed. Attending a parent meeting, she learned that some students were unable to participate in various after school activity programs. A few weeks later, a late bus appeared on a daily basis for these students. When she was notified by math teachers of a need for graphing calculators, she wrote to and received a grant for \$10,000 from the Blue Hills Charitable Foundation. Her weekly newsletter (Friday Focus) to teachers allows her the opportunity to preview the coming week, as well as offer a thank you to staff for jobs well done.

Ms. Gately received her undergraduate and first Masters degree, both in History, from Bridgewater State University, and a second Masters degree in Educational Leadership from Framingham State University. She is currently in the final stages of an EdD program at Northeastern University. Prior to assuming the principalship in 2009, Ms. Gately served as

an Assistant Principal at the McDevitt and Kennedy Middle Schools in Waltham. She began her career as a teacher of Social Studies in the same system.

Recently, Ms. Gately was appointed to the Educator Preparation Program Review Committee for the Massachusetts Department of Education, in which she will assist in reviewing accredited programs around the state to determine the effectiveness of programs preparing teachers in Massachusetts.

Ms. Gately resides in Waltham and has a summer home in South Yarmouth. She enjoys traveling, relaxing at the beach and spending time with her parents, siblings, two nieces and three nephews.

The Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association represents and supports the interests and needs of 1,500 middle and high school administrators throughout the Commonwealth.



Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association

33 Forge Parkway ~ Franklin, MA 02038 ~ 508-541-7997

www.mssaa.org