

Connie Jerpseth

Mesquite Elementary School

2015 Rodel Exemplary Principal

Collaborating with the community

“Parents and community members graciously volunteer to come and share their expertise with students. We have a community volunteer who teaches orchestra before school four days a week. There is a community martial arts instructor who provides free assemblies focused on anti-bullying. Our PTO is active in providing family nights and successful fundraisers that benefit every classroom. Our Accelerated Reader program is completely funded by our supportive parents and community members. Collaboration with the community has allowed students to attend field trips aligned to our health and science standards at no cost to the school.

A tip for parents

“Research shows that children who are active in extracurricular activities have a significantly higher chance of being successful as adults. I would encourage parents to keep their children active because they learn from being a part of a team, the fine arts, and other extracurricular activities. These non-academic activities develop skills such as compassion, work ethic, collaboration, team player responsibilities, communication, and leadership that they will use throughout their education and lifetime.

Learning from a mentor

“Praise loud and proud but always discipline privately. This applies when working with both staff and students. Nobody, no matter their age, wants to be reprimanded publicly. Teachers can't teach in fear and students can't learn in fear.

Being inspired to lead

“The principals I had as a teacher are the people who inspired me to become a principal myself. I was fortunate to have wonderful role model principals that were true instructional leaders. They provided me opportunities to build my leadership skills outside my classroom and challenged me to push myself.



Connie Jerpseth
Mesquite Elementary School
Crane Elementary District

660 students in grades K - 6

Experience: 24 years in education including 10 years as a classroom teacher, 1 year as an assistant principal, and 13 years as an elementary principal; have served on several different district committees that involve ELL students and instruction, teacher evaluations, budget, technology, and curriculum

Degrees: B.A. in Elementary Education from Southwest State University in Marshall, MN; M.A. in Educational Leadership and Principal Certification from Northern Arizona University in Yuma, AZ

Rodel, in partnership with Social Venture Partners Arizona, developed the Rodel Exemplary Principal Initiative to recognize outstanding school principals and populate a pipeline of highly skilled school leaders for Arizona's most challenging schools.

The Rodel Exemplary Principals are selected for their demonstrated ability to lead high-need schools to success by inspiring their staffs to develop a campus that is high achieving, safe, orderly and welcoming.

Each cohort of Exemplary Principals provides professional development, field experience and mentorship to a class of Rodel Aspiring Principals. After learning from the best, Rodel Aspiring Principals are better prepared to lead their own high-need schools.