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NEWS RELEASE

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Basalt Middle School Receives Second Designation as Colorado Trailblazer School to Watch

BASALT, Colo... Basalt Middle School was recently chosen as a Colorado Trailblazer School to Watch for the second consecutive time. Recognized for creating an extraordinary learning environment, Basalt Middle School is once again part of an elite national network of high-performing middle schools. Only 16 out of 505 middle schools in Colorado have received this designation, while nationwide approximately 350 out of more than 13,000 middle schools in 19 participating states (or about two percent) have been honored.

“Our staff and students work incredibly hard to build a strong learning culture at Basalt Middle School,” said Principal Jeremy Voss. “This designation is a wonderful recognition of those efforts. I’m very proud of our community.”

BMS first applied for and received this three-year distinction in 2012. In order to initially qualify, a school must submit an extensive application and undergo a rigorous peer-review process that includes a site visit by other member schools. According to Diane Lauer, Colorado Schools To Watch state coordinator, a second designation is more difficult to achieve because a school must demonstrate a continued trajectory of success.

After a team site visit in early February that involved observations in every classroom and panel discussions with teachers, students, and parents, BMS was able to demonstrate that it exemplifies a long-term commitment to building a positive, engaging, and academically rich environment for students and families.

“The evaluation team was especially impressed with the instructional practices they saw in our classrooms and how our growth mindset school culture was reflected in every part of our school,” said Principal Voss. “They also singled out our student work ethic and the compassion students demonstrate to each other and their community.”

The Colorado Trailblazer program is run by the Colorado Association of Middle Level Education (CAMLE.com), which in turn partners with the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform (www.middlegradesforum.org). Together, these organizations annually search for middle schools across the nation that demonstrate strong characteristics in the areas of academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity and strong organizational structures.

Dr. Diana Sirko, Superintendent of Schools for the Roaring Fork School District, said, “Basalt Middle School is truly a model of the key components of excellence that must be present in any school. This recognition is a wonderful reflection of the hard work, persistence and commitment of

BMS students, staff, the leadership team, and the community. Vince Lombardi once stated, 'There are no shortcuts to excellence.' This wisdom is modeled by BMS each day. We are extremely proud of all that they continue to accomplish as a school."

Designation as a Colorado Trailblazer School to Watch comes with the opportunity to present on best practices at a national conference in Washington, D.C. in June. BMS will be sending several staff members to D.C. to accept this award, and BMS will be officially presented with its School to Watch banner in April as part of its quarterly honor roll assembly.

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