

Focused on Improvement

Superintendent of the Year Pat Greco reflects on success

Pat Greco, superintendent of the Menomonee Falls School District, knows schools are facing wicked challenges. Greco, who was recognized by the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators as Superintendent of the Year, believes by working together, Wisconsin school leaders can overcome those challenges.

“Trying to lead is difficult,” she said. “Doing it alone is impossible.”

Greco recalled her childhood as the daughter of two hardworking parents — a Chicago police officer and a waitress. For Greco, education was important and a way to improve her life, “It was a lifesaver for me.”

When she started her career in education administration, Greco knew the importance of mentoring others from her own positive experience when she first became a principal.

“The most important aspect of leaders is to develop leaders,” she said.

As Greco moved into her current position as superintendent, Greco became interested in the principles of improvement science. Specifically, she focused on Lean Sigma Six – a methodology that collaborative teams can use to improve performance by removing waste, reducing variation and becoming a more efficient and effective organization. Greco said the focus on a collaborative methodology fits well in public education and excited her school board.

“This is a team sport,” she said. “Our school board is deeply com-

mitted. They wanted a skilled leader in improvement and I wanted a skilled board focused on improvement.”

The Menomonee Falls School District’s Lean Six Sigma work focuses on getting everyone involved from support staff to administration and has been recognized by organizations like the Carnegie Foundation. More importantly, the district has seen improvement in its graduation rate and Advanced Placement participation and a decrease in student suspensions.

Every district is facing its unique set of challenges, Greco urged school leaders to continue their work on behalf of their students.

“I see some of the best work



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I’ve ever seen in my career in public education and some of the most wicked challenges,” she said. “Together, I think we can make dreams come true.” ■

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