

Evans named 'principal of year'

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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When Randy Evans was asked to be part of a panel discussion about budget cuts at the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association conference last Friday in Kearney, he was a bit confused.

"That was hard to understand because we're not at that stage yet," said Evans, who has been Gothenburg's high school principal for the past 15 years.

But Evans attended, along with Swede music teacher Ernie Blecha. They ate breakfast and listened to former Husker football standout Matt Davison speak. Then it was time for awards.

Blecha was honored as the music teacher of the year and then the master of ceremonies began speaking about some programs Evans initiated at GHS.

"Then I knew Teahon (superintendent Mike) had used a trump card on us," Evans said with a laugh Monday morning.

Evans was given a principal of the year award by the organization made up of 180 school districts and educational service units who support and promote educational programs for students in rural Nebraska.



His wife, Dudley Elementary kindergarten teacher Janet Evans and his mother Alene Evans of Holdrege, appeared as Evans was recognized.

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"I'm still in shock," he said.

The Loomis High School graduate, who received both his bachelor and master degrees from Kearney State College, said that kids, and bringing out the best in them, are what makes him tick.

"I treasure them more each year," he said, recalling how performance was probably most important when he first started teaching physical education and coaching in Benkleman shortly after receiving his undergraduate degree. "But the performance will come if you can connect with kids."

With the support from the administration, he's taken over the school improvement program and started a Swede Teacher Academy for new teachers and access time for students who connect with teachers before school.

Through part of the school improvement program, Evans said he visits and reviews other schools and their programs and gets ideas to bring back to GHS.

"I learn about quality schools and what they should look like," he said.

In the nomination for the award, Teahon said Evans' passion for student learning and strong organizational skills has had a huge impact on the school improvement process.

"School districts often look at school improvement as an event," Teahon wrote. "Mr. Evans and his teams look at it in our district as a culture created to help kids."

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