

# Welsh named rural superintendent of the year

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*Courtesy Center Consolidated Schools Superintendent George Welsh receives his Demont Award as rural Superintendent of the Year from former Salida school superintendent Jim Wilson during a Colorado Association of School Boards meeting in Denver last week.*

BY TERESA L. BENNS  
CENTER  
Center  
Consolidated  
Schools  
Superintendent  
George Welsh  
received the  
Demont Award  
at the  
Colorado  
Association of  
School Boards  
Convention  
last week,  
naming him  
Outstanding  
Rural  
Superintendent  
of the Year.

His award  
was presented  
during a

meeting of the Colorado Rural Schools Caucus.

The Demont Award nomination lists different criteria for who will receive the award. Among these are high moral character, compassion for children and positive contributions to education.

The Center Board of Education, who nominated Welsh wrote concerning his high moral character: "Mr. Welsh has committed his administrative career to the Center School District and his involvement in the lives of children has been beyond reproach. He came to Center at a time when the local value for education was not as high as it should be and often adults focused on politics and other diversions. His work in Center has focused the job of the schools back on children." Regarding his compassion for

children, those nominating cited Welsh's constant presence in the classroom, his oversight of teacher planning and instruction and his personal mission to put laptops in the hands of all students from fourth grade through 12th grade.

Contributions to education listed in the nomination include Welsh's role in helping to make Center Schools a model in the area of rural school use of instructional technology, guiding Center High School to Accredited with Distinction and Center for Education Excellence status, involvement in the Lobato v. Colorado lawsuit and "helping to place Center Schools in position to completely renew its PK 12 facilities through the award of a Building Excellent Schools Today grant."

Administrators also cited Welsh's dedication and perseverance in incredibly challenging circumstances and his refusal to let any obstacles he encountered stand in the way of pursuing his goal of academic excellence for Center Schools as reasons he should receive the award.

In addition to the Center School Board, those writing letters of commendation for Welsh include former student Taylor Lobato, language arts teacher Diane Parker and former Center School Board president Janet Kuntz. Kuntz described Welsh as "a top-notch superintendent of schools" and a first-rate human being." Parker commended Welsh for his dedication on helping both teachers and students achieve their highest goals.

In accepting his nomination, Welsh wrote in an e-mail to his administrative staff and teachers: "Am I excited about this? You better believe it! In my mind the fact of actually being recognized as the 'Rural Superintendent of the Year' is really just evidence of all the wonderful things that are happening at Center Schools.

"It is clear to me these things are happening because of the great work and dedication each of you demonstrate on a daily basis on behalf of our students," he continued. "From the bottom of my heart I thank each of you for the feelings you allowed me to experience yesterday in accepting this honor on behalf of the Center School District."