

# **NEWS RELEASE:**

At this year's annual conference in Myrtle Beach, SC on February 16, 2021, one of the highlights of the 26<sup>th</sup> NSPMA & 51<sup>st</sup> South Carolina SPMA Conference was the announcement of the 2021 Pat Cochrane Memorial Award recipient.

We are honored to announce that the winner of the National School Plant Manager Association (NSPMA) - 2021 Pat Cochrane Memorial Award is Keith W. Watkins, Assistant Director of Facilities for the City School District of New Rochelle, New York. Mr. Watkins is in his 4<sup>th</sup> year of his current position with a total of over 31 years in school facilities operations and management. Mr. Watkins exemplifies every trait desired within a facilities director as demonstrated daily by his innovative and creative skill sets. In his 31 years of service Mr. Watkins is known as a resource and go-to person. Keith has shown he is a dynamic leader with a great drive to advance any initiative that is put before him.

As Assistant Director of Facilities, Keith performs his responsibilities with four core values; leadership, service, communication and integrity. These qualities are a constant that he applies to all problems. He is a solution provider, using research and data to provide innovative solutions while seeking to integrate best practices.

Mr. Watkins' dedication to the profession of school facilities management is evident through his leadership and many accomplishments. His continuing education has earned him proudly the New York State Certified Director of Facilities (CDF) after a rigorous training program in 2014. Keith's leadership and service includes being Past President of the New York State School Facilities Association (NYSSFA), serving as a former School Board member in his community of Phoenix CSD and currently serving as the President of the National School Plant Manager Association (NSPMA).

While Keith has only been in New Rochelle since May of 2017, he has implemented numerous positive directives, provided training and professional development, and sparked a new sense of ownership and dedication amongst the facilities staff. Keith's accomplishments within the department in such a short period are amazing. Mr. Watkins has shown his true leadership both locally and nationally within the past year during the Corvid-19 pandemic. Not only has he implemented measures to ensure the safety of the students and staff at the New Rochelle Schools; but he has been a resource of information to surrounding school and national district facility managers. He enthusiastically promotes Best Practices of Plant Management.

The NSPMA team has a bright future and shows unlimited capabilities due to the leadership of Mr. Watkins. In total, Mr. Watkins is the epitome of what any School Plant Manager should be; Proficient in Leadership, Facilities Knowledge and Promoter in Chief! We therefore; proudly acknowledge Mr. Keith W. Watkins, CDF, who has exhibited the leadership skills, passion and vision for all K-12 facilities in America; as the 2021 recipient of the Pat Cochrane Memorial Award! Congratulations!

On behalf of the NSPMA Board and Scholarship and Awards Committee, we want to thank all of the qualified candidates for this year's award. We wish them much success in their future.

AJ Nordt, CPE, CEFM, NSPMA Scholarship and Awards Committee Chairperson  
[acnjsbga@aol.com](mailto:acnjsbga@aol.com)