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Garlough Elementary receives national Magnet School of Excellence award

(Mendota Heights, Minn.) --- For the second year in a row, Garlough Environmental Magnet School (GEMS) in West St. Paul has been named a Magnet School of Excellence by Magnet Schools of America, a professional educational association representing over 2,000 magnet schools nationwide.

“To receive this recognition for the second year in a row is tremendously affirming and exciting,” says Susan Powell, Principal of GEMS. “It is an honor to be recognized at a national level for our commitment to student learning through the environment, and demonstrates the intense dedication and passion of the Garlough staff.”

As a Magnet School of Excellence, GEMS is one of 54 magnet schools nationwide, and one of only five in Minnesota to receive the recognition this year. GEMS was one of the top candidates across the country that was selected based on criteria such as desegregation, innovative instructional strategies, student achievement, and parent and community involvement.

GEMS serves over 400 students from kindergarten through fourth grade. The school became an environmental magnet school in 2007, and was formed in partnership with Dodge Nature Center, located across the street. Though it offers the same core curriculum as the other elementary schools in the district, GEMS integrates a nature-based theme into every class, allowing for the incorporation of science, technology, and mathematics throughout the day.

“Being named a Magnet School of Excellence honors the hard work and success of the Garlough staff, parents, and students, and we are very proud of their accomplishments in this district,” says Superintendent Jay Haugen. “It also validates the decision the district made several years ago to provide more school choices for parents in the area, which is encouraging as we explore opportunities to create additional magnet schools in the future.”

Representatives from GEMS will be honored at the 28th annual Magnet Schools of America Conference later this spring in Tampa, Florida. The award presentation is scheduled for Tuesday, May 4 at the Annual Award Luncheon, and attendees will include more than 1,000 school administrators and teachers from magnet schools and districts across the nation.

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