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Principal of the Year Focused on STEM, Business Partnerships

By [Jackie Zubrzycki](#) on **September 10, 2013 12:39 PM**

Sheila M. Harrity is the National Association of Secondary School Principals' MetLife/NASSP high school principal of the year. Harrity received the award at a surprise assembly today at [Worcester Technical High School](#), where she is principal.

Harrity has been principal at Worcester Tech since 2006. She's created small learning communities in the school, focused on project-based learning, and doubled the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses at the school.

Worcester Tech students' scores on the state's standardized tests have also risen dramatically during her tenure: 88 percent of students scored proficient in English/Language Arts in 2012 as compared to 27 percent in 2006, and the percent of students scoring proficient in math increased from 35 percent to 78 percent during those same years.

Harrity has also taken advantage of the school's technical focus, building relationships with industry and business professionals in the area. The school now hosts a L'Oreal Redkin salon and spa, an automotive service center, a preschool, and an animal clinic for low-income families, where students apply their learning.

Governor Deval Patrick and state Secretary of Education Matthew Malone attended the assembly. Harrity is on the governor's Task Force for College and Career Readiness.

Worcester superintendent Melinda Boone commended Harrity for her high expectations. "When she is faced with a goal that cannot be accomplished, she adjusts her approach rather than the goal. Principal Harrity continuously seeks to improve and serves as a model of excellence for her staff, students, and the learning community," Boone said in a press release.

NASSP announced its [middle-level principal of the year](#) late last month. The principals of the year each receive a \$5,000 grant to improve student learning in their school and will be honored at



an event in Washington later this month.

Last year's **principals of the year** (and finalists) had some interesting thoughts to share on the challenges of the principalship and what makes a good school leader at last year's event. Here's a full list of this year's **principal-of-the-year finalists**.

Photo: Sheila Harrity, MetLife/NASSP principal of the year. Photo via NASSP

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