Janel O. Scurlock
Assistant Principal
Pinedale Elementary School
Pinedale, Wyoming

The stats:
■ Years in education: 18
■ Years as an assistant principal: 8

Education:
■ B.A., Western College Program–Interdisciplinary Studies, Miami University
■ M.A., Bilingual Education, University of Kentucky
■ School Principalship, University of Wyoming

School details:
■ Grade span: K–5
■ Number of students: 467
■ Features a panoramic view of the Wind River Mountains
■ Has called only one snow day in 30 years in spite of its climate and altitude (7,182 feet)
■ Local ranchers branded the school’s wooden archways, and the art teacher designed medallions to match pod themes

Connect on Twitter:
■ @JanelScurlock
Results-Oriented

Award-winning assistant principal stresses integrity, follow-through in serving small-town students

Janel O. Scurlock’s goal is to live and act with character, integrity, honesty, and optimism. “I take risks,” she says. “I keep commitments. I work to right my wrongs. I choose to be transparent with my thoughts, decisions, and actions. I speak clearly and without ambiguity. And I work hard to stay positive when faced with adversity.”

To stay current, the award-winning assistant principal reads professional literature, attends webinars and conferences, and taps feedback from colleagues constantly. “Competence, however, is more than ability and skills,” she says. “When I commit to a task, I follow through and provide results.”

On what makes her school community unique

We live in a small, rural town, so our teachers, staff, and students aren’t just people we see at school. We see each other at the grocery store, at the post office, at the park, and at community events. We have relationships beyond the school walls. This has a big impact on how I serve students. I know them all by name, I know something about each of them, and I usually know their parents, aunts, uncles, or grandparents. Each of these children is like an extended family member, which makes my service to them even more special and meaningful.

On being named an NAESP National Outstanding Assistant Principal

When I was presented with the award at the Wyoming Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals (WAEMSP) banquet, I was proud, honored, and humbled. I have colleagues across the state who are doing fantastic things in their schools, and I have learned from them. I strive to uphold the foundational pillars of the award.

On building a relationship with her principal

My principal and I share day-to-day challenges and successes. We have different strengths, which allows us to bring balance to the leadership of our school. He has been a great mentor; he is smart, reflective, and can see the big picture when I tend to focus on the details.

On where she looks for professional growth and inspiration

There are many great principals in Wyoming to whom I look for inspiration and guidance. I can’t express how much I have grown from the people I have met through WAEMSP! In addition to face-to-face interactions, I follow great educators and leaders on social media.

On the best piece of career advice she’s ever received

I attended a workshop with [Fall Creek (Wisconsin) Superintendent] Joe Sanfelippo recently, and one of his statements resonated with me: “Today, I shall live as if it’s the last day I will be remembered.” I must be my best self, put forth my best effort, and live my best life, because that’s what our students deserve.

On what she does for fun outside of school

Outside of school, I spend most of my time with my husband, our two daughters, and our dog. We love camping, fishing, backpacking, hunting, skiing, and traveling. I also enjoy reading, swimming, and laughing, eating, and relaxing with my friends.