

Kate McDonald

South Mountain High School

2016 Rodel Exemplary Principal

Setting high expectations

“ I demonstrate through my words and actions that I believe in our highest potential and that I also believe each of us wants to achieve at the highest level. My job is simply to create the conditions where that can happen.

A tip for parents

“ Be curious. Ask your children what they are doing. Ask to see their work. Look onto their Facebook accounts. Talk about what's happening in their world while you share what's happening in the larger world.

A tip for new principals

“ Know thyself. Be honest in your self-appraisal so you know how to leverage your strengths and balance your weaknesses--and we all have them.



Kate McDonald

South Mountain High School
Phoenix Union High School District

1,750 students in grades 9-12

Experience: 25.5 years in education including 12 years as a high school English teacher, four years as a language arts curriculum specialist, two years as an assistant principal, and seven and a half years as a principal

Degrees: B.A. in English from Arizona State University; M.Ed. in Secondary Education from Arizona State University; ELA Certificate from National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Rodel, in partnership with Social Venture Partners Arizona, developed the Rodel Exemplary Principal Initiative to recognize outstanding school principals and populate a pipeline of highly skilled school leaders for Arizona's most challenging schools.

The Rodel Exemplary Principals are selected for their demonstrated ability to lead high-need schools to success by inspiring their staffs to develop a campus that is high achieving, safe, orderly and welcoming.

Each cohort of Exemplary Principals provides professional development, field experience and mentorship to a class of Rodel Aspiring Principals. After learning from the best, Rodel Aspiring Principals are better prepared to lead their own high-need schools.