

For Immediate Release

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**State Board of Education names Dr. Tony Smith
new State Superintendent of Education**

***Longtime educator and former Oakland, Calif., superintendent selected to lead Illinois' K-12
education agency***

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois State Board of Education Wednesday named longtime educator and administrator Dr. Tony Smith as the 28th Illinois State Superintendent of Education at its regular April meeting. Smith currently works as the executive director of the W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation, which annually awards more than \$5 million in grants that support children's development and education. Prior to joining the Stone Foundation, Dr. Smith led the Oakland Unified School District in California, where he helped improve academic outcomes, district finances, family engagement and organizational coherence during his four-year tenure.

Dr. Smith will take his new post May 1, replacing Dr. Christopher A. Koch, who served as State Superintendent since 2006 and served in various leadership roles at the state's K-12 education agency for 21 years.

"The Board selected Tony Smith for his proven track record of accomplishment and leadership in education," said State Board Chairman James Meeks. "We know that Dr. Smith will move forward to improve and expand on the agency's initiatives to improve teaching and learning on behalf of the more than 2 million kindergarten through 12th-graders in Illinois public schools."

Chairman Meeks and other Board members took time during Wednesday's announcement to thank and commend Dr. Koch for his contribution as a state and national education leader known for working collaboratively with education partners as he led initiatives ranging from improved teacher and principal preparation to more rigorous learning standards. Board members cited Dr. Koch's passion for thoughtful and comprehensive policy that put children first, as well as his tenacity. Dr. Koch is one of the nation's longest-serving education chiefs as he ends his nine-year tenure in Illinois.

"We have been very fortunate in Illinois to have had Dr. Koch's strong leadership and drive to raise the bar for everyone involved in education, but particularly our students," said Chairman Meeks. "His experience working with children with special needs made him a strong advocate for ensuring that all children have access to a quality education."

Dr. Tony Smith, 48, has served in a wide range of leadership roles, primarily in his native state of California. Prior to being superintendent in Oakland, Dr. Smith served as Deputy Superintendent for the San Francisco Unified School District, where he led efforts to close the achievement gap. He also served as Superintendent of the Emery Unified School District. He previously led the Math, Science and Technology Initiative at the Emeryville Citywide Initiative. He oversaw several major programs at the former Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools, now known as the National Equity Project.

Dr. Smith earned his bachelor's degree in English in 1992 from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was captain of the football team. He went on to earn his master's and doctorate degrees in the Division of Language, Literacy and Culture from Cal's Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Smith and his wife, Kathleen, an Oak Park native, and their two daughters, 12 and 10, reside in River Forest.

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