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## **District 214's Schuler named Illinois Superintendent of the Year**

SPRINGFIELD—Dr. David R. Schuler of High School District 214 has been named the 2018 Illinois Superintendent of the Year by the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA).

The award was presented Saturday (November 18) during the Joint Annual Conference in Chicago co-sponsored by the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO) and the IASA.

Nominees are judged on the following criteria: Leadership for Learning,

Communication, Professionalism and Community Involvement.

“What an incredibly humbling experience to be recognized by my peers throughout Illinois. The credit truly goes to the students, staff and the extremely supportive school board of High School District 214,” said Schuler, who oversees the state’s second-largest high school district with more than 12,000 students at six high schools and four specialized learning programs in the northwest suburbs of Cook County. The district includes Buffalo Grove HS, Elk Grove HS, John Hersey HS, Prospect HS, Rolling Meadows HS and Wheeling HS. “High School District 214 is a microcosm of the country. I am truly fortunate to work, hands down, in the best school district in the country.

“We provide tremendous opportunities for our students. I am continually amazed that when adults from the community walk through our schools they say that they wish could go back and do high school again because what we are providing our students today is so radically different than what many adults experienced when they were in high school.”

District 214 School Board President Todd Younger described Schuler as an innovator.

“Public education is not failing in District 214. We are creating pathways and opportunities for our students that the country could learn from,” said Younger.

Dr. Lazaro Lopez, District 214 Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, said Schuler “empowers his staff to lead.”

“It is not about him. He has a wonderful way of challenging you and asking you to rethink things that really has no boundaries or limits,” said Lopez, who also serves as the Chair of the Illinois Community College Board and was named Illinois Principal of the Year in 2013.

Those who nominated Schuler noted many accomplishments during his 12-year tenure as superintendent of District 214, including:

- Having all six high schools in the district consistently ranked among the best in the state and country. In U.S. News and World Report's 2016 ranking, all six schools earned either a Gold or Silver medal, and were named among the top 45 public schools in the state. All six schools also were ranked in the top 11 percent in the nation in a Washington Post study that assessed the level of rigor in schools.
- Achieving awards and recognition for financial excellence, including a perfect 4.0 score from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) on the district's Financial Profile Designation.
- Creating Educator Prep, a teacher preparation program that provides resources, dual-credit opportunities, mentoring and job placement to students through partnerships with elementary schools and postsecondary institutions. The program is designed to empower the next generation of teachers with a specific focus on solidifying minority students' interest in the education profession.
- Implementing a Career Pathways program that provides students with rigorous courses, access to early college credits, industry certifications, and personalized, career-specific learning experiences. Students have 44 career pathways from which to choose, there are 2,700 annual student workplace learning experiences, and in one year students earned 34,565 early college credits.

"We set a goal several years ago as part of the Redefining Ready! campaign to ensure that every individual that graduated—some 3,000 students a year—would have an internship and workplace learning experience aligned to their career pathway of interest prior to going across our (graduation) stage," Lopez said.

The Redefining Ready! campaign referenced by Lopez is a national initiative launched during the 2015-16 school year when Schuler served as President of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The purpose of Redefining Ready! is to introduce new research-based metrics to more appropriately assess that students are college ready, career ready and life ready. "Students are more than just a test score" is one of Schuler's most noted catchphrases.

Dr. Brent Clark, Executive Director of IASA, said of Schuler: "He is positive, full of energy and never takes no for an answer. He finds a way to get it done. I think Dave is one of the people who's always looking over the horizon determining where we need to be as public school educators and where public schools need to be to best suit and serve school children."

Schuler began his career as a Social Studies teacher in Wisconsin. He also served as a student activities and athletics director and principal before becoming a school superintendent. He was superintendent in Marshall (WI) and Stevens Points (WI) before becoming head of District 214 in 2005. He attained his Bachelor's Degree from Carroll University, and his Master's in Educational Administration and Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Wisconsin. He and his partner have two children, Maliah (6) and Gavin (4).