



## NEWS IN EDUCATION

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### **Perry County Schools Superintendent John Heard Selected as Alabama's 2015 Superintendent of the Year**

**Montgomery, AL., October 15, 2014--** School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) and Classworks, an SSA Diamond Level Business Partner, are proud to announce the selection of John Heard as the 2015 Alabama Superintendent of the Year. Heard was selected from nine finalists throughout the state, each of whom is an outstanding superintendent. He will be honored at the SSA Superintendent of the Year Luncheon on March 3, 2015, held during the association's Legislative Conference in Montgomery. Classworks will provide Heard with a Superintendent of the Year ring plus travel expenses to the AASA National Conference on Education, to be held February 26 - 28, 2015, in San Diego, CA. At the National Conference, Heard will receive a bronze medallion with the Superintendent of the Year emblem, and a plaque from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), SSA's national affiliate and national sponsor of this program. Each state's winner will be recognized during the opening General Session where the national winner will be announced.

Heard has served in many capacities during his 33 year tenure in education. He has served as Superintendent of the Perry County School System since 2003. Prior to his superintendency, he served in Perry County as the Assistant Superintendent, Professional Education Personnel Evaluator of Principals, and Capital Plan Coordinator between 1998 and 2003. His other experience in Perry County includes Federal Programs Coordinator, Title I, VI, IX Coordinator, Title II Coordinator, At-Risk Coordinator, Systems Technology Coordinator, Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Trainer, Professional Evaluation Personnel Evaluation Coordinator, Agriscience Instructor at East Perry High School, and a Career Tech Director.

Heard holds a Certification in Vocational Administration from Auburn University; a Certification in Administration and AA Certificate from Alabama A & M University; Master of Science from Iowa State University; Bachelor of Science from Tuskegee Institute; and his High School Diploma is from East Perry High School.

"We are so pleased to have John Heard representing Alabama on the national stage as our nominee for National Superintendent of the Year. I have worked with him for a decade and know firsthand how deeply committed he is as an educator and community leader.

"Serving in Perry County, Mr. Heard understands the very real challenges that rural and under-resourced communities face as they work to prepare their students to compete in a 21st century economy both within and outside of the community. He and his staff work to ensure greater opportunities for all their students everyday.

"Through his innovative leadership, schools in Perry County have achieved some of the highest graduation rates in the state and nation -- even amid steep obstacles. He has built partnerships with higher education, Teach for America, community agencies, and anyone else who could bring resources and expertise to his schools. We are thrilled that he will represent Alabama in the national competition," says Dr. Eric Mackey, SSA Executive Director.

Heard is currently serving as the Immediate Past President for the School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) and has also served as President, Treasurer, and District II President. He served on the CLAS Board of Directors from 2009 until 2012. He is also a member of the Alabama Education Association and the National Education Association. Heard has served as President of the Alabama State In-Service Advisory Board between 1988 and 1994; as Chairman of the Trustee Board and Deacon for the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church; Advisory Committee Chairman of the Perry County Department of Human Resources, and is a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

Some of the awards and honors Heard has received include Teacher of the Year for the Perry County School System in 1990; Alabama Educator of the Year by Regions Inaugural Gala in 2007; Administrator of the Year by the Alabama Association for Health and Physical Education in 2008; Leadership Alabama 2012-2013; and SSA Individual Leadership Award in 2007, 2009, and 2014.

Nominations for this award were submitted and voted on by members in each SSA District. Each finalist for this award is known as an outstanding leader and held in high regard by other superintendents as well as by his or her board, staff, community, and parents, and has distinguished himself or herself through stable leadership, innovative ideas, student achievement, or leading through difficult situations. All District Finalists were recognized earlier this week during the SSA Fall Conference in Florence, AL. Other Superintendent of the Year finalists include Mrs. Martha Peek, Mobile County; Mr. Tim Wilder, Dothan City; Dr. Jacqueline Brooks, Macon County; Dr. Walter Gonsoulin, Fairfield City; Dr. Ed Miller, Gadsden City; Dr. Keith Davis, Winfield City; Mr. Rex Mayfield, Russellville City; and Mr. Ken Harding, Jackson County. Each of these superintendents does an outstanding job and deserves the recognition of this program.

School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) provides a united voice for superintendents in our state. SSA promotes public education in Alabama and the nation; is the leading advocate for children and youth in our state; provides a forum for discussion of educational issues; provides professional development for superintendents and their leadership team to promote the efficient and effective operation of the school system and the achievement of students; and is the organization for superintendents to influence policy makers and legislators.

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