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Wayne Barker is Indiana Superintendent of the Year for 2022

INDIANAPOLIS – Oct. 4, 2022 – Wayne Barker, superintendent of Northwest Allen County Schools, has been named the Indiana Superintendent of the Year for 2023 by the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents (IAPSS).

He becomes Indiana's representative in the American Association of School Administrators National Superintendent of the Year program.

Barker has led two school districts to stronger financial positions and improved academic resources. Although he thought he would retire from his second district, he accepted an offer this summer to become superintendent of Northwest Allen County Schools.

Barker served as superintendent of Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District from 2009 to 2019. When he began his superintendency, enrollment had fallen over the past decade by more than 300 students, the district had a year-end cash balance of just \$9.025, and teachers were two years behind on collective bargaining.

Under Barker's leadership, the district created a strategic plan to make the district a showcase for technology integration. By 2019, the district had grown by 300 students, compensation and benefits for teachers and staff had improved. When he left Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District, the district had completed four building construction projects, had a cash balance of \$2 million and had deposited more than \$2 million in the district's rainy day fund.

He then served as superintendent of the School City of Mishawaka from 2019 through June 2022, the years when the COVID-19 pandemic impacted schools the most. While it was a very divisive time for many school districts, the Mishawaka Board of School Trustees, school employees and the community stayed united.

Barker found a silver lining to the pandemic in Mishawaka. Before the pandemic, the district wasn't close to having computer devices for all students, and it had never had an e-learning day. In one weekend the leadership team created a remote learning plan, which has since been implemented.

Barker has been a leader in school technology and has made presentations on “Implementing a 1:1 Digital Learning Initiative” to 60 Indiana school districts.

Barker was selected as the IAPSS District II 2023 Superintendent of the Year as part of the Indiana Superintendent of the Year competition. District winners are chosen by their peers, who evaluate candidates for their leadership, communications, professionalism and community involvement. The remaining 2023 district winners are:

- District I: Dr. Larry Veracco, Lake Central School Corporation
- District III: Kristen Bilkey, Northwestern Howard School Corporation
- District IV: Jeffery D. Fritz, Clay Community Schools
- District V: Dr. Michael Beresford, Carmel Clay Schools
- District VI: Dr. Melissa Brisco, Alexandria Community School Corporation
- District VII: Dr. Matt Thompson, Metropolitan School District of Mount Vernon
- District VIII: Dr. Branden Roeder, Rising Sun Community School Corporation