

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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## **Region 10 Selects Dr. Michael D. McFarland as Superintendent of the Year**

Lancaster, Texas/Lancaster ISD

Lancaster ISD has been in a state of transformation for the past few years, and leading the charge has been its superintendent, Dr. Michael D. McFarland. Since his arrival, the district has improved its financial status, strengthened city and community partnerships, increased the graduation rate to where it is the highest among the Best Southwest member cities and is seeing gains in student achievement.

The transformation has not gone unnoticed and on Thursday, June 17, Region 10 Education Service Center confirmed Dr. McFarland as its Regional Superintendent of the Year.

The Superintendent of the Year Program has honored outstanding Texas administrators for achievement and excellence in public school administration. Candidates are chosen for their strong leadership skills, dedication to improving the quality of education in their school districts, commitment to public support and involvement in education, and ability to build good employee relations among teachers and staff members.

"As superintendent of Lancaster ISD, Dr. McFarland has realized superior academic achievement, greatly improved fiscal management and amassed abundant community support," Region 10 Chief Communications Officer Kelli Tharp said. "Through innovative programs such as the *More Than a Diploma Initiative* and the transformation of the instructional services department, Lancaster ISD achieved the highest academic rating and eight designations of distinction from TEA last year. The Region 10 selection committee was impressed with the transformations Dr. McFarland has made thus far and enthusiastic about the vision he illustrated for the future."

Tharp added that being named Superintendent of the Year in Region 10 is a window into the high-functioning organization Dr. McFarland has established

"The designation of Superintendent of the Year highlights the hard work and ambition of the Lancaster ISD staff, students, parents and community," she said. "It is a rallying cry for the virtuous work that will most perceptibly continue under Dr. McFarland's tenure."

In a note to staff, Dr. McFarland shared his sentiments regarding this recognition.



“I accept this honor, but I also realize that this recognition is more about the work, sacrifice and effort that we all have exerted in our quest to provide the best for our students,” he said. “This award is also about where we have been, where we are and where we are headed. It provides external confirmation that the improved achievement of our students has been remarkable and the efforts of each of you are commendable—we did this together.”



Many staff members throughout the district said that they were proud of their superintendent.

“Dr. McFarland is a transformational leader. He inspires others to give their best and instills in others the need to evolve and grow professionally,” Lancaster High School Principal Joseph Showell said. “Students in our community are considered at-risk. Dr. McFarland is very aware of what the research says about our student population if they are not adequately educated. His knowledge of academic trends and best practices is exceptional.”

District employee Terry Tucker said that the success of any organization or movement starts at the top.

“Dr. McFarland is truly a ‘hands on’ superintendent. He often visits each campus to ensure the students are receiving the best of instruction and campus engagement.” Tucker said. “Great school districts don’t just happen by chance. Great school districts happen by design. His leadership, professionalism and dedication inspire a love of learning in students and staff of all backgrounds and abilities.”

Central Office Administrative Assistant Eliska Thomas has been in Lancaster ISD for 14 years and has been a witness to its transformation.

“Since Dr. McFarland’s arrival to Lancaster ISD, a level of professionalism has been restored to the district,” she said. “He has instilled a high level of accountability and expectations with regards to instruction and student learning.”

The Lancaster ISD Board of Trustees unanimously voted to nominate the superintendent for this honor. Board President Ty G. Jones said that the nomination and Region 10’s selection came as a result of the hard work that Dr. McFarland has put forth to catapult the district to a great place as it relates to student achievement, leadership and financial management.

“This selection will solidify our place in the Best Southwest and the state as a premier district that services African American students and students as a whole,” President Jones said.

The school district and its city are in a partnership and Lancaster City Manager Opal Mauldin-Robertson was glad to hear the news. She expressed that Dr. McFarland was an excellent selection for this honor.

“His commitment, compassion and dedication to ensuring the most qualified and competent educators are providing a learning experience that prepares our students for the workplace and society is second to none,” she said. “Dr. McFarland has taken the opportunity that the Lancaster Independent School



District provided and created an environment that districts across the metroplex and state of Texas are using as a standard and template for continuous improvement and success.”

Dr. Reo Pruiett, Program Officer for Educate Texas agrees that others are beginning to take notice of the working occurring within Lancaster ISD.

“Across the state of Texas, Lancaster ISD is developing a reputation of being the school district that is transformative, cutting edge and innovative,” Dr. Pruiett said. “The best kept secret in the Best Southwest Consortium was Lancaster ISD and its willingness to re-invent what school looks like for children today. Now, the secret is out.”

The Chairman of the Texas Instrument Foundation, a partner of Lancaster ISD, was happy to hear the district’s news.

“This recognition reflects Dr. McFarland’s charismatic leadership, his ability to gain consensus among the school board, business community, parents and teachers to work toward a common goal,” Chairman Lewis McMahan said. “Most importantly, he has helped to sharpen the focus on a vision that can lead to an outstanding public school system where high-performing students are prepared to succeed in college or the workforce of tomorrow.”

Neighboring district leader, Dr. David Harris, DeSoto ISD Superintendent, shared that he supports Region 10’s selection.

“I feel Dr. McFarland is an excellent choice. He is a great example of how to preserve and expand the opportunities for students in Lancaster. Dr. McFarland is a true visionary and has the fortitude to ensure his vision and the vision of the community comes to fruition,” he said. “It gives credibility to the work that is ongoing in Lancaster and it means others are looking at the work too.”

Dr. McFarland will now advance to the next level and represent Region 10 and Lancaster ISD in the state competition for Superintendent of the Year.

“Region 10 looks forward to Dr. McFarland representing North Texas in the next stage of the Superintendent of the Year competition,” Sharp said. “The work he has accomplished in Lancaster ISD mirrors the hard work and high academic realizations occurring in schools and districts across Region 10. We are proud to highlight this work through the snapshot of Dr. McFarland and Lancaster ISD.”

Region 10 is the second largest of the 20 ESCs in Texas servicing 80 public school districts and 44 public charter schools. The region encompasses Collin, Dallas, Ellis, Fannin, Grayson, Hunt, Kaufman, Rockwall, and a part of Van Zandt Counties.

*The Lancaster Public Schools serve more than 6,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 11 schools. The mission of the Lancaster Independent School District, a leader in providing innovative, quality programs, is to educate every student with the knowledge; skills; and principles to succeed and contribute in a competitive and technologically*



*advancing world by providing rigorous and engaging learning opportunities that promote diversity; create an environment of integrity and respect; and establish a commitment to continued improvement in partnership with families and community.*

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