

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 21, 2015

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## **Grayslake's Finger honored as 'Superintendent of Distinction'**

Grayslake Superintendent Catherine M. Finger was honored as a regional "Superintendent of Distinction" at an awards luncheon Tuesday (April 21) at the governor's Executive Mansion in Springfield. Finger was selected by her peers in the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Lake Region.

"I am humbled and grateful," said Finger, who has been an educator for 32 years and has served as superintendent of Grayslake Community High School District 127 the past 10 years. "I love our school community and our county and consider myself blessed to be able to live and work in such a wonderful school community. This award reflects on our wonderful students, staff members, families and community members."

Finger was one of 20 school superintendents from around the state to be recognized as a "Superintendent of Distinction." Governor Bruce Rauner and IASA Executive Director Brent Clark were among those taking part in the awards ceremony.

"Public education is facing some of its most difficult times, and that is when leadership is most important. These 'Superintendents of Distinction' were selected by their peers in their regions because of the dedication, commitment and leadership that they have demonstrated, and we are pleased to recognize them for what they do to fulfill the promise of public education for children all over the state," Clark said.

Finger graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, attained her Master's Degree from Northern Iowa University and her doctorate in Instructional Leadership from National Louis University. She served as a teacher, coach, dean, director of secondary education, associate principal, principal, associate superintendent at various school districts before being named superintendent at Grayslake in 2005.

At Grayslake, Finger has helped oversee going from one high school to two, with both being consistently recognized by the Washington Post as "High Challenge High Schools" because of the high level of academic achievement by students at Grayslake Central and Grayslake North. Other accomplishments include:

- Dramatically increasing student participation and performance in the Advanced Placement programs;
- Implementing differentiated instruction and curriculum;
- Creating a strong leadership identification, training and mentoring program;
- Expanding instructional technology access, opportunities and training for students and staff;
- Creating a Student Assistance Program;
- Creating "Writer's Week" and "Spark Week," annual events to support student interest in writing and performing arts; and

- Creating a new student conference designed to motivate students to succeed in academics, athletics, activities and community service.

Finger also is a published author. Her first mystery novel, "Alabaster Vases," was released in January, and the yet-to-be-published sequel, "Shattered Masks," recently was named grand prize winner in the Deep River Books Writers Contest.

The awards and luncheon were sponsored by Horace Mann, one of the nation's largest insurers focusing on educators' needs, and Herff Jones, one of the largest suppliers of class rings, yearbooks and graduation caps, gowns and announcements.

"Superintendents face many challenges. From balancing budgets to keeping schools and students safe, they work to put the needs of students first and consistently work to find, nurture and support quality teachers," said Marita Zuraitis, Horace Mann President and Chief Executive Officer. "Their efforts make their schools outstanding learning environments, and that excellence is what the IASA is celebrating. Horace Mann is proud to recognize and applaud the IASA 'Superintendents of Distinction.' "

"Herff Jones celebrates the educational leaders who are being recognized today for promoting and encouraging excellence in their schools," said Sales Representative Elizabeth Elsner. "Thank you for educating our children."