

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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East Richland's Holt honored as 'Superintendent of Distinction'

East Richland Superintendent Marilyn Holt was honored as a regional "Superintendent of Distinction" at an awards luncheon Tuesday (April 21) at the governor's Executive Mansion in Springfield. Holt was selected by her peers in the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Wabash Valley Region.

"I am honored and humbled to have been selected by my peers for this award. I thank all of the Wabash Valley Region members, the Illinois Association of School Administrators, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the wonderful mentors that I have had throughout my many years in education," said Holt, who has been an educator for 42 years, the last 13 years as superintendent of East Richland Community Unit School District 1. "This award is shared with our Board of Education as well as our students, staff, parents, and the Richland County community. They are the ones who are 'distinguished!' It has been my honor to serve them these past 13 years!"

Holt 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.

Holt attained her Bachelor's Degree from Blackburn College, and her Master's Degree and Education Specialist Degree from Eastern Illinois University. She was a teacher, career education consultant, director of the Career Guidance Center in Olney, director of the Educational Service Center in Olney, and special assistant to the State Superintendent before being named superintendent at East Richland in 2004.

At East Richland, Holt has overseen many accomplishments, including:

- Annexing West Richland CUSD 2 for a combined Richland County school district;
- Winning the Covey Lighthouse Award for educational excellence;
- Implementing LEGO education and an Aspire Network School in the district;
- Remodeling East Richland Middle School;
- Implementing a 1:1 iPad program at the middle school;
- Becoming one of 75 schools in the country to secure a Successful Practices Network grant from the International Center for Leadership in Education;
- Becoming a Race to the Top district;

- Conducting 10-day summer institutes for four years to enhance professional development;
- Setting up a 21st century after-school program;
- Implementing a teacher induction/mentoring program; and
- Increasing the Fine Arts program.

Holt and her husband, Merl, have two children, Kara and Tyra, and four grandchildren.

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."