



---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** January 4, 2011

**CONTACT:** Robert Lowry, Jr., Deputy Director • 518/449 - 1063  
E-mail: [boblowry@nyscoss.org](mailto:boblowry@nyscoss.org)

## **Yonkers' Bernard Pierorazio chosen New York State School Superintendent of the Year by statewide Superintendents Council**

**Albany, NY** - The New York State Council of School Superintendents announced today that Superintendent Bernard P. Pierorazio of the Yonkers Public School District has been named the 2011 New York State School Superintendent of the Year.

Dr. William Johnson, THE COUNCIL's Distinguished Service Chair and Superintendent of Rockville Centre Schools, said, "Bernard Pierorazio was chosen New York State School Superintendent of the Year by his colleagues because he provides a model of leadership in this time of reform that exemplifies what we as an association believe is the mission of our profession."

Mr. Pierorazio became the Yonkers superintendent in 2005. Serving 26,000 students in Westchester County, Yonkers is the fourth largest district in New York State. He has shown a lifelong commitment to the city and its schools, where he was born, raised and educated.

Council Executive Director, Dr. Robert Reidy, Jr., said, "As an educator, Bernard possesses a unique combination of wisdom, integrity, and educational expertise that give him the ability to inspire, achieve, challenge and innovate within the district successfully."

Prior to becoming superintendent, Mr. Pierorazio served as Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Principal of Saunders Trades and Technical High School, which, under his leadership, became a United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon School of Excellence as well as a New American High School. Formerly a dean of students and classroom teacher, he holds degrees in History, Special Education, and Administration and Supervision.

College Board Vice President Helen Santiago described Mr. Pierorazio as "the hallmark of what leaders can do when they believe in and execute their vision."

Similarly, former Director of the Education Alliance at Brown University and current President of the Center for Secondary School Redesign Joseph A. Di Martino praised him as one who "possesses the education, experience, and work ethic to accomplish things that had seemed virtually impossible before he began to address them."

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Pierorazio has continued to highlight the diversity of the Yonkers Public Schools as a strength and emphasizes multiculturalism as a banner of success. In his pursuit to gain equitable funding for children of poverty in under-resourced communities, he remains unyielding.

Former Yonkers NAACP President Karen Edmonson has been impressed by the superintendent's insistence on ensuring all children get the benefit of a meaningful education. She recalled his words: "We must strive to eradicate the bias of low expectations for minority students."

Maintaining a "lead by example" philosophy, Mr. Pierorazio remains firmly committed to the community he knows and respects, and recognizes the dedication of all stakeholders in the accomplishment of student excellence. He motivates audiences about the limitless possibilities of urban education, rallying constituents to act responsibly on behalf of all children. Accomplishments include:

- Mr. Pierorazio authored and led the development of the district Five-Year Plan leading to unitary status and ending court-ordered desegregation.
- A restructuring of middle schools into 14 prekindergarten through eighth grade schools, resulting in higher student achievement, increased Regents scores, and improved graduation rates.
- The establishment of district-wide, full-day prekindergarten, providing equity and access for urban students.
- The Yonkers Public Schools, which promotes a college-going culture to a traditionally underserved community, was the recipient of the National School Boards Association's Magna Award for the district's *College is in My Future* campaign.
- The district repurposed existing school buildings, increasing the number of high schools from five to nine, and ensuring the success of the "Smaller Learning Communities" initiative.
- The district is establishing the first public prekindergarten through twelfth grade Montessori Academy in the country.
- The district established a seventh through twelfth grade College Board Academy, collaborating with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the College Board Association.
- An Early College High School was established in conjunction with local colleges, providing students an eventual opportunity to simultaneously graduate with a high school diploma and an Associate's degree.
- The *US News and World Report's* "Best High Schools" edition rated Yonkers High School, with an International Baccalaureate Programme, as the 41<sup>st</sup> best high school in the country and the highest ranked in Westchester County.
- The *US News and World Report's* "Best High Schools" rated Saunders Trades & Technical High School among the nation's top one thousand high schools.
- The district implemented a twilight high school program, which established credit recovery opportunities and elevated graduation rates.
- The Yonkers Public Schools maintains transparency, communicating through the district's award-winning website and publications, and incorporating interactive social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

- The use of the district's mass telephone communication system, Blackboard Connect, tripled, increasing two-way communication and family-friendly schools that united parent/guardian engagement in student learning.
- Mr. Pierorazio continues to conduct annual Fall Forums, town hall meetings during which stakeholders learn about the budget, voice their concerns, and collaborate on solutions.
- Mr. Pierorazio implemented a comprehensive audit of special education services and processes with the goal of increasing program efficiencies.
- A systematic professional development plan, which emphasized the importance of highly skilled educators in a successful learning environment, led to a double digit increase in the number of students achieving proficiency on New York State assessments.
- Mr. Pierorazio set benchmarks for student achievement and defined non-negotiable goals for administrators, aligning district objectives for academic excellence with clearly articulated performance outcomes.
- The Yonkers Public Schools is a NYSED *District in Good Standing*.

Mr. Pierorazio has received numerous prestigious recognitions that highlight his educational career and evidence his community commitment. Among his awards are the

- New York Association for Continuing Community Education "Lawrence Levin Professional Award,"
- New York State Association for Women in Administration "Maxine Giacobbe Award,"
- Hanban-College Board Association honor and visit to China,
- Rotary Club of Yonkers "Leadership in Education,"
- Fulbright Association-Greater New York Chapter "Leadership Award,"
- Nepperhan Community Center Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Drum Major for Justice,"
- Boy Scouts of America "Excellence in Education Award,"
- "Westchester Association of Hispanic Professionals Award,"
- American Congress of Italian Migration "Educator of the Year,"
- Spanish Community Progress Foundation "Outstanding Community Service," and
- Khalil Gibran Education Fund "Khalil Gibran Spirit of Humanity Award."

Mr. Pierorazio is a member of the American Association of Administrators (AASA), the New York State Council of Superintendents' House of Delegates, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, New York State School Boards Association, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

A resident of Westchester, Mr. Pierorazio, the son of Yonkers natives Joseph and Lillian (nee DeSantis) Pierorazio, is married to Tina, a retired educator from the Ardsley Public Schools and an adjunct professor at Mercy College. Among all his accomplishments, he is most proud of his two sons, Dr. Phillip Martin Pierorazio, a graduate of Georgetown University and the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and a surgeon at Johns Hopkins University

Hospital, and Michael Bernard Pierorazio, JD, a graduate of Columbia University and the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

As the New York State Superintendent of the Year, he now becomes New York's candidate for national superintendent of the year, to be awarded at AASA's National Conference on Education in Phoenix in February 2011.

The Superintendent of the Year Award was established in 1988 by the American Association of School Administrators and is co-sponsored by ARAMARK Education and the ING Foundation.

***The New York State Council of School Superintendents is a professional and advocacy organization with over a century of service to school superintendents in New York State. The Council provides more than 750 members with numerous professional development opportunities, publications and personal services while advocating for public education and the superintendency.***

##