



# Thomas G. Maridada, II, named 2008 Michigan Superintendent of the Year

The December 11 meeting of the Inkster Public Schools Board of Education held a little extra punch for superintendent Thomas Maridada. That's when MASA Executive Director William Mayes made a surprise visit to the district to announce that Maridada had been selected as the 2008 Michigan Superintendent of the Year. Maridada received his award to the cheers of a crowd of supporters that included the Inkster city mayor and Wayne RESA superintendent Chris Wigent.

Inkster City Councilwoman DeArtriss Richardson nominated Maridada for the award. A committee of distinguished education stakeholders representing teachers, principals, superintendents, central office administrators, college educators and parents selected Maridada from a group of seven highly qualified superintendent nominees.

"This is a most prestigious honor, and you can be proud to have been chosen from a group of highly qualified nominees," Mayes told Maridada at the board presentation.

The committee selected Maridada for his tireless efforts and "no-excuses" attitude, which over the past two years of leadership at Inkster Public Schools has caused the district to make remarkable progress. Mr. Maridada's efforts brought about the passage of a new millage and \$6 million capital improvement fund, which skeptics said taxpayers would never pass.

"Every building has been repaired and now every school is wireless, which allows our kids to have unprecedented access to technology," wrote Councilwoman Richardson in her nomination letter. "His 'can-do' attitude has made the community catch fire with hope. Now, school performances, events and games are packed wall to wall with parents and community leaders."

More significantly, for the first time in ten years, the district made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in all schools K-8 for two years in a row. Moreover, Mr. Maridada reports that for the first time in 15 years, the district saw a 100 percent graduation rate, and every graduate had received an acceptance letter from a college or university upon graduation.

"I feel that we are beginning to scratch the surface of making good on our promise—preparing our students, through access to a quality education, so that they can go out and positively impact the world," wrote Maridada.

Although a superintendent for less than three years, Mr. Maridada is a veteran when it comes to visionary school leadership. His knowledge, enthusiasm, tenaciousness, and research skills have earned him respect and recognition, first as a principal and later as Director of Curriculum, Professional Development and Learning Services for Wayne County RESA.

Supporters call him a "formidable force in championing the cause of academic excellence for all students." Indeed, while working in partnership with the Detroit Public Schools to close the achievement gap in the district's under performing schools, he helped achieve a "whopping 40 percent increase in student achievement in the schools he worked with"—an increase that has been sustained in those schools for four years beyond his initial participation.

"Although we talk about the need for standards in schools," wrote Maridada, "I have discovered that when you give children a dose of excellence, and they are allowed to think critically, unfettered, they will crave after knowledge like a man thirsts after water in a desert."

Mr. Maridada will be honored at the MASA Midwinter Conference in Detroit at the Marriott Renaissance Center during Thursday's Distinguished Administrator luncheon. His selection also places him as a candidate for the AASA National Superintendent of the Year, to be announced in early 2008.

# MASA announces Regional Superintendents of the Year

Congratulations to the following individuals who have been named 2008 Regional Superintendent of the Year. Each year, selection committees in each region choose for this distinction a superintendent who has shown tremendous effort and dedication to enriching the lives of children and the community as a whole.

## \*Region 2

**Thomas Lanway,**  
Alpena Montmorency  
Alcona ESD (retiring)

Thomas Lanway was selected for his 40 years in education and for his outstanding service to students in a leadership position.

## Region 3

**Tim Wood,**  
Saugatuck Public Schools

Tim Wood was selected for exemplary leadership for Saugatuck Public Schools. Under his direction, staff and administration have participated in the Harvard University Exchange Network, a long-term professional development opportunity focused on improving instruction. Also under Dr. Wood's leadership, the district has implemented the NCA Transitions Model for School Improvement. Dr. Wood has received national recognition as a presenter at numerous state and national conferences.

## Region 4

**Donald Pavlik,**  
Alma Public Schools

Donald Pavlik was selected for his leadership during a time of turmoil in a way that has restored community trust. Nominators say his humility and belief in others have helped him build a great team of leaders. "Don's leadership is driven by

a deep passion for all students to have the best opportunities to grow academically," said region president Charles Schnetzler of Ithica. "He draws from his personal experiences as a teacher and a building principal. He is an encourager—not a micro manager—who leads by example and is always accessible." Because of Mr. Pavlik's leadership, nominators say the district has grown and accomplished many great things.

## Region 5

**Rodney P. Green,**  
East China School District

Rodney P. Green was selected for his leadership and skill as a long-term strategist, which has allowed the East China School District to continue to meet and exceed local, state and federal standards. "Dr. Green's vision for excellence in education has driven him to guide the district toward continuous and high performance," said MASA Region president Ralph Coaster. "In addition, he has been a leader among state superintendents, having served as president of his region and president of the state association."

## Region 6

**Mark Miller,**  
Byron Area Schools  
(recently retired)

Mark Miller was nominated simultaneously by three of his peers for exemplary service to children, young adults, parents, and his community. He was a longtime employee in the Byron school district and retired at the peak of his career. He has been active in MASA and other community service organizations. Mark's interest in kids continues as he has come out of retirement to serve as a principal for Webberville Community Schools.

## Region 7

**W. Craig Misner,**  
Kalamazoo RESA (retiring)

W. Craig Misner was selected for his work with superintendents not only in Kalamazoo County, but also throughout the entire Region 7. He has included region superintendents in a variety of different programs, bringing in state and national speakers to share their expertise. "Dr. Misner is a model of superintendent leadership," said Region 7 President, Joe Trimboli. "He provides encouragement and carries the torch of school improvement through his daily responsibilities. He is willing to offer his perspective and insight, which is always enlightening."

## Region 8

**Donald A. Spencer,**  
Monroe ISD

Donald A. Spencer was selected for his leadership style and promotion of Monroe ISD in the community. Nominators noted Mr. Spencer's collaborative work with community organizations, his oversight of a new building project and renovation of Holiday Camp, and his leadership in passing a technology millage for Monroe County.

## Region 9

**Pete Louis Lazaroff, Jr.,**  
Van Buren Public Schools

Pete Louis Lazaroff, Jr., was selected for his outstanding record as an instructional leader. He has led by example, developing Van Buren's principals into the instructional leaders of their buildings. As a result, all district schools have made AYP and test scores are rising. His programs "Root Cause Analysis" and "Dashboard Data" focus teachers on learners' individual deficiencies and allow for quick interventions.

\* Region 1 chose not to participate.