Four Veteran Educators Win 2008 Dr. Effie H. Jones Humanitarian Award

February 4, 2008

ARLINGTON, Va. – Four veteran educators and members of the American Association of School Administrators will receive the 2008 Dr. Effie H. Jones Humanitarian Award during the 2008 AASA National Conference on Education, Feb. 14-17 in Tampa, Fla.

The Dr. Effie H. Jones Humanitarian Award recognizes AASA members who exemplify the professional qualities espoused and modeled by the late Effie Hall Jones, a champion of women and minorities in educational leadership. The awards honor individual efforts related to the advocacy, support, mentoring, encouragement and successful advancement of women and minorities in education.

Jones, a school administrator and teacher, organized the Office of Minority Affairs at AASA. She was profiled in the film “Women at the Top” for her groundbreaking work in the 1970s with women who aspired to the superintendency. Equity and opportunity were vital elements of Jones’ life work.

The 2008 winners are:

**Randall H. Collins**, superintendent in Waterford, Conn., for the past 17 years, and AASA president-elect. During the nearly 30 years serving as a superintendent in three districts, Collins is credited with hiring, promoting and mentoring numerous women and minorities. Collins helps women and people of color dream big dreams for their professional lives and helps them succeed. For example, when Collins landed his first superintendency in Easthampton, Mass., in 1987, shortly thereafter he hired a woman and former principal to become the assistant superintendent. Then with high expectations and support, he helped her take risks and explore new skills and ideas. Although the assistant superintendent did not aspire to the superintendency, Collins urged her to seek the top job and recommended her to his board. (She landed the position.) Collins has also encouraged women who work with him to complete doctoral studies (and helped them on special doctoral projects), endorsed their interest in becoming active leaders in state or national education organizations, and encouraged them to attend local, state and national meetings, workshops and presentations to direct their learning and build networks with professionals of a high caliber. In Waterford, he has supported the recent addition of the district’s first African-American cabinet-level administrator.

**Terry B. Grier**, superintendent in Greensboro, N.C., since 2000. Guilford County Schools serve 71,300 students in the state of North Carolina, with a 57-percent minority student population. When Grier assumed the superintendency of Guilford County Schools in 2000, an African American female was the only woman and non-white member of his cabinet. Today his cabinet includes four women, three African Americans, a Latino and an Asian. Under his watch, the number of female principals has increased from 55 in 2000 to 77 in 2007, and the number of non-white principals has grown from 35 to 57 during the same timeframe. Grier has worked with two local universities to establish a leadership development program with 80 individuals of whom 52 are female, 40 are African American, and one is Asian. Grier’s commitment to promoting women and people of color into positions of educational leadership has been long-standing – spanning 20 years and his work in seven districts. Many female and non-white administrators who have worked with Grier have gone on to serve as school superintendents and in other prominent leadership positions across the
country.

**Frances F. Jones**, executive director of the Piedmont Triad Education Trust, a group of 15 local school districts in Greensboro, N.C. Jones has served as a teacher, central-office administrator, superintendent and college professor. She is a past international president of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. She designed and implemented a yearlong training program, “Lifting Minority Leadership,” that serves male and female non-white educators who wish to further their administrative careers. She also created a similar training program to support and advance the careers of women. She serves as an adviser and mentor to women and minority superintendents across the state and around the country. Because of the key roles she holds and the relationships with school boards she has developed, she is frequently called by boards and asked for her opinion regarding candidates. She is credited with placing more females in superintendent positions in North Carolina than any other search group.

**Helen C. Sobehart**, associate provost/vice president for academic affairs at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. For the past 35 years, Sobehart has worked tirelessly as an advocate, mentor and role model for women in educational leadership. During her tenure as an assistant superintendent and superintendent in the Fox Chapel Area School District in Penn., in the 1990s, Sobehart’s advocacy resulted in increasing the percentage of women in school administration from 5 percent to 55 percent, and the percentage of minority administrators growing from 1 percent to 10 percent. Sobehart served for 10 years on the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators Women’s Caucus Executive Board; she has delivered state, national and international presentations and chaired the first scholarly international conference on women in educational leadership in Rome, summer 2007, co-sponsored by AASA, Duquesne University and the University Council for Educational Administration. She has published nationally, edited PASA’s Women’s Caucus Annual Conference monograph and AASA’s national monograph of the Women Administrators Conference. She has encouraged women in leadership roles to join and participate in state and national professional education associations.

“This year’s winners are truly deserving of this award for their extraordinary leadership in promoting and expanding diversity and multiculturalism among school system leaders to help all children achieve excellence,” said AASA Executive Director Paul Houston.

**About AASA**
AASA, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders across America and in many other countries. AASA’s mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. AASA’s major focus is standing up for public education.