BRINGING TOGETHER EDUCATION’S BEST
NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR® PROGRAM
https://soy.aasa.org
2017 Final Four:
Stewart McDonald, Barbara Jenkins, Matthew Utterback and James G. Merrill

2016 Final Four:
Steven Webb, Thomas Tucker, Pamela Moran and Freddie Williamson
For more than three decades, the National Superintendent of the Year® Program has recognized and celebrated the tremendous accomplishments and contributions school superintendents from all 50 states have made in their local educational communities. To be eligible for the national award, an active superintendent must be selected as a State Superintendent of the Year (a process independent of AASA), and then apply for the national program. Each candidate is evaluated based on a range of leadership, communication, professional and community involvement criteria. From creatively meeting the needs of each student in their school populations to maintaining an active role in the local community, these exemplary school superintendents demonstrate unwavering commitment, progressive thinking and caring for their students at every turn.

In appreciation for everything our superintendents do, AASA has grown its National Superintendent of the Year® Program to include an exciting new lineup of networking events, discussion panels, forums and a black-tie gala honoring the National Superintendent of the Year® winner. All state superintendents are given the opportunity to meet and connect with policy makers in our nation’s capital, as well as to discuss pressing issues with their peers in a collegiate and supportive setting at the AASA National Superintendent of the Year® Forum.

Through these programs, we aim not only to say “thank you,” but also to inspire these great leaders to continue to find new and innovative ways to help students in their communities thrive.
First Student knows a thing or two about serving students. Each day, the company provides transportation to more than 5 million students in North America. It is driven by a simple but powerful goal: to begin and end each student’s day on a positive note and inspire each one to expand his or her academic horizons.

It’s a goal shared by superintendents from around the country. As Dennis Maple, president of First Student, explains, 91% of school superintendents rate student transportation as extremely important to the success of the school district, second only to student instruction. But, he explains, the reasons go beyond simply getting students to and from school. The school bus driver is the first and last adult representing the school district with whom a student comes into contact each day, picking up in the morning and dropping off each afternoon. Good interactions enforce positive beginnings and endings to each day. All of this, Maple believes, has a powerful impact and provides peace of mind to members of the community — parents, community leaders and teachers.

Though this is First Student’s first year as a sponsor of Superintendent of the Year®, the company’s passion for education runs deep. Inspired by AASA’s relentless focus and commitment to success of superintendents, First Student is committed to helping AASA create a place where superintendents not only can go for advice, inspiration and ideas, but feel that their needs are truly heard and taken care of.

Now that the Superintendent of the Year® Program has grown to include the forum and gala, First Student is excited to see how the expansion will improve the overall experience. Not only will the 50 state winners join together for a summit with topics on policy, leadership, teacher education and retention — all pressing needs for superintendents — but they will also receive recognition through media coverage and a gala that First Student believes will elevate the award to its rightful place.

For First Student, being a sponsor of the Superintendent of the Year® Program is a privilege. “These leaders are the very best in public education,” Maple continues. “Saluting them, publicizing their accomplishments . . . we can’t do too much based on the contributions that these dedicated professionals make. We need to take time to celebrate all of the good things that are happening in public education.”

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Since 1955, VALIC has helped people shape their futures for the better by providing financial products, education and tools that make saving easier. With online calculators, helpful articles and free interactive programs, VALIC makes complex personal finance topics more approachable and aims to make success attainable for everyone.

From its start, VALIC has always believed in the power of education. And for the last half-decade, it has continued its commitment to those in education as a cosponsor of the Superintendent of the Year® Program.

“It’s unbelievable the stories we’ve heard since becoming involved in the program,” John Kevin, VALIC Vice President of K–12 Markets, explains. “I’ll never forget hearing about a superintendent who spends the summer visiting students who have dropped out of school and encourages them to come back in the fall. It is people like that who we want to help ensure continue to impact our communities.”

In addition to the access the Superintendent of the Year® Program gives to important policy makers and influencers, VALIC sees professional development and networking as integral components to the annual event. Kevin says that as a sponsor, he believes it has been invaluable to hear the issues facing superintendents and others in the educational community on a daily basis. And further, he notes that there’s nothing like providing a forum for superintendents from around the country to come together, let their guards down and share with one another.

That is where problem solving and innovation happen. When superintendents are able to participate in meaningful dialogues about the problems they face, they discover the bold things they can do for their schools in order to be successful.

Connecting peers, providing education and building relationships that benefit everyone — each makes up an essential piece of the Superintendent of the Year® Program and is a key piece of VALIC’s mission.
At First Student, we believe that education offers a child the foundation needed to lead a productive and successful life. We support education by making sure children have a safe and reliable way to get to and from school. As the leading school transportation solutions provider in North America, First Student completes 5 million student journeys each day, transporting more passengers than all U.S. airlines combined. With a team of highly trained drivers and the industry’s strongest safety record, First Student delivers reliable, quality services including full-service transportation and management, special-needs transportation, route optimization and scheduling, maintenance, and charter services for more than 1,100 school district contracts. For more information, please visit www.firststudentinc.com.

For more than half a century, VALIC has served as a leading retirement plan provider for higher education, as well as for K–12 schools and school districts, healthcare, government, and other not-for-profit institutions. VALIC, the group retirement division of AIG, has more than $94 billion in total assets under management as of November 2, 2017, and manages plans for nearly 23,000 groups serving approximately 1.9 million participants. VALIC represents The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company and its subsidiaries, VALIC Financial Advisors, Inc. and VALIC Retirement Services Company. Additional information about VALIC can be found at www.valic.com.

AASA, The School Superintendents Association, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA’s mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. For more information, visit www.aasa.org.