



# Recognition Program

Monday, November 13, 2023

Hilton Columbus Downtown  
Columbus, Ohio

# Sponsors



## Empowering to Elevate

Empowering to Elevate (E2E) is an organization that provides educational facilities with the tools needed to tackle mental health challenges from within. Our mission is to provide quality school-based, outpatient, day treatment, and telehealth services, as well as coping skills for developmental and mental health challenges to families and individuals in need of support. Contact: Zachary Logan, [zlogan@empoweringtoelevate.org](mailto:zlogan@empoweringtoelevate.org)



BetterLesson connects K-12 educators with comprehensive professional learning solutions centered on student outcomes through differentiated learning experiences and research-backed pedagogy. In collaboration with OESCA, ESC of Central Ohio, and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, BetterLesson launched a sequence of workshops, 1:1 coaching, and learning walks, carefully designed to build capacity for student-centered math instruction statewide. Contact: Ashley Gericke, [ashley.gericke@betterlesson.com](mailto:ashley.gericke@betterlesson.com)



Zearn is a nonprofit educational organization behind Zearn Math, which provides teachers with research-supported curriculum and digital lessons that effectively double student academic growth at all proficiency levels. Contact: Tanaga Rodgers, [Tanaga@zearn.org](mailto:Tanaga@zearn.org)

# Program

## **Welcome**

Jennifer Felker, OESCA President  
*Superintendent, ESC of the Western Reserve*

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chad Hilliker, OESCA Secretary  
*Superintendent, Hamilton County ESC*

## **Invocation**

Dave Larson, OESCA Past President  
*Superintendent, Miami County ESC*

## **Award Presentation**

Craig Burford  
*Executive Director, OESCA*

Marie Ward, OESCA President-Elect  
*Superintendent, Fairfield County ESC*

## **Closing Remarks**

Craig Burford  
*Executive Director, OESCA*

## **Adjournment**

# 2023 Award Winners

## Outstanding Leadership Award - Community

*Current community leader who has personally rendered a specific leadership service which has significantly benefited all of the local school districts in the county school system, or educational service center office, or both.*

### **Ohio Means Jobs Adams & Brown County Offices (represented by Matt Reno and John Barnes)**

#### **Nominated by Brown County ESC**

Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ) staff have been partners and collaborators on a variety of programs and projects relating to workforce and career preparation. OMJ employees have served on committees providing needed research data on regional careers, and serve on the Brown County Business Advisory Committee. They have provided professional learning at events like the STEAMOLOGY workshop that helped teachers learn about careers in STEM. OMJ staff have also conducted workshops during the county fair as a part of workforce development efforts, secured grant funding to provide additional resources such as the Virtual Reality Career activity and have served as presenters at the Human Libraries. Their collaboration with the Brown County Educational Service Center has been important in serving local youth and adults.

### **Rick Szrabrak**

#### **Nominated by Fairfield County ESC**

Rick Szrabrak is the Fairfield County Director of Economic and Workforce Development and has served on the FCESC Business Advisory Council since its inception. He is currently serving his second term as president. Mr. Szrabrak's leadership efforts led to annual career fairs, the hire of career navigators that are placed in every district, the ESC Success Center, the establishment of the Workforce Development Center, and free summer learning camps for middle school students. Mr. Szrabrak collaborates with the ESC, local colleges, businesses and school districts to expand educational opportunities. His focus on collaboration and progress has leveraged millions in resources from state and local government. Mr. Szrabrak is an outstanding leader and an asset to Fairfield County.

# **Columbiana County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board**

## **Nominated by Columbiana County ESC**

The Columbiana Mental Health and Recovery Services Board has had a positive impact on the community by providing critical support and resources for individuals with mental health issues and addiction. The Board partners with the Columbiana County ESC to provide evidence-based prevention programs to address the needs of districts through programs like the Search Institute Attitudes and Behaviors Survey that provides more than 20 years of trend data to assist school districts with prevention programming. The Board and the ESC are also part of a coalition that identifies school district needs and provides technical assistance to serve youth in Columbiana County. The Columbiana County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board is a strong advocate for education and is committed to providing support and guidance to all districts in Columbiana County.

# **Columbiana County Port Authority**

## **Nominated by Columbiana County ESC**

The Columbiana County Port Authority has made significant contributions to its community by promoting economic development and infrastructure improvements. It has played a crucial role in attracting businesses, creating jobs, and enhancing transportation and logistics, ultimately boosting the local economy and quality of life for residents in Columbiana County. Unprecedented at the time, the Port Authority helped make high speed internet available to schools, hospitals, and commercial and government entities in regions where none existed. As an active member of the Columbiana County Business Advisory Council, the Port Authority provides vital information, support, and technical assistance as it addresses the workforce needs of Columbiana County. Always a strong supporter of students and educators in the county, the Port Authority has hosted site visits and county meetings and has been open to talking to teachers and students about what the Port Authority does.

## **Duane Piccirilli**

### **Nominated by ESC of Eastern Ohio**

Duane Piccirilli serves as the Executive Director of the Mahoning County Mental Health & Recovery Board. Mr. Piccirilli's leadership has resulted in a partnership with the ESC of Eastern Ohio that includes financial support for wellness initiatives, promotion of ESC programs to other like-minded organizations in the region, and relationship-building with service providers who make a difference locally. He has helped align efforts throughout the region to increase effectiveness and efficiency for beneficiaries.

## **Ryan Tekac & Susan Kovach**

### **Nominated by ESC of Eastern Ohio**

Ryan Tekac and Susan Kovach were invaluable partners during the pandemic. In addition to their weekly contribution to the Superintendent meetings, both Mr. Tekac and Ms. Kovach made themselves available to guide Mahoning county superintendents through the everchanging landscape of COVID and beyond. The relationships forged during that difficult time have allowed for collaborative projects that continue to benefit our school community today. Ryan Tekac is the Mahoning County Health Commissioner, and Susan Kovach serves as Deputy Director of Community Health.

## **Judge Luann Cooperrider**

### **Nominated by Muskingum Valley ESC**

Judge Luann Cooperrider received this award 24 years ago, but deserves recognition again. Her dedication and commitment to helping area youth grow into productive citizens is unparalleled. She continues to advocate for helping every child find a path to graduation and success as adults, regardless of the obstacles they face. Judge Cooperrider's unwavering persistence and the success of her Alpha Program, which serves our neediest students, is an inspiration.

## **Outstanding Leadership Award: ESC Governing Board Member**

*Current members of educational service center governing boards who have personally rendered a specific leadership service that has provided a significant benefit to one or more local school districts in the county school system.*

### **Michael Harlow**

#### **Nominated by Hamilton County ESC**

Michael Harlow was willing to fill a board vacancy last year. As a former school board member, policy expert, and education supporter he was able to quickly contribute to the Hamilton County ESC. Mr. Harlow's knowledge and ability to ask good questions helped improve our organization. His service to the ESC was invaluable and the ESC staff wish him the best as he continues his work with Hamilton County Board of Elections.

## **Legislative Leadership Award**

*Legislators and legislative support staff who have provided outstanding public service and legislative support for Educational Service Centers and public education in the state of Ohio.*

### **State Representative Jay Edwards**

#### **Nominated by Muskingum Valley ESC**

State Representative Jay Edwards understands the needs of rural school districts and the diverse challenges they face. He is extremely supportive of education and is always willing to listen and learn. Representative Edwards has also been a strong supporter of ESCs and understands the benefits of collaboration among districts. MVESC is grateful for Representative Edwards' work at the statehouse and looks forward future collaboration.

## **Distinguished Service Award**

*Current members of educational service center governing boards who have served their county school system as a member of the county and local boards for 20 years or more.*

### **Kathi McNabb Welsh**

#### **Nominated by ESC of Eastern Ohio**

Attorney Kathi McNabb Welsh has committed the past 20 years to selflessly serve as a Board member at the ESC of Eastern Ohio and the Mahoning County Career and Technical Center. Ms. Welsh is committed to the well-being and success of all students in the region. She has a strong understanding of educational policies, finance, and practices. She is open to new ideas and considers the impact of each decision she makes. Kathy has a strong ethical compass and acts with integrity in her role as Board member.

## **Torch Award**

*Individuals or organizations who have rendered outstanding service or made significant contributions to OESCA and ESCs as a whole.*

### **Leslie Crew**

#### **Nominated by Clark County ESC**

Leslie Crew has been an active part of Clark County Social Services for more than 30 years, has spent the last 10 years as the Executive Director for the Clark County Family & Children First Council, and works closely with the Clark County ESC. As an advocate for children and families, Ms. Crew has identified children's needs for healthier living. She has brought resources to the community to provide needed support to families with children who have developmental disabilities and has also helped identify and find funding for prevention and evidence based curriculum for students. Ms. Crew serves on the Business Advisory Council, and recently worked with ROX (Ruling Our eXperiences) to bring programming to girls that focuses on empowerment, social skills, safety and more.



## **Emily Young**

### **Nominated by ESC of Eastern Ohio**

Emily Young is the Education and Workforce Development Coordinator for America Makes. She works with the ESC of Eastern Ohio Career Counseling Department and the Business Advisory Council on workforce development issues. Ms. Young presents the world of additive manufacturing to students through education programs for school districts. She has a love for the Youngstown community and providing opportunities for students of all ages and backgrounds to learn.

## **Angela Krile**

### **Nominated by Fairfield County ESC**

Originally hired to produce newsletters, reports and news releases for Fairfield County ESC, Angela Krile and the Krile Communications team have become strategic partners in promoting the impact that Fairfield County ESC has on client districts and the community. Ms. Krile serves the ESC personally because of her belief that the ESC is a critical agency. The ESC leadership and Governing Board are appreciative of her efforts to advance the mission of Fairfield County ESC and the role ESCs play in the community. Ms. Krile has more than 25 years of experience in helping to develop and implement strategic communications efforts.

## **Dr. Richard Hall & Homer Weekley**

### **Nominated by Muskingum Valley ESC**

Richard Hall and Homer Weekley have been instrumental in creating a driver's education program that serves districts throughout Ohio. Their work has brought driver's education back into schools, resulting in a top quality program that ensures students get the best training possible. Their work in the field of driver's education has focused on workforce development and the direct connection between a driver's license and a career. The partnerships created provided a platform for collaborative teamwork among Ohio ESCs and school districts. Dr. Hall is a former teacher, coach, principal and superintendent and now serves as Executive Director of Operations and Special projects for Ohio Valley ESC. Mr. Weekley is a former teacher, coach, athletic director and principal who now serves as Driver's Education Supervisor for MVESC.

## **Stephen Miller**

### **Nominated by Summit ESC**

Stephen Miller has demonstrated exceptional dedication to the advancement of education locally, statewide and nationally. Serving as a lead state facilitator for Ohio's Mathematical Modeling and Reasoning course, he has made foundational contributions to the course's framework and ensures it meets state standards and incorporates best practices. Mr.

Miller's leadership in the Math Coaching Collaborative and his comprehensive trainings exemplify his holistic approach to elevating education, ultimately leading to enhanced student performance and teacher capabilities. He has collaborated with other ESCs and acted as a mentor and partner for math specialists around the state. Mr. Miller has led numerous professional development initiatives, equipping educators with necessary tools for impactful instruction. Through his work with High Schools that Work, he has facilitated specialized training for math coaches and teacher leaders, and his commitment to instruction and pedagogy has transformed the educational experience within the district.

## **Andrea Patt**

### **Nominated by Summit ESC**

Andrea Patt has displayed unwavering dedication to the betterment of educational programs, most notably when it comes to her work with districts on high-quality instructional material adoptions in Social Studies.

Her meticulous attention to detail, understanding of the broader educational landscape, and expertise in evaluating materials for alignment with curriculum standards has been crucial for Northeast Ohio school districts. Ms. Patt's collaboration with regional data leads at neighboring ESCs and her role as a High Quality Instructional Materials Specialist emphasize her dedication to enhancing student growth and achievement. In addition to being an often sought-after presenter, Andrea also holds a crucial role as the ESC Resident Educator Program Coordinator. In this capacity, she serves as a mentor and a leader for numerous districts in the Summit County area, ensuring that educators are well-supported and empowered to deliver excellence.

## **Dr. Missi Zender-Sakach**

### **Nominated by Summit ESC**

Dr. Missi Zender-Sakach's contributions to science education are substantial and influential. Her leadership roles in organizations like the Akron Council of Engineering and Scientific Societies and the Science Education Council of Ohio have been pivotal in advancing the goals of educational service agencies. Moreover, as an HQIM Ambassador for science education, her work has resulted in significant collaborations with other ESCs and the Department of Education and Workforce, showcasing her forward-thinking approach and dedication to equipping educators with the best resources. As the Chairperson for the Business Advisory Council at Summit ESC, she is committed to bridging education and the workforce, and fostering real-world learning opportunities for students. Beyond her numerous positions and accolades, Dr. Zender-Sakach's true impact lies in her ability to foster meaningful partnerships and advance innovative practices in science education. Her work on the "STEAMing Up to the Challenge" project underscores her commitment to STEAM education.

## **Teamwork Award**

*ESC staff member or organization who has worked to promote organizational unity within OESCA and among ESCs and serves as an example that encourages others to think of ESCs as a network and community first.*

### **Lori Lowe**

#### **Nominated by North Central Ohio ESC**

Lori Lowe is an example of what it means to be a team player. If she sees an opportunity to help districts and ESCs anywhere in the state, she will roll up her sleeves and get to work. She is always willing to share ideas, processes and her time. She does not seek recognition or credit, she just wants what is best for children and school districts. For example, Ms. Lowe and her team created and developed a Driver's Education Program and her team is now training other ESCs statewide to duplicate this program. Ms. Lowe has also developed a health initiative to bring online health visits to students within the districts to help children, parents and the community with affordable healthcare. She is open and willing to provide other ESCs with the opportunity to learn from her team.

## **Lifetime Achievement Award**

*ESC superintendents, ESC treasurers, board members, state/national legislators, local/state educators, and professional staff with a minimum of twelve years of demonstrated service to educational service centers and public education.*

### **Pam Tone**

#### **Nominated by Warren County ESC**

Pam Tone is celebrating 50 years as an employee of the Warren County ESC. She started her career at the ESC in September of 1973 when she was 17 years old as part of Little Miami's Business Office Education program. She would go to high school in the morning then work at the ESC in the afternoon. After graduation she earned a full time position at the ESC. Ms. Tone has seen many changes in the past 50 years both professionally and personally and has worked in many roles - she is now the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and also Director of all Support Staff.

## **Carol E. Austin Lifetime Achievement Award**

*OESCA's highest honor - ESC superintendents with a minimum of 15 years of demonstrated service to educational service centers and public education.*

### **Jeff Saunders**

#### **Nominated by Lawrence County ESC**

Jeff Saunders has been involved in Lawrence County public education for the past 42 years. As a former teacher, principal of the county school for the developmentally disabled, and local and county ESC superintendent, he has experienced education through a leader's eye on many levels. At each position Mr. Saunders has served as an advocate for each and every student. His character is beyond reproach and his dedication to his family and job are recognized throughout the county. Mr. Saunders has led the Lawrence County ESC through some challenging times. He has brought additional strength to the ESC through staffing and encouraging employees to build on their talents. Mr. Saunders is known for his professionalism, and creating an enjoyable and productive work environment while instilling pride in each employee's role as a county educational leader. Time has proven Mr. Saunders to be a passionate ambassador for children and a credit to education in Lawrence County.

### **Anna Marie Vaughn**

#### **Nominated by Columbiana County ESC**

Anna Marie Vaughn has served the Columbiana County ESC for 37 years as Consultant, Supervisor, Director of Special Education and Assistant Superintendent before becoming Superintendent in 2004. During her time at the ESC she has served on numerous boards and committees including the OESCA Executive Council. Focusing her career on educating the whole child, Ms. Vaughn has worked diligently to develop partnerships with local agencies and programs to meet the needs of all students. One partnership made high speed internet available to communities where none existed. Ms. Vaughn has been a mentor to countless teachers, administrators, and ESC staff. She is always there to listen and provides an unwavering commitment to students, teachers, and staff, working to ensure that every individual under her care has the opportunity to thrive. Her leadership style always focuses on the needs and well-being of the students, teachers, staff, and the broader community, making her a true servant leader.

# In Memoriam

## **Dr. John Louis Agle, Clark County ESC**

During 35 years of serving on the Clark County Board of Education (later called the Clark County Educational Service Center), Dr. John Agle worked with six superintendents and many board members. Dr. Agle always promoted the concept of local control for boards of education. He felt the needs of students, staff and the public were best served by a board that knows the county's needs well. Dr. Agle also championed the CTC and served on their board for several terms. Dr. Agle will always be remembered in the Clark County community.

## **Sarah Wiegel, Clark County ESC**

Sarah Wiegel served on the Southeastern Local School Board for 4 years and was a member of the Clark County ESC Governing Board for 16 years, serving terms as Vice President and President. During that time the board grew and expanded services, thanks to the wonderful people employed at the ESC. She enjoyed her time working with staff and being a part of enhancing opportunities for all students in Clark County. Ms. Wiegel made many significant contributions to the ESC and truly had a gift for teaching and connecting with young people. She will be greatly missed by the community, family, and friends.

## **Phil Schumacher, East Central Ohio ESC**

Phil Schumacher was a dedicated East Central Ohio ESC Governing Board member for 31 years. We are grateful for Mr. Schumacher's dedicated service to our community. He passed on December 16, 2022, but his contributions will last forever.

## **Lou Ann Putnam Harrold,**

### **Hardin County ESC (Midwest Regional ESC)**

Named as Hardin County Superintendent of Schools in 1194, Lou Ann Harrold, was one of only five women in Ohio serving in this position at the time. Under her direction, both Hardin County Online Academy and Hardin County Charter School were established to allow credit deficient students opportunities to complete coursework to graduate. After retiring, Ms. Harrold was elected to the State Board of Education and served on many statewide project teams and regional advisory boards. Ms. Harrold was a vocal education advocate and an active member of OESCA, serving on its Executive Committee and in other roles. She died on June 12, 2023.

## **Janet Tuttle, North Point ESC**

Jan Tuttle started with the Erie County Board of Education in 1983 and was instrumental in the ESC growing into three more counties and becoming what is today the North Point ESC. Ms. Tuttle served dutifully for a total of 36 years - her impact will be felt long after.

## **John Wilhelm, Northwest Ohio ESC**

John Wilhelm was a long-time educator and administrator in northwest Ohio and served as the Henry County Office Superintendent and later Superintendent of Northwest Ohio ESC. Most recently, he worked with the Ohio Department of Education and taught classes at both BGSU and Lourdes College. Mr. Wilhelm was an active OESCA member and Past-President of the organization. He passed away Tuesday, December 6, 2022.

## **Steve Martin, Ross-Pike ESD**

Steve Martin served as Ross-Pike ESD Superintendent from 2010-2019 after a career serving Pike County as an educator. He was an active member of OESCA and served on the Executive Committee and other committees. Mr. Martin's example of service is a lasting reminder of the power of servant leadership to organizations and community. He passed away in March 2023.

## **About OESCA**

The Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA) supports, educates and advocates for Ohio's ESCs in their work of providing school districts with professional development, technology, support, planning, and administrative services that help improve student learning, enhance the quality of instruction, expand access to resources, and maximize operating/fiscal efficiencies.

## **Vision Statement**

OESCA will be recognized at state and national levels for educational leadership and superior member services.

## **Mission Statement**

OESCA and its members provide leadership and services that enable school districts to increase student achievement and improve Ohio's educational system.

## **Special Thanks to Our Sponsors**



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## **Photographer**

Gil Balden, Associated Photographers

