



NEWS RELEASE

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JEFFERY O. SMITH NAMED CHAIR OF THE 56th ANNUAL PENINSULA HUMANITARIAN AWARDS PRESENTATION

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA - The Peninsula Chapter of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities announces that **Jeffery O. Smith** will serve as the chair of the 56th Annual Humanitarian Awards Presentation to be held on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at the Newport News Marriott at City Center. Dr. Smith will assume the leadership role in recognizing those who have made significant humanitarian contributions to the Virginia Peninsula.

Dr. Jeffery O. Smith has over 32 years of successful experience as a public-school educator and 15 years serving as a superintendent of public schools. Under his leadership as superintendent of Hampton City Schools, academic success was the highest it had been in decades. For the first time in Hampton City Schools' history, 100% of the division's 29 schools became accredited without conditions, and the dropout rate decreased from 5.1% for the class of 2015 to 0.62% for the class of 2022.

Dr. Smith's civic engagement is one of continued leadership. He is serving as a member of the following boards: Sentara Healthcare, VersAbility Resources, C&F Bank, and the Peninsula YMCA. He served as the president of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), was the superintendent-in-charge for New Horizons Regional Education Centers, and is a 2017-2018 graduate of the Civic Leadership Institute. Dr. Smith served as a member of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and the vice chairman of the academic committee. He served 12 years on the Board of Trustees for the Williamsburg Health Foundation, including time both as vice chairman and chairman. He has also served as president of the Rotary Club of West Point, and Chairman of the School-University Research Network (SURN) for the College of William and Mary.

Dr. Smith received the 2023 Distinguished Citizen Medal from Hampton City Council and the 2023 Presidential Award for Outstanding Citizenship from Hampton University. He is also the recipient of the 2019 Humanitarian Award from the Peninsula Chapter of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. He was named the Region II Superintendent of the Year and the 2020 Virginia Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Smith was named as one of four national finalists for the 2020 AASA National Superintendent of the Year Award. Additionally, he is the recipient of the 2020 Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity (School Leadership). He was recently selected by the Virginia District Exchange Club to receive the 2021-2022 Distinguished Virginian Award.

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success by addressing prejudices, in all forms, in order to improve academic achievement, increase workplace productivity, and enhance local trust. Through workshops, retreats, and customized programs that raise knowledge, motivation, and skills, VCIC develops leaders who work together to achieve success throughout Virginia.

For more information about the organization or the event, contact Jonathan Zur, CEO, or the staff at 804-515-7950. Information about the 56th Peninsula Humanitarian Awards Dinner may also be found online at www.inclusiveVA.org/awards/peninsula/.

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