

Superintendent Sicoli receives National Urban Alliance Award for Equity and Social Justice

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Robbinsdale Area Schools' superintendent Dr. Aldo Sicoli on July 7 received the National Urban Alliance (NUA) for Effective Education's most distinguished award during its annual Summer Academy that is being held in Minnetonka. Sicoli was presented with the "Leadership Award for Promoting Equity and Social Justice" in front of dozens of educators during the opening session.

The award celebrates superintendents who have focused on equity and social justice through education. Sicoli is the third superintendent to receive this award since 2005. "Dr. Sicoli is a tireless leader for diversity and recognizes the importance of student learning in diverse schools and classrooms. He focuses on the strength of students' experiences and skills, rather than limiting student potential through remediation of weaknesses in learning and achievement," said NUA President Eric Cooper.

Sicoli has fostered a unified district vision to embrace the large demographic shifts in the district, which has gone from 63.9 percent white in 2004, to presently 47.3 percent white, 30.3 percent black, and 12.6 percent Hispanic.

"I am surprised and honored to be the recipient of this award that is a testament to the hard work and commitment of so many people in Robbinsdale Area Schools," said Sicoli. "One of my greatest joys as an educator is to see students learning, growing, and achieving. If we are going to be effective as educators, we must celebrate and embrace the value that diversity brings to our schools."

In his acceptance speech, Sicoli shared how, as immigrants, his family stressed hard work and achievement and maintained high expectations for him in America. He challenged the audience to maintain high expectations for all students because if teachers expect great results from their students they are more likely to get them. "High expectations are contagious. What we say to students matter. What strengths can we pull out of our students if we have high expectations for them?"

Robbinsdale Area Schools has made significant growth in ensuring all students are ready for career and college by significantly increasing the numbers of minority students taking the ACT while also increasing the number of all students who the full battery of core courses to prepare

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for college. That number has increased from 39 percent in 2007, to 89 percent in 2013, which places the district above statewide and national averages.