

Dr. Romules Durant Biography



The year 2023 marks a major milestone for Dr. Romules Durant – it is the 10th year since he assumed the position of CEO/Superintendent of Toledo Public Schools. He is the 29th Superintendent for TPS and stands as the youngest educator to hold this prestigious position. At the end of his current contract, he will rank as the second longest tenured Superintendent for Toledo Public Schools.

When Dr. Durant assumed the role of Superintendent, he was faced with mounting budget deficits. Suggestions to balance the books included closing popular programs and schools, including Toledo Early College and Toledo Technology Academy, along with suspending athletics and other extracurricular activities.

Fast forward to today; Toledo Public Schools, the fifth largest school district in Ohio, is thriving and building upon a strong momentum of change and improvement. Under Dr. Durant's leadership, the district has improved its overall bond rating and now offers competitive salaries and benefits allowing the district to recruit and retain highly qualified staff members. He has also led five successful levy campaigns with an average 70 percent voter approval rating.

The district has been transformed in the past 10 years thanks in large part to Dr. Durant's extraordinary vision of what an urban school district can look like in the 21st century. What started as a simple idea to better promote what was then only two magnet high schools has blossomed into a multi-pronged, multi-year plan to enhance the educational opportunities available for ALL students, whether they are interested in enrolling in college, entering the workforce, or enlisting in the armed services after graduation.

Because of Dr. Durant's commitment to producing college and career ready graduates, the district has seen graduation rates climb from 60 percent to 82.3 percent for four year graduates and 85 percent for five year graduates. That is a 20 percent increase which equates to the strong commitment district staff members have toward their students' academic success.

One of the first major accomplishments the district celebrated under Dr. Durant's leadership was securing Head Start funding in 2013. Since the award of the first grant, the TPS early childhood program has seen great achievements, including expanding services, adding staff and continuing to successfully acquiring state and federal funds to enhance the offerings to the youngest learner in TPS.

Toledo Public Schools has seen the creation of three STEMM elementary schools; the transformation of a former charter school into Escuela SMART Academy, a bi-lingual grade school; the introduction of Naviance, a college and career exploration and planning tool; and the establishment and expansion of gifted services for elementary students and AP courses for high school students. And now Toledo Early College and Toledo Technology Academy of Engineering both accept seventh and eighth grade students who are thriving and earning industry credentials, certifications and taking college courses.

The ever-increasing interest in the TPS magnet schools is attracting students from across northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. The first magnet school that opened under Dr. Durant's leadership was Jones Leadership Academy of Business, a school for 7th – 12th graders who are preparing to become the CEOs and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. Thanks to a significant investment from the Bloomberg Foundation and other community partners, JLAB is now one of only two sites in the country that has a Bloomberg Financial Lab, where students gain hands-on experience with technology and allows them to use terminals to explore real-world business practices and interact with Wall Street. The Class of 2022 celebrated an impressive 100 percent graduation rate from each of the district's six magnet schools.

Other innovative schools launched under Dr. Durant include the Aerospace & Natural Science Academy of Toledo (ANSAT), which combined the district's aviation program and its agricultural program and attracts students from throughout northwest Ohio. The most recent magnet school that has opened is the Toledo Pre-Medical Science and Health Science Academy, a school that focuses on preparing students for careers in one of a number of medical related fields. Future plans call for an educator and construction academy and magnet schools dedicated to marine biology and the fine arts.

These academic advances have been built upon partnerships and ingenuity. TPS has kept its promise to local voters, which was to not seek levy support for at least 10 years after the district's last request in 2013.

Dr. Durant currently represents Toledo Public Schools on 14 area boards of trustees. He has also received 36 awards during his professional career, including five Hall of Fames, the 20 Under 40 Award and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators Exemplary Leadership Award.

Dr. Durant will say that his number one goal for today's students is the same he had for himself while a student at TPS's Waite High School – to rise up from modest means to achieve success first in school and then in life.

