



VSBA

Virginia School Boards Association

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News Release

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VSBA President Rodney Jordan Named the 2020 Recipient of the Benjamin Elijah Mays Lifetime Achievement Award

Charlottesville, VA – The Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) is proud to announce that Rodney A. Jordan, VSBA President and School Board Member in Norfolk City is the recipient of the 2020 Benjamin Elijah Mays Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Benjamin E. Mays Lifetime Achievement Award is presented by the National School Boards Association Council of Urban Boards of Education to a school board member who, for the span of his/her lifetime, has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to representing the educational needs of urban school children through his/her service as a local school board member.

Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays is remembered for his outstanding leadership and service as a scholar, teacher, minister, mentor, author, and civil rights activist. Dr. Mays became a member of the Atlanta Board of Education in 1969 and served as its president from 1970-1981, where he tirelessly worked to provide equal educational opportunities for children.

“There is no question that Rodney has dedicated his life’s work to improving the educational outcomes for students in the City of Norfolk, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the entire Nation,” said Gina G. Patterson, executive director of the Virginia School Boards Association, “Rodney is an advocate for the students who do not have a voice to let them know that there is someone out there fighting for them every day and I am thrilled that he is receiving recognition for his work.”

“Rodney tirelessly serves our Commonwealth as President of the Virginia School Boards Association, and his local school division, Norfolk City,” stated Virginia Secretary of Education Atif Qarni, “Rodney is an advocate for public education and personifies the qualifications described for recipients of this award.”

Rodney Jordan stated “Benjamin Mays! I know Benjamin Mays the great educator, the ‘intellectual conscience’ of the Civil Rights Movement. Receiving an award in his name has me speechless. And, I am not known to be speechless.” Jordan added “In the spirit of Dr. Mays, I understand no one receives such an award as this through individual effort, so on behalf of all the parents, students, school board members, educators, and community leaders I have had the honor and pleasure to work, I thank CUBE for honoring me.”

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2-2-2/Lifetime Achievement Award

Rodney's professional work as a digital inclusion visionary has taken him areas of the country, urban and rural, to work with stakeholders to improve access to broadband. He has dedicated his professional career to ensure that students and families have adequate access to the internet and are skilled in creative uses of technology to help to close the digital divide and encourage learning for all students. Jordan led the charge in Virginia to remove the word "failing" from use at the state level for public schools. Jordan vocalized the stigma that a "failing" label can bring to school divisions, teachers and students and he advocated for the change of terminology from "failing" to "challenged".

Jordan has served as a school board member in the City of Norfolk since 2012. In 2013 Jordan became co-chair of the VSBA Task Force on Students and Schools in Challenging Environments and has presented at the state and national level on the work of the Task Force. In 2015 Jordan joined the VSBA Board of Directors and has served in the roles of Tidewater Regional Chair, Audit Committee Chair and President-Elect. Jordan is currently the President of the Virginia School Boards Association.

Mr. Jordan will be presented with the award at the 2020 CUBE Annual Virtual Conference September 22-24, 2020.

About the Virginia School Boards Association

Virginia School Boards Association, a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards, promotes excellence in public education through advocacy, training and services. The Association offers conferences, information, training, and counseling designed to meet the needs of the Commonwealth's educational leaders.

About the National School Boards Association Council of Urban Boards of Education

The Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) supports excellence in urban school board leadership. As part of its mission, CUBE creates educational opportunities for urban school board leaders to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to serve as effective local education policymakers and as advocates for equity in public education.

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