



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

COMMISSIONER PRUITT RECEIVES THORNTON AWARD

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The Kentucky School Public Relations Association (KYSPRA) has presented Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt with the 2017 Richard Thornton Award for exceptional leadership and dedication to public education in Kentucky.

KYSPRA created the Richard Thornton Award in 2001 to honor the contributions to public education made by Thornton, a long-time KYSPRA member and past president of the National Association of School Public Relations Association. Thornton presented the award at KYSPRA's 2017 Fall Conference on Nov. 3.

During the presentation, Thornton noted the commissioner has helped Kentucky schools navigate significant challenges.

“In the midst of these challenges, Dr. Pruitt has led with a vision for Kentucky education that puts students at the center of our work, values the profession of education, and values the education of the whole child, not simply test scores,” Thornton said. “Dr. Pruitt, we are grateful for your leadership, and we appreciate your steady vision as we navigate the turbulent waters of public education in the Commonwealth.”

“I am truly honored to receive this prestigious award,” Pruitt said. “My commitment is that we are going to continue to work really hard in education to improve the outcomes for our students. We are going to focus on closing our achievement gap by 50 percent in the next 13 years. But I can guarantee you that won't happen without quality communication and an informed populace that comes together for the betterment of our kids.”

In September 2015, the Kentucky Board of Education unanimously voted to hire Stephen L. Pruitt as Kentucky's sixth commissioner of education.

Pruitt came to Kentucky with an extensive background in education at the local, state and national levels, and he currently serves on the Board of Directors for the national Council of Chief State School Officers.

Past recipients Thornton Award recipients:

- 2015 Kentucky Valley Cooperative - Appalachian Renaissance Initiative
- 2012 Brad Hughes, Kentucky School Boards Association
- 2011 Doug Whitlock, President, Eastern Kentucky University
- 2010 Cathy Prewitt, District Judge, Whitley and McCreary Counties
- 2009 *Kentucky Teacher Magazine* Staff Members

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- 2008 American Printing House for the Blind
- 2007 Rocky Adkins, State Representative; the Kentucky DataSeam Initiative
- 2006 Armando Arrastia, Five Oakes Communications
- 2005 Kentucky Board of Education
- 2004 Kentucky Charitable Foundation for the Blind
- 2003 Fran Salyers and Commissioner Gene Wilhoit, Kentucky Department of Education
- 2002 Kentucky School Superintendents

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