



East Alton-Wood River High School District 14 Superintendent Dr. John Pearson To Retire After 40 Years

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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WOOD RIVER - East Alton-Wood River High School District 14 Superintendent Dr. John Pearson has had a career that spans 40 years in education and 21 years in his present administrator position. When his contract expires on June 30, 2021, Dr. Pearson will officially retire.

Dr. Pearson submitted his retirement notice to East Alton-Wood River District on November 10, 2020, to provide ample time to find a replacement.

John's mom and dad were both educators, so he comes from a long line of teachers. John also graduated from Alton High School in 1971, so he has close ties to Alton's district and athletics.

John said he has a great building principal in Leigh Robinson. John also recognized Assistant Principal Kevin Gockel and Athletic Director Mark Beatty, other office personnel, and all the teachers, staff who have an excellent rapport with students.

In addition to his career at EA-WR High, John has also served as superintendent of Freeburg High School District 77 and Chenoa Unit District in Central Illinois. Previously, Dr. Pearson held high school principal positions at Chester and Cisne High Schools and taught social studies and coached basketball in three other systems, most of those being at Fairfield High School in southeastern Illinois.

During his tenure at East Alton-Wood River High School, Dr. Pearson said he and the Board accomplished the following:

Closed the Campus for lunch

Major financial turnaround, from tough financial times early in the first years of the 2000's, from “financial watch list” in 2000-2004 through to “financial recognition” ratings:

Student-athlete drug testing program

Numerous Life Safety and building renovation projects (New boilers for the Main/South and East Buildings, track, tennis court resurfacing and re-striping projects, new exterior and interior doors (East Building, memorial Gym, auditorium), roof replacement throughout, new football field crown and turf, restroom, cafeteria, window, gym renovations, air conditioning every classroom, and others.

Being on the ground floor of the High Schools That Work innovations and network with other high schools

After over a year of study, school visits, and staff development, we made the transition to our current 1:1 computer program (Chromebooks) in 2013, in which teachers are changing their teaching from delivery to facilitation and increasing more student engagement in their own learning.

Starting and growing the first charitable foundation in 2011 (EAWR Foundation), a 401(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, which helps fund special projects at the high school, such as the large ceiling fans in Memorial Gym, a new football scoreboard, the electronic marquee on Wood River Ave., room A/C units throughout the campus, a new Auditorium stage curtain, a new drumline for the band, yearbook cameras, and numerous smaller projects and donations to help students and the campus

Starting and growing the EAWR Alumni Hall of Fame (2009), both which help build and/or restore alumni connections and charitable giving to the Foundation. The Foundation has thus far received over \$200,000 in donations and the Hall of Fame has inducted 50 top-flight alumni

Dr. Pearson noted that he was proud to have served with the following 24 school board members in the last 21 school years:

Held President's Chair

Fred Ufert

Mark St. Peters

Lonnie McCoy

Wes Tucker

Ron Goode

Ronnie Galletta

Diane Zangori

Leroy Duncan

Gale Ufert

Dorothy Malone

Joe Silkwood

Chris Schiber

Nick Aguinaga

Rebecca Leggett

Michelle St. Peters

Jenny Murray

Scott Miner

Zach Butkovich

Melissa Walter

Amy Harding

Melissa Bell-Yates

Melissa Bartels

Mike Redman

Jamey Westbrook

Dr. Pearson said that he was also proud to have served alongside some very special administrators and directors and this was the list: Bob Kasten, Lucinda Nelson, Stan Hall, Kevin Cartee, Leigh Robinson, Rick Levek, Kevin Gockel, Adam Miller, Mark Beatty, Gerry Mattix-Wand, Jeff Foxall, Maj Lukert, Sylvia Fitzgerald-Berry, and Mike Moxey, as well as numerous outstanding teachers and support staff, who have each left their individual stamp on our great students and community.