

## Dr. A. Katrise Perera's Education Leadership Professional Bio

The National Association of School Superintendents 2015 SUPERINTENDENT-OF-THE-YEAR Recipient, Dr. A. Katrise Perera, is a self-proclaimed life long learner. She is widely recognized as an innovative and visionary leader for a progressively global learning environment for all grade levels. More recently, she served as the superintendent in Isle of Wight County Schools (IWCS) in Smithfield (VA) from 2011 – 2015 before being recruited and hired by McGraw Hill Education to lead their Urban Markets Division as their National Director.



During her superintendent tenure IWCS saw an expansion of new opportunities for online courses, dual enrollment opportunities, and an iSLE 21 Initiative. The iSLE 21 Initiative (Initiative for Student Learning and Engagement in the 21st century) was implemented for all 9th 12th grade students as part of the districts 1:1 tablet program. The district was recognized as a Model for Technology Infusion and Implementation by the Virginia Department of Education. Before departing, due to family obligations in June 2015, she led the districts vision development, planning, and initial implementation for a new STEaM instructional program, which was scheduled to begin fall 2015 in the upper elementary grades and is to be phased up a grade each subsequent year.

As superintendent of IWCS, Dr. Perera led the school district to accreditation each year including a District Accreditation from AdvancedED & the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). As she departed in June 2015, IWCS had progressed to the number four academic ranking out of fifteen school districts in Region II and 14th out of 134 Virginia school districts, which in combination with improved academic successes contributed to a decrease in the dropout rates (less than 3% points) and an increase in the on-time (4-year cohorts) graduation rates (93% - up from 88% in 2011), which surpassed the state average of 86%. The number of IWCS students that applied for and attended a two or four-year college increased from 21% in 2011 to an all-time high of 73% in 2015. The SAT scores improved by 27 points during her tenure when compared with the state average, and graduates receiving scholarship awards reached an all-time high of \$7.6-plus million. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the governor's office recognized the school districts Title I elementary schools, and in 2014 an IWCS most challenged elementary school was awarded a National Blue Ribbon of Excellence and a National Title I School of Excellence in 2014 & 2015. In addition, the school district was recognized by the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) for its environmentally friendly efforts and was awarded the 2012 GO GREEN GOLD School District of The Year; the GO GREEN PLATINUM AWARD in years 2013-2015 for the 10,000 students or less category; and recognized by the First Lady of Virginia & VSBA as the statewide FOOD FOR THOUGHT 2014 winner for its efforts through food nutrition to eliminate student hunger. The VSBA also recognized the IWCS School Board as the 2014 Board of Distinction for Virginia.

Before serving as superintendent in Isle of Wight County, Dr. Perera served as an area superintendent /school improvement officer (SIO) in the nation's seventh largest school district - Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. In HISD, she served several schools that housed over 43,000 students, contributed to improving and stabilizing the middle school enrollment, increasing the at or above grade level reading and math scores by 8%, and decreasing the dropout rate by 3% points. She led the planning and start-up of a 6th -12th grade All-female College Preparatory Academy, which was designed to deliver a curriculum that emphasized Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) education. She identifies the most rewarding of her experiences in HISD was her ability to contribute to the development of a comprehensive secondary reform plan to turnaround some of the lowest performing schools (Apollo 20 Schools) in partnership with Harvard University and by working collaboratively with the curriculum, instruction, and assessment departments to develop a rigorous K-12 curriculum aligned with state and national advance placement standards.

In addition to her service in Houston ISD and IWCS, she served longest in Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) in Richmond, Virginia where she served very effectively as a district leader-Deputy Superintendent for Instruction, a building administrator - Principal, a classroom teacher, and a coach. As a building principal, she led the turn-around work at Rolfe Middle School, and later the planning/opening of a new school in an at-risk community, Elko, which maintained accreditation and NCLB excellence for the three years she served as the principal. She began her educational career as a Humanities teacher and coach in Charlottesville City Schools in 1994.

Throughout her career, Dr. Perera has presented and continues to present at national and state conferences. She has received numerous district level, state, and national awards and/or recognition of her educational service, as noted in the opening statement above by NASS, including the 2009 Henrico County Public Schools Instructional Leader of the Year and the Level II Principal of Distinction recognition & endorsement from Virginia Department of Education. She has been recognized by the US Department of Education as a Future-Ready Connected Educator finalist, she was also noted by the District Administration Leadership Institute (DALI) as a Quintessential Multi-Tasker and named to their Executive Board. As a testament to her ability to effectively multitask - she successfully defended her dissertation and received a Doctorate in Educational Leadership & Policy from Virginia Tech (May '14) while maintaining her duties as superintendent in IWCS. Naturally, in 2014 AASA selected her to study alongside some of the leading superintendents of large, urban school districts as part of their highly selective National Superintendents Certification Cohort, which she completed in February of 2016 and ultimately, she received a National Superintendents Certification. Withal, she holds a Post-Master's degree in Administration & Supervision from Virginia Commonwealth University, a Master of Arts degree in Teaching from Mary Baldwin College, and a Bachelor's degree in Merchandising w/a minor in Marketing from the University of Louisiana, where she was also a premiere District-I college athlete.

She and her husband are the proud parents of twin daughters, who graduated with honors from IWCS and are Honors Scholars at Louisiana State University (LSU).