

Dr. John P. Connolly

2012 Distinguished Service Award



John P. Connolly was born and raised in New York City. He graduated from St. John's University with a B.A. in 1962, and a Master's of Science in 1964. He earned his Ed. D from Teachers College in 1974. Dr. Connolly's career has been an exemplary one. He was appointed as a superintendent of a New York school at the very young age of 28 and served as a superintendent in two other New York schools before coming to Dallas. John was the sixth superintendent in the 98-year history of Highland Park Independent School District, where he made a significant contribution by helping to make HPISD stronger academically and fiscally. John assumed leadership of HPISD in 1990 during a very difficult and controversial time. He addressed the issues of rapid growth in student enrollment, the financially devastating Robin Hood legislation, and worked tirelessly to improve the financing of Texas public schools. John was the impetus behind the founding of the Texas School Coalition made up of over 100 school districts. He became the first full-time executive director of that organization and was a leader in organizing the Robin Hood Districts to join a law suit suing the State of Texas for not adequately funding Texas public schools as required by the State Constitution. As a result, in 2005, the school finance law was declared unconstitutional. He led many district improvement and long-range planning initiatives and activities that greatly strengthened HPISD. We are grateful for his commitment, energy, strong ethical leadership and his bravery in facing the challenges of our schools, and it is a privilege to award Dr. John P. Connolly the 2012 Distinguished Service Award.