

NOMINATION FORM

2021-22 A Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year
AASA 2022 National Superintendent of the Year

SUPERINTENDENT INFORMATION

Name: Rhonda Schuhler

School System: Franklin County Schools

Mailing Address: 53 West River Road

City, State, ZIP/Postal Code: Louisburg, NC 27549

Telephone: (Office: 919-496-2600 Cell: 919-340-3524)

Email: rhondaschuhler@fcschools.net

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name: Paige Sayles

Relationship to Superintendent (i.e. board member, colleague, parent, community member): board chair

School System: Franklin County

Mailing Address: 53 West River Rd.

City, State, ZIP/Postal Code: Louisburg, NC 27549

Telephone: (Office: 919-400-9240 Cell: 919-496-8611)

Board of Education

Paige Sayles, Chair Bernard Hall, Vice Chair
Debra Brodie Dr. Elizabeth Keith
Rosemary Champion Tommy Piper
Meghan Jordan
Rhonda Schuhler, Ed.D.
Superintendent



Dr. Croom,

On behalf of the Franklin County Board of Education, I would like to nominate Franklin County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Rhonda Schuhler, for the 2021 – 2022 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year. We believe Dr. Schuhler exemplifies leadership, professionalism, communication and commitment to the community.

Dr. Schuhler brought a wide array of experiences to her job as superintendent. Through her career, she has worked in numerous avenues of public instruction. She has worked at the school level as an elementary classroom teacher, an assistant principal, and a principal. At the district/county level, she has served as an executive director of K-12 curriculum and instruction, human resources director, and director of professional development and innovation. These experiences provide a breadth of understanding of education and they inform her decision-making as an educational leader.

Since joining Franklin County Schools, Dr. Schuhler has focused on increasing student achievement. Faced with seven schools designated as “low performing,” she encouraged the schools’ leadership and staff. The academic growth has been intentional and methodical; improvement occurred over several years with a goal of “Raising the Bar” each year. Currently, these schools have improved and are no longer considered “low performing.” Dr. Schuhler recognized the importance of the relationships between students and the adults. Knowing that the teachers and school staff are there to work for them ensured the students’ success. The students know the adults are there to listen, to see, and to help. Raising the Bar became a mantra at these schools, and the R in Bar was for “relationship.” Those relationships extend beyond the school system and into the community.

One of the cornerstones of Franklin County Schools, and a crowning achievement, has been Early College High School. Since opening in 2010, Early College High School had been housed in a mobile unit that was too small to accommodate the number of students wishing to attend. Dr. Schuhler worked with Vance-Granville Community College to move the Early College High School into one of the underused buildings on campus, giving the students the much-needed space and more importantly, a greater connection to the community college.

Dr. Schuhler has actively engaged with the County Commissioners. By developing a relationship of trust and respect, she has effectively communicated the needs of the school system. As a result of this partnership, FCS has received full funding, as requested from the county, for the past three years. In part, this funding enabled classified employees to receive their first salary increase in over seven years. Dr. Schuhler is committed to continuing to nurture this partnership for the good of the school system and the county at large.

Dr. Schuhler has demonstrated the ability to plan and lead under difficult circumstances. When COVID shut down the schools in North Carolina, Franklin County didn't miss a beat. A data-driven person, Dr. Schuhler anticipated a possible shut down and the system had already begun to prepare. Online classes and paper packets for students without internet access had been planned. Child Nutrition began providing lunches for pick up at school sites throughout the county. The pandemic accentuated the inequities in our community. Since many of our families did not have electronic equipment or broadband internet access, it was critical that this disparity be addressed. When school began in the Fall, all K-12 students received a device, and many families received hotspots in order to access the internet for remote learning.

The pandemic proved challenging for public school systems, and there were a variety of responses as schools reopened in the Fall. Following the science, Dr. Schuhler recommended opening under Plan B, and FCS strictly following guidance from the health department and the CDC for the safety of our students and staff. While some systems opened, encountered problems, and had to close again, Franklin County was the only system in our surrounding area that opened under Plan B and remained open until Plan A was instated. This consistency was an advantage for our students and parents.

Communication has always been a strong suit with Dr. Schuhler. Pre-COVID, she routinely met with parent advisory groups, had monthly lunches with students to learn about their school experiences, and like most Superintendents, spoke to any group who asked. She had increased the online presence of FCS as one way to keep families and the community at large informed. When the schools were closed as a result of the pandemic, Dr. Schuhler increased communication with families, staff and the community. Information was given through Facebook, texts and "robo calls" to parents, Twitter and the Franklin County School YouTube channel informing them where to pick up meals, school packets, how to reach out with online issues, and details regarding the reopening of schools.

Dr. Schuhler is a professional in every sense of the word. She is knowledgeable, data-driven, and a leader who encourages others to reach their full potential. She is not afraid to ask the hard questions or have the hard conversations. For these reasons and many more, I, and the Franklin County Board of Education, feel Dr. Schuhler is most deserving of recognition and praise. We proudly nominate Dr. Schuhler to be the 2021 – 2022 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year.

Sincerely,

Paige Sayles
Chair - Franklin County Board of Education

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SUPERINTENDENT INFORMATION

Name: *Dr. Rhonda Schuhler*

School System: *Franklin County Schools*

Mailing Address: *53 West River Road*

City, State, ZIP/Postal Code: *Louisburg, NC 27549*

Telephone: (Office: *9194962600* Cell:)

Email: *rhondaschuhler@fcschools.net*

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name: *Dawayne McIntosh*

Relationship to Superintendent (i.e. board member, colleague, parent, community member): *Colleague/Cabinet Member - Director of Communications*

School System: *Franklin County Schools*

Mailing Address: *53 West River Road*

City, State, ZIP/Postal Code: *Louisburg, NC 27549*

Telephone: (Office: *9194962600* Cell: *919 727 0676*)

Email: *dawaynemcintosh@fcschools.net*

Please complete this form and a letter (no more than 2 pages) providing justification and supporting information for your nomination. The letter should include information about the nominee's leadership for learning, communication, professionalism, community involvement, and overall impact on the school district.

Mail or email the completed nomination form and supporting letter by **May 1st** to:

Ed Croom, Central Carolina RESA Executive Director

Mail: Central Carolina RESA, Suite 104, 7208 Falls of Neuse Rd, Raleigh, NC 27615

Or

Email: croome@ccresa.net

If you have questions, contact Ed Croom (croome@ccresa.net) or Dana Stutzman (officemanager@ccresa.net) at 919-882-5951.



Rhonda Schuhler, Ed. D.
Superintendent
RhondaSchuhler@FCSchools.net

Dawayne McIntosh
Director of Communications
DawayneMcIntosh@FCSchools.net

Dear Dr. Croom,

It is my distinct honor to recommend Dr. Rhonda Schuhler, Superintendent of Franklin County Schools, as the 2021-2022 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year. Over the past school year, she has been a trailblazer in guiding our district during this pandemic. Working closely with the ABC Science Collaborative, Dr. Schuhler has made the challenging yet correct decision time after time in providing the best learning options for families and students. We were one of the first districts to open up for Plan B learning and Plan A options. As a result, neighboring districts were consulting her for guidance in this transition. We often say, let us do what's best for students. However, I've never seen it to this magnitude in the most challenging times.

Dr. Schuhler is an excellent communicator. Over the past two years, I have witnessed her go above and beyond to use effective video communication to reach staff, parents, and the community. She led a monthly video series entitled "60 Seconds with Schuhler", which won a gold award from the North Carolina Public Service Association for electronic media. Additionally, she frequently creates video messages to keep staff informed and congratulate them on achievements. Dr. Schuhler has an excellent rapport with our board of education, cabinet members, and staff, and all highly respect her.

Dr. Schuhler has also been a creative visionary for student and teacher instructional needs. A few years ago, she decided for our school district to go entirely 1:1 with devices for all students. As we were abruptly forced to work and learn from home, our students seamlessly were able to continue learning because of the access and usage of devices they already had.

Lastly, Dr. Schuhler has been a champion for public education. Behind the scenes, she has been advocating for our district and public schools in general. Communicating with legislators, lawyers, and representatives to ensure other learning entities are held to similar standards and accountability measures as public schools.

Dr. Rhonda Schuhler represents everything you want in a leader. Fairness, Punctuality, Determination, Vision, Work Ethic, and Skill. It is with honor that I get to work alongside her. I highly recommend her for the 2021-2022 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year.

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SUPERINTENDENT INFORMATION

Name: Dr. Rhonda Schuhler
School System: (350) Franklin County Public Schools
Mailing Address: 53 West River Road
City, State, ZIP/Postal Code: Louisburg, NC 27549
Telephone: (Office: ⁽⁹¹⁹⁾ 496-2600 Cell: ⁽³³⁶⁾ 512-9308)
Email: Rhonda.Schuhler@FCSchools.net

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name: Quinnley Coley
Relationship to Superintendent (i.e. board member, colleague, parent, community member): Cabinet Member - Chief Financial Officer
School System: Franklin County Public Schools
Mailing Address: 53 West River Road
City, State, ZIP/Postal Code: Louisburg, NC 27549
Telephone: (Office: ⁽⁹¹⁹⁾ 496-2600 Cell: ⁽⁹¹⁹⁾ 426-5890)
Email: Quinnley.Coley@FCSchools.net



Rhonda Schuhler, Ed. D.
Superintendent
RhondaSchuhler@FCSchools.net

Quinnley Coley
Chief of Finance
QuinnleyColey@FCSchools.net

April 29, 2021

Ed Croom
Executive Director
Central Carolina RESA
Suite 104, 7208 Falls of Neuse Road
Raleigh, North Carolina 27615

Re: Supporting Letter of Recommendation for Superintendent of the Year 2022

Dear Mr. Croom:

I am writing this letter to recommend Dr. Rhonda Schuhler, Superintendent of Franklin County Schools, as the North Carolina Superintendent of the Year for 2022. This letter is being submitted to provide insight as to why Dr. Rhonda Schuhler is more than deserving of such a distinguished award.

I have been employed with our district for 20 years and have had the pleasure of working directly with Dr. Schuhler as a member of her Leadership Cabinet for the past 3.5 years. We both were beginning our new roles, but her style of leadership, commitment to high standards and vision for greatness are why she is a trailblazing role model for all up and coming Superintendents. With her innovative ideas and ability to identify and maximize all resources, not only has Franklin County Schools operated safely throughout the entire pandemic season, but many of her original initiatives have been used as a platform for operations for other districts. A few highlights are provided below as a glimpse into her accomplishments over the tenure of her employment as Superintendent:

- District performance, moving from 7 low performing schools to zero as of 2018-19
- 1:1 Technology Devices for all students
- Implementation of the Classified Salary Table impacting 430 employees
- Leading the Strategic Planning Committee's development of the "Blueprint 2025"
- Receiving full support from the Franklin County Board of Education for the identified district priorities and receiving full funding from the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners for the past three consecutive years

Dr. Rhonda Schuhler is a committed life-long learner, dedicated leader and accomplished educator within her own right. This letter serves as a bow to Dr. Schuhler in appreciation for all her hard work and her powerhouse of excellence that she exhibits each and every day.

Sincerely,

Quinnley A. Coley