

TPS Proud isn't just a catchphrase for Toledo native Dr. Romules Durant. In everything he says and does – and wears – Dr. Durant shows his unwavering commitment to Toledo Public Schools.

A graduate of Waite High School, Dr. Durant has received three degrees from the University of Toledo: a Bachelor of Education degree in 1998, a Master's of Education degree in 2002 and a Doctorate Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision in 2007.

Employed by TPS since 1999, Dr. Durant had been a fourth grade teacher, a dean, an assistant principal, a principal and an assistant superintendent before being named to the top position in December, 2013, when he was given a five-year contract. In Dr. Durant's tenure as superintendent, Toledo Public Schools has seen its graduation rate jump 15 percentage points for all students and a 16 percentage point jump for both minority students and those at or below the poverty level.

In addition to the increase in graduation rates, Dr. Durant is particularly proud of using progressive measures such as pathways to college degree tracks and pipelines to various industries with the addition of 100 more industry partners. Those partnerships have led to increasing internships with industry partners from 75 to more than 500, adding Career Tech programs and increasing the funding to support those programs.

The district continues to progress toward universal PreK for all students, an important goal for Dr. Durant as he sees it as an equal starting point for all students, despite their socioeconomic status.

To make sure that all students can find the best school to foster their talents, Dr. Durant has overseen the creation of four thematic schools: two more STEMM academy elementary schools, plus Jones Leadership Academy of Business and the Aerospace & Natural Science Academy of Toledo, with those two schools aimed at preparing high school students for jobs of the future. Finally, the district now has more than 800 students amassing college credit and Dr. Durant has made sure 12 associate degree tracks have been developed for high school students.

In just 2018 alone, Dr. Durant has experienced two major highlights that many superintendents would envy: for the first time in the history of Toledo Public Schools, one of the district's educators has been named Educator of the Year for the state of Ohio, plus TPS can now boast of the first state championship in girls' basketball in more than 30 years.

The Division II state championship win by the Lady Rams of Rogers High School is especially meaningful to Dr. Durant because he made it a top priority to restore athletics after they had to be cut in a cost-savings move by a previous administration.

Knowing how important strong funding is to providing the services that students need, Dr. Durant has made it a mission to pass every levy that has been on the ballot since he has been superintendent or assistant superintendent. As of November 2018, he is five for five. That month, Dr. Durant and a team of dedicated volunteers led the successful campaign for two renewal

levies – one for 6.67 mills and another for 5.8 mills. Both passed with 70 percent of the vote – the same margin of victory for the five-year, 6.5 mill levy renewed in November 2017. Even more impressive is the victory that came in November 2014, with the passage of Issue 1, an operating levy that brings in more than \$13 million to the district each year - the first new money since 2001. Finally, as interim superintendent in 2013, Dr. Durant led the successful campaign for the passage of a levy renewal.

One of Dr. Durant's proudest achievements is founding the Young Men of Excellence and the Young Women of Excellence mentoring groups. Members are well known for performing service projects in their community. Dr. Durant currently serves on nine community boards and is a member of the 12th largest Rotarian organization in the world, the downtown Toledo Rotary Club.

In addition, he has received nearly 30 community awards, including induction into the Birmingham and Waite High School halls of fame, being named the Alumnus of the Year Award from the University of Toledo's Judith Herb College of Education and winning a leadership award from 20 Under 40 Toledo. During his years of playing football at the UT, Dr. Durant twice earned the Jon Binder Heart and Courage Award.

While his honors are many, Dr. Durant has never lost sight of the fact that he has the same goal for today's TPS students as he had for himself: to rise up from modest means to achieve success first in school and then in life.

Dr. Durant's visionary approach to running an urban school district – as well as his dynamic delivery -- has made him a highly sought-after speaker. Since becoming superintendent, Dr. Durant has made more than 500 appearances before local, regional and national organizations, as well as before faith-based groups, to tell the TPS Proud story.