Superintendent Barbara Jenkins Announces Retirement from OCPS

By Staff

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After 10 years as the Superintendent of Orange County Public Schools, Dr. Barbara Jenkins has announced her retirement. Dr. Jenkins will open the 2022-23 school year, but officially retire in December after dedicating more than 30 years to serving the needs of OCPS students.

“Through the years, it has been my honor to work with phenomenal board members, teachers, administrators and support staff who are committed to leading our students to success. Serving in this role has been a calling and a tremendous blessing,” said Superintendent Jenkins.

The School Board has been aware of her approaching retirement as she has been enrolled in Florida’s DROP (Deferred Retirement Option Program) since 2018. The School Board discussed a tentative timeline to name Superintendent Jenkins’ replacement, which will begin with a February 15th work session.

Dr. Barbara Jenkins is not only the first female superintendent in Orange County Public Schools, she is also a product of OCPS and started her teaching career here. A Superintendent Teacher Scholarship Fund for future teachers is being established through the Foundation for Orange County Public Schools in her honor.

Her list of accomplishments is extensive. Under Jenkins’ leadership, the district won the prestigious 2014 Broad Prize for Urban Education for academic achievements, which brought half-a-million dollars for student scholarships from the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. The district also received the Governor’s Sterling Award in 2014 and 2015 and the Sustained Excellence
Award in 2017 for its exemplary performance using research-based best practices in its business.

In 2015, Dr. Jenkins led the district in successfully seeking District Accreditation from AdvancED for its best practices in the education field. OCPS has repeatedly been recognized by the College Board for increasing access to Advanced Placement course work while simultaneously maintaining or increasing the number of students earning exam scores for college credit.

Dr. Jenkins is recognized nationally as an educational leader. Most recently, she received the prestigious Cognia Values-Driven Award during the 2022 Cognia Florida State Conference. The award recognized Dr. Jenkins for expanding non-traditional pathways to success for students. Last month, she was a recipient of the Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence within education for outstanding service. She currently serves as national Chairman of the Board for the Council of Great City Schools, member of Chiefs for Change, the Florida Council of 100, and past president of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents. In January 2017, she received a presidential appointment as a director of the National Board of Education Sciences. The Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents also named her the Hispanic-Serving School Superintendent of the Year.

At the state level, Dr. Jenkins was previously recognized as Florida’s Superintendent of the Year and one of four finalists for the national title. The Florida Association for Career and Technical Education named her CTE Superintendent of the Year. In 2016, the Florida Music Education Association named her Superintendent of the Year.