

To the Marcus Foster Distinguished Educator Award Committee,

I am writing to offer my highest recommendation for Dr. Reggie Wicker for the Marcus Foster Distinguished Educator Award. Dr. Wicker's exemplary leadership, profound dedication to educational excellence, and consistent efforts to create lasting, systemic change within South Carolina's education system make him an ideal candidate for this prestigious recognition.

Dr. Wicker's journey is rooted in his commitment to educational equity and accessibility. Starting from humble beginnings, he has risen through the ranks of education to serve as a transformative leader at every level—from teacher to principal, and from district administrator to higher education consultant. His multifaceted experience in both K-12 education and higher education uniquely positions him as an educational leader who not only drives policy but shapes practices that impact students and educators alike.

In his current role as a district administrator, Dr. Wicker's leadership continues to shape the district's educational landscape. He serves as a trusted advisor to the Chief of Human Resources, providing guidance on employment issues and ensuring the hiring process is both compliant and equitable. His focus on personnel development, districtwide program implementation, and instructional leadership has contributed to a robust learning environment, underpinned by his commitment to fostering positive relationships across diverse educational stakeholders.

Dr. Wicker's prior experience as Principal of Newberry Elementary School exemplifies his ability to lead with vision and impact. In his tenure, he guided the school through rapid growth, modernizing curriculum and creating innovative partnerships with local colleges and community organizations. Under his leadership, the school achieved remarkable academic results, with notable efforts in establishing both a Chinese and Spanish Academy. His dedication to providing a comprehensive educational experience extended beyond academics, launching initiatives like the school lunch program and talent coaching, demonstrating his holistic approach to education.

Further reflecting his systemic influence, Dr. Wicker has played a significant role in higher education as a consultant and director in the Call Me MISTER program at both Columbia and Newberry Colleges. Through this initiative, Dr. Wicker has worked to diversify the educator workforce by recruiting young men into teaching. His success in

these efforts underscores his forward-thinking approach to fostering an inclusive educational community.

Dr. Wicker is deeply committed to professional development, as evidenced by his engagement in numerous professional organizations and training programs. From his work with the South Carolina Association of School Administrators to his board roles with the South Carolina Alliance of Black School Educators and Newberry County Literacy Council, Dr. Wicker has continually demonstrated a commitment to the advancement of education, both locally and statewide.

Beyond his impressive resume, Dr. Wicker is a true educator at heart—one who believes in the transformative power of education to create opportunities for all students. He has consistently gone above and beyond to support teachers, administrators, and students, creating environments where all individuals are empowered to succeed. His work through Equity Education Associates further demonstrates his dedication to equitable, high-impact learning experiences.

In conclusion, Dr. Wicker exemplifies the qualities that the Marcus Foster Distinguished Educator Award seeks to honor—exceptional leadership, a focus on systemic change, and an unwavering commitment to the improvement of educational outcomes for all students. I can think of no one more deserving of this prestigious award.

Thank you for your consideration of Dr. Reggie Wicker for this well-deserved recognition.

Sincerely,

James Ann Sheley
Retired Educator of 45 plus years