



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Former Streator School District 44 Superintendent Honored with Illinois ASBO Lighthouse Award**

At their 2018 Annual Conference on May 3, the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (Illinois ASBO) recognized Dr. Matthew J. Wilkinson, former Superintendent at Streator Elementary School District 44, with the Foundation Lighthouse Award. This prestigious award honors those who bring outstanding new ideas or practices to school entities.

In 2013, District 44 was facing a financial crisis. Because of reduced state funding, the school district was forced to close two of its schools within four years of each other. Rather than let these buildings remain vacant, Dr. Wilkinson chose to lease the empty buildings to other community based organizations, and with the help of the Starved Rock County Alliance, sell one of the buildings to a teacher training facility from Hong Kong. The buildings were able to remain in use for educational purposes and as a viable resource to the community, while keeping them safe from vandalism and providing revenue for the district.

Dr. Wilkinson began his educational career as the Assistant Superintendent of the Indiana School for the Blind, an experience that shaped his future career. Receiving the Lighthouse Award means a great deal to him after 20 years as a school administrator. "I feel honored to have received this prestigious award and hope I can continue to grow and develop as a school business manager."

He hopes that awards such as these can bring awareness to the enormous role that school finance and operations play in a school district. More information on the award, including a special award video featuring Dr. Wilkinson can be found at [www.iasbo.org/lighthouse](http://www.iasbo.org/lighthouse).

*Photo caption: Dr. Wilkinson accepts the Lighthouse Award from current Illinois ASBO President Dr. David H. Hill.*

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