



## Southwest Allen County Schools

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### For Immediate Release

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### **SACS Educator Is Indiana Teacher of the Year!**

*Haverhill's Jean Russell named top teacher in surprise announcement with Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz.*

FORT WAYNE, IND., October 5, 2015 — The Department of Education has named Southwest Allen County Schools teacher Jean Russell as the 2016 Indiana Teacher of the Year. Russell was surprised at her school, Haverhill Elementary, by staff, students and Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz on Monday.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to represent all the amazing educators in Indiana," Russell says. "It's humbling to be the one doing it, but I feel like my heart and my passion for education, for kids, and for teachers will shine through so that the world will know education is where it's at."

Russell, a literacy specialist at Haverhill, has been teaching for 25 years, 21 of them at SACS.

"We could not be more proud of Mrs. Russell, and the state couldn't have selected a better representative of education in Indiana," Superintendent Dr. Philip G. Downs says. "Mrs. Russell does amazing things for girls and boys each and every day and is a great example of the kind of dedicated teachers we have in Southwest Allen County Schools."

As a literacy specialist at Haverhill, Russell has helped create a “community of readers,” where reading spills into the community through parents, students, teachers and community members. She provides on-going professional development to the entire Haverhill staff in the areas of reading and writing. She also designs trainings, models in classrooms and provides a wealth of resources for teachers throughout the district.

“Her ability to connect with students and staff is truly amazing,” Haverhill Principal Jeanine Kleber says. “She has a real passion, true commitment and an irresistible zeal for life that has inspired so many of our teachers and young readers.”

Russell earned her bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from the University of Illinois and her master’s degree in Elementary Education from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

As Teacher of the Year, Russell will represent Indiana teachers at a national level, including the National Teacher of the Year competition.

### **About Southwest Allen County Schools**

Nationally recognized and locally known for its award-winning programs, high-quality staff, and strong parental and community support, [Southwest Allen County Schools](#) is dedicated to a shared mission of preparing today’s learners for tomorrow’s opportunities.

### **About the Indiana Teacher of the Year Program**

The [Indiana Teacher of the Year](#) program began in 1957 and continues as the oldest, most prestigious state honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. Its mission is to build and utilize a network of exemplary teachers who are leaders in the improvement of schools, student performance and the teaching profession.

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