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**Margaret Hoernemann of Avon Community Schools
Is Indiana Superintendent of the Year**

INDIANAPOLIS – September 24, 2015 – Dr. Margaret Hoernemann, superintendent of Avon Community School Corporation, was named Indiana Superintendent of the Year for 2016 by the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents. She becomes Indiana’s representative in the American Association of School Administrators National Superintendent of the Year program.

“Each of our eight district superintendents of the year for 2016 has done an outstanding job of striving for excellence despite prolonged budget challenges,” said Dr. J.T. Coopman, executive director of IAPSS. “In every corner of Indiana – urban, rural and suburban – superintendents are being asked to do more with less.

“Maggie Hoernemann rose to the top of our state Superintendent of the Year candidates for her consistent, deliberate and multi-faceted approach to deal with the district’s \$39 million loss to property tax caps. It’s a model school districts everywhere can learn from.”

Hoernemann became Avon superintendent in 2012, after a downward financial spiral had already started. Avon Community School Corporation entered the Great Recession with significant debt from building new schools in the early 2000s to accommodate the suburban area’s rapid population growth. The district deferred purchasing buses for five years, a 2011 referendum to approve additional operating funds did not succeed, and unavoidable teacher layoffs had increased class sizes.

Hoernemann started her new responsibilities with a listening tour, where school employees shared their frustration over lack of resources and stagnant salaries. By 2014 73 percent of the district’s computers were obsolete. In 2015 Avon ranked 325 out of

365 public and charter schools in per-pupil funding -- \$550 per student below the state average.

Despite previous cuts, the entire organization still needed to become leaner. Hoernemann created an Efficiency Task Force of 28 stakeholders in 2014. Their recommendations resulted in new school boundaries to more efficiently share resources, \$350,000 in transportation savings and \$330,000 savings in custodial staffing.

Concluding that “we can’t cut or grow our way out of this,” the district developed partnerships to supplement reduced revenue. The district used a grant from Purdue University to provide \$250,000 in professional development to improve science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) instruction, and a \$25,000 Duke Energy Foundation grant funded a summer vocabulary academy for students who are English language learners. Hendricks Regional Health donated 400 newer computers.

Hoernemann convened several groups to educate the community about the district’s financial situation, including business leader luncheons, and Avon Oriole Advocates, a grassroots advocacy group. She co-founded and serves as co-facilitator of the Avon Taxing Entities Collaboration, a group comprised of representatives of the town, township, library, Chamber of Commerce and state legislators.

ACSC funding improved slightly in the new school funding formula as a result of the increased communication with legislators.

Hoernemann feels the district is beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel of some very difficult financial times. The district now has a balanced budget and a AA+ bond rating – the district’s highest one in a decade. Efficiencies and new funding allowed the district to add approximately 31 teaching positions for 2015-2016. The additional staffing does not replace all 55 teachers lost, but it is progress.

Hoernemann is a graduate of Miami University of Ohio. She also studied at the University of Dijon in France, earned a master’s degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago, and a Ph.D. from Purdue University. She currently serves as president of the Avon Rotary Club and is a board member for the Avon Chamber of Commerce.

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Indiana’s District Superintendents of the Year for 2016 are:

- District I: Dr. Peggy Buffington, School City of Hobart
- District II: Dr. Randall Zimmerly, Westview School Corporation (Topeka, Ind.)
- District III: Donald DeWeese, Community Schools of Frankfort
- District IV: Daniel A. Sighting, Bloomfield School District
- District V: Dr. Margaret Hoernemann, Avon Community School Corporation

- District VI: Dr. Gregory P. Hinshaw, Randolph Central School Corporation
- District VII: Dr. Thomas A. Kopatich, Metropolitan School District of Mt. Vernon (Mt. Vernon, Ind.)
- District VIII: Dr. Jim Roberts, Batesville Community School Corporation