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Steven Pate of Portage School District Receives
2018 Wisconsin Rural School Board Member of the Year

Steven Pate was honored by the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA), a non-profit organization that is dedicated to helping address challenges faced by rural school districts, at the annual Rural Schools Conference on October 29, 2018.

Portage, as a district, has been fortunate to have Board President Steve Pate as an advocate for our students and staff for the last 32 years as a member of our board of education. He was elected in 1986 and since that time, has been involved in the evolution of the district and what it is today- a community of educational leaders committed to the success of every student.

Mr. Pate has been a strong advocate for the Portage High School Building Trades program and headed the charge to renew the program several years ago. He is dedicated to ensuring all students have the academic and technical skills, knowledge and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners. His passion for hands-on learning has been seen in his support for our Career and Technical Education programming, apprenticeship opportunities and business partnerships. Steve's primary focus has been on the success of each of our students, regardless of their grade level. He wants to make sure we are all doing our best to prepare our young people for their roles as community members.

Mr. Pate has been a member of the board for decades, he has had the responsibility to be a true servant leader in both great and challenging times. His commitment to our students has never wavered. He has been a parent and is now a grandparent of Portage students. His dedication and commitment are personal, but he shares the same passion for every student who walks through our doors.

Other award winners honored by WiRSA at the Rural Schools Conference were Ashley Furniture Industries of Arcadia, Rural Business Partner of the Year; Dan Viste, Southern Door County School District, Rural Support Staff Person of the Year; Bryce Bird, District Administrator of the Riverdale School District, Rural Administrator of the Year; Justin Gerlach, teacher in the Mishicot School District, Rural Teacher of the Year; and, Heather DuBois Bourenane, Executive Director of WPEN, Rural Advocacy Award.

The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance was formed to help rural school districts address the unique issues that affect rural schools as they seek to achieve the highest quality education for every student. Members include a cross-section of administrators, educators, school board members, post-secondary representatives, rural community members, business leaders, and other concerned individuals who want a strong voice for rural education.