

# Principal with 36 Years of Educational Experience Named ACPS Principal of the Year

- 🕒 April 7, 2019



Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School's Rene Paschal has been named 2019 ACPS Principal of the Year.

Paschal, who has 36 years in education, immediately dedicated his award to his students and staff, whom he said should all share in the honor. His award was announced through a video of student tributes shown during a pep rally on Friday morning.

*"Mr. Paschal is truly a great person who had shown genuine commitment*

*and dedication to this school and its students. He is always rational and level-headed, and we are honored to be able to have him as our principal of the year — to hold up as a shining example of who principals should be, not just in ACPS but everywhere,"* said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.

Dr. Hutchings recalled the time when he had been a part of the interview panel that hired Paschal.

*"He said then that he wanted to serve this community and it's a sign of genuine commitment that he is still serving them when I return all these years later as superintendent,"* Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. shared.

Paschal is known as a leader who is focused on growing others to their fullest potential in every position he has held. The numerous titles that he's held do not begin to tell the story of the passion, wisdom and energy as extolled by his staff. Paschal, who started out as a teacher and school counselor and is never far from the classroom, will now also be the ACPS finalist for the Washington Post Outstanding Principal of the Year award.

*"This is a true honor. I start my days at the front of the school looking at smiling faces of students, and I end my day in the back of the school watching smiling faces get onto school buses. That is really what it is all about,"* said Paschal.

Members of his team describe Paschal as having the patience of a saint, the vision of a masterful coach and the commitment of a marathon runner. The strong relationships that Paschal has cultivated and his limitless compassion, patience and dedication are at the heart of his leadership. As a manager, he empowers teachers to lead and has created an environment where staff



members feel safe exploring and trying new things and where making mistakes are part of learning and growing.

Paschal embraces and celebrates the school's rich culture and diversity and works to ensure that equity is an integral and constant goal throughout the school. He has collaborated with the PTA to ensure that Tucker is welcoming and accessible to all Tucker families and that they have avenues in which to

get involved. The school hosts math nights, after-school programs and professional development for teachers to empower them with additional ways to support students with specific learning needs. Paschal builds deep trust and strong, lasting relationships and supports individual families through difficult times.

*“A principal who inspires, leads with vision, fosters creativity, fights for equity and champions cooperation is a rare find — and that is exactly what we are so lucky to have at Tucker. Our entire community looks to our leader as a problem-solver, counselor, conflict manager, coach, friend and decision-maker. And he does it all with ease and extraordinary success.” — Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School Staff*

*“Rene casts a vision that is built on the foundation that every child has value and worth and will be treated with respect. He is a kind and compassionate man who considers the needs and desires of all people in his building. His open-door policy never trivializes or minimizes staff concerns; he listens with an open mind and gracious spirit, not just the anxieties and trepidations of the staff but to their aspirations and desires to become better at their craft. The level of trust, respect and kindness our students experience in our building is a direct result of what is offered and modeled every day by Mr. Paschal.” — Tucker Grade 5 Teacher Stacy Swickert*

*“Mr. Paschal is the most empathetic, heartfelt, genuine person with an amazing gift with words. We have seen a number of students struggle before making great strides forward thanks to the consistent communication and teamwork that Mr. Paschal engages in with each family.” — Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School Staff*

*“As a member of the international community, I feel that Mr. Paschal values and celebrates diversity. None of this is more evident than in Heritage Night, when the cultural backgrounds of all students are celebrated. You can always see Mr. Paschal smiling at the parade of nations, making sure everyone feels valued and welcome in the Samuel Tucker family.” — Marcia Molina Lehmann, Tucker parent*

*“He is an administrator who would quietly like to ensure that every child feels safe, happy and ready to learn. He is an administrator who would quietly like to ensure that every child, whether they were born in Alexandria or Ghana, has the tools they need to do well.” — Tucker PTA*

*“Mr. Paschal always makes it his utmost priority to be available for parents and students. He gives parents and students a voice. He is there when needed, from administrative tasks to holding a baby while the mother attends Math Info Night. I have never met a principal who is so dedicated to his job. Mr. Paschal is a true model for educational leadership and an admirable human being.” — Regina Siebold, Tucker parent*

*“Mr. Paschal’s greatest ability is to host a room full of parents with children in all grades and be able to take each question and make each parent feel like they are the only other person in the room.” — Robert Fabian, Tucker parent*

*“I have been fortunate enough to volunteer my time helping within the school. I’ve seen how Mr. Paschal goes above and beyond. He always has a pleasant, if not encouraging, word for everyone he passes. I hear how highly the staff speak about him. He truly supports his staff. By doing so, I feel he has created a strong foundation within the school. That foundation provides a*