



Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) 2015 Rural Advocacy Award Winner

Jerry Fiene | past WiRSA Executive Director



Jerry Fiene, past WiRSA Executive Director 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 Nov. 12, 2015.

Jerry has committed his entire professional career to the promotion and improvement of rural schools. From teaching, to the principalship, to the office of the superintendent, Jerry has consistently worked in rural education settings and promoted the ideals and the need for strong rural schools. When he left the individual school setting, he took the reins of CESA 9 in Tomahawk, WI, again, a very rural area, where he advocated for rural schools and worked hard to bring cutting edge technology and educational opportunities to his districts. Jerry not only understands the need for strong rural schools, he knows how to advocate at a local, state and national level to bring tremendous opportunities to those schools.

Even in retirement he has continued the battle. After retiring from CESA 9, he agreed to become the first-ever executive director of WiRSA. He has worked tirelessly to build the foundation of the rural schools alliance and in doing so has given a voice to the many rural districts in our state. Through his leadership, WiRSA has grown in membership each year of its existence. This growth has led to the WiRSA Annual Conference, held each year in November, to bring together rural schools to share their stories of what works and to discuss the issues that hamper our success. As a lobbyist in Madison, Jerry has had great success bending the ears of legislators to the needs of rural districts and has won numerous battles to bring more resources our way. Whether it be more funding, fewer restrictions, transportation issues or the need for technology, Jerry has championed the cause of the small rural school of Wisconsin.



As he moves into his real retirement, I can think of no person more deserving of the WiRSA Rural Advocacy Award than Jerry Fiene. I think presenting this award to him would be an extremely fitting way to say thank you for being a tremendous leader for WiRSA and for dedicating his life to the advocacy of rural schools.

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.