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**Dr. Nicholas Diaz, Shared Superintendent of Schools at Union Township Schools and Franklin Township School District  
Named 2023 NJ Communicator of the Year**



***In this photo:** Dr. Nicholas Diaz (center), shared superintendent of schools at Union Township Schools and Franklin Township School District, accepts the NJSPPRA 2023 Communicator of the Year Award from Paul Zeller (l), NJSPPRA President, and Maren Smagala (r), NJSPPRA President-Elect and the 2021 Communicator of the Year.*

The New Jersey School Public Relations Association announces Dr. Nicholas Diaz, shared Superintendent of Schools at Union Township Schools and Franklin Township School District,

as their 2023 Communicator of the Year. This annual award recognizes exemplary leadership and commitment to enhanced communication and relationship-building between public schools and the stakeholders they serve. NJSPRA President Paul Zeller, and Maren Smagala, NJSPRA's President-Elect and 2021 Communicator of the Year, presented Dr. Diaz with the award during the organization's Annual Meeting on May 12th.

"Dr. Diaz embraces the importance of communications with all stakeholders in his community," notes Zeller. "Not having a communications professional on staff, Dr. Diaz takes this responsibility on himself, strategically communicating with his community to assure everyone is informed and has an opportunity to share their thoughts."

The presidents of both Boards of Education supplied nomination letters, confirming Zeller's statement. Franklin Township School District Board of Education President Karen Sutton wrote, "He has a remarkable talent for presenting complex information in a clear and concise manner, making it accessible to all members of our community. Whether he is speaking with parents, teachers, students, or community leaders, Dr. Diaz always takes the time to listen to their concerns and respond thoughtfully." Union Township Schools Board of Education President Mr. Lou Palma made a similar affirmation, noting, "Through surveys and analysis of website traffic and social media engagement, Dr. Diaz has been able to measure the effectiveness of our communication efforts and make data-driven decisions to improve our outreach."

Dr. Diaz is a well-respected superintendent, not only in his community, but throughout the state of New Jersey and across the country. The National School Public Relations Association named him as a "Superintendent to Watch" in 2018. He serves as an advocate for public education, regularly presenting to his community and at educational conferences in New Jersey. With members of his administrative teams, Dr. Diaz presented, "Supporting Employees with Parent/Family Communications," to the Washington School Public Relations Association (WSPRA), sharing best practices and examples to help school communication professionals work with their respective districts to improve communication. Dr. Diaz also co-authored an article "5 Strategies Leaders Can Use to Stay Out of the Weeds," published in the national periodical *Education Week*, guiding and encouraging educational leaders across the country to support and empower the educators of their staffs.

With his primary focus always on his local communities, Dr. Diaz reaches people through letters, social media, in-person presentations, and through video. An example is his creative YouTube video series, "Do you have a minute?" which provides the community with a quick update on the great things happening in his districts. Launched recently, the series already has over a thousand views.

Three veteran accredited school communication professionals from across the country served as judges for the Communicator of the Year award and unanimously agreed Dr. Diaz should be the 2023 recipient from among those nominated.

For more than 26 years, NJSPRA has provided professional development, training, resources, networking, and collateral support in all facets of communication to education communities across the state. Members include public relations and communications professionals, as well as superintendents, administrators, board members, principals, teachers, and consultants. NJSPRA is a chapter of the National School Public Relations Association and has been recognized for the breadth and depth of programs it provides to its 120+ members across the state. For more information, visit [www.njspra.com](http://www.njspra.com) or email [njspracomunications@gmail.com](mailto:njspracomunications@gmail.com).

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