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Dr. James Sarruda Honored for Contributions to Impact Aid

Washington, DC – March 22, 2024 – The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) has recognized Dr. James Sarruda, Executive Director of the Learning Opportunity Impacted Schools Association (LO~ISA) and retired Superintendent of Northern Burlington County Regional School District (New Jersey), with the Virginia Allred Stacey Founders Award. The award – the highest that NAFIS offers – was presented at the 2024 NAFIS Spring Conference.

Sarruda was honored for his leadership, dedication and service to the Impact Aid community. Impact Aid reimburses school districts for the loss of revenue caused by the presence of nontaxable federal property, including military installations; Indian Trust, Treaty and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands; federal low-income housing facilities; and national parks, national laboratories and other federal buildings and property. It helps ensure students who attend schools on or near federal property have access to a quality education.

Sarruda has been active with Impact Aid and NAFIS for nearly 30 years. He has served on the NAFIS Board of Directors since 2007, including as president 2017-2019. His initial engagement stemmed from the federal government's impact on Northern Burlington County Regional School District, which serves a substantial population of military students connected to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Over the years, Sarruda has championed the entire Impact Aid program, building expertise in and forging connections with districts impacted by Indian lands, federal low-income housing and other federal properties to ensure a unified message and advance the NAFIS agenda.

Even after retiring from Northern Burlington in 2022 after 29 years as superintendent, Sarruda remains committed to Impact Aid. He has been actively involved in the establishment and growth of the Learning Opportunity Impacted Schools Association (LO~ISA), of which he is past president and currently serves as executive director.

"Jim's dedication and leadership have been integral to NAFIS success throughout the years," said NAFIS Executive Director Nicole Russell. "He has served as a mentor within the NAFIS community, and his ability to listen, learn and make careful, considered and informed decisions has significantly enriched our organization. Thanks to his efforts, students in federally impacted school districts across the country have access to high-quality educational opportunities. He truly embodies the spirit of the NAFIS Founders Award."

The entire NAFIS Family joins together in thanking Dr. Sarruda for his commitment to and work to strengthen NAFIS and the Impact Aid program.

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The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) represents approximately 1,100 federally impacted public school districts that together educate nearly eight million students across the nation. Federally impacted school districts are those located on or near nontaxable Federal property—including military installations; Indian Trust, Treaty and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands; Federal low-income housing facilities; and national parks, national laboratories and other Federal buildings and property. These school districts, which are demographically and geographically diverse, receive Impact Aid, a Federal education program that reimburses school districts for the lost local revenue and additional costs associated with the presence of Federal property. To learn more, visit www.nafisdc.org.