



**National Association of
School Superintendents**
United in Common Purpose: Each Other's Success

Name

Felicia Adams, Ed.D., Superintendent

Current School District and Location

Southwest Public Schools
Houston, TX

INTRODUCTION

Education

Dr. Felicia Adams holds a strong academic foundation in education and leadership. She earned her bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University, followed by a master's degree from Texas Southern University. She later completed her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy at University of Texas at Austin, equipping her with advanced expertise in school leadership and systemic improvement.

Experience

Dr. Felicia Adams has over 30 years of experience in urban education, serving in a wide range of roles including teacher, instructional leader, principal at both the elementary and secondary levels, and district administrator. Her career has included positions such as School Support Officer, Officer of Academic Instructional Technology, and Area Superintendent, before becoming Superintendent of Southwest Public Schools in Houston, Texas. Throughout her career, she has focused on strengthening instruction, supporting educators, and improving systems to better serve students and families. Throughout her leadership, Dr. Adams has led significant gains in student achievement, including double-digit growth across core subjects and improvements in closing achievement gaps. Schools under her leadership have earned multiple distinction designations, top state rankings, and recognition for academic performance. At the district level, she has led large-scale turnaround efforts impacting tens of thousands of students, successfully guided campuses to meet state accountability standards, and supported systemwide transitions such as virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outstanding Achievement(s)

Dr. Felicia Adams' achievements reflect a consistent record of improving student outcomes and leading high-performing schools and systems. Under her leadership, campuses earned all-state distinction designations, reached top rankings among comparison schools, and demonstrated significant gains in student achievement, including closing achievement gaps and increasing performance at the highest levels. She successfully led large-scale turnaround efforts in Houston ISD, where the vast majority of struggling campuses met state accountability standards within one year.

At the district level, she developed and implemented strategic initiatives impacting tens of thousands of students and educators, including a comprehensive turnaround plan and a districtwide instructional continuity plan during the COVID-19 pandemic. As Superintendent of Southwest Public Schools, she led the district to improved accountability ratings, moving from a C to a B designation in a short period of time. Her work has been recognized through multiple honors at the local, regional, and state levels for leadership, instructional excellence, and student achievement and most recently leading Southwest Public Schools to be named one of the Top Ten Most Admired School Districts in the Nation by Education Magazine.

AN INTERVIEW

Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.

Today's superintendent is a true balancing act, navigating university learning, on the job experience, and insights from families and the community. Each perspective matters, and balancing them effectively defines strong leadership. Just when stability is reached, new challenges emerge requiring constant adaptability. Superintendents must pivot, respond, and lead beyond day to day responsibilities. Success requires attention to all areas including students, teachers, families, administration, and finance. The role now also demands a forward focus on innovation and technology. Leaders must ensure districts stay ahead of AI and remain technologically advanced. Communication has evolved, requiring engagement across multiple platforms including social media. At the same time, state, local, and federal changes continue to shift expectations. The role is to align all moving parts to a clear vision that ultimately benefits students.

What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?

One of the most important lessons I have learned is how to lead at different levels because leadership is not one size fits all. Engagement with the board, cabinet, administrators, teachers, students, and families all require different approaches. Each level requires intentional communication, support, and leadership style. At the same time, all relationships must remain strong and aligned. Leadership is ultimately about intentional prioritization. Whatever you prioritize becomes the priority for your organization. If you emphasize attendance or instruction, your team will follow your lead. Your words, and more importantly your actions, set the tone. Effective leaders also understand their team's strengths and areas for growth. When aligned to a shared vision, every effort leads to student success.

Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.

When academic achievement is approached as a shared responsibility, outcomes improve significantly. I've learned that simply gathering input is not enough; we must move toward intentional collaboration. As a district, our focus on post-secondary readiness requires alignment across all levels. This work cannot live in one department; it demands a unified effort. By working collectively, we tap into individual strengths while maintaining a shared vision. This creates coherence, builds momentum, and drives meaningful progress. True collective efficacy means believing not only that students can succeed, but that together we ensure they do.

Submitted by:


Felicia Adams, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

April 23, 2026

Name/Signature

Date