Dr. Susan Russell Toohey received her doctorate in leadership in 2013 and now serves as the principal for the Nelson Mandela Elementary School in North Omaha.

Toohey graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with teaching degrees in Earth Science and Social Sciences in 1986 and has taught social studies, English and drama for Omaha Public Schools. From 2009 to 2014, Toohey served as Head of School for Marian High School. Toohey has worked extensively in education and has impacted thousands of students through her leadership and creativity.

The Lozier Foundation, where Toohey serves as the Director of Education Initiatives, offered her the opportunity to begin the Nelson Mandela Elementary School and in 2015, the unique, community-based, free private school was opened.

Toohey provides distinguished service to her community through dedication to education and her work reflects her lifelong passion to serve others. She philanthropically supports Creighton University, the American Cancer Society, St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church and School, Creighton Prep, Marian High School and more. Toohey has counseled students and guided teachers to make significant impacts on their own students. She has also dedicated her time to assisting others in the doctoral program at Creighton.

In 2006, Toohey received the distinguished Service Award from the Nebraska State Council for Social Studies. She is the recipient of both the Nebraska Outstanding Social Studies Educator of the Year Award and Trailblazer of the Year Award.

Toohey served as president of the International Servite Schools Network, president of the Nebraska State Council for Social Studies, a board member of the Heart Ministries Center, the National Council for International Education and a member of the National Association for Professional Women.

For her passion for educating youth and serving her community, Dr. Susan Russell Toohey is a most deserving recipient of the 2016 Graduate School Alumni Merit Award.