October 2026

Dear Superintendent,

Thank you for your exceptional leadership. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your tireless efforts and congratulate you on your triumphs and successes this past year.

The Illinois Principals Association is dedicated to providing high-quality support and resources to serve your building level leaders throughout their professional journey. We are steadfast in our mission to foster, support, and advocate for innovative educational leaders by providing professional and personal support, ensuring they can do their best for their learning organizations, communities and most importantly, their students.

Since 1990, the third full week of October has been designated as Principals Week. This year, it is October 19-23 and Principals Day is October 23. We invite you to join us in honoring the hard work of your school leaders. Enclosed you'll find a copy of the Governor's Proclamation, which has been sent to all Illinois school principals, and a press release for local media distribution. We are thrilled to celebrate with you and your school leaders as they build their legacy of educational excellence. For more information about Principals Week/Day including a toolkit, visit ilprincipals.org (click Programs, Principal Appreciation).

Also, please consider nominating deserving leaders in your district for an IPA Award for Excellence Principal of the Year Award. Applications are due by October 31. For more information about the program, visit ilprincipals.org (click Programs, Awards & Scholarships).

The demanding nature of educational leadership necessitates a strong community for support. I urge you to ensure your building leaders are IPA Members, joining a network of more than 7,000 educational leaders throughout Illinois.

Wishing you and your learning community a successful school year. Please feel free to reach out if there is anything the IPA can do to assist you.

For the Association,

Dr. Jason E. Leahy
Executive Director
Illinois Principals Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illinois Principals Association Encourages Principal Appreciation in October

Springfield, IL – The Illinois Principals Association (IPA) encourages communities to celebrate Principal Appreciation Week October 18-24, 2026, and Principal Appreciation Day on Friday, October 23 to highlight the dedication of principals, assistant principals, and deans. This annual recognition has been recognized by Illinois governors since 1990. October is also National Principals Month, supported by the IPA, the National Principals Association (NPA), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA).

Brian Faulkner, IPA President and principal of Kaneland Harter Middle School (Sugar Grove) shared: "During Principal Appreciation Week, we celebrate the dedicated school leaders across Illinois who work tirelessly to create schools where students can learn, grow, and thrive. Principals are lead learners, culture builders, advocates, and champions for both students and staff. We are grateful for the passion, resilience, and unwavering commitment they bring to their schools and learning communities each and every day."

"This year, we celebrate our state's school leaders for what they do – unlocking the potential of those they serve," said **Dr. Jason Leahy, IPA Executive Director**. "These courageous individuals lead their learning organizations with optimism, humility, vision, perseverance, and a deep commitment to do what is best for their students. Both research and common sense tell us how critical these servants are to positively influence young people, teachers, and communities. For this, they deserve our respect and gratitude."

IPA invites teachers, students, parents, and community members to show appreciation for school leaders on Friday, October 23.

The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves almost 7,000 educational leaders throughout the state of Illinois and whose mission is to develop, support and advocate for innovative educational leaders. For more information about the IPA, please visit www.ilprincipals.org.

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STATE OF ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, *school principals play an integral role in nurturing positive, student-centered cultures in elementary, middle, and high schools across the State of Illinois; and,*

WHEREAS, *school principals attract, support, and retain outstanding teachers and staff to ensure each child has equitable opportunities to reach their full potential; and,*

WHEREAS, *it is the primary responsibility of the State of Illinois to provide adequate and equitable resources for schools so that all students have access to a quality education and a foundation for future success; and,*

WHEREAS, *school principals understand the unique needs of their students, staff, and communities and must have the flexibility to exercise sound professional judgment in meeting those needs; and,*

WHEREAS, *school leaders influence student and adult performance by fostering a growth mindset, guiding research-based continuous improvement, and leading systemic organizational change; and,*

WHEREAS, *school leaders face many obstacles in supporting and educating young people, and through their perseverance, passion, and hope-filled leadership, Illinois continues to prepare quality, career-ready students; and,*

WHEREAS, *the Illinois Principals Association, representing over 7,000 educational leaders statewide, develops, supports, and advocates for innovative school leaders through professional development, networking, legislative advocacy, and the elevation of educators' voices in education policy;*

THEREFORE, *I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim the week of October 18-24, 2026, as* ***Principals Week*** *and Friday, October 23, 2026, as* ***Principals Day*** *in Illinois, to recognize principals and the Illinois Principals Association for all that they do to help our children learn and succeed.*

In Witness Whereof, *I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.*

Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield, this TWENTY-FIRST *day of* SEPTEMBER*, in the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and* TWENTY-SIX*, and of the State of Illinois, two hundred and* SEVENTH*.*

SECRETARY OF STATE

GOVERNOR