Illinois Principals Association Announces 2023 John Ourth & Dr. Fred Singleton Professional Development Scholarship Recipients

Springfield, IL – Elwanda Butler, Principal of Robert Fulton Elementary School, Chicago, and Jordan Master, Assistant Principal of Johnsburg High School, have received the 2023 John Ourth and Dr. Fred Singleton Professional Development Scholarships sponsored by the Illinois Principals Association. Scholarship grants assist individuals in the pursuit of graduate study, attendance at national conferences, and attendance at other relevant professional development to further the capacities of school administrators to be instructional leaders.

Elwanda Butler has served as principal of Robert Fulton Elementary School since 2020. Prior to that, she served as an assistant principal in Chicago Public Schools. Butler began her career in education as an elementary teacher in Chicago Public Schools. A graduate of University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Dr. Butler has continued her professional education by completing a Master of Education degree from the American College of Education, reading endorsement from Northeastern Illinois University, English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement from University of Sioux Falls, and a Doctor of Education – Administration and Supervision, from Loyola University Chicago. Butler is currently completing coursework to earn a Learning Behavior Specialist 1(LBS1) endorsement from the Jacqueline B. Vaughn School for Teacher Leadership and plans to utilize the scholarship to continue pursuing professional and personal development opportunities.

Butler believes that effective instructional leaders must ensure that all students receive a high-quality education from qualified teachers. “I demonstrate this through my processes of hiring, growing, and retaining diverse groups of talent. During my recruiting process, I connect with universities and the Golden Apple Foundation to get qualified candidates. Upon hire, teachers receive ongoing support tailored to meet their needs, such as a New Teacher Academy to provide a safe space for teachers who are new to the profession or new to the building to meet with me once a month for professional learning.” Butler demonstrates life-long learning through encouraging teachers to attend professional development within the school and outside of the district. “I firmly believe that it is important to help others develop the knowledge and skills needed to increase student achievement and independence. I invest time and effort to meet the needs of all staff to identify with their input what is needed for success.”

Jordan Master has served as Assistant Principal at Johnsburg High School since 2020. She began her educational career as an English and Language Arts teacher at North Boone Middle & High School in Poplar Grove. A graduate of Marquette University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Secondary Education and English, Master continued her education by completing a Master of Arts in School Leadership at Concordia University, Chicago. Master plans to utilize the scholarship to attend educational leadership conferences in order to better serve students, parents, and staff in Johnsburg.

“To be an effective instructional leader, it is critical for administrators to dedicate time to being present in classrooms on a regular basis, partner with stakeholders like curriculum leaders within the district, coach and communicate with staff consistently, evaluate data regularly, attend professional development that focuses on high-impact teaching strategies, and find ways to be culturally responsive to impart that on to our staff,” shared Master.
Master added, “I continue to cultivate my growth mindset in learning from those around me and being open to different perspectives. This includes learning from my principal, and from collaborating with professionals around me during my first year at Johnsburg. This mindset, and taking advantage of every opportunity, has contributed to my growth mindset considerably as well as my leadership abilities and potential. I have also found that setting yearly goals for myself, both in my professional life and personally, has allowed me to continue to focus on maturing and continuing my growth mindset.”

The John Ourth & Dr. Fred Singleton Professional Development Scholarships were established in 2007 to recognize the contributions of John Ourth and Dr. Fred Singleton, former Field Directors for the Illinois Principals Association. Two $1,000 scholarships are awarded each year. Mr. Ourth passed away shortly after the creation of the scholarship on December 10, 2007. Dr. Singleton retired in 2014 after 50 years of service in education.

Butler and Master will be recognized in October at a special ceremony during the IPA Education Leaders Annual Conference in October 2023.

The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 6,000 educational leaders throughout the state of Illinois and whose mission is to develop, support, and advocate for innovative educational leaders. The John Ourth & Dr. Fred Singleton Professional Development Scholarship is supported by funds provided by the Illinois Principals Association Foundation. For more information about the IPA, please visit [www.ilprincipals.org](http://www.ilprincipals.org).

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