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For Immediate Release

Horace Mann and Illinois Principals Association Announce
2023 Illinois High School Principal of the Year

Horace Mann and the Illinois Principals Association are pleased to announce that Eileen Hart, principal of Rolling Meadows High School, has been named the 2023 Illinois High School Principal of the Year. The award recognizes high school principals who have demonstrated a positive impact on their students and learning community. Criteria for the award include:

- Demonstrates a positive impact on education and advocacy for children
- Ensures the school climate is positive and reflects high staff and student morale
- Moves actively to implement the goals and objectives of the school
- Works collaboratively with teachers and other staff to improve the educational program and student achievement
- Involves the community in the life of the school and uses community resources for students.

Eileen Hart has served as principal of Rolling Meadows High School for 12 years. Prior to becoming principal, she served as the Academic Division Head for English Language Learners, Social Science and World Language at Wheeling High School. Hart has been a member of the Illinois Principals Association since she became a principal in 2011 and been a part of the IPA Legislative Committee since 2018.

Hart shared, “Being a principal is a complex leadership role that does not seem to be getting any easier. There are many attributes that could be shared of what it means to be an effective instructional leader. The importance of keeping a focus on what is best for students, while recognizing and keeping a focus on removing barriers that may hinder student growth or opportunity. To build and retain a caring and diverse staff that prioritizes what is best for students, with the necessary skills to connect and collaborate with the students, families, and colleagues. To build college and career pathways students can explore while in high school, which allow students to discover and dream about their post-secondary opportunities. And lastly, to create a school environment where critical conversations around learning and race take place.”

“During her tenure as Principal, Eileen has led with courage and conviction, turning around years of stagnant academic growth, expanding access to early college opportunities, and leading early implementation of career pathways,” adds Lazaro Lopez, Associate Superintendent of Township HSD 214. “In addition to leading efforts to significantly expand early college access, she also led the implementation of nationally recognized career pathways. This includes one of the only high schools offering an agriculture pathway in North Cook, earning her recognition by the Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education as the 2022 Advocacy Award recipient. Eileen Hart secured the funding to build a state-of-the-art green house, recruit staff, and develop a veterinary assistant program in partnership with College of DuPage.”
Rolling Meadows Division Head of Career and Technical Education, Physical Education and Health David Wietrzak shared, “Eileen’s attention and dedication to DEI work are apparent and visible in the planning of professional development, the creation of a curriculum that recognizes cultural differences, and in hiring and selecting staff to lead this significant work. Eileen is insightful and respected by students and staff at Rolling Meadows High School. Eileen has been an effective leader and has positively impacted our school and District #214 because of her work ethic, personality, and desire to improve our school’s culture for the betterment of students.”

The High School Principal of the Year winner was selected from a pool of region nominees provided by the 21 Regions of the Illinois Principals Association. Hart will be recognized at the IPA’s Education Leaders Annual Conference in October 2023.

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The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 6,000 educational leaders throughout the state of Illinois. You can find out more about the IPA at www.ilprincipals.org. Visit http://www.ilprincipals.org/about-IPA/awards for more information about the IPA Principal of the Year Awards Program.

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