

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Principals Association Names Dr. Amy Dixon as 2023 Herman Graves Award Recipient

Springfield, IL – The Illinois Principals Association is pleased to announce that Dr. Amy Dixon, superintendent of Harrisburg Unit 3 school district has received the 2023 Herman Graves Award. Dr. Dixon was announced as the winner at the association’s annual conference on October 16, 2024, in Peoria, IL.

The Herman Graves Award, sponsored by Horace Mann Companies of Springfield, IL, was established in 1991 to recognize outstanding service to IPA. Herman Graves was selected as the first honoree and the award was established because of the intrinsic contributions he made to the Association and his enthusiasm for the profession. Regional winners are chosen from the 21 regional areas of the Illinois Principals Association. From these elite administrators, a state winner is chosen by a committee composed of IPA Past Presidents.

Dr. Jason Leahy, Executive Director of the Illinois Principals Association, shared: "Dr. Amy Dixon is a fierce advocate and supporter of school leaders and the Illinois Principals Association. As a successful school leader and one who knows both the challenges and opportunities afforded to principals and assistant principals, she has worked both in her schools and through her service in Illinois and across nation to ensure school leaders receive the encouragement, respect, and resources they need to lead their schools and do what is best for kids."

Dr. Dixon has been a member of the Illinois Principals Association since 2003. During this time, she has served as Egyptian Region member of the IPA Board of Directors, Region Director for the Egyptian Region, National Association of Elementary School Principals State Representative, and as IPA President during the 2020-2021 school year. Dixon has previously been recognized by her peers and community as Kiwanis Educator of the Year (2022), Guardian Center Friend of Children Region Award (2015), IPA Egyptian Region Herman Graves Award Winner (2014), and Egyptian Region Elementary Principal of the Year (2012). She has also shared her expertise with fellow school leaders as a moderator for the Illinois Principals Association’s LEAD webinar series for principals and school leaders to enhance their skills, exchange ideas, and stay informed about the latest trends and best practices in education. Dr. Dixon has also presented to her peers at the IPA Annual Conference since 2021 and has co-authored and presented an IPA Administrator Academy for new school administrators.

Dixon began her career in education in 1996 as school social worker with the South Eastern Special Education Cooperative (Ste. Marie, IL) and continued working as a school social worker and early intervention service coordinator at the Wabash and Ohio Valley Special Education District. Following, Dr. Dixon served as principal of Truant Alternative Optional Education (TAEOP) programs at ROE #20 in Carmi. Prior to becoming superintendent in Harrisburg, Dr. Dixon served in various roles including principal, Special Education coordinator, Director of Instruction, 504 and English Language Learner Coordinator for Carmi-White County Schools. Since 2017, Dr. Dixon has been an Adjunct Instructor for Eastern Illinois University College of Education.

Dr. Dixon’s peers and colleagues shared the following:

“Dr. Dixon’s dedication and passion for educating students and her tremendous desire to improve have contributed to her accomplishments. She is a very professional and caring person who is always willing to do anything that is asked of her. I have witnessed her visionary and effective leadership in America’s schools and administrations to ensure every child receives a high-quality education through improved supports and services for school leaders.”

- *Dr. L. Earl Franks, Executive Director, National Association of Elementary School Principals*

“As a former principal and superintendent, few professionals make a lasting impression with their common sense, caring, and problem-solving skills. Dr. Dixon is one of these individuals. She has used these skills to benefit many students and future leaders in our field of educational administration.”

- *Dr. Cliff Karnes, Department Chair, Educational Leadership, Eastern Illinois University*

“Dr. Dixon will tell you she sets the bar high for staff and students, but there is truly nothing she will not do for a child. If our school, staff, or students need anything, she is the first to help and often takes care of the problem before anyone else notices. For years she has paid bills quietly and anonymously, delivered meals, bought school supplies and clothing, and built rapport with families who needed school support most. Dr. Dixon pours into families for years, making sure the parents and students have all they need during their educational career.”

-*Lacey Moore, Principal, Jefferson Attendance Center, Carmi-White County Unit #5*

Dr. Amy Dixon resides in Carmi, Illinois with her husband Eric, a teacher in Carmi-White County Schools, and their two children, Payton and Trey. Dr. Dixon received her Bachelor and Master of Social Work degrees from the University of Illinois, Master of Educational Administration from Eastern Illinois University, and her Doctoral degree from Oakland City University.

The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 6,500 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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