

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Illinois Principals Association Names Michelle Chavers as 2024 Herman Graves Award Recipient**

**Springfield, IL** – The Illinois Principals Association is pleased to announce that Michelle Chavers, principal of Limestone Middle School, Herscher CUSD #2, has received the 2024 Herman Graves Award. Chavers was announced as the winner at the association’s annual conference on October 22, 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.

"Michelle Chavers embodies everything that Herman Graves was known for," stated IPA Executive Director Dr. Jason Leahy. "She is passionate about school leadership, about the Illinois Principals Association, and doing everything possible to effectively serve young people. As we celebrate the legacy builders in our profession this year, Michelle Chavers sits at the top of the list."

Michelle Chavers has been a member of the Illinois Principals Association for seventeen years. During this time, she has served as State Director, Region Director, and as a member of the Three Rivers Region of the Illinois Principals Association (*includes schools in Kankakee, Kendall, Grundy, and Will counties*). Chavers has also been active on the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) State Board of Directors, Past-President of the I-KAN Administrators Association, Past-President of the Kan-Will Conference, and served as Membership and Scholarship Chair for the Upsilon Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International. Chavers has also been recognized by her peers as Three Rivers Region Middle School Principal of the Year.

Chavers is also active in her community previously serving as a member of the Limestone Township Library Board of Trustees and the Limestone Little League and Youth Softball Association Board. She is actively involved in the Unit 2 Parent Teacher Association.

Chavers has dedicated her entire career to Herscher Community Unit School District #2. She began as a teacher and coach at Limestone Grade School, became assistant principal in 2006, and then served as principal at Herscher Grade School (2007), returned to Limestone Grade School (2010), and remained at the reconfigured Limestone Middle School (since 2013).

Ms. Chavers’ peers and colleagues shared the following:

"Ms. Chavers has an excellent grasp on curriculum and how to organize her school’s academic schedule to reflect what is best for students. Her leadership in creating a rigorous middle school curriculum was the highlight of preparing for the Herscher CUSD2 reconfiguration of schools. The addition of STEM classes for Grades 5-8 reflects Michelle’s capacity to look beyond our current practices to the

opportunities that are possible when change is embraced. Ms. Chavers has also led by example when it comes to the topic of mentoring and induction. This accomplishment allows her the opportunity to work with highly qualified teachers who will, in turn, help foster new teachers in our profession to be the best they can be. This is a huge undertaking that Michelle does not take lightly, as she continuously creates an environment of learning and professional integrity.”

*- Jennifer Edmonds, BBCHS Board of Education and Former Curriculum Director, Herscher Community Unit School District 2.*

“In addition to her principal duties, Ms. Chavers has served on the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) Board of Directors since 2016. As a board member, Michelle handles delicate situations with a great deal of thought and puts forth reasonable explanations of her concerns on a given matter. Serving in this capacity shows Michelle’s willingness, character, and organization to serve in a volunteer role when she has a job that takes up an incredible amount of time.”

*- Steve Endsley, Former Executive Director of the Illinois Elementary School Association*

“I worked closely with Michelle as a member of the Illinois Principals Association Three Rivers Region Board. This association allowed me to see Michelle’s dedication to the spirit of our region to ensure our teaching and learning connections remain strong across our represented counties. She is a leader in the eyes of many in our region and within the educational world in Illinois.”

*- Patrick Flynn, Past Region Director, IPA Three Rivers Region*

Michelle Chavers resides in Kankakee, Illinois. She and her husband Michael have three adult daughters – Caroline, Olivia, and Chloe. Chavers received her Associate of Arts degree from Highland Community College, Bachelor of Arts in Christian Education from Moody Bible Institute, Master of Arts in Teaching from Olivet Nazarene University, and Master of Science in Educational Leadership from the University of St. Francis.

*The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 6,600 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](http://www.ilprincipals.org).*

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