

January 17, 2025

**Horace Mann and Illinois Principals Association Announce**  
**2025 Illinois Assistant Principal of the Year**

Horace Mann and the Illinois Principals Association are pleased to announce that Nick McGurk, Assistant Principal of Streator Township High School, Streator, has been named the 2025 Illinois Assistant Principal of the Year. Nick McGurk has served as assistant principal at Streator Township High School for 18 years and is a Streator Township High School alumnus.

The award recognizes assistant 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.

“We try to ensure that all students have a chance to succeed. In this effort, I have created and now oversee a Truancy Alternative Classroom and a Guided Program for Success (GPS) class,” said McGurk. “GPS curriculum provides our students with study skills education, tutoring, mentoring and organizational skills needed in everyday life. This program has helped 171 at-risk students graduate over the last 12 years. I am most proud of the support it gives to our IEP population by supporting them in regular education classes. Prior to GPS, many of these students were unable to take needed vocational education courses due to lack of credits. This program has kept struggling students on track and opened new doors.”

McGurk has also worked with Social Workers and the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) team to foster a Diversity Club and SEL Peace Room. Since 2018, McGurk has assisted STHS to receive \$1,066,358 in competitive grant awards, including the Federal Community Partnership Grant (CGP), ISBE Truants Alternative and Optional Education Program grant, Illinois American Water Company Grant, and the GENYOUTH School Nutrition Grant. Through the district's Community Partnership Grant, 10 staff members became certified as Ruby Payne Emotional Poverty trainers, who then trained the entire staff to address anger, anxiety, and violence with strategies and best practices to engage students.

Amy Jo Lotshaw, Principal of Streator Township High School shared, “Nick has a passion for student athletes, and had done a great job in the Assistant Principal/Athletic Director role at SHS. Being a Bulldog graduate himself, he thrives in supporting all students in their athletic endeavors.”

“(Nick) has developed innovative programs to help our school such as the Service Dogs program, which has received national acclaim. This program recognizes and awards student athletes who do community service, and in return the students receive letterman's jackets which increases school pride,” added Brad Brittin, Coordinator of Student Services for Streator High School District #80. “Nick has been a part of the high school as a student, student teacher, teacher, coach and administrator since 1987, and he cares about the school immensely.”

The Assistant Principal of the Year winner was selected from a pool of regional nominees provided by the 21 Regions of the Illinois Principals Association. Nick McGurk will be recognized at the IPA's annual Education Leaders Annual Conference in October 2025.

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The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 6,600 educational leaders throughout the state of Illinois. You can find out more about the IPA at [www.ilprincipals.org](http://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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