



Bloom High School's Dr. Jerry Lee Anderson Named 2026 Illinois High School Principal of the Year

The Illinois Principals Association and Horace Mann Companies are pleased to announce that **Dr. Jerry Lee Anderson, principal of Bloom High School in Chicago Heights**, has been named the 2026 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.

Dr. Anderson has served as principal of Bloom High School for the past five years and has spent 25 years as a school administrator. Anderson has been a member of the National Association of Secondary School Principals since 2000, where she served as co-facilitator of NASSP's School Leaders of Color Network and became a board member in 2025. Locally, Anderson has been a member of the Illinois Principals Association for the last 9 years. Anderson previously served as an elementary school teacher, Dean of Students, Director of Secondary Education, and a Middle and High School principal in Colorado and Illinois. She is also a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Dr. Anderson is committed to preparing students to succeed in a global society and keeping them at the center of decision-making. "Students from a variety of activities and interests are included in our Principal's Advisory Committee to share concerns and provide feedback. We also select learning materials with consideration of our diverse student body. At the end of their senior year, students prepare portfolios to present in interviews with community businesses and prospective employers, to showcase their success in the academic and career education programs we offer."

"Through proactive community-building, problem-solving groups, and restorative circles we have fostered understanding among students, resolved discord, and supported student physical well-being and safety," Anderson added. "Our students are also supported by Bloom social workers, counselors, and deans, and our community partners such as Aunt Martha's, Sertoma, Schoolhouse Counseling, and Daybreak Health. We also have campus safety monitors throughout our school, giving students a trusted adult in every area of the building."

Dr. Lenell Navarre, Superintendent of Bloom Township District 206, shared, "Dr. Anderson exemplifies transformational leadership, inspiring excellence among students, staff, and the entire community. Her visionary approach has elevated academic achievement, strengthened school culture, and fostered a spirit of service and pride. She is deeply engaged with her students beyond the classroom and leads by example—building meaningful community partnerships and mentoring future leaders. Under her direction, Bloom High School's nationally recognized NJROTC program has earned prestigious honors, with several cadets celebrated by the White House for their outstanding contributions. Dr. Anderson's passion, integrity, and unwavering commitment to student success make her a model of educational leadership and a deserving recipient of this distinguished award."

Stacy Henderson-Shaw, Senior Naval Science Instructor at Bloom High School, added, “Dr. Anderson is an amazing person and her compassion for our students and faculty is top notch. Not only do I trust her judgement and influence over the students at Bloom, but I trust her with the futures of my own children. She seeks opportunities to better herself, while motivating our faculty, staff, and students to be their best. She is an expert team builder, a dynamic mentor, and she knows how to get support from others to accomplish the tasks at hand.”

Dr. Anderson received her Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education and Social Sciences from Vanderbilt University, her Master of Arts in Reading Curriculum and Instruction from University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and completed her Doctor of Philosophy in Administration, Supervision, Research and Policy from Loyola University of Chicago.

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. Dr. Jerry Lee Anderson will be recognized at the IPA’s Education Leaders Annual Conference in October.

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The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 6,800 educational leaders throughout the state of Illinois. You can find out more about the IPA at www.ilprincipals.org. Visit <https://ilprincipals.org/awards> for more information about the IPA Principal of the Year Awards Program.

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