



## **Earle STEM Elementary School Principal Regina Latimer-Lake Named 2026 Illinois Elementary School Principal of the Year**

The Illinois Principals Association and Horace Mann Companies are pleased to announce that **Regina Latimer-Lake, principal of Earle STEM Elementary School in Chicago**, has been named the 2026 Illinois Elementary School Principal of the Year. The award recognizes elementary school principals who have demonstrated a positive impact on their students and the learning community.

Regina Latimer-Lake has served as principal of Earle STEM Elementary School for the past 4 years and has spent 6 years in school administration. She previously served as an Assistant Principal and Academic Director and Instructional Coach at Sherman School of Excellence, Instructional Coach at the Dulles School of Excellence, Principal Intern at Vanderpoel Magnet School, and as a Framework Specialist for Chicago Public Schools. Latimer-Lake began her career in education as an ELA teacher in Chicago Public Schools.

"At Earle STEM, we are fostering a culture of excellence, equity, and innovation to ensure every student is prepared to thrive in a global society," said Latimer-Lake. "Teachers design lessons that emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world application through STEM integration and project-based learning. Our 'Winning Wednesdays' schedules and partnerships within our building provide world-class experiences for our students ranging from business pitching and leadership development to robust STEM experiences such as LEGO Robotics. Through ongoing coaching, feedback, and accountability, we strengthen instructional quality and prepare Earle STEM scholars to lead and succeed in a dynamic global society."

Latimer-Lake added, "As principal of Earle STEM, I've made it my mission to ensure equity is not just a program, but a daily practice. Serving a student body that is 60% African American and 30% Latino, our focus is on making every learner feel represented, respected, and empowered to achieve. We intentionally curate culturally relevant curricula that highlight the histories and innovations of African American and Latino communities, ensuring students see themselves reflected in what they learn. I have also prioritized recruiting diverse staff so that our faculty mirrors our students, and implemented professional learning on culturally responsive instruction, restorative practices, and interrupting bias."

**Latasha Geverola, Chief of Network 11 Schools in Chicago Public Schools**, shared, "Principal Lake is an exceptional instructional leader who leads with integrity, vision, and compassion. She models excellence in teaching and learning by providing consistent support to teachers and fostering a culture of high expectations for both staff and students. Principal Lake's commitment extends beyond the classroom where she actively engages families and community stakeholders to ensure every child has access to opportunities for success. Her leadership exemplifies dedication, collaboration, and a deep belief in the potential of every learner."

**Monique N. Dockery, Principal of Westcott Elementary**, added, "Regina Latimer-Lake has been a beacon of hope for Earle Stem Academy. During her tenure, the school has taken on a new face. She is a transformational leader that is committed to student success. Earle STEM and Principal Lake have been recognized by the district and Network for their increased student outcome data

because of the systems and structures Principal Lake put in place hold staff, students, and parents accountable for contributing to success.”

Regina Latimer-Lake received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Chicago State University, Master of Education in School Leadership from the American College of Education, Master of Education as a Reading Specialist from Concordia University Chicago, and a Master of Education in Educational Leadership from Concordia University Chicago.

The Elementary School Principal of the Year winner was selected from a pool of region nominees provided by the 21 Regions of the Illinois Principals Association. Regina Latimer-Lake 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](http://www.ilprincipals.org). Visit <https://ilprincipals.org/awards> for more information about the IPA Principal of the Year Awards Program.

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