



THE SCHOOL LEADER JOURNEY

Your Guide to IPA Resources
and Support for Every Stage



NATIONAL
SCHOOL
LEADER
COLLABORATIVE





Decorative graphic featuring a stylized pen drawing a line, with abstract shapes in light blue, grey, and orange.

YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY *is uniquely yours.*

**Wherever you are today,
IPA is here to help you
with what's next.**

YOUR JOURNEY.

Our Support.

Your leadership journey is unique — and so is the support you need. Wherever you are on your path, IPA is with you ... every step of the way.

The IPA offers the right resources, connections, and opportunities throughout your career. Our School Leader Continuum spans four career stages (Aspiring, Launching, Elevating, and Mastering), each with its unique core need for support.

ELEVATING

Strengthen your practice and grow your impact.

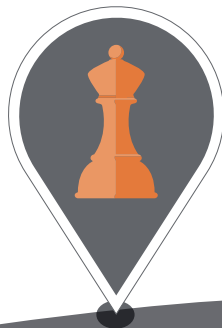
Strengthen leadership practices, grow your school, and build a sustainable, rewarding career.



MASTERING

Create lasting change and leave a legacy.

Maximize your impact by continuously growing yourself, your school, and the leaders who follow.



LAUNCHING

Build confidence and lead with purpose.

Gain the tools, support, and confidence needed to successfully lead during the first years in an administrative role.



ASPIRING

Discover your leadership potential.

Explore school leadership, build foundational leadership skills, and connect with a community of future leaders.



At every stage of your journey, IPA supports you to:



LEAD

Build your leadership capacity through tools, guidance, and expert support.



ENGAGE

Connect with peers, mentors, and communities that encourage, challenge, and support you.



ADVOCATE

Elevate your voice, influence policy, and champion the needs of students and school leaders.



LEARN

Access high-quality learning opportunities that meet you where you are and fuel where you're going.

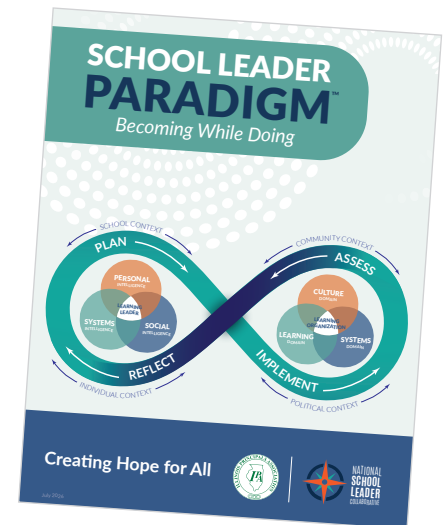
The resources in this document are available to IPA members, though some may require an additional fee. If you have any questions, please call us at 217-525-1383 or visit ilprincipals.org.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The School Leader Paradigm

Every great school leader starts here.

The School Leader Paradigm (developed by the National School Leader Collaborative — see back cover) is the research-based framework that serves as the foundation for your IPA membership. It identifies the leadership behaviors, skills, and dispositions needed to lead learning organizations and provides a roadmap for continuous leadership growth. Every resource, learning opportunity, and support in this guide is aligned to the Paradigm, helping you become a more effective school leader while strengthening your learning organization. Whether you're an aspiring administrator or an experienced school leader, begin with the School Leader Paradigm. It provides the foundation for understanding your leadership journey and making the most of every IPA resource that follows.



The School Leader Continuum = when resources are most valuable.

The School Leader Paradigm = why these resources matter.

Great school leadership requires more than knowing what to do. It requires continuously growing as a leader while leading the work of your school. The School Leader Paradigm provides a comprehensive framework for that growth by bringing together four essential elements:

Becoming

Develop the leadership intelligences that shape who you are as a leader.

Doing

Strengthen the leadership practices that build culture, systems, and learning throughout your organization.

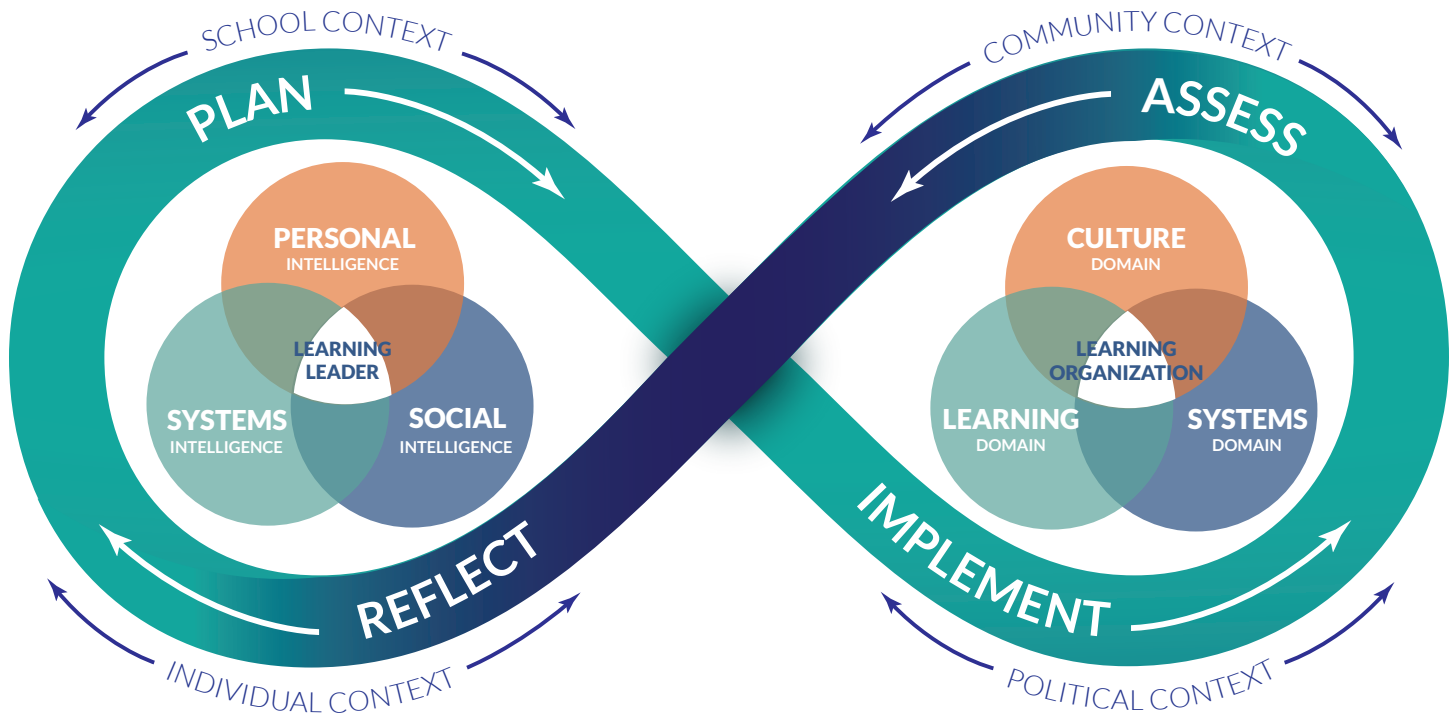
Cycle of Inquiry

Leadership growth is never finished. The Cycle of Inquiry helps you continuously improve both your leadership and your learning organization by asking you to Plan → Implement → Assess → Reflect and then repeat the cycle as you continue growing.

Context

No two schools are alike. The School Leader Paradigm recognizes that every leadership decision is shaped by the unique school, community, political, and individual contexts surrounding your learning organization.

The School Leader Paradigm isn't just about becoming a better leader — it's about creating hope for every student, educator, and community you serve.



As you explore the resources in this guide, you'll see they all connect back to the School Leader Paradigm. Whether you're seeking guidance, building relationships, influencing policy, or expanding your knowledge, every resource is designed to help you grow as a learning leader leading a learning organization.

Need help making sense of the School Leader Paradigm?

Meet Hope.

The School Leader Paradigm AI Assistant helps you:

- Make sense of the framework.
- Identify your next growth area.
- Discover relevant IPA resources.
- Answer leadership questions.

Visit ilprincipals.org to explore Hope and the School Leader Paradigm.

HOPE
YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE.
Discover the resources that will help you grow.



LEAD

Build confidence through trusted resources, guidance, and support.

START HERE

- **School Leader Paradigm** — Gain a clear roadmap for your leadership growth with a research-based framework that helps you become a more effective school leader.
- **School Leader Calendar** — Stay focused, organized, and growing by using the monthly lists of responsibilities and requirements.
- **School Leader Entry Plan** — Gain practical guidance, planning tools, and reflection resources to confidently transition into your new school leadership role.
- **Legal Support** — Get trusted guidance on everything from employment contracts and personnel matters to student issues and newly enacted education laws.

ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

- **Cycle of Inquiry** — Use this powerful tool for continuous leadership and organizational growth.
- **School Leader Evaluation Plan** — Develop an evaluation system to help grow your leadership dispositions and skills.
- **School Leader Hiring Guide** — Plan, recruit, and select the school leader that best meets the needs of your learning organization.
- **School Leader Paradigm: The Learning Resources** — Take advantage of these school leadership learning resources.
- **School Leader Paradigm: The Research** — Review the extensive research reviewed to identify critical leadership dispositions and essential behaviors of school leaders.
- **Resume Review** — Have your resume reviewed to ensure it follows best practices for school leaders.
- **Salary, Benefit, Career Planning and Job Satisfaction Study** — Make informed career and contract decisions with statewide salary data and personalized salary estimates.
- **Contract Review** — Have your employment contract reviewed to ensure it includes appropriate employment and due process protections.
- **Model Student Handbook and Model Student Handbook AI** — Subscribe to this cost-effective service for a customizable, legally reviewed foundation for school policies. Add the AI service to provide your handbook in an interactive format based on your school's policies — anytime, from any device, and in multiple languages.
- **Member Assistance Program** — Navigate challenges and support your overall well-being with this confidential, 24/7, no-cost support for you and your family. Services include counseling, work-life resources, and financial guidance.

LEAD



ENGAGE

Connect with colleagues who encourage, challenge, and support your growth.

START HERE

- **IPA Connect** — Never solve leadership problems alone. Ask questions, share ideas, and learn from administrators facing the same challenges.
- **IPA Education Leaders Annual Conference** — Attend IPA's flagship event which brings together school leaders each October for nationally recognized keynote speakers, practical breakout sessions, networking, and professional development opportunities.
- **IPA Region Meetings** — Connect with school leaders in your region through meetings, networking events, and recognition programs.
- **IPA Social Media** — Follow IPA on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and YouTube for leadership resources, advocacy updates, member recognition, and timely information.

ADDITIONAL ENGAGING RESOURCES

- **IPA Plugging In & Breaking Out** — Join virtually on the first Wednesday of each month for timely updates, meaningful conversations, and encouragement from fellow school leaders and the IPA team.
- **WELL Summit** — Attend the Women in Education Leading and Learning (WELL) Summit which brings together women in educational leadership for two days of inspiration, professional learning, networking, and celebration.
- **I-Grow Summit** — Attend the I-Grow Summit which supports the recruitment, retention, and growth of educational leaders and teachers of color through learning, collaboration, and community.
- **Assistant Principal/Dean Summits** — Attend these summits for opportunities to network, learn, and connect with peers as they are designed specifically for assistant principals and deans.
- **Region Leadership** — Volunteer in a region leadership role.
- **Moderate or Present at an Event** — Share your expertise at an IPA event.
- **Committees** — Help shape the future of the IPA by serving on a statewide committee.
- **IPA Congressional Delegate** — Represent your region as a voting delegate at the Association's annual business meeting and help shape the future direction of IPA.
- **IPA Board of Directors** — Continue your leadership journey by serving as a State Director, helping guide the Association's mission, strategic priorities, and long-term vision.
- **National Conference** — Expand your professional learning by attending conferences hosted by the National Principals Association (NPA).

ENGAGE



ADVOCATE

**Influence the future of education
through informed advocacy and action.**

START HERE

- **Advocacy in Action** — Stay informed with regular updates on state and federal legislation affecting Illinois schools and school leaders.
- **Legislative & Case Law Update** — Published annually, this comprehensive guide summarizes new laws, court decisions, and legal developments impacting school leaders, along with practical implementation guidance.
- **IPA Policy and Action Center** — Take action on the issues that matter most. Find your elected officials, receive legislative alerts, and access advocacy resources and talking points to make your voice heard.

ADDITIONAL ADVOCACY RESOURCES

- **Principal Partners** — Build consistent, meaningful connections with local legislators.
- **Principal for a Day** — Invite your elected officials into your school to experience the realities of school leadership firsthand and strengthen their understanding of the issues impacting students, staff, and schools.
- **Legislative Committee** — Help shape education policy by joining IPA's Legislative Committee. Members provide feedback on proposed legislation and policy initiatives and may have opportunities to testify before the Illinois General Assembly or serve on statewide task forces.
- **Region Legislative Chair** — Serve as your region's legislative leader by sharing updates, engaging members in advocacy efforts, and representing your region on the IPA Legislative Committee.
- **National Advocacy Conference** — Represent Illinois school leaders at the NPA Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C., where IPA leaders meet with members of Congress to advocate for policies that strengthen public education and support school leaders.

ADVOCATE



LEARN

Grow your leadership through learning
designed for every stage of your career.

START HERE

- **School Leadership That Fits** — Find the leadership role that's the best fit for your strengths, values, and vision.
- **Administrator Academies** — Stay current on leadership, legal updates, instructional practice, and emerging issues through more than 100 ISBE-approved academies.
- **Ed Leaders Network (ELN)** — Access on-demand courses, learning resources, and professional development designed to help you grow as a school leader—anytime, anywhere. Visit edleadersnetwork.org.
- **Mentoring & Coaching** — Receive support from experienced school leaders through one-on-one mentoring and coaching.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

- **The PrincipiPal** — Find important event information, IPA updates and information from the field.
- **IPA Talks** — Tune in to casual chats between IPA staff and experts in the field about current issues affecting school leaders.
- **Teacher/Principal Evaluator Initial Training/Retraining** — Complete the ISBE-required training to earn or renew your teacher or principal evaluator designation through IPA's approved Administrator Academies.
- **Launching Excellent Leaders Academy** — Attend this academy, designed for first- and second-year Illinois principals, to build confidence, strengthen leadership skills, and make an immediate impact.
- **Principal Endorsement Programs** — Earn your Illinois Principal Endorsement through a combination of internship experiences and Micro-Credentials.
- **Micro-Credentials** — Demonstrate your expertise by earning digital badges in focused leadership competencies aligned to the School Leader Paradigm.
- **Professional Development Scholarships** — Apply for one of three IPA scholarships for graduate study, national conferences, and other professional learning opportunities that help school leaders continue to grow.

LEARN

As your leadership grows, so do your opportunities.

Each stage builds on the previous one. As you grow as a school leader, new learning opportunities and experiences become available while maintaining access to everything from earlier stages.

New to IPA? Start with the   resources!





ELEVATING

Expand your influence:

- ✓ Strengthen your hiring practices with the School Leader Hiring Guide
- ✓ Volunteer in a region leadership role
- ✓ Moderate or present at an IPA event
- ✓ Serve on a statewide committee
- ✓ Represent your region as an IPA Congressional Delegate
- ✓ Mentor or coach a school leader
- ✓ Join the IPA Education Leaders Annual Conference Planning Committee
- ✓ Nominate a colleague for an Award for Excellence
- ✓ Join the Legislative Committee
- ✓ Lead as your Region Legislative Chair
- ✓ Testify before the General Assembly
- ✓ Shape policy on a statewide task force
- ✓ Work with a leadership coach
- ✓ Train as a mentor or coach



MASTERING

Leave a lasting legacy and help grow other leaders:

- ✓ Facilitate an Administrator Academy
- ✓ Author or co-develop an ELN course
- ✓ Serve as mentor/coach trainer
- ✓ Deliver School Leader District Supports
- ✓ Serve on the IPA Board of Directors
- ✓ Attend the NPA Advocacy Conference
- ✓ Serve on the State Superintendent Principal Advisory Committee
- ✓ Present to the National School Leader Collaborative

NEED HELP?

We Got You!

Wherever you are on your leadership journey, your IPA Field Service Specialist is ready to help. As experienced school leaders, they provide trusted guidance, answer questions, connect you with resources, and support your success every step of the way.



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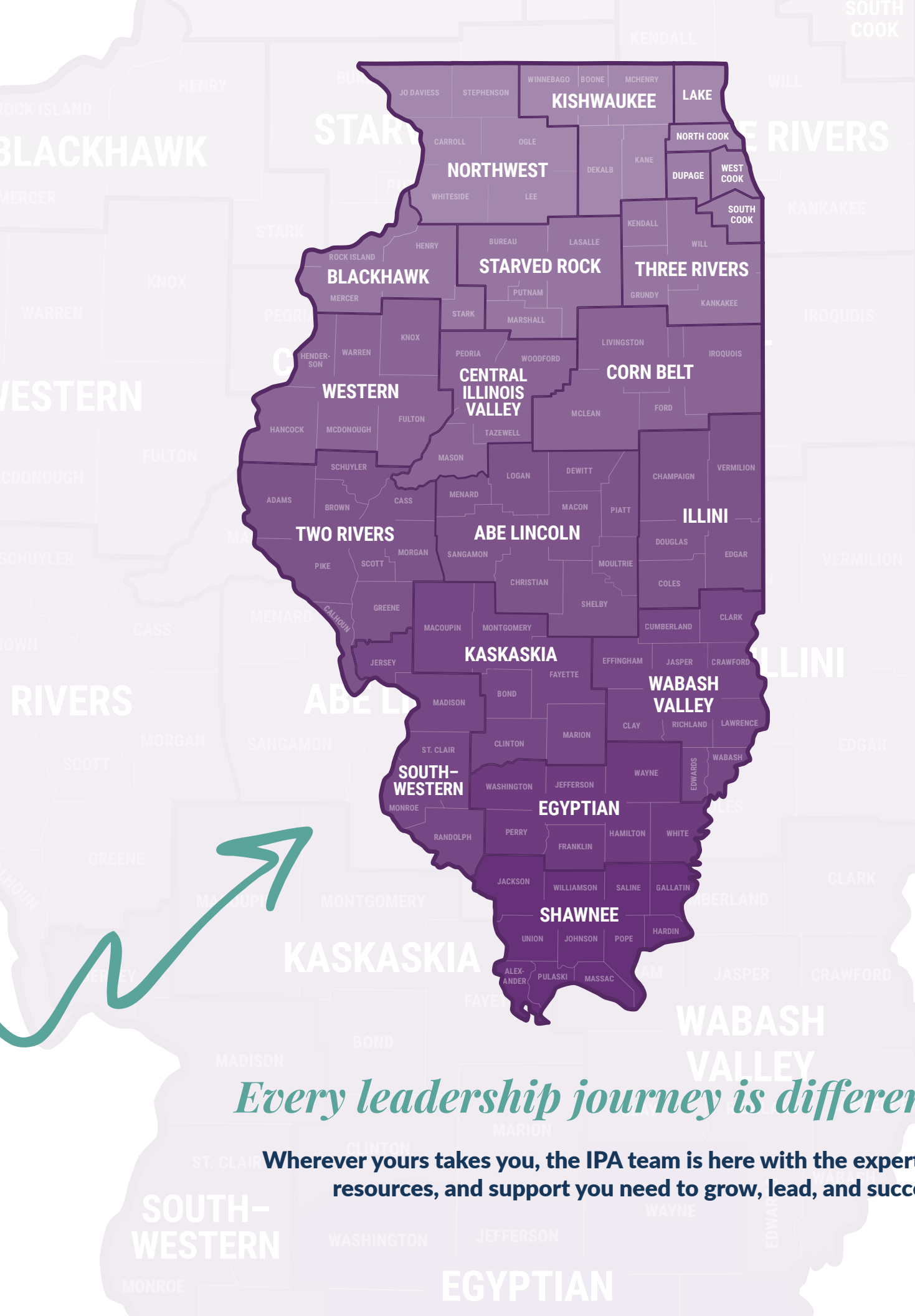


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SHOW UP. CONNECT. GET INVOLVED.

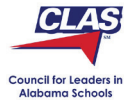
Attend IPA Region meetings and events to build relationships with school leaders near you, share ideas, and stay connected. Find your region at ilprincipals.org.



Every leadership journey is different.

Wherever yours takes you, the IPA team is here with the expertise, resources, and support you need to grow, lead, and succeed.

The **National School Leader Collaborative** is a consortium of state associations committed to supporting the professional growth of school leaders and their teams. Through shared resources, research, and innovative best practices, the Collaborative strengthens the capacity of its partner associations to support school leaders throughout their careers.



Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools
Dr. Farrell Seymore, Executive Director
clasleaders.org



Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals
Chris Hoehne, Executive Director
moassp.org



Alaska Council of School Administrators
Dr. Lisa Parady, Executive Director
alaskaacsa.org



New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association
Karen Bingert, Executive Director
njpsa.org



Connecticut Association of Schools
Dr. Glenn Lungarini, Executive Director
cas.casciac.org



School Administrators Association of New York State
Jennifer Carlson, Executive Director
saanys.org



Illinois Principals Association
Dr. Jason Leahy, Executive Director
ilprincipals.org



Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
Dr. Timothy Freeman, Executive Director
oassa.org



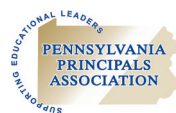
Indiana Association of School Principals
Dr. Todd Bess, Executive Director
iasp.org



Coalition of Oregon School Administrators
Dr. Krista Parent, Executive Director
cosa.k12.or.us



School Administrators of Iowa
Dr. Lisa Remy, Executive Director
sai-iowa.org



Pennsylvania Principals Association
Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, Executive Director
papincipals.org



Maine Principals' Association
Dr. Holly Blair, Executive Director
mpaprof.org



Texas Association of Secondary School Principals
Dr. Billy Pringle, Executive Director
tassp.org



Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals
Robert Driver, Executive Director
massp.org



Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
Krista Barton-Arnold, Executive Director
vaesp.org



Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association
Michelle Krell, Executive Director
mespa.net



Association of Washington School Principals
Dr. Scott Seaman, Executive Director
awsp.org



Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals
Dr. J. Anderson, Executive Director
maesp.com



Association of Wisconsin School Administrators
Jim Lynch, Executive Director
awsa.org



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