

**MEDIA CONTACT**

Alison Maley, Government/Public Relations Director  
Illinois Principals Association  
Phone: 217-525-1383  
E-mail: [alison@ilprincipals.org](mailto:alison@ilprincipals.org)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Illinois Principals Association Encourages Principal Appreciation in October**

**Springfield, IL** – Lifetouch and the Illinois Principals Association (IPA) encourage all communities in Illinois to celebrate Principal Appreciation Week October 21-27, 2018, and Principal Appreciation Day on Friday, October 26, 2018. This state-endorsed recognition was first approved by the Governor of Illinois in 1990 and is annually celebrated. The IPA also joins the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA) to recognize October as National Principals Month.

"I am proud to have served as a principal in the state of Illinois for the past 16 years," said Jeff Knapp, Principal at Rockland Elementary School in Libertyville and IPA President. "It is rare to have a job where there are so many immediate rewards when impacting students, staff, and communities in which we serve. Getting to make personal connections and developing relationships over time are the most special parts of working as an educational leader. I remain excited each day as I walk through our school doors to have this opportunity to influence our nation's future. Principals from all over pour in countless hours each day to provide for their schools, and during the month of October I'd like to say thank you to them for the work in which they do. During the month of October, I ask everyone to take a moment and extend gratitude to a school leader in your community for the time spent leading and promoting education. A little note or heartfelt words can be so rewarding for the dedication and perseverance our leaders put forth each day. I'm proud to be a member of the Illinois Principals Association and am grateful for the recognition bestowed upon the principals across the state of Illinois."

"School leadership matters," said Dr. Jason Leahy, IPA Executive Director. "As a former principal and having visited dozens of schools throughout Illinois, the quality of a school's learning environment and the ability of a school to do what is best for its students comes as a direct result of the leadership provided by the school's Principal and leadership team. Courageous leadership is essential to effectively educate students and work to provide the resources and support they need to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is important that we recognize and encourage our schools' leaders today and every day."

Principal Appreciation Day provides learning communities an opportunity to publicly recognize the work, commitment and importance of principals, assistant principals, and deans throughout the state. Lifetouch and the IPA invite all teachers, students, parents, and community members to perform some act of appreciation on Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup> to acknowledge the leadership of building administrators in Illinois' public and private schools.

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*Lifetouch is proud to be the official school photographer for the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Lifetouch is honored to support local members of the Illinois Principals Association in recognition of "Principal's Appreciation Day. Lifetouch is excited to have joined forces with Shutterfly earlier this year to bring together two industry leaders who share a common purpose – to share life's joy through capturing and preserving memories with the click of a camera. While we continue to deliver the quality photography and service you expect from Lifetouch, we are creating a new, innovative experience that will allow you to do more with your photos than ever before. As a part of our mission to help you share your memories, Lifetouch and Shutterfly are truly better together! Learn more at: [schools.lifetouch.com/shutterfly/](https://schools.lifetouch.com/shutterfly/)*

*The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 5,000 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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