

February 27, 2020

Contact: Jason E. Leahy, Executive Director, Illinois Principals Association

Phone: 217-525-1383

Email: [jason@ilprincipals.org](mailto:jason@ilprincipals.org)

**For Immediate Release**

## **Horace Mann and Illinois Principals Association Announce 2020 Illinois Elementary School Principal of the Year**

Horace Mann and the Illinois Principals Association are pleased to announce that Mandy Ellis, principal of Dunlap Grade School, Dunlap, IL, has been named the 2020 Illinois Elementary School Principal of the Year. The award recognizes elementary school 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.

Mandy Ellis has served as principal of Dunlap Grade School for the past 8 years and has been an active member of the Illinois Principals Association since 2012. Ellis currently serves the Illinois Principals Association as Central Illinois Valley (CIV) Region State Director and member of the Board of Directors. She previously served as Region Board Member At-Large, Membership chairperson, and CIV Region Director. She has also been active within the IPA as a conference speaker, member of the State Superintendent Principal Advisory Committee, and member of the IPA Educational Leaders Annual Conference small group selection committee.

Ellis is also active in the Peoria-area community as a past chair for the Peoria Playhouse Children's Committee Capital Campaign, and representative for Peoria during the 2013 campaign to become an All-America City. She also served as a founding member of the Young Professionals of Greater Peoria, which has grown to over 500 members and supports the professional endeavors and growth of Peoria's up and coming professionals.

"With vision, focus and direction, I use my knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and technology to support teachers and nurture an environment that is inclusive of all students," said Ellis. "My objective is to continuously improve the quality of education by placing a focus on developing positive relationships, maintaining proactive, innovative and intentional leadership, fostering a safe environment, and championing collaboration and shared leadership with stakeholders."

"What's most impressive about Mandy is her strong ability to listen," said Karen Disharoon, member of the Dunlap Board of Education. "She shows deep respect by acknowledging concerns and creating a plan for addressing concerns. Mandy supports such an open atmosphere with her regular communications and open-door policy. Parents feel comfortable being completely honest with her about their concerns because they know she really cares, and they trust her with being confidential and doing what is best for their child."

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. Ellis will be recognized at the IPA's annual Education Leaders Annual Conference in October 2020.

Horace Mann -- the largest national multiline insurance company focusing on educators' financial needs -- provides auto and homeowners insurance, retirement annuities, life insurance and other financial solutions. "Founded by Educators for Educators" in 1945, the company is headquartered in Springfield, Ill. Visit [www.horacemann.com](http://www.horacemann.com) for more information.

The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 5,800 educational leaders throughout the state of Illinois. You can find out more about the IPA at [www.ilprincipals.org](http://www.ilprincipals.org). Visit <http://www.ilprincipals.org/about-ipa/awards> for more information about the IPA Principal of the Year Awards Program.

###