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For Immediate Release

Horace Mann and Illinois Principals Association Announce 2020 Illinois High School Principal of the Year

Horace Mann and the Illinois Principals Association are pleased to announce that Dan Kaiser, principal of Dwight Township High School, has been named the 2020 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. 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.

Dan Kaiser has served as principal of Dwight Township High School for 6 years and has been an active member of the Illinois Principals Association for 24 years. His experience as an educator includes 13 years as a principal, 2 years as an assistant principal, and 9 years as a classroom teacher. In the past two years, Kaiser has served as Region Awards Chairperson for the IPA Corn Belt Region, Region Membership Chairperson, and currently serves as Region Director. Kaiser has also organized recognition luncheons for students and administrative support staff within the Corn Belt Region. The IPA Corn Belt Region includes schools within Ford, Iroquois, Livingston and McLean counties.

As principal, Kaiser has worked to maintain visibility in classrooms and make meaningful connections with students and teachers. "Effective instructional leaders must have the ability to make strong connections with students, staff, and community members in various ways," Kaiser said. "I work very hard to learn as much about each student that walks into my building. I believe that we as educators must continually fill the 'buckets' within each of our students. When their 'buckets' are filled, they feel self-worth, belonging and acceptance." Under Kaiser's leadership, ACT and SAT scores have improved and the DTHS staff have worked collaboratively to develop curriculum, lessons and assessments that led to significant improvements among all students. Kaiser also supports student organizations such as Future Farmers of America (FFA), Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Friends of Rachel, Drama Club, and occasionally participates in theater performances and music activities such as pep band and jazz band.

Kaiser has been active in the local community by developing the first Adopt-A-Highway project in the area with student volunteers and has led student groups at several community-wide cleanup and recycling events. He has also worked with the Dwight Economic Alliance on projects such as Rachel's Challenge, food pantry drives, community nights at professional sports events, silent auctions, and Veteran's Day assemblies.

During his time at Dwight Township High School, Kaiser has worked closely with the Sangamon Valley Conference to emphasize co-curricular activities in addition to athletics. Under his leadership, the conference began hosting leadership workshops and conferences for students, an annual art exhibit at Olivet Nazarene University, musical showcases, and principal meetings that focus on academic challenges and topics such as school climate and teacher shortages, in addition to athletic schedules.

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

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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. Visit <http://www.ilprincipals.org/about-ipa/awards> for more information about the IPA Principal of the Year Awards Program.

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