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For Immediate Release

Illinois Principals Association Awards 2020 Reaching Out & Building Bridges Award to Riverton Schools Administrators and Lincoln-Prairie Behavioral Health Center

Riverton Community Unit School District 14 administrators Jacie Shoufler, Riverton Elementary School; Megan Doerfler, Riverton Middle School; Matthew Moore, Riverton High School; and Tom DeMarco of Lincoln Prairie Behavioral Health Center have received the 2020 Illinois Principals Association Reaching Out & Building Bridges Award for their partnership to provide students with mental health services. The award is sponsored by Horace Mann Companies of Springfield.

The Reaching Out & Building Bridges Award was created to recognize principals or assistant principals, and an agency, association, or community member that displays an outstanding effort in creating partnerships between schools, principals, associations, and organizations for the betterment of all.

Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, each of the schools within the Riverton school district partnered with the Lincoln Prairie Behavioral Health Center (LPBHC) to provide students with mental health services within the schools. Administrators from each school worked with LPBHC to identify topics to review with students to build coping skills, effectively handle their emotional well-being, assist in anger management techniques, and address other behavioral health issues. LPBHC regularly meets with principals, counselors and social workers within the school district to best meet the needs of students and identify students that would benefit from these services. LPBHC staff have also attended open houses and family nights at the schools to inform the community of their services to the school and students.

“The partnership is deserving of recognition due to the creativity and ingenuity behind working together to provide students with additional mental health supports,” said Brad Polanin, Superintendent of Riverton Schools. “As our schools are seeing an increased need for these services, this partnership provides the essential services that students need to succeed without a cost to the school district. It is a mutually beneficial program designed to support students.”

“Over the past several years, Riverton Elementary School has seen an increase in the number of students needing mental health support. However, the school has lacked the professionals to provide children with the support they need,” said Jacie Shoufler, principal of Riverton Elementary School. “Riverton School District’s partnership with Lincoln Prairie Behavioral Health Center has been saving grace for several students.”

Shoufler, Doerfler, Moore and DeMarco will be recognized at a special ceremony during the IPA Education Leaders Annual Conference in October 2020.

The Illinois Principals Association serves over 5,800 educational leaders statewide and whose mission is to develop, support, and advocate for innovative educational leaders. The Reaching Out & Building Bridges Award is supported by Horace Mann Companies of Springfield, IL. For more information about the IPA, please visit www.ilprincipals.org.

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