

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Principals Association Names Bridget Belcastro as 2020 Herman Graves Award Recipient

Springfield, IL – Dr. Bridget Belcastro, principal of Johnsburg Elementary School, Johnsburg, IL has received the 2020 Herman Graves Award from the Illinois Principals Association (IPA).

The Herman Graves Award, sponsored by Horace Mann Companies of Springfield, IL, was established in 1991 to recognize outstanding service to IPA. Herman Graves was selected as the first honoree and the award was established because of the intrinsic contributions he made to the Association and his enthusiasm for the profession. Regional winners are chosen from the 21 regional areas of the Illinois Principals Association. From these elite administrators, a state winner is chosen by a committee comprised of IPA Past Presidents.

"Dr. Belcastro epitomizes everything the Herman Graves Award stands for," stated IPA Executive Director Dr. Jason Leahy. "Besides her work as a school leader at Johnsburg Elementary, she dedicates herself to the support of the profession and the IPA. She has made a real impact, and I believe will continue to do so for years to come."

Dr. Belcastro has been a member of the Illinois Principals Association for thirteen years. During this time, she has served on the Illinois Principals Association Board of Directors as State Membership Chair, State Director for the Kishwaukee Region (Boone, DeKalb, Kane, McHenry, and Winnebago counties), and within the Kishwaukee Region, has served as Treasurer, Region Director, and Student Leadership Breakfast Chair. Bridget's service to the association includes presenting at annual conferences, hosting book studies with local members, supporting advocacy campaigns with state and federal legislators, and taking part in statewide focus groups on the teacher pipeline and principal preparation programs. She also keeps an active presence on Twitter to network with and learn from other school leaders around the state and nation.

During her career, Belcastro has been a member of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the McHenry County Curriculum Council (MCCC). She has presented to colleagues at the IPA annual conference and the WELL (Women in Education Leading and Learning) Summit on topics such as work-life balance and incorporating GRIT school-wide. She has been a recipient of the IPA John Ourth Professional Development Scholarship and has been recognized for school environmental efforts through the MCSEEP TREX Recycling Contest and the McHenry County Department of Health Green Award.

Belcastro began her career in education in 2002 as an English and Business teacher at St. Francis High School in Wheaton, IL. She continued teaching at Marian Catholic High School (Woodstock), and as an adjunct professor in Curriculum and Instruction at Concordia University. Dr. Belcastro's first administrative role was Principal of the Middle/High School at Alden-Hebron District 19. She later served as Principal at Capron Elementary School and Middle School/Upper Elementary School

in the North Boone Community Unit School District 200 in Poplar Grove. Since 2015, Belcastro has served as Principal at Johnsburg Elementary School in Johnsburg, IL.

Belcastro resides in Johnsburg, Illinois with her daughter Kelly, a student at Woodstock High School. She received her Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Loyola University, Master of Education from North Central College, Bachelor of Arts in English Education from Northern Illinois University, and is currently pursuing a certificate program in School Management and Leadership from Harvard University. Her passions include reading, community theater, and tennis.

The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 5,800 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

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