

February 25, 2021

Contact: Dr. 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 2021 Illinois High School Principal of the Year**

Horace Mann and the Illinois Principals Association are pleased to announce that Dr. Jeff Prickett, principal of McHenry High School-East Campus, has been named the 2021 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.

Dr. Jeff Prickett has served as principal of McHenry High School-East Campus for the last 4 years. His experience as an educator includes 17 years as a principal, 1 year as an assistant principal, and 1 year as a dean. Prickett has been an active member of the Illinois Principals Association since 2002 when he first stepped into school leadership as a dean. Prickett currently serves as Professional Development Chairperson for the IPA Kishwaukee Region and has presented an Administrator Academy, Alternatives to Suspension and Restorative Justice, for IPA. Dr. Prickett was named the IPA Kishwaukee Region Middle School Principal of the Year in 2016 during his time as principal at Richard F. Bernotas Middle School as well as being named a Golden Apple Stanley C. Golder Leadership Award Finalist in 2017.

As principal, Prickett says, "The personal competencies and attributes that principals must possess include the ability to create trusting, respectful relationships. The excellent leader will understand that this characteristic is carefully inspired through humor, modesty, and personal example for all audiences and groups under his charge. I work to create intentional relationships every single day." This work is evidenced by Raymond Porten, Principal of Indian Hill Elementary School, Round Lake Heights. Porten shares, "Dr. Prickett embodies what a principal should be in education today. While working with Dr. Prickett, he always puts students first and builds the connections needed for a social and emotional foundation conducive to success. The building culture he creates is an example for all administrators. For me, he modeled how to lead a building and handle all the administrative duties while keeping a solid connection with staff and students."

Prickett has been active in the local community by running a district podcast entitled, WarriorEDU. Prickett says, "On the show, a colleague and I interview district teachers as a means of getting colleagues into their classrooms to see the great things that are going on. It also serves as a way to tell our district story, as each podcast episode is shared with the school district community." Carl Vallianatos, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for McHenry CHSD 156, acknowledges the effectiveness of this presence, "Dr. Prickett has a natural, outgoing and caring persona that he couples with a very active digital presence on social media. He has brought a new brand of creativity and communication to MCHS. He hosts several podcasts including one focused on highlighting the stories of our teachers to wider school community."

"First and foremost, Dr. Prickett is a strong student advocate," shared Dr. Ryan McTague, Superintendent of Schools for District 156. "His extraordinary connection and relationship to our students, parents, and staff is reflected in the strong sense of community and culture he helped to create at East Campus over his tenure. Dr. Prickett was the architect of many school-wide initiatives ensuring his student's always feel valued, supported, and have a voice in building their school community. Dr. Prickett encourages students to embrace their differences, the diversity of their school, and inspires social activism."

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. Dr. Prickett will be recognized at the IPA's Education Leaders Annual Conference in October 2021.

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.

###