Horace Mann and the Illinois Principals Association are pleased to announce that Colleen Goodrich, Associate Principal at Wayne Thomas Elementary School, Highland Park has been named the 2023 Illinois Assistant Principal of the Year. The award recognizes assistant 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.

Colleen Goodrich has served as associate principal at Wayne Thomas Elementary School for the last 3 years. She previously served as associate principal at Red Oak Dual Language School and Wayne Thomas School for 2 years. Goodrich previously taught Kindergarten and 1st grade and served as an Elementary School Acceleration Coach in Hoffman Estates. Goodrich has been active in the Illinois Principals Association’s Lake Region as a planning member of the AP North Summit Committee since 2021.

Dr. Monica Schroeder, Deputy Superintendent of North Shore School District 112, shared, “Colleen is kind, positive, driven, and laser focused on improving student achievement and growth for each learner. She tackles challenges as opportunities for growth and recognizes staff along the way for their contributions. She and the principal at Wayne Thomas have created leadership conditions that have led to improved staff culture and improved student growth.”

“Colleen joined Wayne Thomas three years ago, and quickly became a pivotal member of our school community,” added Michael Rodrigo, Principal at Wayne Thomas. “Her instructional insight has been incredibly important as our school has attempted to navigate the impact of Covid. Her ability to support and develop the instructional knowledge and skills of our teachers has been invaluable. She provides direct coaching, professional development, and lesson planning with our staff daily, and has resulted in significant student achievement. As a result of her work, our students grew 29% on the IAR assessment. This increase led to the highest level of attainment in our school history.”

The Assistant Principal of the Year winner was selected from a pool of regional nominees provided by the 21 Regions of the Illinois Principals Association. Goodrich will be recognized at the IPA’s annual Education Leaders Annual Conference in October 2023.

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The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 6,000 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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