



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 9, 2011

District 64 Emerson School's Tim Benka Named Illinois Assistant Principal for 2011-12

Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 today announced that Tim Benka, assistant principal at Emerson Middle School, has been named the Illinois Assistant Principal of the Year for 2011-12. The award is given by the Illinois Principals Association (IPA) and Horace Mann. The award recognizes an assistant principal who has demonstrated a positive impact on their students and learning community.

"We are delighted that Tim has received this high honor, which reflects his dedication to putting kids first and foremost every day," said District 64 Superintendent Philip Bender. "We are proud of Tim for being an inspiring and compassionate role model for young adolescent students especially as they take to heart our District's civil behavior standards, and for the educational leadership he offers teachers and parents at Emerson," he added.

Benka has been assistant principal at Emerson since its opening in 1998. He recently served on the District 64 Strategic Planning Team that crafted a five-year plan to guide the District's educational program. Currently, he coordinates a grades 6-8 committee that is developing a system for students to create personally challenging goals related to academics, civil behavior, talents and interests. He is also a Board member of the Maine Community Youth Assistance Foundation (MCYAF).

Previously, Benka was a special education teacher at Lincoln Middle School for 10 years and served as the assistant track coach at Maine East High School. He also taught for a year at Schaumburg High School before joining District 64 in 1988. Benka is a graduate of Illinois State University and received his master's degree from Northeastern Illinois University.

"Tim has been instrumental in establishing the climate of Emerson Middle School and creating a positive learning environment for all of the students," according to Jason Leahy, IPA Executive Director. On Emerson's annual school climate survey, students every year indicate that for social and emotional issues, "even though he is in charge of discipline, he is the staff member that students feel most comfortable going to for help," he added.

Benka was nominated by IPA's North Cook region and was selected in state competition from a pool of 21 regional candidates; Illinois has more than 2,000 assistant principals serving its K-12 schools. Benka now will advance for consideration in the National Assistant Principal of the Year competition sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and Virco. He also will be honored officially at IPA's annual Assistant Principals Conference at the conclusion of his term in July 2012.

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