



PRESS RELEASE

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DCPS Elementary School Teacher Surprised with \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

D.C. "Oscar of Teaching" goes to Jacqueline Simms from Anne Beers

(Washington, DC) — A seemingly routine school-wide assembly turned into the surprise of a lifetime when the Milken Family Foundation (MFF) honored – and astonished – Jacqueline Simms, a third-grade teacher at District of Columbia Public Schools' (DCPS) Anne Beers Elementary School, with a Milken Educator Award.

Joining Milken Family Foundation Co-Founder Michael Milken at the surprise presentation were DC State Superintendent Hosanna Mahaley Jones, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Chancellor Kaya Henderson, Interim Deputy Mayor of Education Jennifer Leonard, At-Large Councilmember and Chair of the Committee on Education David Catania, and Ward 7 Councilmember Yvette Alexander.

One of education's most prestigious recognitions, the Award, presented by MFF Co-Founder Mike Milken, comes with a *no-strings-attached* cash prize of \$25,000. "The idea behind these Awards is that everyone likes to hand out prizes to our heroes. We give Grammys to musicians, gold medals to Olympians, Nobels to scientists and others. But we give too little recognition to the people with society's most important job – educators. Nothing assures the success of a nation more than education; and nothing assures the quality of education more than dedicated classroom teachers instilling a love of learning and sense of wonder in their students," said Mr. Milken.

"Congratulations to Ms. Simms on winning this prestigious award! Our teachers are the backbones of our education system, so it is exciting to recognize an educator each year who's well deserving of the Milken Educator Award," said State Superintendent Hosanna Mahaley Jones.

"What a great day for DCPS," said Chancellor Kaya Henderson. "I'm so proud of Ms. Simms for the work she does in her classroom every single day. She's an exceptional teacher, one who is making a difference and changing students' lives. Just by being the star that she is, she's showing everyone that DCPS can and will help our students excel at the highest levels."

Third grade teacher Jacqueline Simms is the rare individual who can inspire students, ignite colleagues to strive for their best, and lead the transformation of an entire school culture around teaching and learning. At Anne Beers Elementary School in Washington, D.C., Simms is recognized as a powerful and positive force of nature who is fully committed to ensuring the success of every single student. She improves student achievement through innovations in curriculum, development, instructional methods, and classroom management. Her contributions to Beers are legendary. As an Academic Intervention Coach, Simms implemented the Schoolwide Application Model (SAM), where supports and services are fully integrated and available to all students. Through her leadership and guidance, special education students at Beers seamlessly integrate into general education classes and many are now achieving at proficient and advanced levels on state assessment tests. High expectations are held for all.

Simms was instrumental in introducing and engaging all staff and students with a Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) system, writing the school's affirmation which is recited every morning. She leads the Incentive and Rewards program where students earn "Cheetah Bucks" for displaying positive behavior. When funds were not available to provide extra learning time for students, Simms established an all-volunteer Saturday School by recruiting staff and community members to participate on a rotating basis. So that students would have a place to read or de-escalate from a conflict, Simms established Book Nooks. She started a mentoring program with a law firm, a leadership skills building program with the F.B.I. and partnered with a local theater to introduce students to playwriting skills. To build relationships with families, she conducts home visits over the summer. An integral member of the school leadership team, Simms has a reputation for fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and open communication. Outstanding with modeling instruction as well as data analysis, she is adept at working with colleagues to identify areas for improvement. In addition to delivering school and district-wide professional development, Simms mentors beginning and student teachers. A role model for all, Jacqueline Simms epitomizes excellence in education.

The recognition is not intended as a lifetime achievement award. Recipients are selected in early to mid-career for what they have achieved — and for the promise of what they will accomplish in the future. Milken Educators point to their Award as a pivotal milestone. Encompassed in the recognition is the responsibility to stretch their professional practices and leadership to even higher levels.

Hailed by *Teacher Magazine* as the "Oscars of Teaching," what separates this Award from others is that the recipients have no idea that they will be honored. Not only is the entire selection process confidential, but so is the real purpose of the school-wide assemblies where the Awards are presented. The Awards story doesn't end with the surprise notification. New recipients are invited to join the Milken Educator Network, a group of distinguished educators whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

MFF has been recognizing and rewarding the noble profession of teaching through the Milken Educator Awards for 26 years. Since first presented to a dozen California teachers, the Awards have grown to become the nation's preeminent teacher recognition program having honored more than 2,500 K-12 teachers, principals and specialists with over \$63 million in individual, unrestricted \$25,000 awards. More than \$135 million in funding has been devoted to the overall program, which includes powerful professional development opportunities throughout the recipients' careers in education. The exponential impact of Milken Educators is helping to improve American K-12 education.

The Awards alternates yearly between elementary and secondary educators. Each participating state department of education appoints an independent blue ribbon committee to review candidates that are sourced through a confidential selection process and recommend candidates to the Foundation.

Award Criteria:

Candidates for the Milken Educator Awards are selected on the basis of all the following criteria:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by effective instructional practices and student learning results in the classroom and school;
- Exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom that provide models of excellence for the profession;
- Individuals whose contributions to education are largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight;
- Early- to mid-career educators who offer strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

View the 2012-13 Milken Educator Awards YouTube video for a peek at the surprise of a lifetime that awaits up to 40 of America's best educators: <http://www.mff.org/newsroom/news.taf?page=videos&init=&dateYear=&vid=1200>

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For more information about the Milken Educator Awards, visit <http://www.mff.org> or call the Foundation at (310) 570-4775. You can connect with the Foundation at www.twitter.com/milken, www.facebook.com/milkeneducatorawards and at www.youtube.com/milkenaward. For more information about OSSE, go to: www.osse.dc.gov; www.twitter.com/OSSEDC; www.facebook.com/OSSEDC