



Harford County Public Schools

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harford County Educator Receives \$25,000 Milken Educator Award Milken Family Foundation Bestows National Award to 80 of America's Elementary Educators

When Christian Slattery attended a morning assembly at Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School this morning, he had no idea that he was the guest of honor and that he would walk away with a \$25,000 award. Surprised, in front of students, faculty, and staff, the vocal music teacher at the Harford County public school, graciously accepted the Milken Award from Jane Foley, Senior Vice President of the Milken Educator Awards and Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick, during a surprise school assembly. Slattery, an educator for six years, is free to use the no-strings attached cash prize in any manner he chooses. He will receive the actual monetary award this spring at the Milken National Education Conference in Los Angeles.

"It is wonderful that an elementary vocal music teacher is one of only 80 teachers across the country to receive a Milken Educator Award," said Dr. Grasmick. "I am impressed by Christian Slattery's amazing ability to integrate the music curriculum with other content areas. He truly demonstrates his creativity and commitment to education through his work with individual classroom teachers to build and enhance instruction in all subject areas."

"Christian loves what he does," said Gwendolyn Benjamin-Jones, Principal of Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School. "He has a very special connection to the school community and loves the students. They perform at a higher level because of his ability to zero in on what's needed, whether it's a song that helps students memorize math facts or grammar concepts – Christian has such a unique ability to bring out the best in all the students."

Hailed as "the Oscars of Teaching" by Teacher Magazine, the Milken Educator Awards were conceived by Lowell Milken, chairman and co-founder, to recognize the importance of outstanding educators and encourage talented young people to enter teaching. Unlike most teaching awards, the Milken Educator Awards have no formal nomination or application process. Each year exceptional teachers and principals can be recommended without their knowledge. The Milken Foundation makes a final decision on its Award recipients.

"Nothing in America's k-12 schools has more influence on student learning than the quality of the classroom teacher," said Mr. Milken. "Highly effective teachers are the bedrock in constructing a world-class education system that meets our challenges and opportunities in this 21st century. It is a national imperative that we attract, retain and motivate people of talent to the profession. America's prosperity depends on it."

This year's honorees will propel the ranks of recipients to more than 2,300 with financial prizes topping \$60 million. Established in 1985, the Award alternates yearly between elementary and secondary educators. The 2008 recipients will actually receive their \$25,000 checks during the Milken National Education Conference held April 17-19 in Los Angeles. They will also 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.

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Candidates for the Milken Educator Awards are selected on the basis of 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;
- Strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

To date, 53 Maryland educators have been honored by the Milken Family Foundation with more than \$1.1 million since the state began participating 15 years ago.

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