

# MILKEN FAMILY FOUNDATION NATIONAL EDUCATOR AWARDS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. What is a Milken Educator Award?

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award provides public recognition and an unrestricted financial prize of \$25,000 to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other education professionals who are furthering excellence in education.

## 2. How are Milken Educators selected?

Based on guidelines established by the Milken Family Foundation (see FAQ #3), the department of education in each of the 47 participating states appoints an independent blue-ribbon committee to recommend candidates for selection to the Foundation. There is no nomination or application procedure for the Award.

## 3. What are the criteria for selection?

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by outstanding instructional practices in the classroom, school and profession.
- Outstanding accomplishments and strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership.
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

## 4. How are the Awards announced?

The main element is surprise! Each fall, newly selected recipients are taken completely by surprise at school-wide assemblies. With an entourage of media and distinguished officials, a Foundation representative or the state chief of education typically notifies the recipient, often accompanied by the governor and other state leaders.

## 5. Are the recipients required to do anything specific with their monetary awards?

Milken Educators may use their **unrestricted** \$25,000 Award in any way they wish. A Foundation survey found that the largest number of past recipients have used their Award to finance their children's education or their own continuing education. Others have purchased equipment for their schools, funded scholarships for their students, and even financed the adoption of their children.

## 6. When do the recipients receive their monetary prize?

Recipients are notified of the Award in the fall. The following May, they participate in the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference, **to be held for the first time in Washington, D.C.**, culminating in an awards ceremony at which recipients receive their \$25,000 checks. At the 2004 Conference, 100 Milken Educators will receive awards totaling \$2.5 million.

## 7. Are both elementary and secondary school educators selected each year?

The Award alternates each year between elementary and secondary educators.

(more)

**8. What other benefits besides the \$25,000 do recipients receive?**

- Professional development opportunities and public recognition at Notification events and the annual Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference;
- Membership in state and national networks of nearly 2,000 distinguished educators, including the Milken Educator listserv;
- Opportunity to participate in ongoing projects like the Milken Festival for Youth.

**9. Why does the program put such an emphasis on teacher quality?**

Recognizing and rewarding quality educators has been a hallmark of the Milken Educator Awards program since its inception. However, as the lack of advancement opportunities drives classroom teachers out of the profession and fewer young people pursue a career in education, the nation faces a potentially catastrophic shortage of quality classroom teachers. Over the next 10 years, schools will need to hire over two million new teachers, but will come up short by more than a third. Studies show that only one in 10 college-bound high school students are strongly interested in teaching as a career, due in part to competition from the private sector, which is having a particularly damaging effect on the supply of science and math teachers.

In 1999, Milken Family Foundation Chairman and Co-Founder Lowell Milken introduced the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), a comprehensive strategy for restructuring the education profession to attract, retain and motivate quality teachers. TAP works by integrating five key principles: multiple career paths; broad market-driven compensation; performance-based accountability; on-going, applied professional growth; and expanded supply of high quality teachers. TAP is currently being implemented in Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina and in Indiana by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

**10. What are the other areas of interest of the Milken Family Foundation?**

The Milken Family Foundation was established in 1982 to discover and advance inventive ways of helping people help themselves and those around them lead productive and satisfying lives. The Santa Monica, California-based foundation advances this mission primarily through its work in medical research and education. Milken Family Foundation initiatives include:

- American Epilepsy Society/Milken Family Foundation Epilepsy Research Award, Grant & Fellowship Program
- Prostate Cancer Foundation
- Milken Festival for Youth
- Jewish Educator Awards
- Mike's Math Club
- Milken Archive of American Jewish Music
- Milken Institute, an economic think tank focusing on jobs and capital issues
- Milken Scholars
- Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)

**11. Does the Milken Family Foundation have a Web site?**

Yes -- [www.mff.org](http://www.mff.org). For additional questions, call the Milken Family Foundation at (310) 570-4773.