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Minnesota Teacher Receives \$25,000 National Milken Educator Award

Seth Brown of Wayzata Received the "Oscars of Teaching" During Surprise Ceremony

Wayzata, MN - A seemingly routine schoolwide assembly turned into the surprise of a lifetime when the Milken Family Foundation honored—and stunned—Seth Brown, a middle school math teacher at Wazyata West Middle School, with a Milken Educator Award. One of education's most prestigious recognitions, each Award comes with a no-strings-attached cash prize of \$25,000. Dr. Jane Foley, Foundation Senior Vice President, Milken Educator Awards; Brenda Cassellius, Minnesota's Commissioner of Education; and Congressman Erik Paulsen were among the leaders participating in the surprise celebration.

Dubbed "the Oscars of Teaching" by Teacher Magazine, the Milken Educator Awards program was conceived by Lowell Milken to recognize the importance of outstanding educators and encourage talented young people to enter the teaching profession. Unlike most teaching awards, the Milken Educator Awards have no formal nomination or application process. Each year, exceptional teachers, principals and specialists—recommended without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by each state's department of education—are surprised with the news of their awards.

"Our public education system is at the heart of America's promise and is essential in safeguarding the American dream for future generations. With research confirming that an effective teacher is the single most important school-related factor in raising student achievement, it is clear to see the critical role that outstanding teachers play in shaping our country," said Lowell Milken, chairman and co-founder of the Milken Family Foundation. "We created the Milken Educator Awards to proclaim in a very public way that greatness in education must be recognized and rewarded. As the program's motto extols, the future belongs to the educated."

Seth Brown has been a mathematics teacher at Wayzata West Middle School since 2003. Though the district is large, Seth has distinguished himself at the building and district level. He is known for his expertise as a mathematics teacher and for the creative use of technology in his classroom. A colleague describes him as, "constantly utilizing cutting-edge technology, strategies, and methods in his classroom... a leader among his peers."

Brown has shown a deep concern about the achievement gap and has worked to ensure that all of his students have the skills required for future success. Achievement data reveals consistent growth among his students and that his classroom has consistently exceeded district performance. Described by his colleagues as an engaging teacher, Brown has taken an active role in the lives of his students by attending many of the after-school functions and has built strong relationships with the community.

Brown received his B.A. in 2003 from St. John's University and currently is working on his Masters in Educational Leadership at Concordia University.

"Teachers like Seth that consistently go above and beyond in their classrooms are true heroes in every sense of the word," said Commissioner Cassellius. "It's wonderful to be a part of honoring Seth's remarkable achievements as a world-class educator, and to acknowledge the positive impact he has had on his students, in his school and on the profession of teaching."

Since first presented in 1987 to a dozen California teachers, the Milken Educator Awards have grown to become the nation's preeminent teacher recognition program, having honored more than 2,500 teachers, principals and specialists with over \$62 million in individual, unrestricted \$25,000 awards. The exponential impact of the more than 2,500 outstanding teachers has helped to reform American K-12 education. The Awards alternate each year between elementary and secondary educators.

Award Criteria:

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.
- Individuals whose contributions to education are largely unheralded, yet are worthy of the spotlight.
- Early- to mid-career educators who offer strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership.
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

You can view the 2011 Milken Educator Awards kickoff YouTube Video. Take a peek at the surprise of a lifetime that awaits up to 40 of America's best educators:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCmGOvmNtV8>.

For more information about the Milken Educator Awards, visit <http://www.mff.org> or call the Foundation at (310) 570-4775. You can follow the Foundation at www.twitter.com/milken, www.facebook.com/milkeneducatorawards and at www.youtube.com/milkenaward.

An education reformer for three decades, Lowell Milken created the Milken Educator Awards to recognize exemplary teachers and established TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement to generate more talented teachers www.tapsystem.org. Lowell Milken recently provided the founding gift for the Lowell Milken Institute for Business Law and Policy at UCLA School of Law. For more information about Lowell visit www.lowellmilken.com.

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