



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Charles Pyle
Director of Communications
(804) 371-2420
Julie C. Grimes
Communications Manager
(804) 225-2775

**Virginia Beach Elementary Teacher Latest to Receive \$25,000 Milken Award
*Chesterfield County and Albemarle County Teachers Honored Yesterday***

A Virginia Beach third-grade teacher is the third Virginia educator this year to receive a \$25,000 award from the Milken Family Foundation. Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright presented the Virginia Beach award today during a surprise assembly at the winner's school. Yesterday, Dr. Wright and Milken Family Foundation Senior Vice President Jane Foley made unannounced visits to Chesterfield County and Albemarle County to honor two other Virginia educators.

"These educators model and inspire excellence in their students, their colleagues and their schools," said Dr. Wright. "Today a Virginia Beach teacher is receiving recognition through the Milken Family Foundation's National Educator program for making a significant difference in the lives of her students and her community."

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards are designed to reward and provide recognition for elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other education professionals who promote excellence and innovation in public education. Today's 2008 Virginia recipient is:

- **Recharta C. Walston**, a third-grade teacher at Seatack Elementary School in Virginia Beach. Her students routinely score in the 90th percentile on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. Walston serves as Seatack Elementary's parent involvement coordinator and coordinates a community partnership program pairing business leaders with students to encourage academic success. She was the first recipient of the Virginia Beach Superintendent's Spotlight Award for community involvement. Walston earned a bachelor's degree from Shaw University.

Walston joins yesterday's Milken Family Foundation National Education Award recipients:

- **Laura H. Marshall**, a third-grade teacher at Grange Hall Elementary School in Chesterfield County. More than 25 percent of Marshall's students achieved perfect scores on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. Marshall serves as the school's social studies lead teacher and previously served as lead technology teacher. She was second-place winner in the Virginia Lottery's Super Teacher program and was nominated for the R.E.B. Award for Teaching Excellence. Marshall earned her bachelor's and master's degree from Virginia Tech.
- **Dr. William D. Sterrett**, principal at Woodbrook Elementary School in Albemarle County. Under his leadership, Woodbrook earned the 2008 Board of Education Virginia Index of Performance Excellence Award for making significant progress toward Governor Timothy M. Kaine's goals for increased student achievement and expanded educational opportunity. Woodbrook students consistently perform well on SOL tests and have been successful in narrowing or closing achievement gaps between subgroups. Sterrett earned a bachelor's degree from Asbury College and a doctorate from the University of Virginia.

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Walston, Marshall and Sterrett join 29 other Virginia educators who have been recognized by the Milken Family Foundation since Virginia began participating in the awards program in 1999. They become members of the Milken Educator Network to provide expertise to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

Educators are recommended for the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by each participating state's department of education. Identification and selection procedures for the awards are confidential and the program does not include a formal nomination or application process. Recipients of the awards are selected on the basis of numerous criteria, including:

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

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards — dubbed “the Oscars of teaching” by Teacher Magazine — were first presented in 1987. Since the inception of the program, the Milken Family Foundation has distributed more than \$60 million in awards to more than 2,300 educators across the country. This month, up to 80 new recipients are being announced in surprise assemblies at their schools. This year's award winners will receive their unrestricted \$25,000 prizes in spring 2009 at the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference in Los Angeles.

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