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

Portsmouth 4th-Grade Math Teacher Receives \$25,000 Milken National Educator Award

Churchland Primary and Intermediate School teacher LaKeshia Ames today received a \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award during a surprise assembly at the Portsmouth school. The award was presented to the fourth-grade mathematics teacher by Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright and Milken Family Foundation Senior Vice President Jane Foley before the students and faculty members packing the school gymnasium.

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards are designed to recognize and reward elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and specialists who promote excellence and innovation in public education. Ames is the 38th Virginia educator to be recognized with the award since 1999.

Ames has served on Churchland Primary and Intermediate's school improvement team, as well as the school's mathematics, science and social studies committees. To help colleagues stay abreast of current educational trends, Ames coordinated staff development presentations to share new concepts presented at conferences she attended.

Both Governor Bob McDonnell and Secretary of Education Laura Fornash extended congratulations to the Portsmouth teacher.

"There is no greater factor to ensuring that students excel in the classroom than a great teacher," McDonnell said. "Ms. Ames has demonstrated dedication, skill and infectious enthusiasm in the classroom which has led her peers to have chosen her for this prestigious award. She is an inspiration to her students and fellow educators."

"Her record of innovation and her commitment to creating meaningful learning experiences for all students, including the youngest learners, exemplifies the skills needed by teachers for all students to succeed. I offer my sincere congratulations on this well-earned award to Ms. Ames," said Fornash.

A classroom instructor for 12 years, Ames was the Churchland Primary and Intermediate School 2010 Teacher of the Year.

"LaKeshia Ames exhibits a passion for teaching and strives daily to support student achievement," Wright said. "Her ability to utilize technology, mathematics manipulatives and cooperative-learning centers has resulted in her student's consistently high pass rates on Standards of Learning assessments."

Ames earned her bachelor's degree from Norfolk State University in 2000 and a master's in educational leadership from Regent University in 2008.

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Educators are recommended for Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards without their knowledge by a panel appointed by each participating state's education department. Recipients of the awards are selected on the basis of multiple criteria related to instructional practice, student achievement, accomplishments outside the classroom and leadership.

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards were established in 1985. The awards program is the largest of its kind in the country. Since the inception of the program, the Milken Family Foundation has distributed more than \$63 million in awards to more than 2,500 educators across the country.

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