

## News Release

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### Madison's Lincoln Elementary Teacher Josie Guiney Igielski receives \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

MADISON — State Superintendent Tony Evers' visit to Lincoln Elementary School in Madison Wednesday was more than an ordinary school assembly. The event recognized Josie Guiney Igielski, a fourth-grade teacher and motivating force behind the school's outdoor learning space, as the Wisconsin recipient of a 2014 Milken Educator Award. The award includes \$25,000 cash and is one of up to 40 that will be given by the Milken Family Foundation nationwide this year.

"Josie's passion for getting it right for her students and incorporating hands-on and outdoor learning into the school day are such valuable assets to students and the community," Evers said. "She exemplifies what it means to go beyond the expected. Josie is among the top education leaders in our state and nation and a deserving recipient of the Milken Educator Award."

Over the past eight years, Guiney Igielski has pursued excellence through differentiated and personalized learning for her students. She also reaches out to her colleagues, future educators, and the community. Her vision for sustainability turned a lot next to Lincoln Elementary School into an outdoor learning environment for students that attracts parents and neighbors as well. She is passionate about incorporating the outdoors into lessons and is working with other educators to develop a curriculum for outdoor learning. From listening sessions before the project started to work parties that include the community, the outdoor learning lab has been a major achievement that will continue to grow.

Guiney Igielski was selected as a Milken Educator without her knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel and the Milken Family Foundation. Recipients are selected on the basis of numerous criteria, including exceptional educational talent shown through 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

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profession; strong, long-range potential for professional policy leadership; and engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues, and the community.

“We’ve been presenting these awards for almost 30 years because we believe — and the research proves it — that educators represent *the* most important school-based factor in raising student achievement,” said Lowell Milken, chairman and co-founder of the Milken Family Foundation. “The very public nature of each surprise notification, and the excitement as students see their teacher celebrated as an inspiring role model, influences young people to consider teaching as a worthy career option.”

The Milken Family Foundation has conducted a notification tour across the nation to announce Milken Educators since 1987. This is the 15th year the foundation has presented an educator award in Wisconsin. The awards program is intended to attract, retain, and motivate outstanding talent to the teaching profession. Since inception, the program has awarded more than \$65 million to more than 2,600 educators. In addition to the monetary award, the educators are invited to join the Milken Educator Network, a voluntary association of exemplary educators and business leaders, whose expertise serves as a resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards, and others who are shaping the future of education.

The Milken Educator Awards were created to recognize and reward the highest caliber professionals in our nation’s schools. The Milken Educator Awards program, dubbed the — Oscars of Teaching — by *Teacher Magazine*, is the largest educator awards program in the nation. For more information, call (310) 570-4785 or visit the Milken Family Foundation website at <http://www.mff.org>.

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**NOTES:** This news release is available electronically at [http://news.dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/eis/pdf/dpinr2014\\_113.pdf](http://news.dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/eis/pdf/dpinr2014_113.pdf). Additional information about Wisconsin’s 2014 Milken Educator Josie Guiney Igielski and the Milken Educator Award program is available on the Department of Public Instruction news release website <http://news.dpi.wi.gov/newsroom>.