



## **NJDOE News**

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### **Commissioner Librera to Attend 2003 Milken National Educator Awards Convention April 26-28; Joins Six New Jersey Award Winners in Celebrating Excellence in Education**

As part of the Department of Education's continued emphasis on celebrating outstanding educators, Commissioner of Education William L. Librera will join the six New Jersey Milken National Educator Award winners for the three-day 2003 Milken National Education Conference in Los Angeles beginning Saturday and ending Monday.

"It is with great pride that I join the Milken winners in celebrating their excellence at the Milken Conference," Commissioner Librera said. "Our mission, since day one, has been to bring more recognition to the outstanding educators we have in our schools."

The six National Educator Award winners, announced in October 2002, are: April Lowe, Ewing, Mercer County; Theresa Licitra, Jackson, Ocean County; Patricia McGee, Norwood, Bergen County; John Bormann, Spring Lake, Monmouth County; Stephen Liddawi, Elizabeth, Union County; and James Aquavia, Montclair, Essex County.

When the awards were announced, Gov. James E. McGreevey praised all six educators for their dedication and drive to invigorate students on their own educational paths.

"My administration will take each and every opportunity we can to honor such strong abilities in the classroom," the Governor said. "A teacher's success is our children's success."

Both Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Librera praised the Milken National Educator Award program and Lowell Milken, the Foundation's chairman calling the award program a great benefit to the New Jersey public education system.

"Anytime we can recognize the good work being done in our schools, we will take that opportunity and we will make sure that praise is given when praise is deserved," Librera said. "The Milken Award program and Lowell Milken share that belief. We are more than happy to continue this exciting partnership with the Milken Family Foundation."

In October 2002, the state of New Jersey and the Milken Family Foundation commenced the first-year of a partnership. The state is now one of 46 nationwide to recognize outstanding teachers in the classroom. Founder Lowell Milken, the foundation's chairman, created the award program in 1985.

Since 1985, the Milken National Awards Program, which honors teachers, principals and specialists in public education from Kindergarten through 12th grade, has become the largest teacher recognition program in the United States.

Respected annually as one of the premier seminars in K-12 education, the 2003 Milken National Educator Conference brings together key policymakers, state education leaders, past and present Milken winners and other distinguished experts to discuss the imperatives of teacher quality.

This year's conference includes a keynote presentation by former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett; a panel discussion on how to equalize education opportunities for the nation's disadvantaged youths; a dialogue on the essentials of quality teaching; and an interactive debate on whether certified teachers are the most qualified to teach.

The conference culminates with the presentation of the \$25,000 Milken National Educator Awards to 100 recipients from across the nation - including the six New Jersey winners. Jeri Ryan, one of the stars of Fox TV's "Boston Public," is the mistress of ceremonies.

Teachers are recommended for the prestigious award without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed

by a state's Department of Education. Recipients of the Milken Awards are selected based on the following criteria:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by outstanding instructional practices in the classroom, school and profession;
- Outstanding accomplishment and strong, long-range leadership potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community at-large.
- Recipients join the Milken Educator Network, a coalition of more than 1,700 top educators who have access to a variety of expert resources to help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools and districts.

The Milken Family Foundation will award a total of \$2.5 million to educators this year. Since the program's inception, the foundation has honored 1,877 recipients and given \$46.9 million in awards.

For more information about the Milken National Educator Conference or the \$25,000 Milken National Educator Awards, please contact the Department of Education's Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126 or the Milken Family Foundation at (310) 998-3009. Additional information can be found on the Foundation's website, [www.mff.org](http://www.mff.org).