



## NJDOE News

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### **Teachers From Trenton, East Orange Honored with \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards**

Two elementary school teachers working in city school districts in different parts of the state have been selected for National Educator Awards by the Milken Family Foundation.

Kimberly Kosc Jacquay, a third grade teacher at Trenton's Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, and Renee Richardson-Bachia, a fourth grade teacher at the Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr. Academy in East Orange, each received a check for \$25,000 and will join the Milken Family Foundation as exemplary educators and school leaders.

"I want to applaud these two exceptional teachers for their commitment to excellence in the classroom," said Governor Jon S. Corzine. "Through their dedication, Kimberly and Renee are preparing our students to be productive citizens of the 21st century and I congratulate them on being selected for these Milken National Educator Awards."

"Kimberly Jacquay and Renee Richardson-Bachia represent the highest levels of excellence in the field of teaching, and are worthy recipients of this prestigious honor," said Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "Each of them meets the daily challenge of inspiring students to learn in diverse classrooms, where many students must overcome extraordinary obstacles to learning."

"This year's winners exemplify the kind of educators we need in the front lines to ensure that all of our children are prepared for success in the 21st century," Commissioner Davy said.

The awards, which have been called "the Oscars of Teaching" by *Teacher Magazine*, were conceived by Milken Family Foundation Chairman and Co-Founder Lowell Milken to recognize the importance of outstanding educators and encourage talented young people to enter the profession.

"Nothing in America's K-12 schools has more influence on student learning than the quality of the classroom teacher," said Lowell Milken. "Highly effective teachers are the bedrock in constructing a world-class education system that meets our challenges and opportunities in this 21st century. It is a national imperative that we attract, retain and motivate people of talent to the profession. America's prosperity depends on it."

Richardson-Bachia, an elementary school teacher since 1998, has been inspiring young minds at the Cochran Academy since her arrival. In 2002-03, she was selected teacher of the year at the school. Her special strengths are in her ability to excite her students about learning a wide variety of subject matter, and her sound instincts on when to sit back and allow her students to puzzle over a problem, and when to push and lead. She also finds innovative way to involve parents in their children's education.

She is admired by her peers for her dynamic personality and her communications and team-building skills. While clearly devoted to increasing her students' knowledge and skills that pique their curiosity and engage their active participation, Richardson-Bachia is actively pursuing her professional growth. She successfully completed the NJ EXCEL program in educational leadership in May 2007, thereby earning a certificate of eligibility as a principal, and is in the process of earning her certificate as a chief school administrator. In addition, she holds certificates as a teacher and as a supervisor.

"Renee possesses vision," said her principal Deborah M. Harvest. "She understands the value of setting goals and the intricate details that must be put in place to achieve the goals. I consider her to be one of those extraordinary educators who will always put forth wholehearted effort with amazing results."

Richardson-Bachia holds a bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida and earned her master's degree from Seton Hall University. She was recognized at a special surprise assembly held this morning.

Kimberly Kosc Jacquay has taught at the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School since 2000. She is known for high-

energy, student-centered lessons and interactive learning centers in her classroom that are changed each week to allow students to engage in small group activities related to the theme or unit presented.

Included in these centers is an innovative unit she designed based on *Spaghetti and Meatballs for All*, a math story on perimeter and area, and on a science theme about natural disasters, incorporating activities to be completed by students in school and at home.

Jacquay is “a hard working and committed teacher who stops at nothing to demonstrate her commitment to excellence and her belief in the importance of what she has chosen as her career,” said Gwendolyn S. Jennings, her principal at Woodrow Wilson.

Jacquay, who was honored at a surprise assembly held in her school this afternoon, has a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from the College of New Jersey. Her professional training includes Intel Teach to the Future, Penn Literacy and QUEST at Princeton University. She holds a master’s degree from Grand Canyon University Online.

Since the Milken Family Foundation established the National Educator Awards in 1985, more than 2,300 recipients have received financial prizes totaling more than \$60 million. This year’s nominees will receive their checks in Los Angeles during the Milken National Education Conference in April and will join the Milken Educator Network, a group of distinguished educators whose expertise serves as a resource to educators, legislators, school boards and others. This year is the seventh year that New Jersey has participated in the awards program.

Candidates for the Milken Educator Awards are selected based on 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;
- Strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

For more information about the Milken Educator Awards, contact the Milken Family Foundation at 310-570-4775 or visit [www.mff.org](http://www.mff.org).

For more information on the content of this news release, contact the New Jersey Department of Education’s Office of Public Information, 609-292-1126.