**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Fort Wayne Community Schools Teacher Surprised   
with $25,000 Milken Educator Award**

***Ginger Giessler from New Tech Academy at Wayne High School   
presented with Indiana’s 2013 “Oscar of Teaching”***

**PHOTOS:** [**http://milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/photos/view/389/4548**](http://milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/photos/view/389/4548)

* *Photos will be updated during the day.*

**VIDEO:** [**http://milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/videos/view/4547**](http://milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/videos/view/4547)

**MEDIA KIT:** [**http://milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/media-kit**](http://milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/media-kit)

**WHAT:** Ginger Giessler, an English and Language Arts teacher at New Tech Academy at Wayne High School in Fort Wayne, was surprised with an unrestricted $25,000 Milken Educator Award, [www.MilkenEducatorAward.org](http://www.MilkenEducatorAward.org) at a school-wide assembly. **Glenda Ritz,** **State Superintendent of Public Instruction, joined Dr. Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Educator Awards and a 1994 Milken Educator Award recipient from Indiana,** to present the honor, which was the only one to given in Indiana this year.

“Our public education system is at the heart of America’s promise and essential to safeguarding the American dream for future generations,” said Lowell Milken, chairman and co-founder of the Milken Family Foundation. “With research confirming that effective teachers represent the single most important school-related factor in raising student achievement, it is important to honor them, learn from them, and inspire more capable people to enter the profession. As the program’s motto extols, *the future belongs to the educated.”*

**ABOUT THE AWARD RECIPIENT:** <http://milkeneducatorawards.org/educators/view/2589>

Language arts teacher Ginger Giessler pushes boundaries at New Tech Academy at Wayne High School, a diverse urban school in Fort Wayne, Indiana. An influential risk taker who has made an impact through engaging students beyond the standard academic ideals of pass/fail, Giessler has cleared the way for many of New Tech's most innovative academic programs.

As a national New Tech Certified Teacher with an expertise in project-based learning, she mentors colleagues and engages students in exploring real-world challenges and problems. In the process, Giessler integrates language arts with New Tech’s STEM focus and has proven time and again that achievement belongs to students who feel ownership for their education. Students respect her writing critiques and expectations of excellence. Her students’ literacy scores are 25% above the district average and student pass rates are at the school’s highest levels with 75-80%. In the national “Letters about Literature” essay competition sponsored by the Indiana Center for the Book, 16 of Giessler’s students have been semifinalists, including the 2012 national champion.

Giessler models acceptance of all students regardless of their differences and establishes classroom protocols that create an environment conducive to collaboration. When New Tech’s school culture was not developing in as positive a direction as hoped, she came up with an idea to present students with keys to represent core school values. During monthly ceremonies, each of seven students would select another seven students to pass on their keys – and values – with events captured on video. As a result of the "Key Program," school spirit was visibly lifted.

Giessler’s contributions extend well beyond the high school campus. While continuing as a classroom teacher at New Tech, Geissler now devotes part of her time to coaching teachers at the emerging New Tech-Towles Middle School in project-based learning, collaboration and accountability. This quintessential 21st-century educator is also in demand as a speaker at state and national levels.

**DETAILS:** The Milken Educator Awards, conceived by Lowell Milken to attract, retain and motivate outstanding talent to the teaching profession, is the nation’s preeminent teacher recognition program, dubbed the “Oscars of Teaching” by *Teacher Magazine.* Since 1987, the Milken Family Foundation, co-founded by Michael and Lowell Milken, has devoted more than $136 million in funding to the Milken Educator Awards, including over $64 million in individual Awards to nearly 2,600 recipients plus powerful professional development opportunities and networking with leading education stakeholders. Up to 40 Milken Educator Awards will be presented in 2013.

**INDIANA MILKEN EDUCATORS:**

Indiana joined the Milken Educator Awards program in 1993.

57 Indiana Milken Educator Award recipients

$1,425,000 cash awards presented to Indiana Milken Educator Award recipients

**MORE:** **Milken Educator Awards** **Website**: [www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org](http://www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org)

**Indiana Department of Public Instruction Website:** [www.doe.in.gov/](http://www.doe.in.gov/)

**Fort Wayne Community Schools Website:** [www.fwcs.k12.in.us](http://www.fwcs.k12.in.us)

**Milken Family Foundation Website:** [www.mff.org](http://www.mff.org)   
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*Education reform leader Lowell Milken created the Milken Educator Awards to recognize exemplary teachers and established the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) to generate more talented teachers,* [*www.niet.org*](http://www.niet.org/)*. NIET operates TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement and the Best Practices Center. Lowell Milken recently provided the founding gift for the UCLA School of Law’s Lowell Milken Institute for Business Law and Policy. For more information about Lowell visit* [***www.lowellmilken.com***](http://www.lowellmilken.com/)***.***