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Rapid City Teacher Receives Prestigious Milken Award

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Alayna Siemonsma, a fourth-grade teacher and literacy leader at South Park Elementary School in Rapid City, received the surprise of a lifetime today when she was given a Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Dr. Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Family Foundation, presented Siemonsma with a \$25,000 cash award during a school assembly this morning.

“It’s an honor to present this award,” Gov. Daugaard said. “Alayna is a driving force behind professional development and student achievement in her school district. She strives to help everyone around her achieve success and be the best that they can be.”

Siemonsma has been teaching for the past 15 years. During that time, she has had many assignments, including reading and math, guided reading, Internet classes, and education of gifted and talented students. She has a master’s degree, is National Board Certified, and has made presentations at several state and regional conferences and workshops. She has received accolades and also has held leadership positions in the Rapid City School District.

The Milken Educator Awards were conceived by Lowell Milken to recognize the importance of outstanding educators and encourage talented young people to enter the teaching profession.

Candidates for the Milken Educator Awards are selected 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
- Individuals whose education contributions are largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight
- Early- to mid-career educators who offer strong, long-range potential for professional and policy leadership
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community

To learn more about the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award, visit
www.milkeneducatorawards.org