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Middle school math teacher in Harrisburg receives \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

NOTE TO EDITORS: Professional photos and video footage from today's event will be available shortly at <http://milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/media-kit/>.

HARRISBURG, S.D. – Carla Diede, a National Board Certified math teacher at Harrisburg South Middle School, is South Dakota's newest recipient of a \$25,000 award that Teacher magazine calls the "Oscar of Teaching." State Education Secretary Don Kirkegaard and Greg Gallagher, senior program administrator for the Milken Educator Awards, surprised Diede with a Milken Educator Award during a school assembly this morning.



"The Harrisburg School District has been a leader in the personalized learning approach, and it takes great teachers like Carla Diede to make that happen," said Secretary of Education Don Kirkegaard. "Carla epitomizes what it means to personalize instruction for, and make strong connections with, students."

Diede helps lead Harrisburg South Middle School's personalized learning initiative, which is now in its second year and includes 6th and 7th grade students. She also teaches 8th grade math. Colleagues speak highly of Diede's ability to balance a wide variety of duties. She spends mornings as a personalized learning coach to students and teachers and teaches math classes in the afternoon. She also serves as a liaison to parents of incoming middle school students, helping them understand the options available to their children.

"Carla just does whatever it takes," said Harrisburg South Middle School Principal Darren Ellwein. "I've worked with her for a number of years, and she has always gone above and beyond for students. She's passionate about her subject matter and finding the most effective ways to use technology to enhance instruction. She is integral in our personalized learning track for our school and district. She leads professional development and supports all our teachers. I'm thrilled to see her recognized with this award."

Diede has a Bachelor of Science in mathematics with an education specialization from South Dakota State University and a master's from Southwest Minnesota State University.

The Milken Educator Awards program was created by the Milken Family Foundation. The prestigious honor will be presented at up to 44 schools during the 2017-18 school year. More than \$138 million in funding, including \$68 million in individual \$25,000 awards, has been devoted to the program, which includes professional development opportunities throughout recipients' careers. Since South Dakota joined the Milken Educator Awards program in 2002, a total of \$500,000 has been awarded to 20 South Dakota recipients.

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
- Individuals whose contributions to education 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 Educator Award, visit www.milkeneducatorawards.org.