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VITATO RECEIVES MILKEN EDUCATOR AWARD

(Frankfort, Ky.) – Allyson Vitato, principal at Breckinridge-Franklin Elementary School in the Jefferson County public school district, is Kentucky's newest recipient of the [Milken Educator Award](#) and \$25,000.

Education Commissioner Terry Holliday; Jefferson County Superintendent Donna Hargens; Milken Educator Awards senior vice president Dr. Jane Foley and other dignitaries surprised Vitato with the award today during an all-school assembly.

"This award brings attention to our most valuable educational resource – our hardworking, dedicated educators," Holliday said. "The work is not always easy. There are challenges every day. But we value and appreciate Kentucky educators who are focused on ensuring all of our students meet high expectations and graduate from high school college/career-ready."

Vitato joined the school district in 2002 and began her tenure as Breckinridge-Franklin's principal in 2010. She has served as a middle school assistant principal, a resource teacher and an exceptional child education (ECE) teacher. Vitato earned a bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University, and holds master's degrees from Spalding University and the University of the Cumberlands. She is pursuing a Ph.D. from the University of Louisville.

During her tenure as Breckinridge-Franklin's principal, the number of its students scoring proficient or better on state assessments has grown, with documented gains in every subject and at every grade level.

"We are very proud of the exciting success of Breckinridge-Franklin's students under the leadership of Allyson Vitato," said JCPS Superintendent Donna Hargens. "Ms. Vitato is an exceptional educator who believes that every child can learn and inspires teachers with her passion for the supports they need to make that happen. Allyson Vitato is clearly a superstar principal moving students forward and improving our school district."

(more)

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Vitato also supports teachers' collaborative learning, and enhances students' learning through partnerships with a number of local organizations – soliciting extra resources and providing innovative afterschool programming not often accessible in an urban elementary school. She also sets high expectations for every student, with each student in the school having an intervention plan that identifies his or her strengths and weaknesses.

“Allyson Vitato has a dramatic influence on her school and its students; I can say that, without a doubt. She exemplifies the best of what we seek in a Milken Educator,” said Milken’s Foley, a former principal and herself a recipient of the award.

As Kentucky’s Milken Educator Award winner, Vitato received a check for \$25,000. There are no restrictions on use of the award – the winners use the money in any way they choose.

The Milken Educator Award provides public recognition and a cash reward to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other education professionals. The foundation established the educator award program in 1985, with the first award given in 1987. Kentucky started participating in 1993 and, since then, 54 Kentucky educators have received the award.

This year, the foundation selected up to 40 educators nationwide as winners.

The Milken Educator Network is a voluntary association of nearly 2,000 Milken Educators and other exemplary educators and business leaders from across the country who are dedicated to improving teacher quality and utilizing research and expertise to shape education policy at state and local levels.

The Milken Family Foundation was established in 1982 to discover and advance inventive and effective ways of helping people help themselves and those around them lead productive and satisfying lives. The Santa Monica, California-based foundation advances this mission primarily through its work in education and medical research.

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