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NEWS RELEASE

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Two R.I. Elementary-School Teachers Win \$25,000 Milken Educator Awards

Two elementary-school teachers were named today (Oct. 4th) as the Rhode Island recipients of the 2006-2007 National Educator Awards from the Milken Family Foundation.

Catherine G. Moffitt, a physical education and health teacher at the Hope Valley Elementary School in the Chariho District, and Amy Dufault Thompson, a third-grade teacher at the Francis J. Varieur School, in Pawtucket, received their awards this morning in surprise ceremonies at their schools. Each Milken Educator receives a \$25,000 unrestricted financial award.

Governor Donald L. Carcieri, who presided at the awards ceremonies, congratulated the two winners. "Catherine Moffitt is known for using technology in her teaching and for involving parents and families in her programs so as to make health and physical education part of the daily experience of her students," Governor Carcieri said. "She runs a Presidential Fitness Awards Program, and she organized an annual field day and a morning walking program for students, teachers, and parents."

In presenting the Milken award to Ms. Thompson, Governor Carcieri noted that throughout her 11 years of teaching, she has worked with students with disabilities. "Today, Amy Thompson teaches in a third-grade classroom that includes children with varying abilities, skills, and needs," the Governor said. "She provides support for those who need something extra while she challenges students to discover something extra. Her classroom environment encourages each child's learning style and potential."

"These two teachers, who work with some of our youngest students and their families, are excellent role models for all educators. They truly have the gift of teaching," said James A. DiPrete, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. "I congratulate both of them on this wonderful honor."

"By working with students with differing abilities and by establishing programs that bring together students, families, and educators, these two Milken Award winners exemplify teaching excellence," said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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Dr. Jane Foley, a senior vice president of the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards and a former Milken Educator herself, was on hand to present the awards to the winners.

“The Milken Educator Award is a far-reaching vehicle to elevate the standing of educators across the country. It is an investment in human capital, identifying successful people, providing resources, and connecting them within networks, all of which enable these talented educators to achieve even higher levels of performance,” Dr. Foley said. “We thank and commend Milken Educators for providing the precious gift of their time and talent to develop the potential of their students and ensure the future of our society.”

Ms. Moffitt has served as president of the Rhode Island Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. She served on committees to help the state develop its Health Education Frameworks. She holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Physical Education from the University of Rhode Island, where she serves as an adjunct faculty member and as a mentor for student teachers.

Ms. Thompson served as chair of the Varieur School Improvement Team from 2002 to 2005, and she served as coordinator of the Math Leadership Team at the school. She has a Bachelor of Science and Master’s degree in Special Education from Rhode Island College.

The Milken Educator Awards provide recognition to exceptional teachers, principals, and other educators around the nation. The awards have been presented in Rhode Island since 1990, and there have been 65 recipients so far in the state.