



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Elliot Krieger, Communications - (401) 222-8471  
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### **Pilgrim High Science Teacher Receives \$25,000 Milken Educator Award**

WARWICK – In a surprise ceremony today (Wednesday, October 19, 2011), Governor Lincoln D. Chafee and Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist presented the Milken Family Foundation 2011 Milken Educator Award to Michael J. Lobdell, a science teacher at Pilgrim High School, in Warwick.

Lobdell has been a science teacher in the Warwick schools for the past six years, where he has taught general science and biology. In the summer, he works with Rhode Island College on a summer program for high-school students, who do professional research in DNA theory. He created and staffs on a volunteer basis an afterschool “homework club” for students at Pilgrim High School. Lobdell holds a bachelor’s degree in zoology and a master’s degree in education from Rhode Island College. He lives in Wakefield.

“I am very pleased that the Milken Family Foundation has honored Michael Lobdell, of Pilgrim High School, as a Milken Educator Award winner,” said Governor Lincoln D. Chafee. “Mr. Lobdell teaches students who are academically advanced as well as students who are academically challenged, and he is known for inspiring all of his students to perform at their very best. The students at Pilgrim are fortunate to have Mr. Lobdell as one of their science teachers, and Rhode Islanders are fortunate to have Mr. Lobdell and other teachers like him in our public schools.”

“For our students to succeed in the 21st-century, high-technology economy, we will need more excellent science teachers like Michael Lobdell, who lead their students through real hands-on scientific inquiry,” said George D. Caruolo, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “Mr. Lobdell sets a high standard for himself and for his students, and I am pleased that the Milken Family Foundation has recognized his excellence.”

“Today’s Milken Educator Award winner, Michael Lobdell, is a wonderful role model for his colleagues at Pilgrim High School and to educators across the state,” said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “As one of his fellow teachers noted, the students at Pilgrim really admire him, and even reluctant learners work hard to meet his expectations. Another colleague noted that students rule in Mr. Lobdell’s classroom – because he is so skilled at getting students to ask the right questions. I want to thank the Milken Family Foundation for its award to Michael Lobdell for the years of support for great Rhode Island educators.”

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“Milken Educators point to their award as a pivotal professional milestone. They understand that encompassed in this recognition is the responsibility to grow as a leader beyond the school level,” said Dr. Jane Foley, Milken Family Foundation senior vice-president. “Encouraged and supported, these outstanding educators discover a renewed passion and purpose as they stretch their professional practices and policy influence to even higher levels.”

The award, which comes with an unrestricted payment of \$25,000, honors exceptional educators for their work. Each recipient receives the award in a surprise ceremony; educators do not apply for the award, nor are they aware that they have been nominated for the honor.

This fall, about 40 educators around the country will receive Milken Family Foundation 2011 Milken Educator Awards. The program has been administered in Rhode Island since 1990, and there have been 70 Milken Award winners so far in the state.

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