

Milken release – 10-10-12

Providence reading teacher wins \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

In a surprise ceremony this morning (October 10, 2012) at the Lillian Feinstein @ Sackett Elementary School, Providence Mayor Angel Taveras and Acting Education Commissioner David V. Abbott presented a Milken Family Foundation 2012 Milken Educator Award to Yanaiza Gallant, a Reading Intervention Specialist at the school.

Mrs. Gallant has taught in the Providence Public Schools for nine years, including stints as a bilingual teacher in grades 4 and 5 at the Alfred A. Lima Elementary School and as a Reading Coach at the Edmund Flynn Elementary School. She has worked at Lillian Feinstein @ Sackett Elementary for the past year. A Cranston resident, Mrs. Gallant is a graduate of Rhode Island College with degrees in social work, elementary education, and reading.

“Yanaiza Gallant represents the best among Rhode Island teachers,” said George D. Caruolo, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “She has devoted her career to working with young students in some of our most high-poverty communities, and she has achieved a record of great success in improving student achievement. I congratulate her on receiving this prestigious award.”

“Mrs. Gallant understands the importance of providing opportunities for all students to learn,” said David V. Abbott, Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “She developed a program to bring entering first graders into school in August for early assessment, she started a Winter Science Camp to focus students on academics during the winter break, and she has worked with Inspiring Minds to train 60 volunteers to help students. Her record of innovation and her commitment to all students, including the youngest learners, is an example of excellence that the Milken Family Foundation has recognized and honored.”

As one of her colleagues said about Mrs. Gallant: “Teachers love her, because she respects them, listens to them, and works with them to make sure they succeed.”

Another said: “Yanaiza researches best practices, communicates with anyone and everyone, ... mentors university students, and goes above and beyond, devoting extra hours and days” to her school and her students.”

A third said: “When you are around her, you feel a lot of positive energy focused on doing what’s right for students. Yanaiza’s interactions with students reflect sincere respect, caring, and cultural understanding.”

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 2012 Milken Educator Awards. The program has been administered in Rhode Island since 1990, and there have been 71 Milken Award winners so far in the state.