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N • E • W • S R • E • L • E • A • S • E

Anchorage teacher wins Milken Educator Award

Mike Sterling, a sixth-grade teacher at Sand Lake Elementary School in Anchorage, was awarded a Milken Educator Award during a ceremony at the school on October 12.

“Mike Sterling’s achievement reminds us of the hard work and creativity that outstanding teachers bring to their classrooms,” said Alaska Education Commissioner Roger Sampson, who announced the award winner. “The Alaska educators who have won the prestigious Milken Educator Award represent a larger pool of talented and dedicated teachers and principals who benefit our state’s children every day.”

Sterling will receive \$25,000 with no strings attached from the Milken Family Foundation of Santa Monica, California, during a national education conference in April in Los Angeles. He is one of up to 100 winners this year.

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development created a blue ribbon committee to identify and evaluate Alaska educators for the award, which can include principals as well as teachers. Educators do not nominate themselves. The Milken Family Foundation makes the final selection.

The recipients are chosen for their educational talent, educational accomplishments beyond the classroom, potential for professional and policy leadership, and an engaging and inspiring presence. The awards say, in a very public way, that greatness in education should be recognized, foundation officials have said.

Sterling teaches sixth-grade reading, English, language arts, and social studies and is a partner-teacher in the Japanese Immersion Program. He has been teaching for 20 years.

Students in his classroom are taught how to think critically about the world they live in. Sterling’s students analyze and write about real-world issues and many of his students have published opinion pieces in the local newspaper.

Sterling has tremendous connection with his students. He is consistently chosen by students as the speaker for the completion ceremony at the Sand Lake Immersion Program and the

completion ceremony at Dimond High School. “He always emphasizes perseverance and to never give up on your goals and dreams,” states Anchorage Superintendent Carol Comeau.

Alaska joined the program in 1990, three years after it began. Sixty-two Alaska educators have won awards worth a combined \$1,550,000, the foundation said.

For more information on the Milken Educator Awards, see www.mff.org or call 310-570-4775.

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