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Student Stock Market Pays Dividends, Earns Sarah Compton a \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

Monroe, WI, teacher uses hands-on econ lessons and custom data to increase student success

SANTA MONICA, Calif., (February, 22, 2019)—The student stock market is up and so is student achievement in Sarah Compton's fifth-grade class at Northside Elementary in Monroe, Wisconsin. An engaging project that pays real-world educational dividends, Compton's student stock market teaches critical thinking and economic concepts as students invest an imaginary nest egg and manage their individual portfolios. It's one of several project-based building blocks for Compton, whose lessons are invariably down-to-earth and feature hands-on learning no matter how abstract or elevated the material gets. A data-driven educator, Compton creates individually tailored learning plans within her big set pieces, so each student tackles appropriate challenges that boost growth, confidence and test scores.

Yet it was Compton who got a big lift this morning at a surprise school assembly where she was presented with a Milken Educator Award by Milken Family Foundation Senior Program Director Greg Gallagher and Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction Carolyn Stanford Taylor. An enthusiastic Compton was named a 2018-19 recipient of the national recognition, which comes with an unrestricted \$25,000 cash prize. She is the only Milken Educator Award winner from Wisconsin, and is among the 33 honorees for 2018-19.

The Milken Educator Awards, hailed by *Teacher* magazine as the “Oscars of Teaching,” has been opening minds and shaping futures for over 30 years. Research shows teacher quality is the driving in-school factor behind student growth and achievement. The initiative not only aims to reward great teachers, but to celebrate, elevate and activate those innovators in the classroom who are guiding America’s next generation of leaders. Milken Educators believe, “*The future belongs to the educated.*”

Compton stresses independence and self-reliance in her students, attributes that will prepare them to take advantage of whatever challenges come their way. Always striving to see the big picture, Compton not only uses data to differentiate her students' lessons, she also coaches colleagues through data analysis and individualized instruction planning. She sits on building and district committees and frequently leads professional development on responsive classroom practices, math and literacy.

"Sarah Compton knows that each student has a unique path and interests," said Gallagher. "Helping them get excited about learning is her special gift, and we are proud to welcome her as a Milken Educator."

"Teachers who can build strong, personal relationships with their students are always successful at knowing how to unlock a child's fullest potential," said Stanford Taylor. "Sarah Compton's efforts to tailor learning through choices and relationships are a model for others to follow."

"Sarah is one of the most talented young educators I've ever had the privilege to work with," said shared Monroe District Administrator Rick Waski. "Her ability to use student data to drive personalized, engaging instruction for every child is second to none."

About Milken Educator Sarah Compton

Sarah Compton challenges her fifth-graders at Northside Elementary School in Monroe, Wisconsin, to think critically and dive deep into their learning. In a series of project-based lessons on financial literacy, students explore concepts of spending, saving, sales tax, discounts and interest. Next, they learn about the stock market, including how to choose companies for investment based on data trends and current events. They track an imaginary \$10,000 investment as a group, then move to a friendly competition as individual students try to grow their pretend portfolios. Along the way, students practice computing with large numbers and decimals, calculating percentages, graphing and estimation. Engagement is sky-high, both because of the project's real-world connection and because it offers students options along the way. In another popular unit, students create public service announcements on issues facing today's teens: obesity, texting while driving, high school dropout rates and cyber-bullying. A vibrant classroom presence, Compton is dedicated to maximum growth for students at all levels and provides engaging and relevant instruction. Her students deliver among the highest growth scores in the district.

Compton seeks innovative instructional solutions and is always willing to try something new to spur student achievement, access and equity. A leader for her grade level and within the building, Compton studies data to build individual learning plans for each student and helps other Northside teachers use data to differentiate their instruction. She designs curriculum and creates formative assessments for the district. Compton sits on Northside's leadership committee and has served on district committees for math and literacy. She mentors colleagues in both content-area mastery and assessments, developing a district model to help teachers engage in peer-to-peer support and cross-coaching. Compton frequently leads professional development for the district on responsive classroom practices, math and literacy. She works tirelessly to improve her craft; when Compton speaks during a meeting, the whole room listens.

Committed to Monroe's school community, Compton gets to know every child and family and communicates regularly with parents so they can work together to support students. She is known as a genuine advocate for her students and stresses independence and self-reliance. Compton has made great strides with students with behavioral issues, taking time to relate to them on a personal level and build mutual respect so they know she is on their team. When these students return to Northside after they graduate, she is the first person they want to see.

Compton earned a bachelor's degree in education in 2007 from University of Wisconsin Whitewater and a master's of education in 2011 from University of Wisconsin La Crosse.

More information about Compton, plus links to photos and a video from today's assembly, can be found on the Milken Educator Awards website at <http://www.milkeneducatorawards.org/educators/view/Sarah-Compton>.

Milken Educators are selected in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish. In addition to the \$25,000 prize and public recognition, the honor includes membership in the National Milken Educator Network, a group of more than 2,700 top teachers, principals and specialists dedicated to strengthening education.

In addition to participation in the Milken Educator Network, 2018-19 recipients will attend a Milken Educator Forum in New Orleans from March 21-24, 2019. Educators will have the opportunity to network with their new colleagues and hear from state and federal officials about maximizing their leadership roles to advance educator effectiveness.

More than \$138 million in funding, including \$68 million in individual \$25,000 awards, has been devoted to the overall Awards initiative, which includes powerful professional learning opportunities throughout recipients' careers. Many have gone on to earn advanced degrees and be placed in prominent posts and on state and national education committees.

The Awards alternate yearly between elementary and secondary educators. Unlike most teacher recognition programs, the Milken Educator Award is completely unique: Educators cannot apply for this recognition and do not even know they are under consideration. Candidates are sourced through a confidential selection process and then are reviewed by blue ribbon panels appointed by state departments of education. Those most exceptional are recommended for the Award, with final approval by the Milken Family Foundation.

Past recipients have used their Awards to fund their children's education or their own continuing education. Others have financed dream field trips, established scholarships and even funded the adoption of children.

To get regular updates on the surprise Milken Educator Award events, follow and use the #MilkenAward hashtag on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The Milken Educator Awards tour is on social media at www.facebook.com/milkeneducatorawards, www.twitter.com/milken, www.youtube.com/milkenaward, and <http://instagram.com/milkenfamilyfdn>.

For more information, visit www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org or call MFF at (310) 570-4772.

About the Milken Educator Awards

The very first Milken Educator Awards were presented by the Milken Family Foundation 31 years ago in 1987. The Awards provide public recognition and individual financial rewards of \$25,000 to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and specialists from around the country who are furthering excellence in education. Recipients are heralded in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish.

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