



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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**MADISON CITY SCHOOL SYTEM TEACHER BECOMES SECOND IN FAMILY
TO RECEIVE “EDUCATION OSCAR”**

*Horizon Elementary School Teacher Amara Alexander Receives Prestigious
Milken Educator Award and \$25,000*

Montgomery, Ala. – A Madison City School System educator who strives to present students with a smorgasbord of cross-curricular opportunities is the recipient of one of the nation’s top education awards. Amara Alexander, a sixth-grade science and social studies teacher at Horizon Elementary School, is Alabama’s [2016 Milken Education Awards honoree](#).

The announcement came today during the [Milken Family Foundation’s](#) 30th annual coast-to-coast tour to reward outstanding educators. Alexander becomes the second member of her family to receive the prestigious award as well as an unrestricted \$25,000 financial reward. Her mother, Dr. Tammy Alexander, was named Alabama’s Milken Educator in 1998.

The unsuspecting teacher was bestowed with the “[Education Oscar](#)” at a surprise schoolwide assembly disguised as a school event. Presented by Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley and State Superintendent of Education Michael Sentance, the award honors the exceptional work of educators as a model for the state and nation.

“Amara Alexander is a gifted teacher who passionately explores the creative side of science in the classroom,” said Foley. “Her multidisciplinary approach boosts student engagement, propelling academic achievement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Training our nation’s future leaders in these areas is essential to succeeding in a global economy, and Amara is setting them on the right path. I commend Amara on this well-deserved recognition and look forward to her contributions to the Milken Educator Network.”

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Sentance also extended congratulations to Alexander and commended her for her commitment to excellence. Her students post some of the Madison City School System’s highest scores on assessments.

“[The Milken Educator Award](#) is a direct reflection of Amara Alexander’s passion to generate excitement about science and interest in STEM-related careers among her students,” Sentance said. “By using daily targets, guiding questions and an inquiry-based approach, she keeps her students engaged in the process and promotes important real-world skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.”

Alexander’s students learn about science by dancing, singing, writing songs, researching, designing, building, and teaching their peers. She often lets her students teach while she facilitates the discussion, and works to incorporate organizational skills into her class procedures, such as coaching students on note-taking. For English Language Learners (ELLs), Alexander deftly differentiates curriculum, providing appropriately-leveled materials and grouping students to support the ELLs’ participation in discussions and experiments.

In addition, Alexander strives to build positive relationships with all stakeholders by inviting families, colleagues, and administrators to participate in classroom activities with her students. She is active in Project Lead the Way, leads Horizon’s science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) efforts, and directs the school’s extended-day program. A long-time Girl Scout, Alexander is a cadet leader and meets weekly with middle school girls to discuss issues such as bullying, advocacy, budgeting, and time management.

Alexander is a graduate of Alabama A&M University, where she earned a Bachelor and Master of Science in Elementary Education in 2007 and 2010, respectively.

Each year the [Milken Family Foundation](#) travels across the country surprising teachers, principals, and specialists with \$25,000 awards because they are furthering excellence in education. Since Alabama joined the Milken Educator Awards program in 1998, [34 Alabama educators](#) have received the “[Education Oscar](#)” and a total of \$850,000.

[The Milken Educator Awards](#) recognize teacher leaders, who are innovative and effective, in the early to middle part of their career. This is a rigorous and confidential selection process. Teachers cannot apply for the award. Educators are recommended without their knowledge to the [Milken Family Foundation](#) by an independent blue-ribbon panel appointed by each state’s department of education.

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Awards alternate yearly between elementary and secondary educators. In recognizing these outstanding teachers with \$25,000, the [Foundation](#) hopes to raise public awareness that high-quality teachers are essential to student achievement.

Alexander joins the [Milken Educator Network](#), a nationwide coalition of more than 2,700 top educators who have access to a variety of professional resources to help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools and districts. Click [here](#) for more information on the Milken Educator Awards, or [here](#) to learn more about Alabama’s Milken Educator Awards recipients.

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