FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TUSCALOOSA COUNTY TEACHER WINS “EDUCATION OSCAR”
Walker Elementary School Teacher Krystle Bryant Receives Prestigious
Milken Educator Award and $25,000

Montgomery, Ala. – Today in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the Milken Educator Award to
Walker Elementary School teacher Krystle Bryant. The announcement came during the
28th annual coast-to-coast tour to reward top educators. Bryant never expected the award or
the $25,000 check presented with the prestigious Milken Family Foundation National
Educator Award, the “Education Oscar.”

The unsuspecting teacher from the Tuscaloosa County School System was presented with
the 2014 Milken Educator Award at a surprise schoolwide assembly disguised as a school
event. Presented by Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley, and Dr.
Tommy Bice, State Superintendent of Education, the award honors the exceptional work of
educators as a model for the state and nation.

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The Milken Family Foundation is honoring more than 32 outstanding educators this year and the Milken Educator Award is the nation’s largest teacher recognition program. The entire school gathered to hear the extraordinary news that one of its own would receive an unrestricted $25,000 financial reward.

Bice praised Alabama’s 2014 Milken Educator by saying, “This recognition of Krystle Bryant as a Milken Educator is a direct reflection of her unwavering passion to ensure ALL students have a depth of understanding of science and how that understanding applies to real-world problems needing real-world solutions. She is a role model for what rigorous and relevant instruction looks like in action.”

Bryant is a fifth-grade science teacher who has used her educational talent to effectively implement creative instructional strategies at Walker Elementary School and to provide care and compassion to each of her students.

When her school’s math scores became a focus in 2013, Bryant took it upon herself to enroll in the state’s one-year training for mathematics standards so she could add them to her science curriculum. With her help, the school’s math scores improved on each benchmark in 2014.

She also incorporated reading standards into her science curriculum, thereby teaching students three subjects at once. This dedication to cross-curricular excellence is in addition to her students’ mastery of science. In 2014, 92 percent of her students scored a Level 3 or 4 on the Alabama Science Assessment, which was an increase of 4 percent over the previous year, and 57 percent scored a Level 4. Strategic teaching techniques and creative opportunities are evident in Bryant’s class every day. Students demonstrate their mastery of material through rapping, creative dance and acting out their science objectives.

Bryant is also a valued mentor, sharing her techniques with colleagues and student-teachers as a clinical master teacher. Her colleagues are often in awe of the relationships she has with students. Together with parents, personal goals are set for each student to ensure that they are striving both within and outside of the classroom, and regular contact with parents involves them in their students’ progress.

Each year the Milken Family Foundation travels from coast to coast 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, 32 Alabama educators have received the “Education Oscar” and a total of $800,000.

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The “Education Oscar” recognizes teacher-leaders in the early to middle part of their careers who are innovative and effective. There 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. 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. The award was developed to reward, retain and attract the highest quality K-12 teachers.

Bryant joins the Milken Educator Network, a nationwide coalition of more than 2,600 top educators who have access to a variety of professional resources to help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools and districts.

For more information on the Milken Educator Awards, visit www.mff.org or the Alabama State Department of Education’s website at www.alsde.edu.