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*December 19, 2008*

**HENDERSON EDUCATOR RECEIVES SURPRISE \$25,000 MILKEN EDUCATOR AWARD  
*Sewell Elementary School principal recognized as part of educator awards tour***

**HENDERSON, NV** – Carrie Larson, principal of C.T. Sewell Elementary School in Henderson says she is overwhelmed at being selected as a 2008 Milken National Educator Award recipient. The Award, which comes with an unrestricted cash prize of \$25,000, was presented by Milken Family Foundation Co-Founder Michael Milken and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Keith Rheault on Friday, December 19 during a school-wide assembly overflowing with cheering students, proud colleagues and dignitaries.

In the two and a half years that Carrie Larson has been principal of C.T. Sewell Elementary School, she has led its transformation into a culture of professional collaboration, community involvement and strong academic growth. Maintaining a vision of high expectations and accountability for student success, Larson implemented a host of effective, research-based strategies, including a 90-minute literacy block, inclusion of special education students, before- and after-school interventions, student incentive programs, health fairs and a school uniform policy. She also upgraded library resources and equipped every classroom with multiple computers.

Lacking public funds for an all-day kindergarten program, Larson created one by writing and receiving a grant. Since then, Sewell's kindergarteners have improved their criterion-referenced test (CRT) scores in reading and math by 18 to 24 percent. Under Larson's leadership, Sewell advanced from a "Needs Improvement" status to "High-Achieving" on Nevada's Adequate Yearly Progress report, with students increasing CRT scores by 20.5 percent in math and 19 percent in reading. Sewell is one of only eight schools in the district designated as Empowerment Schools, whose innovative and forward-thinking leadership have earned them the autonomy to make certain site-based decisions.

Larson has held several positions since joining CCSD 12 years ago. She was an ELL facilitator at Rex Bell Elementary School and also served as assistant principal at David M. Cox, Ullis Newton and Cynthia Cunningham Elementary Schools prior to being named principal of Sewell E.S. in January 2006. In addition, Larson mentors leadership candidates for the district and is a member of several school and district-level committees. She has presented at state and local conferences and served as an instructor at the Nevada State College and the University of Phoenix, where she was named department chair.

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Hailed as “the Oscars of teaching” by *Teacher Magazine*, the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards were conceived to recognize the importance of outstanding educators and encourage talented young people to enter teaching. Unlike most teaching awards, the Milken Educator Awards have no formal nomination or application process. Each year exceptional teachers, principals and specialists—recommended without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by each state’s department of education—are stunned with the news of their awards.

The Milken Educator Award recipients are honored in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish. From coast-to-coast, Milken Educators point to their Award as a pivotal professional milestone. “I move forward in my career with a renewed energy and vision for excellence,” shared a recent honoree. Another offered, “One year later, I have yet to ‘come down’ from the honor of my life. You will never know how much the Award has changed my life.”

This year’s honorees will propel the ranks of recipients to more than 2,300 with financial prizes topping \$60 million. Established in 1985, the Award alternates yearly between elementary and secondary educators. The 2008 recipients will receive their \$25,000 checks during the Milken National Education Conference held April 17-19 in Los Angeles. They will also join the Milken Educator Network, a group of distinguished educators whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

Candidates for the Milken Educator Awards are selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by effective instructional practices and student learning results in the classroom and school;
- Exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom that provide models of excellence for the profession;
- Strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

For more information about the Milken Educator Awards and the surprise notification events held throughout the United States, please contact the Milken Family Foundation at (310) 570-4775 or visit [www.mff.org](http://www.mff.org). Also check out the Web site to follow news from the road through the Foundation’s National Notifications blog, Facebook and Twitter.

*Lowell Milken has been an education reform leader for three decades. In addition to creating the Milken Educator Awards to recognize teacher talent, he established the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)<sup>™</sup> as a complementary initiative to develop more highly effective teachers through comprehensive, research-based reform. TAP has expanded to over 200 campuses since its launch in 1999, impacting 72,000 students and 6,200 teachers. In 2005 Lowell established the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, an independent public charity to operate TAP with the goal of a quality teacher for every classroom in America.*

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