

# OMAHA WESTSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEACHER RECEIVES NATIONAL EDUCATOR AWARD



Garret Higginbotham, an Omaha Westside Community Schools teacher, received a national educator award today and \$25,000 during a surprise presentation at his school.

Higginbotham, an Underwood Hills Focus School fifth grade teacher, received the 2010 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. Gov. Dave Heineman, Education Commissioner Roger Breed and Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Family Foundation, presented the award.

Underwood Hills Focus School is a cooperative venture with Westside Community Schools, Omaha Public Schools and Elkhorn Public Schools.

Higginbotham analyzes data to guide his instructional decisions and integrates academic content and technology into his teaching in ways that engage students. According to his colleagues, Higginbotham has a firm foundation in educational theory and strategies as well as the state's academic content standards. He uses instructional materials and other resources to ensure his students meet the state's standards and employs instructional strategies that help each of his students find success in his classroom. Higginbotham uses test results to determine the skill level of each student and to learn which individual students need additional instruction and provides enrichment for students who have mastered those skills. And he does this daily. Higginbotham uses blogs, blackboards and other technology to reach his students and works with school staff, sharing his knowledge of technology.

Higginbotham received a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a Master's Degree in Education from Peru State College and a Master's Degree in Administration and Supervision from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He received the BRAVO! Teaching Award from Westside Community Schools Foundation in June and is a member of a number of professional education organizations.

The Milken Family Foundation has been recognizing teachers across the country since 1987. The program provides public recognition and financial rewards to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other educational professionals to attract, retain and motivate talented people. Higginbotham is Nebraska's 37<sup>th</sup> Milken educator award winner. Higginbotham and others from across the country will participate in the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference.