



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Bellevue West High School Math Teacher Receives \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

BIO, PHOTOS AND VIDEO:

<https://www.milkeneducatorawards.org/educators/view/jacob-eitzen>

There are few things Jacob Eitzen (EYE-tzen) loves more than his beloved Nebraska Cornhuskers and mathematics. In his AP Statistics and Algebra 2 classes at Bellevue West High School, Eitzen goes beyond the traditional boundaries of instruction by infusing Husker trivia and game day stats into the mathematical concepts he teaches, creating an engaging and relatable learning experience for his students. Today, that creativity in the classroom was highlighted as he accepted a national [Milken Educator Award](#). The Award comes with a \$25,000 cash prize that Eitzen can use however he wishes.

Milken Educator Awards Vice President Stephanie Bishop and Nebraska Commissioner of Education Dr. Brian Maher surprised Eitzen with the prestigious honor before enthusiastic students, colleagues, dignitaries and media. Bestowed by the [Milken Family Foundation](#), the Award recognizes outstanding K-12 educators for their excellence and leadership in the profession.

“Jacob Eitzen’s story is one of passion, innovation and commitment,” said Bishop, who is also a 2001 Milken Educator from Virginia. “Through his ability to connect with students using creative teaching methods, coupled with his leadership roles within the school and community, Jacob creates a positive and impactful learning environment for all. Through his unwavering dedication, Jacob not only imparts knowledge but also instills a love for learning that extends far beyond the classroom.”

Hailed as the “Oscars of Teaching,” the Awards will honor up to 75 recipients across the country in 2023-24 as part of the Milken Family Foundation’s Journey to the 3,000<sup>th</sup> Milken Educator. 2023-24 will reach \$75 million in individual financial prizes spanning the length of the initiative and more than \$144 million invested in the Milken Educator Award national network overall, empowering recipients to “Celebrate, Elevate, and Activate” the K-12 profession and inspiring young, capable people to pursue teaching as a career.

“Jacob Eitzen really embraces the concept of finding ways to help every student,” said Nebraska Commissioner of Education Dr. Brian Maher. “His leadership in identifying students who need help in the district through technology and his ability to help teachers reach those students exemplifies what it means to be a teacher. We are grateful to have him teaching in Nebraska.”

The Milken Educator Award is not a lifetime achievement honor. Recipients are sought out while early to mid-career for what they have achieved – and for the promise of what they will accomplish given the resources and opportunities afforded by the

Award.

### **More About Jacob Eitzen**

**Fosters Connections and Community:** A leader both within his school and community, Eitzen is dedicated to forging connections with his students and their families. His creative use of data is evident in every aspect of his teaching approach. He leverages classroom statistics to craft targeted lesson plans, ensuring that all students receive the support they need to thrive. Eitzen trains his colleagues to utilize the online intervention program *Edmentum* to monitor, track and support students scoring below the 20th percentile on annual benchmark assessments. Additionally, he has instituted a data-driven tardy system, holding students accountable for their attendance and fostering a culture of responsibility.

**Approach to Teaching Yields Results:** Since taking the helm of AP Statistics, the class has seen remarkable growth in enrollment, expanding from 20 students to nearly 80 each year. Over half of the students in Eitzen's statistics class consistently achieve a passing score of 3 or higher on the AP exam.

**Community-Centered Teacher Leader:** Beyond his love for Husker football and mind-bending math equations, Eitzen's dedication to learning and leadership extends to his community. He serves as the youth pastor at his local church, demonstrating a dedication to nurturing not only academic growth but also the personal development of those around him. Eitzen sponsors the school's National Honor Society and Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapters. His leadership is also evident in his role as head of Bellevue West's MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) team. This framework seamlessly integrates data and classroom instruction to maximize student achievement in math and reading. Eitzen's commitment to continuous growth and excellence is also highlighted by his recent participation in the Bellevue Public School Leadership Academy.

**Education:** Eitzen received a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln in 2014 and a master's degree in secondary mathematics in 2018 from the University of Nebraska – Omaha.

### **More about the Milken Educator Award Journey: "The Future Belongs to the Educated"**

- The honorees attend an all-expenses-paid Milken Educator Awards Forum in Los Angeles in June 2024, where they will network with their new colleagues as well as veteran Milken Educators and other education leaders about how to broaden their impact on K-12 education.
- Honorees receive powerful mentorship opportunities for expanded leadership roles that strengthen education practice and policy. Milken Friends Forever (MFF) pairs a new recipient with a veteran Milken Educator mentor; the Expanding MFF Resource and Explorer Program fosters individual veteran Milken Educator partnerships around a specific topic area; and Activating Milken Educators (AME) promotes group collaboration in and across states to tackle pressing educational needs.
- Veteran Milken Educators demonstrate a wide range of leadership roles at state, national and international levels.
- The \$25,000 cash Award is unrestricted. Recipients have used the money in diverse ways. Some recipients have spent the funds on their children's or their own continuing education, financing dream field trips, establishing scholarships, and even adopting children.

Follow the Milken Educator Awards tour and use the **#MEA3K** and **#MilkenAward** hashtags on: [Facebook](#) (MilkenEducatorAwards)| [X](#) (Milken)| [YouTube](#) (MilkenAward)| [Instagram](#) (MilkenFamilyFdn)| [LinkedIn](#) (MilkenFamilyFdn)| [TikTok](#) (MilkenAward).

Visit [MilkenEducatorAwards.org](https://MilkenEducatorAwards.org) or call the Milken Family Foundation at [\(310\) 570-4772](tel:3105704772) for more information.

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### **About the Milken Educator Awards**

The first Milken Educator Awards were presented by the Milken Family Foundation in 1987. Created by Lowell Milken, 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. The Milken Family

Foundation celebrates more than 40 years of elevating education in America and around the world. Learn more at [MFF.org](http://MFF.org).

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