



## NEWS RELEASE

For additional information, please contact David Jespersen by phone (402-471-4537) or email ([david.jespersen@nebraska.gov](mailto:david.jespersen@nebraska.gov))

OCTOBER 15, 2019

### **Juggling Science, English and Technology Earns Teacher Lyndsay Hartmann a \$25,000 Milken Educator Award**

As a middle school science and English teacher at St. Patrick Catholic School in Lincoln, NE, Lyndsay Hartmann is juggling a lot of balls, sometimes literally. Doing whatever it takes to focus students' attention, Hartmann juggles during her science class to teach students about changing states of energy. And it's an apt metaphor for Hartmann's teaching methods as well. She's not only responsible for multiple class subjects, but also interweaves her lessons with history and literature, aided by technology. Hartmann's energetic, multi-curricular teaching style not only keeps students engaged, it's also working. Test scores for her students rose more than 20% in science, vocabulary and reading.

But it was Hartmann who was uplifted this morning at a surprise school assembly where she was presented with a Milken Educator Award by Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley and Nebraska Commissioner of Education Dr. Matthew L Blomstedt. An elated Hartmann was named a 2019-20 recipient of the national recognition, which comes with an unrestricted \$25,000 cash prize. She is the only Milken Educator Award winner from Nebraska this year, and is among up to 40 honorees for 2019-20.

The Milken Educator Awards, hailed by Teacher magazine as the "Oscars of Teaching" has been opening minds and shaping futures for over 30 years. Research shows teacher quality is the driving in-school factor behind student growth and achievement. The initiative not only aims to reward great teachers, but to celebrate, elevate and activate those innovators in the classroom who are guiding America's next generation of leaders. Milken Educators believe, "The future belongs to the educated."

Hartmann is hastening that future for her learners by prioritizing STEM studies side-by-side with English Language Arts in a potent amalgam of cross-disciplinary critical thinking. Promoting hands-on learning, Hartmann empowers students to self-teach in some situations while also serving as a mentor and leader for other teachers. Hartmann is curriculum leader at the school and district-wide as part of the teacher advisory committee. She extends her enthusiasm to extracurricular activities as well, founding a coding club and a student mentor program to help younger elementary students with reading difficulties. A favorite of students and an advocate for strong teacher-parent communications, Hartmann creates an authentic bond with colleagues, community and students alike.

"Lyndsay Hartmann knows that the power of science and technology coupled with the gift of language gives students the tools they need to succeed," said Foley. "Lyndsay's multidisciplinary outlook, creative problem-solving approach and strong bonds with her students and colleagues are part and parcel of the inspirational leadership we seek in our Milken Educators."

“Lyndsay exemplifies the word teacher,” said Blomstedt. “From her work in the classroom to her leadership with teacher mentoring she is always pushing others to learn and to grow. She has touched countless lives and has meant the world to her students, her peers, her school, and her community.”

“Mrs. Hartmann provides sound instructional practices, exhibits a strong knowledge of the subject matter, and displays passion for the teaching and learning process,” said Diocese of Lincoln Superintendent Dr. Matthew Hecker. “Mrs. Hartmann is an invaluable member of the St. Patrick School family. She works tirelessly to develop engaging lessons for the students and takes particular care in preparing students for future success. She is a leader among the staff members and helps to maintain a culture of strong values, positivity, and professionalism.”

#### About Milken Educator Lyndsay Hartmann

Lyndsay Hartmann teaches both English and science to middle school students at St. Patrick Catholic School in Lincoln, Nebraska, which may explain why cross-curricular education features so prominently in her classroom. For a project on historical fiction, students read books set in the same era they’re studying in social studies, then write poems and letters from the point of view of the characters. Hartmann developed St. Patrick’s annual science fair and uses the projects to teach the scientific method through hands-on learning, including guided inquiry, problem-solving, interpreting results, and oral and written presentation skills. Students guide class discussions, sitting in a circle with their teacher observing in the background. Hartmann juggles balls to demonstrate different types of energy, with students shouting out “Kinetic! Potential!” as the balls rise and fall. Hartmann’s instructional methods work: Her students’ test scores in science, vocabulary and reading rise 20% or more between sixth and eighth grades.

Hartmann founded St. Patrick’s peer mentor program and coaches new teachers through observations and meetings. A member of the teacher advisory committee, she formulated several facets of the strategic plan to help the school and parish meet short- and long-term educational, financial and service goals. Hartmann helped develop the diocese’s English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum and organized a group book study during professional development meetings. She serves as St. Patrick’s link with the diocese’s technology office, uses SMARTboards and iPads in her classroom, and is always available to help colleagues with technology integration issues. Hartmann organizes the Learning Fair, St. Patrick’s biggest annual fundraiser, and coordinates the meaningful eighth-grade promotion ceremony as students move to high school.

Hartmann encouraged students to enter National Geographic’s GeoChallenge, taking a St. Patrick’s team to the regional level. She founded an afterschool coding club and launched the Reading Mentor program, pairing middle schoolers with struggling readers in kindergarten and first grade. Hartmann maintains an open line of communication with parents to keep them up to date on what is happening in the classroom with their children. She attends students’ sporting events and activities and creates trusting, authentic relationships with the children she teaches. High school students often look for her when they visit. Even in middle school, Hartmann spends a lot of time talking about college readiness and takes eighth-graders to the University of Nebraska to meet with college advisors. St. Patrick’s students may not be thinking about attending college when they start middle school, but after a year absorbing Hartmann’s high expectations, they see college as a realistic possibility.

Hartmann graduated from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 2013

More information about Hartmann, plus links to photos and a video from today’s assembly, can be found on the Milken Educator Awards website at <https://www.milkeneducatorawards.org/educators/view/Lyndsay-Hartmann>.

Milken Educators are selected in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish. In addition to the \$25,000 prize and public recognition, the honor includes membership in the National Milken Educator Network, a group of more than 2,700 top teachers, principals, and specialists dedicated to strengthening education.

In addition to participation in the Milken Educator Network, 2019-20 recipients will attend a Milken Educator Forum in Indianapolis from March 26-28, 2020 where they will network with their new colleagues and exchange ideas with state and federal leaders on the future of education. In addition, the Milken Educator Awards’ “Why Not Us” program will pair each 2019-20 recipient with a veteran Milken Educator mentor to explore and prepare for expanded leadership roles that strengthen education practice and policy.

More than \$140 million in funding, including \$70 million in individual \$25,000 awards, has been devoted to the overall Awards initiative, which includes powerful professional development opportunities throughout recipients' careers. Many have gone on to earn advanced degrees and be placed in prominent posts and on state and national education committees.

The Awards alternate yearly between elementary and secondary educators. Unlike most teacher recognition programs, the Milken Educator Award is completely unique: Educators cannot apply for this recognition and do not even know they are under consideration. Candidates are sourced through a confidential selection process and then are reviewed by blue ribbon panels appointed by state departments of education. Those most exceptional are recommended for the Award, with final selection made by the Milken Family Foundation. The cash award is unrestricted. Recipients have used the money in diverse ways; for instance, on their children's or their own continuing education, financing dream field trips, establishing scholarships, and even on the adoption of children.

To get regular updates on the surprise Milken Educator Award events, follow and use the #MilkenAward hashtag on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Everyone is encouraged to watch the tour at [www.facebook.com/milkeneducatorawards](http://www.facebook.com/milkeneducatorawards), [www.twitter.com/milken](http://www.twitter.com/milken), [www.youtube.com/milkenaward](http://www.youtube.com/milkenaward) and [www.instagram.com/milkenfamilyfdn](http://www.instagram.com/milkenfamilyfdn).

For more information, visit [www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org](http://www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org) or call MFF at (310) 570-4772.

#### About the Milken Educator Awards

The very first Milken Educator Awards were presented by the Milken Family Foundation in 1987. 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.

# # #

####

*David Jespersen*  
*Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Education*  
*402-471-4537*  
*david.jespersen@nebraska.gov*  
*@NDE\_News*