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Milken Family Foundation Surprises Pocatello High School Teacher with \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

Highland High School's Dane Beorchia among more than 60 recipients nationwide, second in Idaho

Oprah Winfrey congratulates Milken Educators in heartwarming video message as 'light in this world'

For full bio, photos and video, visit:

<https://www.milkeneducatorawards.org/educators/view/dane-beorchia>

Pocatello, Idaho (March 18, 2022) — Today in a surprise assembly, Dane Beorchia, a career and technical education teacher (CTE) at Highland High School, received a \$25,000 Milken Educator Award for his excellence and innovation in education. Beorchia built a health career and technical program from the ground up and led the effort for his students to become certified for dual enrollment with local universities and technical schools, while making the most difficult content available to every student, entry-level and advanced.

Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley and Idaho State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra surprised Beorchia with the honor before cheering students, colleagues, state and local officials, and the media. Beorchia joins another Pocatello/Chubbuck School District 25 recipient, Tiffany Lemos, who was surprised earlier today in Chubbuck. Both are among more than 60 educators to receive the recognition during the 2021-22 school year, and the only two from Idaho. They mark the first two Milken Awards recipients in the district.

Hailed as the “Oscars of Teaching,” the Milken Educator Awards celebrate, elevate and activate the American teaching profession and inspire young, capable people to join it.

“The pandemic shifted the way we approach and think about education, and Dane Beorchia pivoted with innovative teaching methods that provided exceptional learning experiences for students,” commented Dr. Foley, who herself is a 1994 Milken Educator from Indiana. “His ability to create a career and technical curriculum, double its size and maintain its success all during a time of uncertainty, demonstrates his flexibility, innovation and mastery of his profession.”

The Milken Educator Award is not a lifetime achievement honor. Recipients are heralded while early to mid-career for what they have achieved — and for the promise of what they will accomplish given the resources and opportunities inherent in the Award.

“Dane Beorchia exemplifies a great teacher’s ability to not only convey difficult, important information but to help students envision and create their futures,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “The Health Professions Pathway he built at Highland High has more than doubled in size, and an amazing 100 percent of his students pass the Workplace Readiness and Medical Terminology Dual Credit exams. He is a fantastic choice for the prestigious Milken Educator Award, and I am so proud that our state has two Milken winners this year – two of only 60

honored throughout the nation,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “Even more remarkably, both of Idaho’s winners teach in the same school district. Congratulations to Pocatello/Chubbuck Superintendent Douglas Howell and his team.”

“Today is a remarkable day for the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District 25 and I would like to commend Tiffany Lemos and Dane Beorchia for this recognition,” said Dr. Douglas Howell, PCSD 25 Superintendent. “Walking into Tiffany’s classroom for the first time, I immediately noticed how welcoming of an environment she was able to create for her learners. Dane has an innate ability to make immediate connections and engage in a meaningful way with his learners. Both of these outstanding educators set the stage for a true learning experience every day. To have two of our outstanding educators recognized for this prestigious award right here in Southeastern Idaho is a testament to the power of our district’s focus on Visible Learning, where learners take an active role in their own learning every day,” he said.

Oprah, a longtime education advocate, shared her congratulations to this year’s winners [in a video message shared earlier this week](#) thanking “the most incredible educators around the country” and acknowledging her deep appreciation for the “tireless work” they do.

More about Dane Beorchia

Innovation: Beorchia gives his students more than knowledge—he instills in them a clear vision of their futures by teaching both entry-level and advanced career and technical education classes in a state-of-the-art classroom. He implements career days, industry expert guest speakers, college visits and opportunities for job shadowing. He continued to do so on Zoom during the height of the pandemic. His classes are some of the most rigorous at Highland High School, but incredibly effective as the program has more than doubled in size since its inception.

Inspiration through Leadership: When the pandemic emptied classrooms, Beorchia embraced online and then hybrid instruction, adjusting the curriculum so students could successfully learn whether they were in the classroom or not. He provided guidance for his colleagues in regard to lesson plans and virtual instruction strategy, as well as stepped in as a mentor to a substitute teacher who began when his colleague left for maternity leave one week prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year. He also mentors new teachers and sits on the district’s Health Professions advisory board and CTE team, continuing to improve the program he helped establish. In addition to his classroom leadership, Beorchia fosters lasting relationships with students beyond academics as he serves as an athletic coach for football, basketball and golf.

Education: Beorchia earned bachelor’s degrees from Idaho State University in health education in 2010 and secondary education in 2011. He is also a certified children’s psychiatric rehabilitation specialist, pharmacy technician and personal trainer.

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

For more information on fellow Idaho Milken Educator Tiffany Lemos visit <https://www.milkeneducatorawards.org/educators/view/tiffany-lemos>.

More about the Milken Educator Awards: *“The future belongs to the educated.”*

Along with the financial prize, Milken Educator Award recipients join the national Milken Educator Network, a group of more than 2,800 top teachers, principals and specialists. The network serves as a rich resource for fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others dedicated to excellence in education.

- The honorees will also attend an all-expenses-paid Milken Educator Awards Forum, where they will network with their new colleagues as well as veteran Milken Educators and other education leaders about how to increase their impact on K-12 education. In addition, they will learn about how to become involved in the Milken Friends Forever (MFFs) mentoring program, in which freshman Milken Educators receive personalized coaching

and support from a Milken Educator veteran on ways to elevate their instructional practice and take an active role in educational leadership, policy and practice.

- Over the years, more than \$140 million in funding, including \$70 million for the individual cash awards, has been devoted to the overall Milken Awards initiative, which includes powerful professional development opportunities throughout recipients' careers.
- Veteran Milken Educators frequently go on to serve in leadership roles at state, national and international levels.
- "We find you. You don't find us!" Unlike most teacher recognition programs, the Milken Educator Awards initiative has no formal nomination or application process. Candidates are sourced through a confidential selection process and then reviewed by blue ribbon panels in each state. The most exceptional candidates are recommended for the award, with final selection made by the Milken Family Foundation.
- The \$25,000 cash award is unrestricted. Recipients have used the money in diverse ways. For instance, some have spent the funds on their children's or their own continuing education, financing dream field trips, establishing scholarships, and even adopting children.

To get regular updates on the surprise Milken Educator Award events or to watch the award events unfold, follow and use the #MilkenAward hashtag on [Facebook](#) (@MilkenEducatorAwards), [Twitter](#) (@Milken), [YouTube](#) (/MilkenAward), [Instagram](#) (MilkenFamilyFdn), and [TikTok](#) (@MilkenAward).

For more information, visit MilkenEducatorAwards.org or call the Milken Family Foundation at (310) 570-4772.

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About the Milken Educator Awards

The 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. The initiative was created by the Milken Family Foundation, which celebrates 40 years of elevating education in America and around the world. Learn more at MFF.org.