



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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WEST MEMPHIS: Fifth- and sixth-grade teacher Tracy Valentine had no idea the school assembly at Bragg Elementary in the West Memphis School District was in her honor today, but it was. Valentine received the 2010 Milken Educator Award at the surprise announcement.

Governor Mike Beebe, Arkansas Education Commissioner Tom W. Kimbrell and Milken Family Foundation representative Gary Stark, president and chief executive officer of the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, all took part in the ceremony. During the assembly, they presented Valentine with a mock check for \$25,000. She will receive the real one when she attends the national awards ceremony for the Milken Educators in the spring.

Valentine has worked as an educator for eight years, and has been teaching at Bragg Elementary since 2006. Colleagues commend Valentine for her ability to raise student achievement and especially her work with children from more challenging backgrounds. The extra attention to these students' progress almost always enables them to move from below grade level to grade level performance. Valentine holds an associate's degree in elementary education from Shelby State Community College, a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Memphis and a master's in education from Union University. She also is Nationally Board Certified and has attended the Arkansas Leadership Academy Teacher institute.

The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.