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For Immediate Release

## Cedar Rapids Teacher Receives \$25,000 Milken Award

(Des Moines, Iowa) – October 7, 2004 – A Cedar Rapids teacher today received a 2004 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. Greg O’Connell, an elementary educator from Grant Wood Elementary School, learned of the honor during a surprise announcement made in person by Jane Foley of the Milken Family Foundation and Judy Jeffrey, interim director of the Iowa Department of Education. The Milken Educator honor carries with it a \$25,000 financial award, to be used at the recipient’s discretion.

O’Connell earned the honor in part because of his dedication to continuous improvement for both his students as well as his own professional development, and for his leadership activities at both the school building and district levels. O’Connell actively searches for the most updated research so he can implement best practices and differentiated instruction to help his students. They in turn consistently show strong proficiency and academic growth. In addition to serving on a district curriculum committee and as a PTA officer, he is involved with after-school programs and is a behavior management trainer. O’Connell earned the Scott Foresman National Teacher Award in 1999.

O’Connell has taught at Grant Wood Elementary for nine years. He graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a bachelor’s degree in education and a master’s degree in education administration. Previous Milken winners from Cedar Rapids include Mary Wilczynski from Kennedy High School in 1995.

O’Connell is one of two Iowa educators receiving the Milken Educator Award for 2004. The other recipient will be notified in a separate surprise announcement later today.

A blue ribbon committee appointed by the Iowa Department of Education selects the Milken Educator recipients in a confidential process that does not include a nomination or application.

O’Connell and the other Iowa winner will be presented their \$25,000 awards during ceremonies at the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference in Washington DC in May 2005. A total of 100 educators in 47 states will receive a 2004 Milken Educator Award. The award goes to elementary educators one year, followed by secondary educators the next. ###