



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pennsylvania Teacher Named Milken Educator Award Recipient, Receives \$25,000 Award

Slippery Rock, PA – Secretary of Education Pedro A. Rivera today joined students, teachers, and administrators at Slippery Rock High School to surprise educator Melanie Cole with the 2017 Milken Educator Award and a \$25,000 check.

Melanie Cole, Transition Coordinator and Special Education Teacher at Slippery Rock High School, has transformed the school district's culture and climate, and has championed her students to succeed through postgraduate career placements. She serves as the National Honor Society coordinator and runs campaigns raising funds and awareness for autism and special education inclusion.

"Melanie's expertise and dedication as a special education teacher have made a profound impact on the lives of her students, and this award serves as a testament to her character, perseverance, and commitment to the teaching profession," said Secretary Rivera.

Melanie is the only educator to earn this distinction in Pennsylvania this year.

For more than 30 years, the Milken Foundation has recognized outstanding teachers throughout the nation, and to date, has bestowed the Milken Educator Award on more than 2,700 educators. Each award recipient receives an unrestricted \$25,000 award as well as continued networking and professional development opportunities.

"The goal for special education teachers is to ensure their students' progress through school successfully with access to the same opportunities as their peers: to be educated and develop life skills that ready them for college or a career," said Dr. Jane Foley, Senior Vice President of the Milken Educator Awards. "We applaud Melanie Cole for creating a culture of inclusion and understanding for all students in her school and community. She's 'all-in' and we are excited to witness the impact her vision and can-do attitude will have on the state and the nation as a future leader in special education."

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