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## OPS teacher receives 2022 Kentucky Milken Award

By Karah Wilson Messenger-Inquirer  
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Third-grade teacher Charlotte Buskill celebrates with her students as they gather around her after winning the \$25,000 Kentucky Milken Educator Award on Thursday at Newton Parrish Elementary School.

Photo by Alan Warren, Messenger-Inquirer | [awarren@messenger-inquirer.com](mailto:awarren@messenger-inquirer.com)

Newton Parrish Elementary School third-grade teacher Charlotte Buskill thought Thursday's assembly was going to be for student recognition, but little did she know she would be receiving \$25,000 and a Milken Educator Award.

"I am completely overwhelmed. This is such an honor," Buskill said. "It hasn't sunk in yet."

Buskill said the first thing she was going to do was celebrate the award with her students.

"This is what it's all about and I love them so much," she said. "I love all of my students and I'm excited to celebrate with them to show them hard work really does pay off."



Coming from a family of educators, Buskill said receiving this award shows the work of teachers she's had in her life.

"I'm dyslexic and that's been part of my story. Learning wasn't always easy," she said. "My mom is an educator and my parents always pushed me to be the best I can be. Every single teacher along the way has put me to where I'm at today."

Buskill is the only educator in Kentucky to receive the award this year, adding her name to the list of 60 recipients the state has had since joining the Milken Educator Awards program in 1993. She is also only one of 40 educators to receive the award for the 2022-23 academic year.

The last Milken Educator Award recipient that Owensboro Public Schools had was in 2012 and OPS superintendent Matthew Constant said the district can never tire from honoring teachers.

"They are the lifeblood of our humanity," he said. "At any turn that we can honor a teacher for doing their mission, we need to do that."

Constant said Buskill delivers a mission that is unbelievable every day.

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"Through her years with us, we have noticed the care that she has for her students, but also the expectation that she has," he said. "We need both of those to have really good teaching. ... Mrs. Buskill delivers both of those flawlessly and in a way that her kids receive it very well and do very well."

Aside from her regular classroom duties, Buskill has served on the Newton Parrish Teacher Lighthouse Team and committees for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), site-based decision-making and the district's science curriculum committee.

Buskill currently mentors student teachers and researches best practices, freely sharing ideas, information and innovative instructional strategies with other educators. She is the leader of the school's STEM club and took students to Lexington for the school's first trip to the state STEM competition.

Buskill received a bachelors of science in early childhood education from Pennsylvania State University in 2016 and a master of arts in literacy education from Western Kentucky University in 2020.

Jane Foley, senior vice president for the Milken Family Foundation, said the organization believes Buskill represents the top 1% of educators in the nation.

“At the Milken Foundation, we’re looking for very specific qualities in educators that tell us that they represent national excellence, and for Charlotte, she has amazing practices in her classroom,” Foley said. “She transforms her classroom into a whole environment the first semester and has students decide how they want to transform the classroom in the second semester.”



Foley said the Milken Family Foundation looks for “unsung heroes.” This is the first award that Buskill has been given in regards to education.

“She is early- to mid-career. This is not a lifetime achievement award,” she said. “We know that she has decades ahead of her to make contributions to education.”

The Milken Educator Awards was established in 1987 and were designed with the goal to “celebrate, elevate and activate” the K-12 profession and inspire more people to become educators.

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**Karah Wilson**

