

## **Trist Principal Receives 2011 Milken Family Foundation Educator Award**

Denise Pritchard, Principal of Trist Middle School in Meraux, was surprised Tuesday morning when visitors to her school brought news that she was to receive the 2011 Milken Family Foundation Educator Award. Dr. Gary Stark, representing the Foundation, and Ms. Ollie Tyler, Acting State Superintendent of Education, presented Pritchard with the prestigious award and a \$25,000 cash prize.

Acting State School Superintendent Ollie Tyler, in announcing Pritchard's award, said that Pritchard was singled out as this year's lone Louisiana recipient for the national award due to the "gains Trist has made under her leadership." Pritchard, a 22-year educator, took the helm at Trist in 2009-2010, and since that time, the School Performance Score for Trist has risen nearly 25%, from 88.3 in 2009 to 109.9 in 2011. Teachers at Trist credit these gains to Pritchard's "can-do" attitude and move toward data-driven instruction. Tyler also complemented the entire school district, noting that it was one of only 14 school districts out of 70 in the state to make the state's School District Honor Roll with its recent "B" rating.

The Milken Educator Awards were established by Lowell Milken in 1987 to publicly recognize educators across the country and to encourage talented and creative people to choose teaching as a career. Milken is also creator of TAP: the Teacher and Student Advancement Program. "There are annual awards for outstanding athletes and movie and television stars, and the Milken Family Foundation considers educators just as, if not more important, and deserving of awards also," said Stark. The criteria for selection as a Milken Educator include:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by instructional practices
- Exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom
- Contributions to the education community
- Strong long-range potential for professional leadership, and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues, and the community.

In addition to the cash prize, Pritchard will also receive an all-expenses paid trip to Los Angeles to participate in an Education Forum aimed at strategies for advancing teacher effectiveness.

Superintendent of St. Bernard Schools Doris Voitier said Pritchard was most deserving of the award because of her leadership style and the improvement initiatives underway at the school. Voitier said the award was a great complement to Pritchard, her staff, students, and parents and to the entire school system as well. Pritchard also gave credit for the award to her staff and students. "We have an incredible staff that goes above and beyond in the classroom, doing whatever it takes for students to be successful, and our students and their parents are wonderful partners in this process," she said.