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**INDIANA
DEPARTMENT of
EDUCATION**

**Mike Braun, Governor
Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education**

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Hancock County Educator Surprised with \$25,000 National Milken Educator Award

***New Palestine Elementary School Principal Recognized for Creating a
Strong Culture of Learning and Achievement***

NEW PALESTINE, Ind. – Indiana Governor Mike Braun, Secretary of Education Dr. Katie Jenner, and the [Milken Family Foundation](#) today surprised Kayleigh Fosnow, a principal at New Palestine Elementary School (NPES), with the prestigious Milken Educator Award – which comes with a prize of \$25,000 from the foundation.

“Principal Kayleigh Fosnow is a true leader, setting the example for her building and fostering an environment defined by learning, growth, and achievement,” said Governor Mike Braun. “We are proud to add another outstanding Indiana educator to the prestigious list of Milken awardees, and look forward to seeing the impact that Principal Fosnow continues to have throughout her career.”

The Milken Educator Awards celebrate, elevate, and activate the American teaching profession and inspire young, capable people to join it. Educators are not aware of their candidacy for the Award and are sought out while early to mid-career for what they have achieved — and for the promise of what they will accomplish given the resources and opportunities afforded by the Award.

“Having started her career in the classroom, Principal Fosnow is very intentional about creating trust and connections with students, families, and teachers alike that maximize each student’s academic success,” said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education. “This includes meeting with teachers every week to look at the data, celebrate wins, and identify areas where students may need additional support. Through this approach, students at New Palestine Elementary School are achieving impressive results in both reading and math, and their model is helping other schools and district leaders to improve outcomes for students.”

This data-driven approach is at the heart of the SOAR to Excellence program, launched by Fosnow, which includes weekly meetings with teachers focused on data and improvement. In just a short time, the results speak for themselves. In 2025, nearly 64% of NPES students were proficient in English/language arts, and nearly 74% were proficient in math, as measured by ILEARN. These results place NPES students more than 20 percentage points higher than the state average.

NPES students also achieved a pass rate of nearly 96% on the IREAD assessment in 2025. Literacy specialists, teachers, and interventionists have implemented Heggerty, which is a curriculum focused on phonics and aligned to the science of reading. Kindergarten and first-grade students receive daily instruction on phonemic awareness, and students who are struggling with foundational skills receive phonics instruction twice daily.

“Kayleigh Fosnow leads with purpose, passion, and an unwavering commitment to academic success,” said Dr. Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Educator Awards and a 1994 Indiana Milken Educator herself. “She sparks a genuine love of learning in her students at New Palestine, and the data-driven initiatives she has implemented have not only increased student achievement, but have also elevated the school as a model of excellence. We are proud to welcome Kayleigh into the Milken Educator Network.”

In addition to a strong focus on data, Fosnow has also employed an all-hands-on-deck approach to student learning, engaging everyone from the custodian, to the school treasurer, to Fosnow herself, in running academic intervention groups. As a result of their academic success, NPES currently serves as a demonstration site for other principals and district administrators, and Fosnow regularly mentors other school leaders in the community.

Central to the success of NPES students is Fosnow’s intentional efforts to create a positive, engaging environment for the entire school community. This includes activities for students and families, such as a math bowl, a daddy-daughter dance, a mother-son baseball outing, a school carnival, as well as a fall mums fundraiser. She also creates a themed calendar of engaging activities for staff, including surprise meals and snacks, trivia games with prizes, and local food trucks.

Fosnow earned a bachelor’s degree in Elementary and Special Education and a master’s degree in Elementary Education from Indiana State University. She also holds a Principal Certification from Indiana Wesleyan University.

To learn more about the Milken Educator Award, visit [MilkenEducatorAwards.org](#).

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