



NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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Colchester teacher surprised with \$25,000 honor

Bacon Academy's Peter Arseneault wins prestigious Milken Educator Award

(COLCHESTER, CT)— In a surprise presentation today at a school assembly, Bacon Academy technology education teacher Peter Arseneault was presented with a 2015 Milken Educator Award and the \$25,000 prize that comes with it.

Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell, Colchester Superintendent Jeffry P. Mathieu, Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley, and other officials were on hand to witness the emotional presentation, along with students, faculty and community members.

“Peter Arseneault is the kind of teacher who not only prepares his students for the challenges of college and career, but also inspires them to think bigger about what they can accomplish in the world,” Commissioner Wentzell said. “He connects students with real life learning opportunities that give them the skills and knowledge to pursue careers in high tech fields that will bolster Connecticut’s economy and make our planet a greener place to live. We congratulate Mr. Arseneault, Bacon Academy and Colchester Public Schools on this well-deserved honor.”

“Peter Arseneault equips students with vital science and technological skills to succeed in college, career and life,” said Dr. Foley. “His dedication to making tech education exciting for all students is inspiring. I look forward to following his continued progress as a member of the Milken Educator family.”

Mr. Arseneault is a teacher who understands that technology skills are key to competing in a global economy. Known at Bacon Academy for bringing project-based technology education into the 21st century, Arseneault reaches all of his students, including those who face the most challenges, and motivates them to graduate and go on to successful careers. His engaging teaching methods and ability to make the skills learned in the classroom relevant to everyday life have made tech education attractive for students of all backgrounds and interests.

Addressing the changing demands of today’s educational landscape, Arseneault developed two new classes—Technology Repair as well as Science and Alternative Energy co-taught with a biology teacher.

In the alternative energy course, his students pair the science behind alternative energy sources with the hands-on application of building solar panels, wind turbines, and geothermal heating and cooling systems. Frequently working in teams to develop innovative solutions to real-world problems, Arseneault's students developed an energy-generating panel built from recycled materials and built their own solar heaters.

In his automotive tech class, every problem becomes a learning experience. Students repair engines for community members, perform maintenance on teachers' cars and often work on their own cars during study hall. There are waitlists for all the classes that Arseneault offers.

The enthusiasm and diligence of Arseneault's students are reflected in their dramatic improvement on the career and technical education (CTE) assessment over a two-year period. His auto tech students went from a 33 to a 40 and his advanced auto tech class students jumped from a 40 to a 55. He has also increased the number of students taking the exam.

Arseneault is community-focused and regularly connects with local businesses to gather materials for educating his students. He reaches out to large businesses to provide exploratory opportunities for students and uses these connections to facilitate regional professional development for colleagues in surrounding schools. This allows educators to understand the demands their students will face in the real world. Colleagues appreciate the countless hours he spends coordinating the Perkins grant, which has helped to purchase 3D printers, graphics software and facilities for the school's food services courses.

Arseneault graduated with a Bachelor of Science in technology education in 2007 from Central Connecticut State University.

The Milken Educator Awards have been given annually since 1987 to exceptional educators who are furthering excellence in the nation's schools. Principals, teachers and specialists are considered without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by each state's department of education. Winners can use the \$25,000 in any way they choose. For more information, visit www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org.

Since Connecticut joined the program in 1988, the Milken Family Foundation has honored 93 educators from the state.

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