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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019**

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**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**CONGRATULATING MICHELLE JOHNSON, A THIRD-GRADE TEACHER AT THE  
MARY E. FOGARTY SCHOOL IN PROVIDENCE, ON WINNING THE 2018 MILKEN  
EDUCATOR AWARD**

Introduced By: Senators McCaffrey, Metts, Lombardi, Lynch Prata, and Archambault

Date Introduced: January 30, 2019

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1           WHEREAS, The Milken Educator Award, established in 1985 and first awarded in 1987,  
2 is an initiative of the Milken Family Foundation that honors highly successful teachers and  
3 provides each of the honorees with a \$25,000 unrestricted cash grant. Teacher magazine has  
4 proclaimed the Milken Educator Award to be the “Oscars of Teaching.” The award is given at  
5 “surprise ceremonies” in which the recipient is “ambushed” at school and publicly honored with  
6 the award. Approximately thirty to forty teachers receive the award annually and since 1987,  
7 more than 2,600 teachers have been honored; and

8           WHEREAS, Teacher Michelle Johnson, a resident of Warwick, arrived at the Mary E.  
9 Fogarty School five years ago as the first teacher hired by the school’s new principal, Courtney  
10 Monterey. Ms. Monterey had arrived with the mission of improving the Fogarty School, which  
11 had a reputation as being a low-performing school, by motivating her teachers and improving the  
12 school’s culture and appearance; and

13           WHEREAS, Ms. Monterey knew right away that Ms. Johnson was just what she was  
14 seeking in a teacher. Ms. Johnson, who is certified to teach English as a second language, was a  
15 model of efficiency, innovation and organization. In a classroom with numerous English language  
16 learners and a combined eight different first languages, she developed a deep knowledge of each  
17 one of her students and their performance through the use of data and focused interaction with  
18 each student. She also held herself accountable by paying close attention to her performance in  
19 the classroom and by setting goals for herself; and

1           WHEREAS, Ms. Johnson’s success was also aided by her refusal to quit on any one of  
2 her students. She stayed in close contact with their parents, focused time and energy on making  
3 sure they attended school each day, and refused to give up on any child that was not on the path  
4 to advance. With a struggling pupil she would redouble her efforts and look for other strategies  
5 and approaches that would help the child. As a result of her tireless work and devotion, students  
6 who were as much as two levels below grade when they entered her classroom were all gaining,  
7 with some near their appropriate grade level when they moved on to the next grade level; and

8           WHEREAS, In recognition of her devotion to the teaching profession and her immense  
9 success in educating children from diverse backgrounds, Michelle Johnson was awarded the 2018  
10 Milken Educator Award in a surprise ceremony in the gymnasium of the Mary E. Fogarty School  
11 before a packed group of students, fellow teachers, Principal Monterey, the State’s Education  
12 Commissioner, Dr. Ken Wagner, and Jane Foley, the Senior Vice President of the Milken Family  
13 Foundation. Ms. Johnson’s success is an inspiration to all Rhode Islanders; now, therefore be it

14           RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
15 hereby congratulates Michelle Johnson, a third-grade teacher at the Mary E. Fogarty School in  
16 Providence, on winning the 2018 Milken Educator Award; and be it further

17           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
18 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Ms. Michelle Johnson.

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