



**And the Jewish Educator Awards Go To...**  
**Four Los Angeles Educators Surprised with \$15,000 Awards**  
*Milken Family Foundation honors excellence in the teaching profession  
at BJE-affiliated Jewish day schools*

**SANTA MONICA, Calif. (October 7, 2019)** –During surprise all-school assemblies, four exemplary Los Angeles Jewish day school educators were each honored by the Milken Family Foundation (MFF) with the prestigious [Jewish Educator Award](#) (JEA)—and a \$15,000 unrestricted financial prize. Cheered on by students and colleagues, the 2019 JEA recipients are:

- **Michelle Andron**, General Studies Principal, Emek Hebrew Academy
- **Eric Hartung**, Science Teacher, Pressman Academy
- **Rabbi Abraham Lieberman**, Judaic Studies Teacher, Shalhevet High School
- **Nelly (Manuela) Wisner**, Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten General Studies, Beth Hillel Day School

Recipients responded with emotion as Milken Family Foundation Executive Vice President Richard Sandler and BJE: Builders of Jewish Education Executive Director Dr. Gil Graff celebrated their dedication and accomplishments during four unique whole-school assemblies.

“By surprising educators with their Awards before their entire school communities, we say in a very public way that excellence in education should be rewarded,” said Sandler, who has been involved with JEA since the Milken Family Foundation presented the first Awards in 1990. “And by capturing the imagination of students, we hope to encourage our next generation to consider careers in teaching—in particular, to strengthen the vital role of Jewish day schools to develop academic potential and cultivate lifelong respect for the values imparted by their Jewish heritage.”

All four 2019 Jewish Educator Award recipients will be celebrated, together with their families and community leaders, during an awards luncheon at the Luxe Sunset Boulevard Hotel on December 17, 2019. The inclusive event brings together leaders across LA’s Jewish community, from the most secular to the most Orthodox.

The Jewish Educator Awards initiative was established by the [Milken Family Foundation](#), in cooperation with BJE: Builders of Jewish Education, to provide public recognition and unrestricted \$15,000 cash awards to teachers, administrators and other education professionals in the Greater Los Angeles area who have made significant contributions to excellence in BJE-affiliated day schools.

Award recipients are selected by a committee of educators, professional and lay leaders from the Jewish community, according to the following criteria:

- Exceptional educational talent and promise, as demonstrated by outstanding practices in the classroom, school and community.
- Evidence of originality, dedication and capacity for leadership and self-direction.
- Commitment to influencing policies that affect children, their families and schools.
- Strong long-range potential for even greater contribution to children, the profession and society.
- Distinguished achievement in developing innovative educational curricula, programs and/or teaching methods.
- Outstanding ability to instill in students character and self-confidence.
- Outstanding ability to develop Jewish children's understanding of the connections between their religion, their classroom activities, and their activities beyond the classroom.
- Commitment to professional development and excellence and the continuing Judaic and/or secular study necessary for it.
- Personal involvement in responding to the needs of the Jewish and secular communities.
- Criteria for administrators also include outstanding ability to attract, support and motivate committed education professionals.

**CONTACT: Bonnie Somers, 310-570-4770 (o), 818-307-3111 (m), [bsomers@mff.org](mailto:bsomers@mff.org)**