

Date Released: July 29, 2010
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SREB Announces Finalists for Nation's First Online K-12 Teacher of Year Award

ATLANTA — Three finalists for the first national award for online K-12 teaching were announced today by the two education nonprofit organizations that founded the competition, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL).

The 2010 SREB/iNACOL **National Online Teacher of the Year Award** will recognize an outstanding online teacher for exceptional contributions to online K-12 education. The judging committee evaluated more than 50 nominations of online educators in public schools and state virtual schools from 24 states to make the final three selections.

The three finalists are Teresa Dove from Florida Virtual School, Gabrielle Bray from Gwinnett County (Georgia) Online Campus and Steven Sproles from Virtual Virginia.

For the past four years, Teresa Dove has been an online mathematics/Algebra II teacher for grades 6-12 and a schoolhouse Literacy Coordinator at Florida Virtual School, which serves more than 125,000 students and employs more than 1,100 educators. A resident of North Tazewell, Virginia, she is a mentor, a member of the Reading Leadership Team, and was the first Algebra II teacher at Florida Virtual to create a Model Literacy Classroom.

As the social studies department chair at the Gwinnett County Online Campus, based in Norcross, Georgia, Gabrielle Bray teaches a variety of social studies courses to grades 9-12, including honors and college-preparatory courses. In just seven years of online teaching, the Lawrenceville, Georgia, resident has built strong mentoring relationships with her students and “has improved students’ scores on the Georgia End of Course Test in economics” above state averages for several years, notes her director/principal.

Steven Sproles of Wise, Virginia, teaches Advanced Placement (AP) psychology, macroeconomics and microeconomics at Virtual Virginia, based in Richmond. Hired as Virtual Virginia’s sole AP psychology teacher in 2006, Sproles led the development of a new, high-quality AP psychology course that greatly expanded the number of teachers teaching the course and helped boost student achievement. In 2009, only 69 percent of students passed the AP psychology exam across the nation. “In comparison, 84 percent of Sproles’ students passed that exam that year,” his instructional leader noted.

One of these outstanding finalists will be named the winner of the 2010 National Online Teacher of the Year at an awards dinner on September 8 in New Orleans. The dinner is part of the annual meeting of SREB’s Educational Technology Cooperative and *Electronic Campus*, which bring

the 16 SREB states together to create and expand the uses of technology in education. Sponsors of the award include Aventa Learning, Florida Virtual Schools Global Services and Pearson Foundation.

The winner will receive a custom trophy and an all-expenses-paid trip to the Virtual School Symposium sponsored by iNACOL, November 14-16 in Glendale, Arizona. The winner also will be recognized during the iNACOL Annual Meeting and will be featured on the SREB and iNACOL Web sites. The other two finalists will receive a special plaque and other honors.

“As Web-based learning expands, SREB and iNACOL are proud to recognize these finalists as outstanding K-12 online teachers of America’s students,” said Myk Garn, the director of the Cooperative.

“These teachers have risen to the top of the online teaching field and are making strong contributions to creating a 21st century learning experience for every one of their students. We are grateful and hope this award captures the spirit of the community,” said Susan Patrick, president of iNACOL.

For more information about the award program and the work of the Educational Technology Cooperative, contact SREB Communications.

iNACOL, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, is a nonprofit organization based in Vienna, Virginia, that facilitates collaboration, advocacy and research to enhance quality K-12 online teaching and learning.

The Southern Regional Education Board, or SREB, based in Atlanta, was created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislatures to help leaders in education and government work cooperatively to advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region. SREB has 16 member states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. More information is available online at www.sreb.org.