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CONTACT: Michelle Kincaid
(202) 207-1135
MKincaid@johnadams.com

EDUCATION LEADERS RECOGNIZED FOR EFFORTS IN ONLINE LEARNING
Awards Presented at 2011 Virtual School Symposium

(INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.) – Six leaders in the field of education were recognized Wednesday night for their efforts, achievements and innovations in K-12 online and blended learning.

The Online Learning Innovator Awards were presented by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) at the organization's annual Virtual School Symposium (VSS), a three-day conference that brings nearly 2,000 educators, school administrators and education policy leaders together to highlight cutting-edge work in K-12 online education across the country.

"It is an honor to present the Online Learning Innovator Awards to some of the most dedicated, inspiring and innovative leaders in our field," said Susan Patrick, President and CEO of iNACOL. "As online and blended learning programs continue to grow, with more than 4 million K-12 students enrolled in programs in the US, these individuals and the organizations that we've presented the awards to have played a key role in ensuring that every student is given the opportunity to succeed."

The iNACOL Online Learning Innovator Awards included the National Online Teacher of the Year Award, the Outstanding Individual Contribution to K-12 Online Learning Award, the Outstanding Online Learning Research Award, and the Innovative Online Learning Practice Awards. Additionally, two members of iNACOL's Board of Directors were presented with leadership awards for outstanding service.

Kristin Kipp, an online English teacher at the 21st Century Virtual Academy based in Golden, Colorado, was named the **National Online Teacher of the Year** for her ability to empower students, parents and fellow faculty toward the highest academic standards. In the ninth year of her career, Kipp teaches 11th and 12th grade students, noting that, "For all of these students, online education opens up opportunities that would otherwise not exist."

Julie Young, president and CEO of Florida Virtual School in Orlando, was awarded the **Outstanding Individual Contribution to K-12 Online Learning Award** for her success in creating a groundbreaking, public online learning initiative that offers kindergarten through 12th grade students free statewide access to 125 online courses, including advanced placement courses.

Julia Carpenter, a senior instructional systems designer at General Dynamics Information Technology in Orlando, Florida, was presented the **Outstanding Research Award** for her dissertation, "An Exploratory Study of the Role of Teaching Experience in Motivation and Academic Achievement in a Virtual Ninth Grade English I Course," which examines the complex interactions among student perceptions, teacher experience and practices, course factors, and motivation for insights into learning within a foundational virtual school course.

Quakertown Community School District Cyber Program, located in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was honored with the **Innovative Online Learning Practice Award** for the district's success in its online and blending learning efforts, which have seen a 178 percent growth in student online course enrollments within a three-year period. Serving as a model for other online learning programs, more than a dozen schools have approached the Quakertown Community School District during the 2010-2011 school year to seek guidance regarding the process of implementing their own online and blended education programs.

In addition to the Online Learning Innovator Awards, **Steve Baxendale** and **Todd Hitchcock**, both founding members of the Board of Directors for iNACOL, were also recognized during the awards presentation with **Outstanding Service Awards** for their leadership and dedication to the field. Baxendale, a technical officer for the World Health Organization's Pacific Open Learning Health Net, has served as both chair and treasurer of iNACOL's Board of Directors. Hitchcock, the senior vice president of online solutions for Pearson, served as treasurer for iNACOL's board.

For more information on iNACOL's Online Learning Innovator Awards, please visit:
<http://www.inacol.org/events/awards.php>

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About iNACOL

iNACOL is the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership association based in the Washington, DC area with more than 3,800 members. iNACOL is unique in that its members represent a diverse cross-section of K-12 education from school districts, charter schools, state education agencies, non-profit organizations, colleges, universities and research institutions, corporate entities and other content and technology providers (www.inacol.org). iNACOL is host to the annual Virtual School Symposium (VSS). VSS 2011 is underway, Nov. 9 - 11, 2011, in Indianapolis, IN (www.virtualschoolsymposium.org).