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### **Colorado Resident Named 2011 National Online K-12 Teacher of Year**

ATLANTA — Kristin Kipp of Evergreen, Colorado, an online English teacher at Jefferson County's 21st Century Virtual Academy, was named 2011 **National Online Teacher of the Year** for K-12 education last night by the two nonprofit organizations that founded the program, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

The 2011 iNACOL/SREB National Online Teacher of the Year Award recognizes an outstanding online teacher for exceptional contributions to online K-12 education. The judging committee selected Kipp and four other finalists from 65 nominations of online educators in public schools and state virtual schools in 25 states.

The award winner and four finalists were recognized on March 10-11 in Atlanta.

For the past three years, Kipp has been an online English teacher at Jefferson County's 21st Century Virtual Academy, which is based in Golden, Colorado, and serves high school students throughout Colorado. A nine-year teacher and resident of Evergreen, Colorado, she teaches 11th- and 12th-graders and is an instructional leader for the English department. An "extraordinary practitioner," Kipp serves as a course reviewer, reviser and part-time adjunct English teacher with Colorado Online Learning.

Kipp has noted that she loves online teaching because it often reaches kids that were untouched by the traditional classroom. "I teach at-risk students, gifted and talented students, elite student athletes, pregnant teens, and teen moms. For all of these students, online education opens up opportunities that would otherwise not exist."

Kipp said in accepting the award, "Some students, without online education, would not be able to graduate from high school." Kipp spoke of several students who have inspired her, including a girl who nearly dropped out after an illness in ninth-grade and now will graduate at the top of her high school class, and described another student who was pregnant and would have struggled to finish school otherwise. "I can never give up on a kid, no matter how far they fall behind," Kipp said, adding that "all students deserve access to high-quality online teachers."

As the National Online Teacher of the Year, she received a crystal Flame of Excellence and will spend a day with Karen Cator, the director of the Office of Educational Technology at the U.S. Department of Education. Kipp also gets an all-expenses-paid trip to iNACOL's Virtual School Symposium this November in Indianapolis and will be featured on the SREB and iNACOL websites. The finalists received award certificates and other honors. Sponsors of the award include Connections Academy LLC, Blackboard Collaborate!, Florida Virtual School, Pearson Foundation, SAS, and emantras.

Additional finalists include: Thomas Landon from Virtual Virginia, Dianna Miller from Florida Virtual School, Emily Parrish from North Carolina Virtual Public School and Andrew Vanden Heuvel from Michigan Virtual School.



“Online learning is the leading edge of American public education. SREB and iNACOL are proud to honor Kristin Kipp and the four other finalists for their excellence and creativity in teaching our growing number of online students,” said Myk Garn, the director of the Cooperative.

“Online teaching is a demanding profession with high levels of student interaction, feedback and communication. Research shows that effective online teaching requires exceptional verbal, writing and motivational skills for inspiring today’s students to perform at their highest levels. The online teachers who are national finalists are shining stars with the quality attributes students value most in learning online,” said Susan Patrick, President and CEO of iNACOL.

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iNACOL is the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership association based in the Washington, D.C., 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, nonprofit organizations, colleges, universities and research institutions, corporate entities, and other content and technology providers ([www.inacol.org](http://www.inacol.org)). iNACOL hosts the annual Virtual School Symposium (VSS): [www.virtualschoolsymposium.org/](http://www.virtualschoolsymposium.org/).

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](http://www.sreb.org).