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News Release

First-Ever Colorado Online Teachers of the Year Announced

The Colorado Department of Education today announced the Colorado 2008 Online Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year are Chaille Cummings and Michael Clem, respectively.

The announcement was made today by Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones via Web cam from the first best-practice online teaching workshop sponsored by the unit of online learning. The two-day workshop was held at Academy School District 20 in Colorado Springs for online elementary and secondary teachers.

Cummings is the master teacher and trainer for Connections Academy, located in the Denver Tech Center. Colorado Connections Academy (ColoCA) is a public online school that serves students in grades K–12. ColoCA's full-time program partners with Denver Public Schools (DPS) and has been in operation since fall 2002. Cummings' primary focus is on early reading instruction with kindergarten and first grade students.

"I am honored, surprised and excited to receive this recognition," said Cummings. "I know the future of learning will be online, so to be recognized as the first Colorado Online Elementary Teacher of the Year is a huge honor."

Colorado's 2008 Online Secondary Teacher of the Year Michael Clem is a founding member of the DPS Online High School. Clem helped create another choice and opportunity for all DPS students to have access to high quality education in a small learning community with more

individualized instruction. Clem has been responsible for developing and designing online social studies curriculum, providing professional development and program support that have helped the school quadruple in size.

Clem thanked Principal Jeanne Ross for “bringing in people who believed in this experience.” Clem also thanked his colleagues whom he says make the school better each year. Clem also took the time to recognize conference attendees for their work as innovators and said, “We will make Colorado stand out.”

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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