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## **News Release**

### ***2009 Colorado Teacher of the Year Will Be Named Tuesday, Nov. 11***

The Colorado Department of Education will announce the Colorado Teacher of the Year at an evening reception on Tuesday, Nov. 11 at the Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities (6901 Wadsworth Blvd.). The event begins at 6 p.m.

The winner is chosen by a seven-member committee from a list of nominees of exemplary classroom teachers.

The recipient becomes the Colorado nominee for National Teacher of the Year honors and serves as a teaching ambassador to communities and organizations around the state and nation. The Colorado Teacher of the Year represents the entire teaching profession in Colorado.

The Teacher of the Year selection process includes a written application, letters of recommendation, classroom visits, endorsements from the teacher's district and personal interviews.

Nominees are judged on their ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities. They are expected to play an active role in the community and to have earned the respect and admiration of students, parents and colleagues.

The finalists for the 2009 Colorado Teacher of the Year are:

- Highlands Ranch High School English and social studies teacher Susan Elliott. Elliott's love of learning emerged early as a child playing "school" in neighborhood backyards. Elliott says she

learned the delicate relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement from her mother, a family services worker and her father, a teacher. Elliott believes that responsible teachers must produce adaptive, resourceful adults who have the capacity to excel in higher education and the workplace. Highlands Ranch High School is located at 9375 Cresthill Lane in Highlands Ranch. The school's telephone number is 303-387-2500.

- Lynn Jackson, a fourth grade teacher at Eldorado K-8. Jackson's focus as a teacher has been three-fold. She believes in the importance of building strong, trusting relationships, setting high expectations and providing a wide variety of tools for success for her students. She says all students must have an equal voice that allows equity and fairness in the classroom. Jackson has put this philosophy of teaching into practice and created successful communities of learners academically, socially, emotionally and culturally. Eldorado K-8 is located at 3351 S. Indiana St. in Superior. The school's telephone number is 720-564-1131.
- Nicholas Kawalec, a reading teacher at Scott Carpenter Middle School. Kawalec spends time coaching teachers in the area of language arts strategies across all disciplines and works with students who are a year or two below grade level. Kawalec says a teacher sets students on the path to learning, giving them the tools and skills to succeed, time for academic and intellectual exploration and an opportunity to feel and enjoy their successes and progress. Scott Carpenter Middle School is located at 7001 Lipan St. in Denver. The school's telephone number is 303-854-8807.

The Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado State Board of Education sponsor the program and are supported by Colorado Masons, The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, SMARTer Kids Foundation and SMART Technologies Inc.

**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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