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### CONSORTIUM FOR SCHOOL NETWORKING PRESENTS 2006 AWARDS *Honorees Demonstrate Value of Information Technology in K-12 Education*

#### Press Release:

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Washington, DC (March 8, 2006) – The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) announced the winners of its annual awards today, honoring the achievements of education leaders from across the country and their contributions to the education technology community. The awards were presented at CoSN's annual K-12 Networking Conference in Washington, DC.

This year's award winners include:

- **Outstanding Achievement Award for Excellence in Public Service:** United States Senator Olympia J. Snowe, (R-ME) and is the author of the E-rate.
- **Lifetime Achievement Award:** Dr. Seymour Papert, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is considered the father of the education technology movement in the U.S.
- **Withrow Award for Educators:** Vijay Sonty, CIO, School Board of Broward County, FL, the first urban CTO to be honored with this award.
- **TEAM Award:** Perquimans County Schools who have innovatively used technology funding under No Child Left Behind to leverage an innovative 21st century learning environment in rural North Carolina.
- **Private Sector Champion:** Linda Winter, The Winter Group
- **Volunteer of the Year:** Farimah Schuerman, Academic Business Advisors, LLC.

"Dedicated educators and public officials throughout the nation are making great strides in using of information technologies and the Internet to transform teaching and learning and increase the efficiency of school administration," said Keith R. Krueger, CoSN CEO. "We are proud of the significant accomplishments of each of our honorees. Through their vision and leadership, we can learn a great deal about how to further the goal of enhanced student learning through the effective and ubiquitous application of technology."

CoSN wishes to thank Inspiration Software, Inc., sponsor of this year's awards.

"Inspiration Software is proud to sponsor these awards recognizing individuals who have had a significant impact on improving teaching and learning for students through technology," said Mona Westhaver, president and co-founder, Inspiration Software. "This year's honorees are an impressive group of legislators, K-12 and college and university educators, industry leaders and community volunteers who recognize the ways that technology used well can transform education."

#### About this year's winners:

Senator Olympia Snowe, this year's Excellence in Public Service honoree, is best known in the education technology community for coauthoring the Snowe Rockefeller Exon Kerrey Amendment to the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which became the E-Rate program. Because of her championing of the E-Rate, 93% of America's public school instructional classrooms have been connected to the Internet and all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, enjoy virtually equivalent access in their classrooms. From her vantage point as a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, she has continued to support the E-Rate program. Currently, she is

lead sponsor of legislation that would permanently exempt the universal service program and the E-Rate from provisions of the Anti Deficiency Act that prevent E-Rate funds from flowing quickly to applicants.

CoSN is proud to present its inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Seymour Papert, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in honor of Dr. Papert's early contribution and ongoing commitment to the education technology community. Long before there was any appreciable recognition of the role of computers as a resource for learning in schools, he understood the potential of computers to enrich learning opportunities for children. In the 1960s, at a time when computers were seen as an devices for elite academicians, he created the Logo programming language which was one of the first uses of computers as a learning resource for children. Papert played a key role in the establishment of the nation's first one-to-one computer project at the state level and he is deeply involved in the development of the "100 dollar" computer. His involvement in both of these projects does not stem from his desire to get more computers into the world but to transform the environment for learning for children. He is a tireless advocate of the position that access to the learning opportunities that computer technology provides for children should not be contingent on parental affluence.

Vijay Sonty, this year's Withrow Award for Educators winner serves as Chief Information Officer for Broward County Public Schools in Florida, and as such, is the instructional technology visionary for the sixth largest school district in the country. Mr. Sonty works closely with senior management, educators, and technical staff to establish and implement the district's technology plan while administering a department budget of \$102 million. He is the first urban CTO to win this highest CoSN honor for an individual technology leader.

Mr. Sonty's leadership is at the forefront of the explosive growth and accessibility of online instruction, virtual schools, and distance learning opportunities. Leading the District's Refresh Program, he placed videoconferencing equipment in over 300 locations and aligned the distance-learning program with district-wide goals. Mr. Sonty also oversees Broward Education Communications Network (BECON) programs, which enhance elementary, middle, and high school curricula through daily programs as well as special videoconferencing events.

Perquimans County Schools, this year's TEAM Award Winner, is located in rural Northeast North Carolina and consists of four schools that serve students in grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Although the district has virtually no industry and one of the lowest average incomes in North Carolina, the parents, administrators and teachers place a high priority on using technology to overcome the barriers of isolation and poverty. Because of the virtually nonexistent tax-base, little local funding has been available for computer purchases, but the district has managed through grants, donations, state, and federal funding to achieve a computer/student ratio of less than 1:3, with steady growth in the numbers of computers each year.

Technology planning involves principals and central office staff coming together to determine how to pool resources to get technology in the hands of students and teachers. The district supplies each preK-8 school with a locally-funded technology facilitator who works with teachers and students to ensure that technology is integrated seamlessly into instruction. Additionally, the district provides two locally-funded technicians and a district-level technology coordinator. Perquimans initially funded this effort with the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT, Title IID) of No Child Left Behind, but now has found local, state and other funding to leverage and expand this innovative effort.

Perquimans County High School has been the site of a local Cisco networking Academy to provide students hands-on courses in computer networking and computer engineering. This opportunity is being continued now through cooperation with a site at a nearby campus of the local community college. In addition, a partnership with IBM gave Perquimans Central the opportunity to review and acquire new hardware and software that would be appropriate to preK-2 students.

Linda Winter of The Winter Group, has been recognized as the 2006 Private Sector Champion Award winner. Linda Winter and her company, The Winter Group, have supported CoSN's marketing and messaging efforts for over a decade. The Winter Group conducts pro-bono focus groups that provide vital information on critical topics in education technology for the entire ed tech community.

Farimah Schuerman has been designated CoSN's "Volunteer of the Year" in gratitude for her work on the Marketing Committee.

This year's honorees were chosen by an awards committee with members from across the education technology spectrum. Additional information about the CoSN awards program, including past honorees, can be found [here](#).

*Scholastic Administr@tor* serves as media partner for the CoSN awards.

## About the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) is the country's premier voice in education technology leadership with a mission to serve as the national organization for K-12 technology leaders who use technology strategically to ultimately improve teaching and learning. CoSN provides products and services to support and nurture leadership development, advocacy, coalition building, and awareness of emerging technologies.

CoSN leadership initiatives include: Accessible Technologies for All Students ([www.accessibletech4all.org](http://www.accessibletech4all.org)); Cyber Security for the Digital District ([www.securedistrict.org](http://www.securedistrict.org)); Data-Driven Decision Making ([www.3d2know.org](http://www.3d2know.org)); Safeguarding the Wired Schoolhouse ([www.safewiredschools.org](http://www.safewiredschools.org)); Taking Total Cost of Ownership to the Classroom ([www.classroomtco.org](http://www.classroomtco.org)); and the development of the Council of School District Chief Technology Officers (CTO Council).

CoSN's membership includes a unique blend of education and technology leaders, policy makers, and influencers from the public and private sectors. Our audience includes key technology leaders (often called Chief Technology Officers—CTOs) in leading-edge states and districts, policy makers, private sector leaders, as well as those technology leaders who wish to accelerate their districts' or states' systemic technology use. Visit [www.cosn.org](http://www.cosn.org) or phone 866.267.8747 to find out more about CoSN's programs and activities supporting leadership development to ensure that information technology has a direct and positive impact on student learning in elementary and secondary schools.

## About Inspiration Software, Inc.

Recognized as the leader in visual thinking and learning, Inspiration Software, Inc. develops and publishes innovative software tools that inspire learners of all ages to brainstorm, organize, plan and create. With more than 15 million users worldwide, the company's award-winning software is revolutionizing visual learning in education – inspiring students to develop strong thinking and organizational skills and improve their academic performance. Founded by Donald Helfgott and Mona Westhaver, the company's mission is to support improvements in education and make a positive difference in students' lives by providing software tools that help students learn to think. [www.inspiration.com](http://www.inspiration.com)

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