Rockwood School District Receives 2009 Connect-ED Leadership through Communication Award

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Award Recognizes Schools for Being Leaders in the Enhancement of Communications for Schools and the Community

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ARLINGTON, Va. – Rockwood School District, a leading school system in St. Louis County, Mo., has been named the 2009 recipient of the Connect-ED® Leadership through Communication Award. The award is jointly sponsored by Connect-ED, a service of Blackboard Connect Inc., the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA).

The award recognizes Dr. Craig Larson, superintendent, and Kim Cranston, APR, chief communications officer for the Rockwood School District in Eureka, Missouri, for demonstrating exemplary leadership in the enhancement of school-to-parent communication within their school systems and the communities they serve.

The judges for this year's program noted that Rockwood School District is to be commended for the solid communications program and practices that have been implemented, which include numerous communication channels to keep staff informed about district issues and initiatives so that they can all be “spokespersons” for the schools. They also commended the school district for establishing communication teams in every school and for making wide use of research to measure community attitudes. Rockwood School District is committed to engaging a wide range of stakeholders and offers a variety of opportunities for citizens and staff to participate in meetings and dialogues on issues impacting the schools.

“Rockwood School District excels at tailoring the communication program to support its issues and mission. It serves as a model for listening as well as for using practical communication tools that work well for its staff, parents and communities. It truly is one of the best comprehensive communication programs available in school districts today,” said Rich Bagin, APR, NSPRA executive director. Rockwood School District serves over 22,000 students in 29 schools.

“On behalf of Connect-ED, I commend Dr. Craig Larson, Kim Cranston and the entire Rockwood School District leadership team for making the commitment to timely, effective communication and emergency preparedness, assisting staff, parents and their children in improving academic achievement,” said Thomas Motter, president and chief operating officer of Blackboard Connect Inc., of Rockwood’s communication leadership excellence.

AASA’s Executive Director, Dr. Daniel A. Domenech, applauded the Rockwood School District for taking a leadership role in establishing effective communication systems. “The Rockwood School District leadership team has achieved a successful communication program by acknowledging the value of community involvement. They have engaged parents, staff and students, creating a
community of active stakeholders,” said Domenech. “AASA is pleased to honor the Rockwood School District for developing strategic communication programs that benefit the entire school community.”

The Connect-ED Leadership through Communication Award program is open to all school districts throughout the United States and Canada. The award will be presented at AASA’s National Conference on Education in San Francisco, California on February (date), 2009 and a special recognition reception sponsored by Blackboard Connect Inc. will be held in the district’s honor. A $10,000 contribution will be made by Blackboard Connect Inc. to Rockwood School District’s scholarship fund to be awarded a student or students majoring in communications. District leaders will also give a panel presentation on their communication program at the AASA Conference.

About Connect-ED
Backboard Connect Inc.’s Connect-ED service helps school districts to efficiently improve student safety, parental involvement, staff communications and student attendance through an affordable communication and community outreach system designed specifically for K-12 school systems.

About AASA
AASA, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders across the United States. AASA’s mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. AASA’s major focus is standing up for public education.

About NSPRA
NSPRA is a professional association dedicated to advancing education through communication and has been providing training, services and support to school leaders in North America since 1935.

About Blackboard Connect Inc.
Blackboard Connect Inc. [formerly The NTI Group, Inc.] is the premier provider of mass messaging and notification solutions for educational and government organizations. The Connect family of services enables rapid dissemination of critical information via voice and text devices using its premier mass notification engine designed to allow users to quickly and easily record and send time-based notifications to thousands of people in minutes using just a telephone. Blackboard Connect Inc. makes and distributes the Connect-ED®, Connect-CTY®, Connect-GOV®, and Connect-MIL® systems, allowing users to target specific groups and/or geographic regions within their database(s) and engage recipients in two-way communication by asking them to respond to questions via their telephone keypads.