



VIRTUAL SCHOOL LEADERS FROM CONNECTIONS EDUCATION RECEIVE 2014 INTERNATIONAL DISTANCE LEARNING AWARDS

-- Michigan and Texas Connections Academy Administrators Honored for Outstanding Leadership in Online Technology in K-12 Education --

BALTIMORE, May 8 – Virtual school leaders from Connections Education (www.ConnectionsEducation.com), a leading provider of virtual education for students in grades K–12, have been honored by the United States Distance Learning Association ([USDLA](http://USDLA.org)) with 2014 International Distance Learning Awards – recognized for their leadership, vision and excellence. Award winners were announced Monday night at a gala awards ceremony that kicked off the USDLA’s 2014 National Conference in St. Louis, MO.

Bryan Klochack, principal of [Michigan Connections Academy](#), and Lea Ann Lockard, executive director of [Texas Connections Academy @ Houston](#), won 2014 USDLA Awards for ‘Outstanding Leadership by an Individual in the Field of Distance Learning’ in the online technology/K-12 education category. Both Klochack and Lockard are veteran educators and online learning advocates who have led their statewide virtual Connections Academy public schools since they began serving students.

“We are incredibly proud of Bryan and Lea Ann, and congratulate them both on receiving this tremendous honor,” noted Barbara Dreyer, co-founder and chief executive officer of Connections Education. “That two state-level school leaders have made such a mark on the K-12 distance learning field speaks volumes about their passion, excellence and commitment to serving students today, and to strengthening and moving the field forward.”



*Bryan Klochack, Principal,
Michigan Connections
Academy*



*Lea Ann Lockard, Executive
Director, Texas Connections
Academy@Houston*

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President of USDLA, Ms. Jenny Jopling, commented on the awards in a press release issued by USDLA. “This year’s USDLA Awards recipients represent the finest examples of online courses, best practices, and leadership in our field. The depth and breadth of the USDLA membership allows us to engage with leaders from higher education, K-12, industry, military, and government who daily demonstrate the power of distance learning. We are so very proud and excited to be able to recognize this level of excellence.”

The USDLA’s International Distance Learning Awards are presented annually to individuals and organizations engaged in the development and delivery of distance learning programs. The Awards recognize major accomplishments in distance learning and highlight those distance learning instructors, programs, and professionals who have achieved and demonstrated extraordinary results through the use of online, videoconferencing, satellite and blended learning delivery technologies.

Bryan Klochack has more than 20 years of experience in teaching and administration and has served as principal of the statewide Michigan Connections Academy since the school’s opening in 2011. Klochack has a background in both public and private brick-and-mortar schools; his advanced degrees in education have further equipped him to develop an exceptional virtual school learning environment. As an educational professional, Klochack is especially proud of the school’s focus on individualized instruction delivered by exceptional, highly-qualified teachers who believe all students can learn.

As the executive director of Texas Connections Academy, Lea Ann Lockard believes in challenging the norm and providing alternatives to the traditional brick and mortar school. An education innovator, she has also been recognized as the Texas Education Support Association’s Administrator of the Year and received the National Dropout Prevention Network’s Crystal Star Award of Excellence. She has shared her expertise on topics ranging from curriculum and instruction to collaboration and leadership at local, state, and national conferences and on various educational groups and committees. Lockard has served as the school’s leader since 2009 and has more than 25 years of experience working in education.

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About Connections Education

Connections Education is a leading provider of high-quality, highly accountable virtual education solutions for students in grades K–12. Since 2001, the company's Connections Academy division has delivered individualized learning to students through virtual public schools. Among the schools supported by Connections in the 2013–14 school year are 32 Connections Academy virtual (online) public schools and Nexus Academy blended schools that operate in 23 states and expect to serve more than 45,000 students from across the U.S. A private online academy, International Connections Academy, serves students worldwide. The Connections Learning by Pearson division meets the needs of schools, school districts, and other institutions looking to develop and enhance their online learning programs. Connections Learning by Pearson delivers a full range of targeted digital learning solutions to the K–12 education community including online courses, a program for homebound students, a digital learning platform, and more. Connections Education is committed to expanding quality education through technology and helping students achieve both academic and personal success. For more information, call 800–382–6010 or visit <http://www.ConnectionsEducation.com>. Connections Education is part of the global learning company Pearson (NYSE:PSO).