

By Diana Fingal

# Excellent Educ

## ISTE's Award Winners Inspire, Captivate, and Motivate!

In the impassioned debate about school reform, there is one point that all sides agree on: Classroom teachers have a huge impact on student success. Great teachers don't just teach. They inspire, they captivate, and they motivate their students to create, investigate, solve, and continue learning long after their school years are over.

ISTE loves great teachers, as well as library media specialists, technology coordinators, school leaders, and preservice teachers. Each year, we set out to recognize the best of the best with ISTE awards in the hopes that by highlighting great teachers, leaders, and scholars, we will inspire other educators to stretch just a little further to make our schools exciting places to learn.

We'd like to introduce you to our 2012 award-winning ISTE educators and share what makes them great, because learning from each other is the ISTE way!

**Outstanding Teacher:** [Matt Cauthron](#), digital arts instructor, Palm Springs Unified School District, Cathedral City, California, USA

When it comes to providing students with real-world experience, it's hard to beat digital arts instructor Matt Cauthron. He uses Apple's Challenge-Based Learning model, which he helped design, to inspire students to create high-quality work. Students choose authentic, collaborative, and competitive challenges to work on, and they decide how they will design their projects. They might, for example, choose to enter The Spotlights, a prestigious photography competition in Los Angeles, California, USA; submit a Google Doodle for Google's national contest; submit photos to be included in a book; or participate in dozens of other exhibits or competitions.

Walk into Cauthron's classroom, and you might see students working on a collaborative art project with third graders, preparing for a photo shoot at the exclusive El Paseo Fashion Show, participating in the international Rotoball project, or working on 3D animations for SkillsUSA state competitions.

This approach motivates students, says Lee Grafton, president of the Cahuilla, California, chapter of

Computer Using Educators, who nominated Cauthron for the award. "The ability to be in charge of their own work; to engage in marketable, published projects; and the latitude to take risks empowers the students and often results in exceptional products," he says.

Cauthron teaches more than just art. Through real-world experience, he educates his students about the business of art. He also engages students through social media, portfolio, and internet tools, such as Ning, Wikispaces, Mobile Me galleries, Google Docs, Issuu, Picasa, Vimeo, Animoto, and many others.

Cauthron takes his teaching beyond the school and even district walls by collaborating with educators and artists from around the globe. He spearheaded the Student Creative, a series of global challenges that brings students' photographic worlds together as a collection of digital books. Proceeds from the e-books support children of the AIDS epidemic in Malawi.

**Learn more about Cauthron's projects at:** [flavors.me/imagemonki](http://flavors.me/imagemonki)

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**Outstanding Leader:** Alice Owen, division director of technology, Irving Independent School District, Irving, Texas, USA

Alice Owen does more than advocate for technology in education. For nearly four decades—as a teacher, a principal, a district leader, and an educational technology promoter at the state, national, and international levels—Owen has been a tireless supporter of getting tech into the hands of students.

At the start of her career as a bilingual teacher in San Antonio, Texas, Owen was an early adopter of technology in schools. Later, as a principal, she personally set up the only computer lab in her school and trained her teachers to use technology in an instructional setting. As she progressed in her career, she became a staff development director, providing technology training for teachers and administrators. The U.S. Department of Education recognized her training approach as a Model Staff Development Program.

She currently oversees a districtwide implementation of more than 12,000 laptops provided to all high school students and teachers.

More recently, Owen has taken her passion for ed tech beyond the school and district levels. She served as the executive director of ISTE affiliate Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA) and has sat on numerous state and national committees, developing standards for the ed tech community.

Some of her more notable roles include participating in the U.S. Office of Educational Technology advisory group, serving as part of the ISTE National Expert Forum to develop standards for administrators, sitting on the ISTE Technology Standards Index Task Force, and participating in the Texas IQ Pilot to develop standards for online courses. She's held numerous national leadership positions in ISTE and in the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), and she recently traveled to South America to collaborate on technology topics with schools in Uruguay and Argentina.

Owen has been a tremendous asset to TCEA, says Barbara Brown, who served on the association's board with Owen. "Alice's remarkable leadership is an amazing gift to her school district and to all of her colleagues in surrounding areas," she says. "She deeply cares about children and wants to create possibilities where children learn that they are brilliant."

**Learn more about her district at:** [irvingisd.net](http://irvingisd.net)



**Outstanding Teacher:** **Matt Cauthron**, digital arts instructor, Palm Springs Unified School District, Cathedral City, California, USA

**Outstanding Leader:** **Alice Owen**, division director of technology, Irving Independent School District, Irving, Texas, USA

The Outstanding Teacher and Outstanding Leader awards honor individuals who have demonstrably improved education through the effective use of technology.

**Outstanding Young Educator:** **Caroline Haebig**, social studies teacher, Kenosha Unified School District, Kenosha, Wisconsin, USA

The Outstanding Young Educator Award honors an educator under 35 who has demonstrated vision, innovation, action, and transformation while using technology to improve learning and teaching.

**Emerging Leaders:**

**Nancye Blair**, technology and gifted specialist, McKeel Elementary Academy, Lakeland, Florida, USA;

**Krista Moroder**, English teacher, School District of Reedsburg, Reedsburg, Wisconsin, USA;

**Morgan O'Connor**, social studies teacher, Lakes Community High School, Lake Villa, Illinois, USA;

**Robert Pronovost**, teacher, Ravenswood City School District, East Palo Alto, California, USA;

**Justin Reich**, co-director, EdTechTeacher, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, USA;

**Kelsey Vroomann**, teacher and instructional technology coach, St. Mary's Academy, Englewood, Colorado, USA;

**Selena Ward**, technology integration teacher, Prince George's County Public Schools, Bowie, Maryland, USA

Emerging Leaders are young educators who are also leaders in technology integration.

**Public Policy Advocate:** **Kathleen McClaskey**, NHSTE advocacy chair and president of EdTech Associates, Inc., Amherst, New Hampshire, USA

The Public Policy Advocate Award recognizes outstanding leaders and mentors in advocating for educational technology policy at the local, state, regional, national, and/or international level.

**Kay L. Bitter Vision Award for Excellence in Technology-Based PK–2 Education:**

**Jennifer Orr**, teacher, Annandale Terrace Elementary School, Annandale, Virginia, USA

The Kay L. Bitter Award honors a PK–2 educator for vision and creativity in a project or program that effectively integrates technology.

**Outstanding Young Educator:**

**Caroline Haebig**, social studies educator, Bradford High School, Kenosha Unified School District, Wisconsin, USA

Caroline Haebig exemplifies what it means to teach digital age skills. In a project designed to explore the psychological factors that shape political behavior, she taught her students to research, write, and create a documentary for an assignment called the Good Citizen Project. Haebig's students interviewed political scientists, researchers, and professors from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After gathering information, they organized their footage into a sophisticated documentary that illustrated students' critical thinking skills, technological abilities, and digital citizenship skills.

"In order to critically comprehend the world around us, we must build student literacy skills that teach students to evaluate and communicate with a variety of media," Haebig says. "It is not enough for students to create a product. It's more important to create one that effectively communicates powerful and intelligent messages to a larger audience."

Haebig is the quintessential ISTE educator in that she keeps her skills sharp by taking advantage of professional development opportunities and then shares what she's learned with her colleagues.

"She enjoys leading others to pertinent information through her knowledge of the job and her passion for teaching," says her principal, Susan Savaglio-Jarvis.

A priority for Haebig is teaching her students to be responsible digital citizens, which she does by aligning her lessons to the NETS.

"I teach and require students to practice appropriate copyright procedures, discuss intellectual property rights, and employ best practices for

publishing their work and using other sources," she says. "It is significant for teachers to educate students about the importance of fair-use policy and how to create and use digital content responsibly, inside and outside of school. The projects and opportunities I create challenge students to engage in an extensive creative process, producing professional products and sharing their work with the larger community and online publishing."

**Watch a video about Haebig's class projects:**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xxCTjg17pl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xxCTjg17pl)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAc11X6ay\\_M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAc11X6ay_M)



## Elementary, My Dear, or Far From It

Reflections from an elementary school teacher on the joys and challenges of the job.



### Kay L. Bitter Award for Excellence in Technology-Based PK–2 Education:

**Jennifer Orr**, first grade teacher, Annandale Terrace Elementary School, Annandale, Virginia, USA

Who says first graders can't use technology to communicate and practice critical thinking skills? Well, certainly not Jennifer Orr, who has been stretching the limits of technology in her elementary classrooms for more than 10 years. Her first grade students write their own blog posts, create digital stories using VoiceThread and PhotoStory, contribute to a class wiki, and collaborate using an interactive whiteboard. She manages this despite the fact that three-quarters of her students receive free and reduced-price lunches and two-thirds have limited English proficiency.

"Her strategic use of technology not only enhances her students' educational experiences, but presents the material in an authentic, relevant manner that also helps students become more proficient in discerning and analyzing information regardless of the form," says her principal, Andrea Garris.

Orr's students have created videos and other multimedia content. In one movie, Orr filmed students demonstrating straight motion, back-and-forth motion, and circular motion and then had her student filmmakers sort

the examples, create titles, and record the narration.

She connects students to classrooms in other countries and celebrates the cultures of her own students, many of whom are new to the United States, by integrating their native languages into lessons about counting.

Orr is an avid blogger, maintaining both her own blog—Elementary, My Dear, or Far From It—and contributing to TeachingHistory.org, a national resource for K–12 history and social studies teachers funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Orr shares her ideas widely by putting on professional development workshops, presenting at conferences all over the United States, mentoring preservice teachers, writing her blog, and publishing books and articles. She has a vast professional learning network on Twitter and other social media platforms.

"Technology is Ms. Orr's answer for both directly improving children's learning by integrating technology in the classroom as well as using technology to build a professional learning support network of educators working with the same demographic," says colleague Mark Smith, an instructional technology resource teacher at Orr's school.

**Read Orr's blogs:** [emdfi.blogspot.com](http://emdfi.blogspot.com) and [TeachingHistory.org](http://TeachingHistory.org)

**Sylvia Chapp Award for District Innovation in Technology:** **Mooresville Graded School District**, Mooresville2le, North Carolina, USA (Mark Edwards, superintendent; Scott Smith, chief technology officer; Karen Hart, board chair)

The Sylvia Chapp Award, presented by ISTE and *THE Journal*, recognizes district innovation in technology.

**SIGMS Technology Innovation Award (primary school winner):** **Suzi Prassas**, teacher, and **Mary Carole Strother**, library media specialist, Fanny Finch Elementary School, McKinney, Texas, USA, for "Penguin Palooza"

**SIGMS Technology Innovation Award (secondary school winner):** **Susan Steidl**, English teacher; **Cathy Swan**, technology integration teacher; and **Michelle Luhtala**, library department chair; New Canaan High School, New Canaan, Connecticut, USA, for "Invisible Influence"

The SIGMS Awards, sponsored by ISTE's Special Interest Group for Media Specialists, honor a school librarian and collaborating teacher who have conducted an exemplary technology program extending beyond the media center.

**SIGOL Online Learning Award, 1<sup>st</sup> place:** **Gail Casey**, PhD student at Deakin University and classroom teacher at Geelong High School, Geelong, Victoria, Australia, for "WebToWhere: Creative Learning for the Global Classroom"

**SIGOL Online Learning Award, 2<sup>nd</sup> place:** **Kathy Perkins**, director and team member of PhET Interactive Simulations Project, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA; and **Patricia Loeblein**, teacher and PhET team member, Evergreen High School, Boulder, Colorado, USA, for "Creating and Using PhET Interactive Simulations to Improve Science Education"

**SIGOL Online Learning Award, 3<sup>rd</sup> place:** **Christine L. Coleman**, director of technology, City School District of New Rochelle, New York, USA, for "Mobile Learning on the Go!"

The SIGOL Learning Awards, sponsored by ISTE's Special Interest Group for Online Learning, recognize creative educators for their pioneering use of online networks for students in grades K–16.

**SIGTE Research Paper Award:** **Teresa Foulger**, **Ray Buss**, **LeeAnn Lindsey**, and **Keith Wetzel** from Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, for their paper "Preservice Teacher Education: Benchmarking a Stand-Alone Ed Tech Course"

The SIGTE Research Paper Award recognizes an exemplary research paper on teacher education.

## K-12 Instructional Resource Center

# K12IRC.ORG

Over 2,100 carefully selected and annotated links will provide you with the tools you need to create exciting, topical lesson plans and curriculum. Like an Instructional Resource Center in the real world, you will find...



Information and Resources for the K-12 community

- a solid foundation for supporting standards and assessment practices,
- classroom projects, lessons, units, field trips, extended studies, and international databases in almost every subject and across subjects,
- references and projects to challenge your students,
- ideas & resources to integrate the new media tools,
- tips for school, family, industry, and community partnerships,
- tools for planning, using and managing your own environment,
- professional development and publishing opportunities.

The K-12 Instructional Resource Center is chockfull of the best-of-breed resources for designing, implementing, and refreshing lesson plans and curriculum.

### Your One-Stop Resource For Curriculum And Professional Development.

Used as a professional development resource by the Stanford School of Education and the Exploratorium, K12IRC.org is a non-profit resource, maintained by Dr. Bonnie Tenenbaum.

<http://www.k12irc.org/iste>

## The Next ISTE Award Winner Might Be You!

Now is the time to start thinking about nominating yourself or someone else for an ISTE award. The awards program honors exceptional educators who advance the field, demonstrate vision and innovation, and expand student horizons. We sat down with Heidi Ellis, ISTE's membership program manager, to learn more about the awards program.

### What are some of the things judges look for in award applications?

Each award has different criteria, but generally we're looking for innovative educators who have successfully integrated technology to improve their teaching and/or students' learning in an outstanding way. Nominations may be judged on actual artifacts that can be modeled by other educators or their level of involvement in advocating for educational technology.

### What do awardees get if they win?

While each award includes different prize winnings, all awardees are recognized at ISTE's annual conference and exposition. Additionally, some winners receive travel stipends to the conference, complimentary membership to ISTE, cash prizes, and ISTE products.

### How long does it take to complete an award application?

The time it takes depends on the award category and the individual applicant. Applicants should review the required materials. Most awards require a statement or response to essay questions in addition to recommendation letters or teaching artifacts. Gathering all materials electronically ahead of time expedites the application process.

### Who judges the categories?

Judges include past award winners, volunteers who have signed up to be a judge through our online form, ISTE staff, and members at large who have expertise in that category. To be considered as a judge, apply for a volunteer position in early 2013.

### Anything new this year?

Yes! Previously you had to be nominated by your ISTE affiliate for the Outstanding Leader and Outstanding Teacher awards, but now anyone can nominate themselves. This change opens up the award to a much wider pool of applicants and allows multiple applicants from each affiliate. Additionally, all award winners will receive complimentary (new or renewing) membership to their local affiliate.

### Aren't the winners usually veteran teachers with lots of experience and credentials?

An award winner can be anyone! While some of the awards look at the breadth of experience, many are project-based, and the Outstanding Young Educator Award is specifically tailored to educators under 35. If you are using technology in an innovative way, have inspired positive change in your school, or have transformed your teaching through technology, consider nominating yourself for an ISTE Award!

Nominations open on December 1, and the deadline to apply is February 28. For details on each award, go to [iste.org/awards](http://iste.org/awards).



Diana Fingal is the senior editor for L&L magazine. She has worked as a writer and editor of periodicals for more than 20 years and has been with ISTE for four years.