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For Immediate Release

Iowa Students Participate in Book Discussion with the 2010 National Teacher of the Year

(Des Moines, Iowa) – Hundreds of Iowa high school students statewide joined in a book discussion with Sarah Wessling, the 2010 National Teacher of the Year, and other distinguished guests, using Iowa Communications Network's (ICN) technology on Monday, December 6.

Iowa Public Television (IPTV), in conjunction with the Des Moines Public Library, presented *To Kill a Mockingbird: Share the Experience*, to multiple video sites filled with tenth through twelfth grade students. During the session students interacted together and discussed the book's themes of courage, inspiration, and bullying; and related those themes to relevant issues that are occurring in today's society.

Wessling stated to get so many students talking about *To Kill a Mockingbird* is an English teacher's dream. Wessling said, "These types of discussions go outside classrooms and schools, and this was a wonderful way for students to talk about literature, and pull from literature the ideas that connect us all."

Wessling received the 2010 National Teacher of the Year award from President Obama in April 2010. She teaches high school English at Johnston High School in Johnston, Iowa. Additional guests at the session included James Autry and Polk County District Court Judge, Odell McGhee. Autry has been recognized for his skill as an author with numerous awards for his books to advise business leaders to books of poetry. Judge McGhee was elected to the board of the National Bar Association, and was president of the Iowa National Bar Association for more than 10 years.

The ICN makes it possible for students and instructors, physically separated by location, to participate in interactive educational events in an efficient, creative, and cost-effective manner. While providing support and resources for educators and students, the ICN and IPTV are committed to the continued enhancement of distance learning and professional development for Iowa students and educators. To find out more about the ICN visit www.icn.state.ia.us.

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