



VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL, UTAH CONNECTIONS ACADEMY LAUNCHES STATEWIDE; NAMES LINDA HARLESS PRINCIPAL

-- Innovative, Online Public School Will Serve K–12 Students Statewide --

Woods Cross, UT (May 13, 2011) — [Utah Connections Academy](#) (UCA), a tuition-free, virtual public school for students in grades K through 12, is pleased to open its doors in Utah. Though classes will officially begin on Aug. 29, 2011, the school has opened its teaching center and administrative office in Woods Cross, launched enrollment for the upcoming school year, and named seasoned educator Linda Harless as its first principal. UCA can enroll students in grades K–12 from anywhere in the state and will offer a high-quality, highly accountable, tuition-free, public education option.

Harless comes to Utah from Arizona, where she headed the Arizona Connections Academy, and has been involved in virtual education since 1998. She holds Master Degrees in Education in both Educational Technology and Educational Leadership, respectively, from Northern Arizona University, as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree with Teaching Certification from Arizona State University.

"My philosophy as principal of Utah Connections Academy is to assist and support families so they can provide their children an extraordinary education in a nurturing environment which creates a passion for learning," said Harless. "Virtual education continues to grow in popularity across the country. Utah Connections Academy was established to meet growing parent demand for our flexible, technology-enhanced public school."

According to Harless, in the past year alone, more than 1,600 people throughout Utah have requested information about a Connections Academy in the state.

Utah Connections Academy is authorized under state law by the Utah State Charter School Board. The school is operated by Utah Connections Academy, a nonprofit corporation, through a contract with Connections Academy of Utah, LLC, to provide its educational program and other services. The school is governed by an independent board of directors and all meetings are open to the public.

"Our [curriculum](#) is designed by national education experts and customized to meet the specific standards of the Utah Department of Education. Bringing together the best in print and online resources with Connections Academy proprietary [instructional tools](#), we are designed to engage students of every level," said Harless. "Our goal is simple: To ensure that all students have the resources they need to succeed."

UCA is expected to serve a wide range of Utah students, including those who are significantly ahead or behind in the classroom, those who need a flexible schedule or learn at a different pace from their peers, and those who need more [individualized attention](#) or live in isolated rural settings. Homebound and previously home-schooled students can also thrive in Connections Academy's program.

In addition, for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Utah Connections Academy provides a continuum of virtual special education services that range from consultation, curriculum accommodation and modification, collaboration with learning coaches and general education teachers, to virtual direct instruction. The school also provides students with IEPs related services, which may include virtual speech language and virtual occupational therapy, as determined by the IEP team. For eligible students with disabilities who do not require special education, Utah Connections Academy will develop (as needed) and implement Section 504 plans that detail appropriate accommodations and modifications.

For more information on the school or open enrollment, which is currently available, please visit www.UtahConnectionsAcademy.com or call 800-382-6010.

About Connections Academy

Connections Academy is a leading, fully accredited provider of high-quality, highly accountable virtual schooling for students in grades K through 12. Through tuition-free public schools, and full-time and part-time private school programs, Connections Academy delivers superior, personalized education for students, with the freedom and flexibility to experience our online learning community from anywhere. The combination of certified teachers, a proven curriculum, technology tools, and community experiences creates a supportive and successful online learning opportunity for families and children who want an individualized approach to education. In the 2011-12 school year, Connections Academy will serve students in 22 states via 23 virtual public schools. It serves students worldwide through the online private school, National Connections Academy. Connections Academy offers grades K through 12, though some public school programs do not offer all grades. Connections Academy is a division of Connections Education LLC. For more information, call 800-382-6010 or visit www.ConnectionsAcademy.com

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