



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CONNECTIONS EDUCATION NAMED AMONG**

***-- e-learning Leader Honored by Baltimore Magazine --***

**BALTIMORE, January 29, 2013** -- Connections Education ([www.ConnectionsEducation.com](http://www.ConnectionsEducation.com)), a leading provider of high-quality, highly accountable virtual education solutions for students in grades K–12, has been named one of Baltimore’s “Best Places to Work.” *Baltimore* magazine has honored the e-learning pioneer, praising its Baltimore workplace as among Baltimore’s best, in its “Best Places to Work 2013” feature appearing in its February issue and on sale now.

Connections Education won the “Best Place to Work” honor based on a combination of factors, according to the magazine’s editors, including: an atmosphere or physical work space that makes you happy to head to work in the morning; a devotion to helping employees advance in their careers; stellar benefits; above average compensation; employee- and family-friendly policies like flexible work arrangements; inspiring leadership; or some combination of all of the above. In addition, to be considered, a company must be financially stable and hiring or expecting to hire in 2013.

Twenty-five companies, including Connections Education made the list. Nearly 300 were considered out of the thousands of companies in the Baltimore area based on employee nominations.

The “Best Place to Work” accolade helps affirm Connections Education’s long-standing corporate culture of caring and excellence. It also confirms the extraordinary levels of satisfaction with their work experience that Connections Education employees themselves have expressed in the Company’s annual Employee Satisfaction Surveys. In the most recent survey, 87.5% of employees rated their overall satisfaction working at Connections Education an A or a B; 93% of employees rated their satisfaction with benefits as good, very good, or excellent; 92.6% said that

the work environment is better or significantly better than at their previous job; and 89.5% said training and development is better or significantly better than at their previous job.

The Connections Education workforce numbers 2,500 nationwide. More than 200 work in its Baltimore headquarters, and roughly 600 across Maryland—and—perhaps unsurprisingly for an e-learning company—fully 40% of company employees nationwide work from home.

Founded in 2001, over the past 11 years Connections Education has helped to re-define public education in the United States, by operating high-quality, highly accountable virtual and blended schools for students in grades K–12. In its earliest days, the e-learning pioneer served roughly 400 students in two full-time Connections Academy virtual public schools. Today, 29 Connections Academy and Nexus Academy schools spanning 22 states serve over 40,000 K–12 students. Additionally, the online private school, National Connections Academy, serves students nationwide. More than 1,000 schools, school districts, state departments of education and other educational institutions, serving tens of thousands of students throughout the United States and beyond, also utilize the Company's digital learning solutions.

This remarkable growth is testimony to Connections Education's commitment to expanding quality education through technology—and its equally strong commitment to its employees, who are responsible for the Company's success, according to Connections Education co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Barbara Dreyer.

"We are really proud that Connections Education has been publicly acknowledged as a great place to work," Dreyer commented. "Our employees are incredible, whether they are teachers, counselors, curriculum specialists, multimedia developers, or members of our essential support teams. It is their tremendous talent, dedication and hard work that have enabled us to help tens of thousands of students find academic and personal success over the past decade. So we owe it to our employees to provide the best possible work environment and share our success with our employees through a strong benefits and compensation structure that recognizes performance."

Among the benefits Connections Education offers at no cost to employees:

- Life insurance
- Short-term disability benefit: 100% paid salary for 6–8 weeks
- Long-term disability plan
- Employee Assistance Program
- 401(k) plan
- Health plan with no co-pays for preventive care visits or drugs

- Tuition Assistance Plans
- Financial aid for adoption
- Comprehensive Professional Development and Training Programs

Voluntary benefits include: critical illness insurance, accident insurance, discounted renters/homeowners/auto insurance, discounted cell phone plans, and a discounted pet care plan.

But Dreyer also adds, “Don’t come to Connections if you are not willing to work really hard and accept that you will be continually challenged to perform. We only want the best of the best here because that is what our students deserve.”

“Our culture is very important to us, and to employees,” observed Annie Middlestadt, Connections Education’s executive director of Human Resources. “Our culture is often described as entrepreneurial, empowering, rewarding, high-energy, and fast-paced. Employees are given the tools and resources to get the job done in a flexible manner and so long as they meet our standards; we care less about how, when or where they get the job done. But at the end of the day, we all hold each other accountable for top-notch service and deliverables. In our most recent Employee Satisfaction Survey, 93.4% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that, “I feel empowered to manage myself without close supervision.”

An “open-door” policy at all levels of the company is another major element in the corporate culture, Middlestadt notes. “Employees often comment that without nametags on office doors, you wouldn’t know the executives from the staff-level employees, especially since there are no executive assistants to be found.” Middlestadt observes, “Our employees truly care about and are invested in the mission of our company. Our latest Employee Satisfaction Survey showed that 94.1% of employees said they agreed or strongly agreed that providing quality services to our students and customers is the most important priority of Connections Education.”

CEO Dreyer concluded, “As much as I am delighted about this honor, there is no greater honor than hearing the families we serve tell us how much they appreciate the programs we provide. That is what drives us to be the best company we can be.”

### **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. In the 2012–13

school year, 29 Connections Academy virtual (online) public schools and Nexus Academy blended schools operate in 22 states and expect to serve more than 40,000 students from across the U.S. A private online academy, National Connections Academy, serves students nationwide. The Connections Learning division meets the needs of schools, school districts, and other institutions looking to develop and enhance their online learning programs. Connections Learning 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. More than 1,000 schools, school districts, state departments of education and other educational institutions, serving tens of thousands of students throughout the United States and beyond, are already utilizing Connections Learning products and services. 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).

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