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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - February 9, 2009**

### ***Columbia County Teacher of the Year Named 2010 Georgia Teacher of the Year Finalist***

Congratulations to Columbia County School System's Teacher of the Year, Ms. Michele Rigsby, for her recent selection as one of the ten finalists for Georgia's Teacher of the Year.

"When I listened to Ms. Rigsby speak to a group of business leaders this past December, she was so enthusiastic, confident, and passionate about her 'gift' for teaching and working with students. This is a tremendous honor not only for Michele, but also for Belair Elementary and Columbia County," said Charles Nagle, Superintendent of Schools.

The state's selection process begins with a review of applications submitted by all 147 Teachers of the Year, nominated by local school systems. The applications are evaluated by a panel of judges that includes teachers, past Georgia Teacher of the Year winners and finalists, administrators, community leaders, and others, and are judged on the quality of teacher responses to questions related to the art of teaching.

Because of her selection as a finalist, Ms. Rigsby will be interviewed by a panel of judges who will also observe her in action with her students. Additionally, Ms. Rigsby, along with all of the Georgia Teacher of the Year finalists, will speak at a luncheon sponsored by Georgia Power on March 23. Then the Georgia Teacher of the Year will be announced at the Georgia Teacher of the Year Banquet held at the Georgia Aquarium May 15, 2009. We wish Ms. Rigsby the very best as she competes for this great honor!

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