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Alpine Kindergarten Teacher Named Utah Teacher of the Year

SALT LAKE CITY – Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction Larry K. Shumway today named Highland Elementary School kindergarten teacher Gay Beck Utah’s 2011 Teacher of the Year.

Beck, of American Fork, was presented with a check for \$10,000 and will compete with her fellow teachers of the year in a national competition. Beck will also receive a SMART Board interactive white board from SMART Board Technologies, a classroom amplification system from Educational Technology Solutions, and a laptop computer from PC Laptops. She will meet with fellow teachers of the year in Dallas and meet with President Barak Obama in Washington and attend space camp in Alabama next summer.

Sheri W. Heiter of North Ogden, a math teacher at Weber High School in Pleasant View was named first runner up and received a check for \$5,000. Rob Gardner of Salt Lake City, a history teacher at Highland High School in Salt Lake was named second runner up and received a check for \$3,000.

A committee with representatives from the Utah State Office of Education, principals, superintendents, the Utah PTA, the Utah Education Association and 2010 Utah Teacher of the Year Mary Jane Morris chose Beck from among 20 nominations sent in from local school districts and charter schools.

“We can always count on Gay to be positive in all she does,” said Highland Elementary Principal Reed Hodson. “Her enthusiasm is contagious and generous to the school community. Not only does she teach to perfection in the classroom, she manages to find time to do many extras.”

Beck succeeds Salt Lake City’s Northwest Middle School seventh and eighth grade reading teacher Mary Jane Morris. She is the first Alpine teacher to be named State Teacher of the Year since 1994.