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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 24, 2010

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Imagination, Creativity and Innovation Fostered in Louisiana schools through the ICI Summer Institute

BATON ROUGE – Educators from around the state will join together for the Imagination, Creativity and Innovation (ICI) Summer Institute in Natchitoches, LA from June 28 – July 1, 2010. Classroom teachers from 15 public schools from throughout Louisiana will work with nationally recognized consultants to learn how to use the arts to inspire creative thinking in students and strengthen 21st century skills.

The ICI Summer Institute hosted by the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development/Division of the Arts, developed and coordinated by KIDsmART of New Orleans, will provide professional development for educators in grades K – 4 in arts integration methods, with a focus on linking theater and language arts. Housed on the campus of the Louisiana School for Science, Math and the Arts, the institute will give educators the philosophy and capacity to use the arts in their daily instruction.

Training consultants for the institute include *Wavelength*, a theater-based professional development and performance company based in Chicago, *Alison Marshall, PhD*, a trained consultant specializing in theater and dance from Harvard's Project Zero, *Kay Thomas*, visual artist and presenter for ArtSmart in Texarkana, AR, and Jan Grace, music specialist and arts integration expert from Baton Rouge, LA.

Dána LaFonta, Executive Director of the Louisiana Division of the Arts remarks on the importance of the institute, "This is a special opportunity, bringing together the very best arts specialists and educators for the ICI Institute. As our society develops a knowledge-based, global economy, workforce leaders acknowledge that arts education develops skills for the 21st century: creative thinking, problem solving, individual responsibility and teamwork. The ICI Institute will help educators prepare students to use their imagination, creativity and innovation to tackle the issues of tomorrow."

Imagination, Creativity and Innovation (ICI) is an initiative of the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development/Division of the Arts as part of a broad effort to build the capacity of educators to use child-centered, experiential, arts integrated teaching and learning to foster student success.

The first phase of the initiative was funded by a grant from the Dana Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Louisiana Division of the Arts. In ICI schools, the processes of creating, performing and responding to art will lead to increased student achievement, increased attendance by students and staff, lower rates of retention, higher self-esteem, decreased discipline problems, greater parent participation and a growing sense of community. These schools use strong evaluation practices. Like its acronym which means "here" in French, ICI schools are here - at the center of creative learning in Louisiana.

For more information, please visit <http://www.crt.state.la.us/culture>.

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