FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 4, 2016

ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR TO RECEIVE CLASSROOM UPGRADES AS PART OF NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH INTERIOR ELEMENTS

Montgomery, Ala. – The Alabama State Department of Education is pleased to welcome Interior Elements (IE), the leading supplier of education furniture in the Southeast, as the newest corporate sponsor of the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program.

Interior Elements will honor the recipient of this prestigious award by providing the design and renovation of the Alabama Teacher of the Year’s classroom. IE will work with industry leading manufacturers, Allsteel, KI, Scholar Craft and Interface, in an effort to create a state-of-the-art learning environment.

“Interior Elements has built a sterling reputation among school systems throughout the state while designing 21st century learning environments and will continue to adhere to a high standard of excellence in this significant role of honoring the Alabama Teacher of the Year,” said Interior Elements Executive Vice President Dan Chappell.

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Jennifer Brown, the 2015-2016 Alabama Teacher of the Year, will be the first recipient of the classroom upgrades. Brown, a science teacher at Vestavia Hills High School, said she and Chappell asked her students what type of furniture they would want if given the choice.

“The students mentioned things like rolling desks, standing tables, cushioned chairs, and we thought, ‘Why not? Let’s go with all of that,’” Brown said.

Brown’s new classroom will be “non-traditional,” with four different types of furniture. As for the teacher’s desk – she won’t have one.

“I’ve decided to ditch the teacher’s desk to allow for more space throughout the room. I want my room to feel less like a classroom and more like a learning space,” she said. “We are lucky to have companies like Interior Elements sponsoring the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program. Our future teachers of the year and their students will greatly benefit from this opportunity.”

One of the nation’s oldest teacher recognition programs, the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program was established as a means of identifying and rewarding some of the state’s outstanding teachers each year.

The selection process for Alabama’s Teacher of the Year begins at the school system level. Each school system can nominate an elementary and secondary teacher at the district level. One elementary teacher and one secondary teacher are selected from each of the eight state Board of Education districts. A state selection committee selects four teachers from the 16 district finalists to be interviewed for the titles Alabama Teacher of the Year and Alternate State Teacher of the Year.

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