



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2017
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**TWO SCHOOLS, ONE UNIVERSITY HONORED AS
2017 ALABAMA GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS**

Montgomery, Ala. – The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is pleased to announce the state’s [2017 Green Ribbon Schools](#). The schools are honored for their approach to creating "[green](#)" environments through reducing environmental impact, promoting health, and ensuring a high-quality environmental and outdoor education.

The 2017 Alabama Green Ribbon Schools and University are:

- Childersburg Elementary School, Talladega County School System
- Sycamore School, Talladega County School System
- The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)

We are honored to celebrate Alabama educators and schools creating "green" environments, offering innovative environmental and outdoor education and preparing students with modern skills and concepts focused on the health of our communities and world," said State Superintendent Michael Sentance.

The schools and university will be recognized at the Alabama State Board of Education on May 11. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) worked in collaboration with the ALSDE to nominate The University of Alabama at Birmingham and will be honoring the university.

All schools will be celebrated with a picnic lunch provided by the [Environmental Education Association of Alabama](#) (EEAA). Green Ribbon Flags sponsored by [Legacy](#) and Partners in Environmental Education will be presented to each of the schools. Special environmental-related gifts will be presented by Noresco and Wave PowerSteward.

The Alabama Green Ribbon Schools have been submitted to the [U. S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Program](#). National honorees will be announced following Earth Day on Monday, April 24. The [U. S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Program](#) (GRS) is a federal recognition program that began in 2011.

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About the Schools:

Childersburg Elementary School, Talladega County School System

Childersburg Elementary School (CES) is home to 223 students and faculty members and eight, actively working toward environmental stewardship, responsibility and awareness. Childersburg Elementary, Students to Stewards Clubs have been redesigned to work with students to help them become environmental stewards as so many of the projects and goals focused on environmental and quality of life factors.

Club examples: *Earthworms, The Green Team, Full Steam Ahead, This is How We Roll, Get on Board* just to name a few. The Green Team has been busy with monthly campus clean-up, using our existing pine trees on campus by raking and using the pine straw to protect our shrubs and plants around our campus, and repurposing shredded paper to make decorative ornaments for the community. *This is How We Roll* members give public service announcements about living healthy and taking up healthy habit.

Student Environmental Stewards are always planning and implementing the next project. Second grade students had one large PBL “Breaking it Down.” Students studied trash that had been collected for 42 days. They discovered what breaks down and what does not and the effect it has on our environment. They created “Leaders Don’t Litter” stations that are stocked with gloves and bags. These are available so when classes go outside, they can be good stewards and keep our campus clean. They also created a Lost and Found wooden box that is located by the back door of the gym. This helps students and parents find items and not repurchase.

Multiple community members have been invited to CES to help us become better environmental stewards and healthier individuals. Southern Company works with our school to educate students about electricity. Local chefs have given demonstrations about cooking and keeping meals healthy. Sylacauga had Food Play come to CES and present an interactive play about healthy eating habits. Our school nurse actively promotes good student health by creative visual displays outside her room, newsletters for our students, parents and community members, and she does mini-lessons for students in their individual classrooms.

Physical education class takes an active role in promoting good student health, community involvement and environmental activities. Our playground area used recycled tires that had been ground up and treated to make it safe to use as mulch. Eight faculty members, three community members and over 100 students took part in spreading this mulch on our playground. Students know that physical education is about much more than ‘play’ as they help create attractive visual displays that promote healthy habits that are shared with community members as shown in an attached picture.

All students participate in the Golden Bowl and Golden Broom awards. Students are encouraged to eat healthy. The class that does the best job eating a balanced lunch is awarded the Golden Bowl for the week. They carry this bowl with them to lunch daily.

Students are also encouraged to keep their campus and classrooms a clean, safe and healthy place to learn. The classroom that does the best job is awarded the Golden Broom for the week to display outside their classroom door.

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Over the past three years, Childersburg Elementary has focused on working to win grants that focus on environmental and healthier lifestyles. The school received the Healthy Bike grant that provided over 30 bikes and other physical fitness equipment that makes being active much more fun and diverse. Childersburg Elementary School received the BCBS Healthy Schools for \$10,000 and a \$1,000 Alabama Power Company grant for trees. The concepts of being involved in environmental and health issues continues to prove to be beneficial for all stakeholders and lifelong learners.

Sycamore School, Talladega County School System

Sycamore School, appropriately named for a tree, is a highly positive elementary school serving 212 kindergarten through fourth grade students in a rural area of Talladega County. Sycamore as a community is a closed mill village town, with only three small businesses and one small new production industry and the poverty rate is 88 percent, making the positive, little Sycamore School the hub of many great things for the community. The Talladega County School System is rural and embrace that label as a goal to provide a quality education for students that is a replicable model for any school.

The school is the hub for community recycling efforts and promotions as well, through a partnership with the Talladega County Commission that helps provide much needed recycling bins for all categories of products. The students and the few local businesses partner to advertise the recycling days and bin locations, and are onsite these days to offer information about the schools' environmental efforts as well. The information is developed as part of class and club work by the students.

STEM education is an integral part of all grade levels. To increase partnerships and make a civic connection, the school has developed an awesome partnership with The Southern Company, aka Alabama Power Company, in establishing the gardens, understanding energy, and the value of quality water sources for power generation that also provides outdoor sports and recreational venues. For rural children, this has been a major connection to careers, environmental responsibility, and community service.

Unique to Sycamore School's activities is its partnership with the State Park at Wind Creek, about 35 miles away. Through a grant partnership, the distance becomes a 'joy ride' for a week in the summer for 25 third and fourth graders as they spend the day studying numerous environmental areas as they explore, research, and develop skills as Junior Park Rangers. No one is ever late for this early morning bus ride, and parents almost always had to wait for them to return as they just never want the day to end. This active day is a great partnership that has proven to have highly sustained impacts on positive environmental practices among these young outdoor environmental leaders.

The Sycamore School's food service program is essential for the well-being of the student population with over 88 percent of the students being on free/reduced lunches. Ninety Five percent of the students have breakfast and/or lunch provided by the school cafeteria staff, a staff of three that earned the designation of Healthier Choice School in 2014. Nutrition is a part of the health and science curriculum throughout the year and is also integrated into the physical fitness activities and clubs.

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The Leader in Me and Lighthouse standards are effectively incorporated in cross-curricula and full school activities. The standards promote development of habits in leadership, teamwork, understanding of self and others being proactive and a habit referred to as “Sharpen the Saw.” The efforts to be a school that understands this habit fully supports that each stakeholder do things that promote good exercises and healthy habits in all aspects of living a quality life. Through the blended efforts of the partnerships, the daily efforts for positive habits, the Green Ribbon School Pillars are positively impacting all of the Sycamore School, the hub of the community under the sycamore tree.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is an urban campus of more than 170 classroom, office, research, and hospital buildings, including about 16 million square feet of space spanning more than 90 city blocks. At UAB, they strive to include sustainability in every facet of the enterprise: education, research, patient care, economic development, and service.

The University’s strategic plan, UAB21, is the pledge to prepare students and community for the challenges of a new world economy: global literacy, biotechnology and biomedical science, energy, transportation, materials engineering, information technology, computing security and entrepreneurship. UAB has made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent within the next decade and in 2014 the University established a committee to plan for and institute a comprehensive energy conservation plan. UAB is now home to the largest solar-energy system in the city of Birmingham. The 100-panel system, installed by Birmingham’s Vulcan Solar Power, sits atop the UAB Campus Recreation Center.

The University has adopted the practice of Low Impact Development (LID) in its new construction projects. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat storm water as a resource rather than a waste product. UAB campus dining and restaurants have recently signed on to the LeanPath system.

LeanPath is an automated food waste tracking system that allows UAB to track and measure its food waste. The LeanPath program offers a unique opportunity for raising awareness about manageable steps that they can take toward a more sustainable food system.

UAB campus dining and restaurants are working with Ventura Foods and Standard Biofuels to recycle frying oils used at UAB. The oil is converted to biofuel or blended with petroleum diesel to create biodiesel fuel. One hundred percent of all collected oil is recycled — reducing pollutants into the environment and UAB’s carbon footprint. Campus Restaurants recycle approximately 16,000 pounds of cooking oil each year.

UAB parking and transportation offer several programs to reduce vehicle traffic on campus, which improves air quality, encourages more physical activity, and reduces noise pollution on campus. Students and employees are encouraged to apply for special carpool tags and participate in CommuteSmart (a commuter program provided by the Regional Planning Commission that offers free online ride matching, car-pool and van-pool services, and an Emergency Ride Home program).

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Move Out, Don't Throw Out! is a project of UAB Sustainability (a division of UAB Facilities), in collaboration with UAB Student Housing and Resident Life, and the Salvation Army of Greater Birmingham. The project is in its second year and has now become a well-oiled machine, with Facilities Management employees assisting students and student volunteers with donating food, furnishings, cleaning supplies, household goods, electronics, and other items to local Salvation Army clients.

The UAB Sustainability Fund, a joint project of UAB Sustainability and the Office of the Assistant Vice President for Student Experience, allows students to apply for funding to promote the initiation of projects related to sustainability on campus. The goal of the program is to provide grants for endeavors that improve UAB's sustainability and efficiency and decrease the university's overall ecological footprint.

[Alabama's](#) previous GRS state nominees include:

- 2016: A. H. Watwood Elementary School, Talladega County School System and the University of Montevallo (UM)
- 2015: Lincoln Elementary School and Lincoln High School, Talladega County School System; Bluff Park Elementary School, Hoover City School System; Auburn University
- 2014: Brock's Gap Intermediate School, Hoover City School System; F. E. Burleson Elementary School, Hartselle City School System; Homewood Middle School, Homewood City School System
- 2013: Munford Middle and High Schools, Talladega County Schools; Fayetteville High School, Talladega County Schools; Gwin Elementary School, Hoover City School System; Talladega County School System (district winner)
- 2012: Munford Elementary School, Talladega County School System; Winterboro High School, Talladega County Schools; Mill Creek Elementary School, Madison City School System

About the EEAA: The [Environmental Education Association of Alabama](#) (EEAA) is a non-profit group comprised of educators and professionals involved in teaching about the environment. EEAA is an affiliate of the [North American Association for Environmental Education](#) (NAAEE). Throughout the year, EEAA conducts workshops, hosts an annual conference, and offers members trips to various natural sites. EEAA also sponsors an [annual awards program](#), maintains free teaching trunks, and offers [financial grants](#) to its membership.

About Legacy: [Legacy](#) is an organization making a difference in Alabama's environment. This is evidenced by more than \$2.5 million in grants and scholarships Legacy has offered Alabamians for environmental-related projects and education. Legacy has trained more than 3,000 of Alabama's teachers about our environment in a fun and exciting way. In turn, those teachers pass the knowledge along to their students. Legacy is educating Alabama's future generations about the importance of protecting our environment for future generations. The "Protect Our Environment" car tag provides money to support their projects.

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NORESCO United Technologies: [NORESCO United Technologies](#) is one of the largest energy services companies in the U.S. that utilizes design-build and a variety of performance-based contracting vehicles to deliver energy and maintenance savings and significant infrastructure upgrades to existing facilities. These upgrades can be funded through cost savings that the projects generate without the need for up-front capital expenditures by the customer. NORESKO offers a full suite of energy efficiency and sustainable design consulting services. The company collaborates with building owners, architects, and engineers to identify and integrate viable sustainable design strategies into projects to optimize overall energy and environmental performance in new construction and existing buildings. Services include energy auditing, commissioning and retro-commissioning, energy and daylighting analysis, LEED® certification consulting, and sustainability master-planning.

WAVE PowerSteward: [Wave PowerSteward](#) uses patent-pending technology to effectively measure the power being consumed by **actual computers** rather than relying on average power consumption data. This unique methodology allows the company to accurately measure a business's total cost and savings. Wave PowerSteward's intuitive user interface and dashboard allows any authorized member of a team to manage computer-power settings. There is no need for complex networking or system management tools. Computers are simply placed into user groups where usage patterns can be easily set, managed, and reported.

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