Serve Alabama (Governor’s Office of Faith-Based & Volunteer Service) is excited to announce the eighth annual BeReadyCamp. This camp, hosted at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, provides an opportunity for sixth graders across the state to become Youth Preparedness Delegates, receive a commendation from Governor Robert Bentley, and carry the message of preparedness and safety to their schools, communities and families.

This camp has been featured in international Homeland Security journals and received national media attention, including coverage from the Cable News Network (CNN). Additionally, the camp is considered a best practice by the White House and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

BeReadyCamp is an innovative and unique program that promotes citizen preparedness and participation to sixth graders in Alabama using multiple approaches to learning. BeReadyCamp utilizes a modified Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training as its foundation and broadened to include additional lessons. BeReadyCamp curriculum includes: emergency preparedness, introduction to survival and first aid, developing an emergency kit, creating a family disaster plan, water survival, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, triage, career exploration, and terrorism awareness. Throughout each lesson, the participants have the ability to demonstrate their knowledge with hands-on demonstrations in addition to traditional assessment. The camp concludes with a mock disaster, where the youth perform victim search and rescue alongside professional responders in a realistic setting.

(read more about BEReadyCamp on the next page)
The participants are tasked with bringing the message of preparedness and what they have learned to their families and their communities.

**When and where will BeReadyCamp take place?**

BeReadyCamp will be held at the U. S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama Tuesday, March 25 – Saturday, March 29, 2014.

**Who is Eligible to Attend BeReadyCamp?**

All Alabama residents who were be in the sixth-grade by September 2013 are eligible to attend BeReady Camp.

**What is the Cost of Attending BeReadyCamp?**

Registration for BeReadyCamp is $75, which includes lodging, meals, and a CERT backpack. It is the responsibility of the participant’s parent/guardian to provide transportation to and from Huntsville, Alabama.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

The selection process for BeReadyCamp is open to all Alabama residents who will be in the sixth grade by September 2013. Applicants must submit a 300-500 word essay answering the question, “What does being part of a safe community mean to me?” Please clearly label all submissions with name, address, telephone number, county, and school. Submissions are due by December 31, 2013. Please contact Brooke Mills at 334-954-7456 or BeReadyCamp@ServeAlabama.gov for more information.

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**DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 31, 2013**

**RESOURCE**

**Offers Help To**

**Tell Your Common Core Story**

When you visit NSPRA’s [Common Core Communication Network](#), you will find more than 100 resources — samples, examples, templates and more — to help you share the Common Core story with stakeholders. Resources include a sample communication plan created by Jim Dunn, NSPRA Past President and Common Core consultant, as well as a [video](#) from the Montana Department of Education and the New York State Education Department developed to help make sense of the new test scores. Search resources by topic (including helping parents support their kids, changing instruction, and dealing with critics) or by content type (videos, webinars, and sample letters). If you have something you would like to share, send it to [Katie Hood](#). Be sure to include the title, a short description, and the topic/resource type.
Fordham Institute Survey Reveals What Parents Really Want In a School

Results from a survey of more than 2,000 parents of K-12 students show what they most want in their children’s schools. The top characteristic: **strong reading and math programs**. Parents most want their children to develop critical thinking and communication skills, self-discipline and good study habits. With Common Core’s focus on developing math and reading skills through critical thinking and in-depth content analysis, it seems the reform seeks to deliver what parents say they want. Learn more about the results from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

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**Trend Tracker**

‘Online Lunch with the Superintendent’— An Effective Way to Engage More Parents

*By Amanda Morris*, director of school-community relations, Hilliard (Ohio) City Schools

Many school districts struggle to get busy parents to any kind of meeting, let alone engage them in meaningful dialogue. Learn how one district has addressed this issue by using interactive, online videos.

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**Connecting Communities**

Reaching Out to the Hispanic Community: Effective Media Strategies

*By Denisse Cantu*, senior media relations specialist, Houston (Texas) ISD

The first article for our new Connecting Communities feature column offers proven strategies for communicating with Hispanic audiences and collaborating with Spanish media outlets to support your efforts.
Just as health officials have begun to debate their potential dangers, educators are grappling with how to deal with students who are found puffing on e-cigarettes while at school. A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention underscores the popularity of products such as e-cigarettes, cigars and hookahs among American youth. While the overall rate of student tobacco use has leveled off, e-cigarette use has nearly doubled for middle and high school students. Like combustible traditional cigarettes, electronic cigarettes typically contain nicotine, which has been shown to interfere with adolescent brain development, according to the CDC. But the devices are widely seen as an option that is less harmful than conventional smoking and cheaper. The tobacco products that e-cigarettes aim to mimic are banned from nearly all U.S. public schools, and it is illegal to sell conventional cigarettes to minors. But it is less clear what the rules are for the electronic devices. Some states ban the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. Others are still exploring the issue. Meanwhile, reports suggest many school districts are treating the use of e-cigarettes like a regular tobacco product.

Tim McAfee, director of the CDC’s Office on Smoking and Health, said agency officials were disturbed by the number of children “experimenting with these products,” describing their popularity as “a dangerous situation.” Many experts worry that e-cigarettes are alluring to children and threaten longtime efforts to discourage teen smoking.

Ban them, and make sure parents and students understand the dangers. That won’t be easy as officials cite increased marketing efforts, the availability and visibility of the products, as well as the misperception that they may be safer alternatives to the traditional means of getting a nicotine fix.

“It introduces young people to smoking and nicotine in a way that nothing has in decades,” said Matthew L. Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, who said he urges school districts to treat e-cigarettes as they would treat other forms of smoking.