Please join our efforts this week as we encourage Alabama students to **STAY IN SCHOOL!** The Birmingham, Alabama based Mattie C. Stewart Foundation and the Lawler Foundation are partnering with the Alabama State Department of Education to communicate the urgent message of staying in school – and taking a honest look at the consequences of dropping out of school.

During **InsideOut: Stay in School Week, March 2-6, 2015**, the State Department of Education is encouraging ALL middle and high schools throughout the state to dedicate time to watch the 26-minute, emotionally gripping documentary, *InsideOut*. This film, shot in two Alabama maximum-security prisons, exposes the devastating and lasting effects of dropping out of school by those who live with the consequences every day – prison inmates.

Alabama is moving in the right direction. The state’s graduation rate, which is now at 86 percent, continues to increase – moving toward PLAN 2020’s ambitious goal of at least 90 percent by the year 2020. Still, in Alabama and across America, too many young people are dropping out of school – and ending up in prison.

You can assist the ALSDE by posting information concerning *InsideOut: Stay in School Week* on your social media pages. In addition, please let us know how you acknowledged the week by sending photos and video footage from your programs and events to mvaldes@alsde.edu and posting photos to the ALSDE’s Twitter page, using the hashtag #insideout.

The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation and the Lawler Foundation have covered the cost of production and distribution, sending a copy of the *InsideOut* DVD to every school in Alabama in a 6-12 grade configuration. Although the effort is totally voluntary, we are encouraging superintendents, principals, guidance counselors, teachers, parents, community leaders and others carve out from their busy schedules during the first week in March to watch *InsideOut*. Schools may:

- Hold a rally in the school’s auditorium to watch *InsideOut*
- Make *InsideOut* available for viewing in the school’s media center
- Provide the *InsideOut* DVD to school counselors and graduation coaches
- Encourage coaches from various sports to have their teams watch *InsideOut*
- Encourage youth groups, civic organizations, churches and others to view *InsideOut*

**ALSO:** During *InsideOut: Stay in School Week*, the nationally recognized Choice Bus will visit Alabama high schools in Mobile, Montgomery and Bessemer. The Choice Bus is an experience-based learning tool designed to show young people the power of education – as well as the likely consequences of choosing to drop out of school. It contains a full-scale replica of a prison cell hidden behind a curtain.

After viewing powerful testimonials, and viewing a four-minute movie, the curtain is opened revealing the stark reality faced by many drop outs. Students can walk into the uncomfortable living conditions and experience the reality that faces the overwhelming majority of those who decide to drop out of school.

**Tip of the Month:** Eight ways to become a better storyteller through social media

Advertising innovator and iconoclast Howard Gossage said that people do not actually read ads, but rather what would pique their interests. This is very much true today, according to the *Adweek* blog, *Social Times*. With the advent of the Digital Age— and the rise of popular sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter — it was only a matter of how you would be able to capture the interest of your prospective customers. And visual storytelling is one way to do it.

[Here](#) are eight different ways to deliver an effective storytelling that would boost your brand.
Mark Your Calendar: National School Breakfast Week is March 2-6

Children who eat breakfast at school start the day ready to learn—reflected in higher test scores and better classroom behavior. However only half of the children who eat lunch at school also eat school breakfast, according to the Food Research and Action Council.

National School Breakfast Week – March 2-6, 2015 – is a great time to recognize the foodservice professionals who make the breakfast program work in 1,345 school sites statewide. Over 37 million breakfast meals were served to Alabama students during the 2013-2014 school year.

The 2015 theme, “Make the Grade with School Breakfast” reminds everyone in the school community – parents, students, administrators – that a healthy school breakfast sets students up for a day of learning and academic success. The theme will appear in school cafeterias throughout National School Breakfast Week.

We know that many schools are very creative in how they go about serving breakfast to students in the morning. Tell or show us how your schools celebrated National School Breakfast Week by sending details to epippins@alsde.edu and posting photos to the ALSDE’s Twitter page, using the hashtag #alsdensbw.

Sharing the Good News About Alabama’s Public Schools

Alabama School Connection recently hosted a great, interactive event with state public information officers and local media reporters. It was a great exchange of ideas and the challenges of reporting the news. Click here to find out why showcasing your students and schools is so important.

PR Power Hour: Building a Campaign for School Support Through Storytelling

Speaking of storytelling, NSPRA’s upcoming PR Power Hour will highlight stories you can tell to inspire stakeholder pride and build understanding about how students and schools in your district are achieving and succeeding every day.

Gather practical tips on engaging your community through a story-telling campaign to build support for the schools. You’ll also find out how to overcome resistance and nay-sayers with the right blend of stories from students, staff, alumni, and community leaders using a variety of advertising and marketing strategies.

To register, click here.

Making the News: Will School Staff Vaccinations Be Next?

While a new poll shows that two-thirds of Americans think that parents should be required to vaccinate their children, no one seems to be paying attention to another group in the nation’s schools: teachers and staff members who, in general, do not have to be immunized, according to the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA).

In most states, there is no such requirement for teachers and school staff workers, although some provide a list of recommended vaccines. The issue is likely to be raised in response to the latest measles outbreak in which most of those sickened are adults who were not vaccinated, NSPRA states. Already, some states — including Colorado and Vermont — are considering legislation that would require teachers to be up to date on the same vaccines as students.

Don’t Forget: The CCRS of the Week are Just a Click — or Tweet — Away!

The most current Alabama College- and Career-Ready Math and English Language Arts Standards of the Week can be found on Mondays here on the ALSDE website. You can also share, retweet and pin the standards, which are posted weekly on the ALSDE Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest pages.

Reminder: Sign Up for ALSDE News Releases

Speaking of good news … Not getting the Alabama State Department of Education’s news releases delivered to your inbox?

You can sign up for the department’s news releases by clicking here. Once you have submitted your information, you will receive an email confirming your registration.