There is still time to provide the Alabama State Department of Education with invaluable input on how the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards can be improved.

From now through the week of December 15, 2014, the public can go to the Standards Review Homepage and offer feedback on each standard for English Language Arts and Mathematics by grade. Each week, standards for each grade are available for review and comment. While the eighth grade review is featured this week, participants can still access all available review forms by clicking here.

The purpose of the review is to help raise awareness of what the standards actually require students to learn and assist the ALSDE in strengthening the standards where needed. The department is working continually to ensure that all students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need for college and career, and parents, educators, business and industry and civic leaders are critical to this effort.

Please share this information with your education stakeholders by posting this link on your system’s website and social media pages.

At the conclusion of the public review, the feedback generated will go to the state Mathematics and English Language Arts Courses of Study (COS) teams. The only comments that will be considered for action will be those of academic substance that are tied to a specific standard. The COS teams may then provide recommendations to the Alabama State Board of Education.

The standards in the application are arranged by subject and grade level. To respond to standards, participants must enter all required demographic information.

Review participants can select Agree if they are satisfied with the standard as written or Disagree if they would like to see a standard modified. If Disagree is selected, participants will be able to provide suggestions for rewriting or changing the standard.


Best Wishes for a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

At this time of year, many of us pause and reflect on the things we have to be thankful for. The ALSDE staff are thankful for YOU! Thank you PIOs, Superintendents and Principals for your dedication to excellence in communication. We appreciate your ability to turn your school system into a school community.

The ALSDE wishes you and your families a Happy Holiday Season, and we hope that you can enjoy the short rest it provides for you to recharge with family and friends.

Why Use Social Media to Reach Parents in Your District?

Social media is becoming a necessary communication tool for many adults – even a viable news source for some – according to data from the Pew Research Center’s Journalism project. Given this data, school leaders may want to add social media to their district’s communication efforts to reach key audiences.

Today, savvy education leaders know to ask, “How can we connect with our community through social media?” rather than “Should we?” To learn more about why superintendents benefit from developing social media accounts, click here.

Social Media as a Pathway to News: Facebook Leads the Way

Percent of U.S. adults who use each social networking site & percent of U.S. adults who get news from each social networking site

Facebook 64% 51
LinkedIn 1.9 6
Twitter 1.8 5
Pinterest 1.6 4
Instagram 1.2 5
Tumblr 4 0
ReddIt 2 3

Notes: The percent of U.S. adults who get news on Pinterest and Vine each amount to less than one percent.

Aug. 22-Sept. 2, 2013

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Awards: AASB and LEAN Frog Announce Winners
The Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) and LEAN Frog sponsored a contest to recognize Best Practices and Innovations in the non-instructional departments of K-12 public schools. These Best Practices and Innovations have impacted student achievement and promoted the effective and efficient use of public resources statewide during the last two school years. From Child Nutrition to Transportation to Student Services, non-instructional departments and programs in public schools across Alabama are implementing creative and sustainable Best Practices. The entries LEAN Frog received boast some impressive results:

- A 63 percent increase in high school breakfast participation rates.
- Promotion of unity and shared responsibility.
- A five percent increase in the number of students with perfect attendance.
- Assistance with motor skills for special education students.
- Improved ACT test scores.
- Dramatic decreases in detention.
- Over 98,000 hot meals served to children 18 and under during the summer.
- Reductions in truancy, discipline issues and tardiness.

Click here to view the list of winners and to find out how three Alabama school systems are improving students’ well-being, preparing them for successful futures and encouraging the involvement of school staff, parents and the local community.

Raise Your Voice for Educational Excellence at NSPRA 2015 National Seminar
It’s not too early to begin making plans to attend the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) 2015 National Seminar in Nashville, Tennessee, from July 12-15, 2015.

The NSPRA National Seminar is the largest gathering of school communication professionals in North America, bringing together outstanding experts and practitioners in communication and leadership for four days of collaboration and learning. This year’s theme is “Raising Our Voices for Educational Excellence.”

At the Seminar you will connect with others who are using effective communication to build bridges that ensure education success for all students. You’ll learn innovative and strategic ways to deliver key messages about your schools, foster open and honest dialogue with stakeholders and develop dynamic internal and external communication programs.

Click here to learn more about the NSPRA 2015 National Seminar.

Winter Meeting, Scholarships, Dues and More...

The Alabama School Public Relations Association will host its Winter Quarterly Meeting beginning at 9 a.m. on Friday, December 12, at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville! ALSPRA members Cindy Warner, Rena Anderson and Keith Ward will deliver the keynote address, “Getting Your School News Out in a Shrinking Media Market.”

In the age of dying newspapers and merging commercial TV stations, school systems are finding themselves becoming “the local producer of education news” in their community. Many are not prepared for this change and are still waiting and hoping reporters will show up on their doorstep. Learn effective strategies on how school districts are using news blogs, social media and video production to get their positive news out to the community.

The meeting will also include a discussion of the educational services provided by the U.S. Space and Rocket Center, as well as a tour of what is considered one of Alabama’s premiere attractions.

The meeting and all subsequent meetings and conferences will be scheduled sessions and logged in STI PD as PD Hours. Participants (from LEAs) can log on and register. When the participants complete the meeting, they are eligible to receive credit. The certificate is signed by the superintendents, who are responsible to take the certificate to his/her superintendent. It is at the discretion of the local superintendent to approve it.

The STI PD class for the December Meeting is listed as:

ALSPRA1
PD Title: Public Information in Our Schools - ALSPRA Quarterly Meeting
Start Date: 12/12/2014, Time: 9:00 AM
Location: U.S. Space and Rocket Center, Huntsville

Also:
- The Alabama School Public Relations Association Conference Committee has begun planning the association’s March 6, 2015, conference that will be in Birmingham at The Hyatt Birmingham-The Wynfrey Hotel. We’ve already received a commitment from Dr. John Draper, an acclaimed education expert, former Alabamian and National School Public Relations Association Consultant.
- If you have college-bound students interested in scholarship opportunities, please tell them about the 2014 ALSPRA Student Scholarship. The scholarship winner will be selected by an ALSPRA committee and notified by mid-February. ALSPRA will award one $500 scholarship and present the winner with a certificate in recognition of his or her achievement. Email mralspra@bellsouth.net for an application form. The deadline to apply is January 31, 2015.
- Membership renewals are due January 31, 2015, but we’re hoping for early renewals this year. Your association needs your support and active participation. Renew online now or send in the invoice attached using the address included. Group memberships are highly encouraged to allow multiple members of your organization to participate in ALSPRA activities, including our upcoming conference. ALSPRA also allows associate memberships.