Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards

1. The Pioneer Institute estimates the cost to implement Common Core in Alabama at $200 million. How will the ALSDE pay for this?
   - The cost to develop and implement the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards are very similar to the cost of any course of study development and implementation. There is no additional cost.

2. You said our last place finish in 8th grade math scores was because standards were not aligned with the demands of the tests. Who exactly was responsible for developing and implementing the standards? See Video Answer

3. Even though we value Common Core, how do we balance meeting and surpassing the standards with valuing the student’s individual and unique passions and talents? See Video Answer

4. I have heard Alabama is 100% Common Core Standards with only 15% Alabama Standards. Is this the maximum a state can add? Is it true that the federal, state or the local BOE cannot change the 100% Common Core Standards?
   - Any state that has adopted the Common Core, can change a standard. There is no authority that would preclude a state from changing, rearranging or adding/deleting a standard.
     From Chris Minnich, CCSSO Executive Director: “The states are the owners of this copyright, so they can do as they please with the standards and make changes as they wish.”
   - All states own the copyright of the standards as they are members of the organizations that helped to organize and create - The National Governor’s Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). NGA and CCSSO also own the copyright. CCSSO
operates on behalf of the state superintendents of the country, and NGA on behalf of the governors of the country.

1. How many parent and teachers were on this committee that decided on Common Core?
   - The committee that developed the Common Core can be found [here](#). The Course of Study committees with ALSDE, who reviewed the Common Core, and added specific content and rearranged standards can be found [here](#) and [here](#), within the documents.

**Assessments**

1. Why on state assessments (ACT Aspire) are students’ time so much shorter than the previous assessment being that it contains more rigor and more reading (K-5)?
   - The assessments are more concise and geared more toward determining if students understand the standard. They ask students to think critically and offer more meaningful questions.
2. If according to your handout - Frequently Asked Questions - standardized tests have become minimalized, why are students in our middle schools taking multiple weeks to take standardized tests such as the Global Scholar Performance Series test?
   - Individual school systems and schools choose what formative tests they will use. Some take longer than others. These tests are used for instructional purposes, so they are often given every couple of weeks, to gauge a student’s progress. They are not like summative tests, given just once a year.
3. I noticed the “opt out” option for assessments is written in such a way in my school system’s handbook, as to lead people to believe opting out is against the law. The handbook ties opting out with attendance which is a legal issue. Isn’t it correct students may “opt out” if they attend school? [See Video Answer](#)
4. How can you be sure teachers will not teach to the test? [See Video Answer](#)
5. Why are we still giving the Grad Exam to students who graduated prior to last year?
   - Yes, students who were in graduation year 2012 or below, are/were still required to take the test. Any time that an assessment is discontinued, there has to be a group of students chosen to be the last, and any student before that year, is held to previous requirement.
6. How much per pupil do the ACT Aspire, etc. cost? Are they aligned with accountability?
   - ACT Aspire cost is $11 (online) and $19 (paper) per student. Yes, this assessment is aligned with ALSDE’s Accountability plan.
7. Why is ACT the best company for us to have chosen assessments from? Why should students take the tests?
   - ACT has a 50 year history of offering assessments for students. They have created a suite of assessments that are all mapped back to each other, to create a seamless and integrated approach to determining college- and career-readiness. ALSDE believes all students take the assessments so that teacher, parents and students can see college- and career-readiness
8. What are your plans for the teacher evaluation system that we are required to create? You have stated you will not tie it to test scores. Is that still true? See Video Answer

PLAN 2020

1. Where in “PLAN 2020” do you discuss Arts-Integrated Teaching and how shall art (music dance, theatre, visual art) for Arts sake be encouraged and implemented at all levels (elementary through high school) for all students? See Video Answer
2. It is my understanding that PLAN 2020 has different benchmarks for subgroups of students (i.e., race, S.E.S., English proficiency). If this is true, how can we be assured this doesn’t lead to lowered expectations for students in the different subgroups? See Video Answer
3. PLAN 2020 identifies additional counselors and approximately 2,000 additional classrooms will be needed in the transformation of the education system by 2020. Where will the money come from to cover an estimated expense ranging in nine (9) digits ($100’s of millions)? See Video Answer
4. If a charter school law is passed in the 2015 Legislative session, will that add or detract from PLAN 2020? See Video Answer
5. What are learning supports? How can we all get services without extra money?
   - In 2013, the ALSDE teamed up with Scholastic to create a new Comprehensive System of Learning Supports design document that helps school systems reframe previous student/learning support programs. The initiative utilizes existing resources to revamp infrastructures at the school, district, and state levels. It also focuses on developing and implementing accountability indicators directly related to the learning support system and fully integrating them into school improvement accountability. Ten school systems piloted the program and it has since been rolled out to another 31. Other districts will be phased in over the coming years until every school system has implemented the program.

Curriculum, Courses of Study and Textbooks

1. Will a public hearing be called on the adoption of new AP History books?
   - The hearing for textbook adoption occurred in Spring 2014. This was advertised on the ALSDE website, through a news release and on social media.
2. Is there any truth that Alabama will implement National Sexuality Education standards? See Video Answer
3. Why are teachers limited in what they may teach?
   - Teachers are not limited. If you have a specific incident you would like to report of this happening, send directly to comm@alsde.edu.
4. Will Alabama be looking to adopt new/revised science standards, such as those in the “Next Generation Science Standards” (NGSS)?
   - The 2014 Science Course of Study will be presenting the Course of Study for adoption in Spring 2015. The committee will not be suggesting the NGSS to the State Board of Education.

Data

1. Recently, you said schools would stop asking for social security numbers on enrollment forms. However, I have seen several schools continue to ask for it. What can you do to ensure immigrant children are welcomed?
   - A Social Security Number (SSN) may be requested as part of the enrollment procedure but is NOT required for enrollment and disclosure is voluntary. No child is to be denied enrollment in any school or participation in school activities and programs based on the immigration of the child or the child’s parents/guardians. Memos to superintendents have been sent as a reminder.
2. I heard that by executive order, FERPA was diluted in 1/2011. There has been a huge outcry concerning the privacy of children’s data since then. As a result, a resolution was passed by the ALSDE governing student date, but unfortunately this resolution relies upon this revised FERPA law. So what data privacy does this really ensure?
   - The Data Use and Governance Policy adopted by the Alabama State Department of Education prohibits federal or state reports from containing personally identifiable data; requires all data collected to be stored in a state-developed and state-owned warehouse; and mandates that access to this data be restricted to pre-screened employees. All data elements collected and transferred to the U.S Department of Education are based on the reporting requirements contained in EDFacts and include only aggregated data with no personally identifiable information.
3. Since Pearson Publishing provides the platform for ACT Aspire assessments what specific contractual protection do we have to prevent Pearson from using student data for their own gain such as R&D for Common Core aligned material and market for development of remedial materials?
   - We are not in any contract with Pearson at this time. Though Pearson is assisting ACT Aspire with the delivery of the assessment, the 2014 contract signed for the state-wide administration of the tests is with ACT Aspire and has no contractual obligations to Pearson.
4. I have been told there are schools in Alabama participating in data mining subscribed by Common Core policy guidelines by using facial expression cameras and wireless conductive sensors. See Video Answer

Miscellaneous

1. We as parents are currently told that Alabama doesn’t recognize dyslexia and they do not provide accommodations for dyslexia. How will the PLAN 2020 help Alabama schools close this “acknowledgement” gap? See Video Answer
2. Why must schools list as graduates those who graduate in four years, but not count in the statistics those who stuck with it – but took longer?
   - Students who do not complete all requirements for graduation within a four-year period but who remain in school working toward completion of requirements are considered still enrolled. Those who exit with a document other than a state approved diploma, such as a GED or Special Education Graduation Certificate, are considered completers.
3. Given Alabama’s numbers concerning childhood obesity, will Alabama continue to only require 30 minutes of physical education? See Video Answer
4. AMSTI makes such a difference in our school system. Will there be increased funding for AMSTI?
   - While the ALSDE has requested increased funding for AMSTI in the budget, any increases must be approved by the State Legislature.
5. Summer school is offered to only academically challenged students. Can this privilege be offered to all students? This might offer more time senior year to start college courses offered in high school. See Video Answer
6. Do school waivers allow for the creation of a brand new school? (Not just innovation within a school)? See Video Answer

###