April 20, 2012 is the last date to submit your Second Grade Child Find LEA Summary Report. Of course, you may submit the report anytime you have completed it!

The Challenging Science Activities: A Resource and Curriculum Guide-Grades K-12 is now available online at http://www.alspdg.org/challenging_science_guide.html. Each grade level is listed separately for teachers to find and download exactly what they need instead of downloading the whole guide. The Differentiation Moodle Courses are also linked on this site. Nancy is working on the Challenging Math Activities guide, which we hope will be available by late spring.

We will start work on the Challenging Social Studies Activities guide at the end of this month and the Challenging Language Arts Activities guide in March.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cooking Up Concept-Based Curriculum

Ongoing

The independent study course, “Cooking Up Concept-based Curriculum” at http://atim.cc/course/view.php?id=234 is open for anyone to enroll at anytime as an independent study. We will provide feedback and guidance as you work through the modules for this course. Contact Shirley Farrell (sfarrell@alsde.edu) for details on how to enroll.

Acorn Scholars Program

February 27, 2012

Vanderbilt University has a new grant program for high-ability, high-need Alabama students, particularly those from Jackson, Madison and Winston Counties. This program, Vanderbilt Programs for Talented Youth’s Acorn Scholars program, is supported by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. This grant provides funding for students who meet the requirements to attend the summer youth programs for gifted students. If you plan to recommend students for the program, you must attend the free professional development workshop on February 27th. The registration deadline is February 10. For more information or to register, call 615-322-8261 or access the web site at http://pty.vanderbilt.edu.

Environmental Education Association of Alabama

March 1-3, 2012

The EEAA conference will be held at Camp McDowell near Jasper, Al. For more information, go to http://www.eeaa.us. Many gifted specialists are embedding environmental education topics, concepts, and projects into their concept-based curriculum. This is a great opportunity to network with environmental educators, formal and informal, as well as obtain free resources to use in your classrooms or share with general education teachers.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Legacy, Partners in Environmental Education

Legacy provides environmental education grants annually through the Competitive Grants Program. Funds for this program are allocated specifically to assist with helping to create environmentally responsible citizens through education. Any non-profit/tax exempt Alabama organization or school planning a community based environmental program is encouraged to apply. Competitive grants (http://www.legacyenved.org/index.php/grants-and-scholarships/sub-menu-1) are available for up to $10,000 and Mini-grants.
Toyota Tapestry Grants for Science Teachers

http://www.nsta.org/pd/tapestry/

Toyota TAPESTRY Grants for Science Teachers program offers grants to K–12 science teachers for innovative projects that enhance science education in the school and/or school district. Fifty large grants totaling $500,000 in all will be awarded this year. To apply for funding, qualified teachers must write a Toyota TAPESTRY proposal according to the proposal requirements. The program is open to middle and high school science teachers and elementary teachers who teach some science in the classroom or are teaching specialists. Middle and high school teachers must teach at least two science classes per day. All applicants must have at least 2 years science teaching experience in a K-12 school not including the current school year. Only the Project Director has to meet the above criteria. The project staff may consist of educators of any discipline, administrators, parents, students or anyone who will be directly involved in the project. An individual teacher or a team of up to five people may submit a proposal. The Project Director will be the contact person for the team and will be the sole administrator of the grant money. Applicants may submit only one proposal per year as Project Director. DEADLINE: March 7, 2012

FIELD STUDY EXPERIENCES

The purpose of the field study experience is to enhance and enrich the content and skills from units of study. The trip becomes an embedded activity within the concept-based curriculum unit.

With all the debates, caucuses and primaries leading up to the November Presidential Election, this month’s featured trip is The White House at http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/interactive-tour/. After a welcome from the President, a map of the White House will be displayed. You can either click on the red icons on the map, or select an area of the White House in the window below the map. You will see either a photo or a video with text explaining the purpose and history of the room. Remember, the winner of the 2012 Presidential Election wins a four year stay in this large mansion!

As with any field trip experience, what are the “before, during, and after” experiences connected to this experience to further the studies of the concept-based curriculum? How does this experience help students answer Essential Questions and/or Scaffolded Questions and discover Essential Understandings?

CONTESTS & OTHER REAL-WORLD AUDIENCES

Perennial Math
http://perennialmath.com/

Perennial Math is offering virtual competitions for students in grades 5-8, as well as face-to-face competitions. The problems in the competition involve critical thinking skills beyond the math computational level. You can check out a sample test at http://perennialmath.com/index.php?option=com_bfquiz&view=onepage&catid=6&Itemid=12.

You must pre-register for the virtual competition and pay the registration fee. For more information contact them at 1-888-835-2366 or info@perennialmath.com.

Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge
http://www.youngscientistchallenge.com/

Here’s the search for America’s Next Top Young Scientist! Many of the greatest innovations of our time were first designed to solve a simple problem. This year’s Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge encourages young people to solve everyday problems using science and innovation. When you are working in the field of science, the opportunities are endless! Look around you - science is everywhere. Your innovative ideas just may revolutionize the way we live.
Open to students in grades 5-8, the Young Scientist Challenge provides the opportunity for your child to win $25,000, a trip to Costa Rica with Discovery Student Adventures, and the title "America's Top Young Scientist."

To enter the 2012 competition, students must create a 1-2 minute video describing a new innovation or solution that could solve or impact an everyday problem related to the way we move, keep ourselves healthy or make a difference. One student will win the coveted title of "America's Top Young Scientist."

Want to know more? Visit www.youngscientistchallenge.com to find entry guidelines, prize details and FAQ's. All video entries must be submitted online no later than April 19, 2012.

Noetic Learning Math Contest
Thursday, April 12, 2012

The Noetic Learning Math Contest is a biannual problem-solving contest for elementary students. The contest is in its 4th year and many gifted classrooms have participated in the past. To participate

- Register at http://www.noetic-learning.com/mathcontest
- Fee: $29 per grade level team (There is no limit on the number of students on a team from the same school)
- Administer the test between April 12 to April 19 at your own school
- Grade the test papers and report the scores
- We announce the winners and send out the cool medals

RESOURCES

Career Exploration

One of the results from the online professional development survey many of you completed at the beginning of this school year showed a need for career exploration resources. The following free web sites are great to use with students to determine what they are interested in or to explore different careers. The first one is from the Explore test that students will take in 8th grade. They can click on a career topic. On the right side of the screen a list of specific careers is displayed. When a student clicks the career, a brief list shows the Work Tasks, Salary, Size & Growth, and Education/Training needed for it.

http://www.actstudent.org/wwm/explore_world.html

LearnMore Indiana is sponsored by several Indiana government agencies, including the Department of Education. This one web site has five links for students.

http://www.learnmoreindiana.org/careers/exploring/InterestInventories/Pages/Home.aspx

Career Clickers eXpanded is an in-depth career interest inventory.

Career Clickers eXpress is a tool to find out what jobs might be best for you.

Career One Stop provides information in high growth occupations, including the skills and education.

Career Party is a short career interest inventory.

Drive of Your Life is a web-based video game designed to help middle-school students learn more about themselves and their options for the future.

Oolone- The Visual Search Engine

http://oolone.com/

Check out this visual search engine that provides more than a list of possible web sites in the results. This search engine displays four web sites at a time - yes, displays a preview of the actual web site. There is an adult content filter on the web site that you can set to prevent certain web sites from appearing.

Conceptua Math

http://www.conceptuamath.com/

Looking for ways to assist classroom teachers with their visual-spatial learners? This math site provides visual models to teach fractions. To access the free online tools, click http://www.conceptuamath.com/fractions.html.
Cool Infographics 2011 Gallery
How many of you are using infographics with your students? How proficient in visual literacy are your student? Check out this collection of infographics compiled by Randy Krum. Not all of these information graphics are appropriate for your classrooms. Preview before adding to your bookmarks or downloading!

Google Mapmaker
This Google app allows you to add to and update the map for millions of people to see in Google Maps and Google Earth- talk about a mapping activity with a real-world audience! You can add details about your community by placing the public buildings in the right location, or adding the local park. Check out the web site that includes details to get you and your students started in updating places you know.

Rhyme ‘N Learn
http://rhymenlearn.com/
Check out these raps in math and science. You can listen to them online. Math raps include videos of the math operations. If you, or your students, like them you can purchase them from the iTunes Store. Words are printed on the page for students to follow, or sing, along. Songs include “Don’t Let Pi Make Ya Cry,” “BoneZone,” and “P to the E to the M to the D to the A to the S.”

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS
LatinSummer Birmingham
If you live around the Birmingham area, here’s a summer opportunity for your students: LatinSummer Birmingham will be held on the campus of Samford University for two weeks this coming July. This unique enrichment program gives students grades 2-7 the opportunity to discover Latin and the ancient world through hands-on learning. No prior knowledge is expected - this program seeks to spark interest in language learning among student participants.

LatinSummer Birmingham is a joint venture of Ascanius Youth Classics Institute (a 10-year old nonprofit educational organization) and the Samford University Department of Classics. A variety of scholarships are available in the hopes that this enriching day camp will be available to as many students as possible. An e-brochure gives more details: