September 11, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO:       City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM:  Thomas R. Bice  
        State Superintendent of Education

RE:       October is Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month

October is the time of year when we hold a statewide campaign to raise awareness of the importance of parental involvement and the key role that parents play in their child’s education. It is a time for local school systems to make that extra effort to invite parents to visit their local school and learn how they can become partners in their child’s education. This year’s theme is Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School.

Each year Alabama hosts a very successful parent visitation month, but it requires each of you to make it happen locally. To assist you, we have posted materials and tools for your use located on the Alabama State Department of Education Web site. Please go to www.alsde.edu > Home page > Communications tab > Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Included on the site is the Guide for Schools, which contains a wealth of information on how to make plans for local parent involvement meetings and activities.

Please take the time to work with your staff on the importance of this effort. Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an excellent way to establish partnerships with parents that can be sustained throughout the school year.

Should you have any questions about parent visitation month, please feel free to contact Mrs. Carolyn Townsend by telephone at (334) 353-1191 or via e-mail at cltownsend@alsde.edu.

TRB/CET/PAG

Enclosure

FY12-2104
ALABAMA’S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
October 2012

GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS
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This document and other resources for Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month are available online at **www.alsde.edu**.
OVERVIEW

2012 Theme: Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School

Rationale:

Because parent involvement—now more than ever—is such a critical factor in determining the success or failure of students and schools, the Alabama State Department of Education recognizes the need for ongoing, meaningful parent involvement. The Department is promoting Statewide Parent Visitation Month in October. It is intended as a community effort—a time for schools, businesses, community agencies, churches, and government to turn their attention to the important role of parents in the education of their children. We extend an invitation for all schools and school systems to become a part of this important statewide event.

Date: October is Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month in Alabama public schools.

Suggested Times: Specific dates and times will vary with each school/community.

Suggested Meeting Topics (some topics are appropriate for all grade levels):

- **Elementary** – School/System Report Cards and Accountability/AYP Reports (www.alsde.edu); Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; Response to Instruction (RtI); Getting Involved with Homework; Discipline Techniques; Continuous Improvement Plan (Including the Parental Involvement Section); School-Parent Compacts; School Safety Issues; Health and Nutrition Tips; After-School Programs (Lights on After School is October 22,2012, www.afterschoolalliance.org); Internet Safety, and No Child Left Behind – NCLB (www.nclb.gov).

- **Middle/Junior High** – School/System Report Cards and Accountability/AYP Reports (www.alsde.edu); Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; Making Middle Grades Work; Laying the Foundation; Response to Instruction (RtI); Preparing for Graduation; Continuous Improvement Plan (Including the Parental Involvement Section); School-Parent Compacts; Parenting of Adolescents; Drug-Free Awareness; Health and Nutrition Tips; School Calendars and Menus; Internet Safety.

- **High School** – School/System Report Cards and Accountability/AYP Reports (www.alsde.edu); Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; High Schools That Work; A+ Advanced Placement Initiative; Graduation Requirements; Parenting of Teens; How Parent Involvement Impacts Academic Achievement; School-Parent Compacts; Drug-Free Awareness; Health and Nutrition Tips; School Policies; Internet Safety.

Remember, these topics are just a starting point. You will have many creative ideas of your own. After all, you know the needs of your school and community. Consider contacting other schools for ideas, too.
Points to Consider:

Why is parent involvement important?

Over thirty years of research have proven parent involvement is one of the largest determining factors related to school success. Research has demonstrated when parents are involved in their children’s education in positive ways, children achieve higher grades and test scores, have better attendance at school, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behavior, graduate at higher rates, and have greater enrollment in higher education.

What are the benefits of parent involvement?

The most important benefit of parent involvement is better educated, more informed parents who have a direct impact on children and their success in school. Other benefits include greater community awareness, appreciation for a job well done, increased interest, and meaningful involvement from parents.

- Student success hinges on parent/family involvement.
- School quality depends on parent/family involvement.

(Source: National PTA’s National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, www.pta.org)

Why should we participate in Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month?

Your school system will benefit from the collective efforts of a statewide event. These events provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to become familiar with students’ parents and to solicit sustained, year-round parental and family involvement. Community members can prove to be a valuable resource for the classroom and the school. Furthermore, the school will receive positive news coverage and business support while offering community outreach.

Who should be involved in the community?

The more that people are involved and feel ownership of the event, the greater the chance of success. Business leaders, church leaders, the media, parents, transportation services, and childcare centers are among many services you can include in your planning.

How long should the event last?

Event schedules and formats will vary. Assess your community’s needs to determine the best time to schedule sessions relative to occupations in the community, businesses and their hours of operation, etc. Invite parents and others to visit their child’s school. Offer some form of informational format and/or interesting activities to promote attendance.
What are some activities that can be offered?

This event is an opportunity to share the programs offered in your school with your community and to emphasize a shared responsibility for student success. Highlight your successes but do not hide your problems. Seek input from parents, grandparents, and the community on needs and solutions. Use this opportunity to expose parents to the benefits of the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI); Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI); career-technical education; arts education; and technology. Open your classrooms, labs, and libraries for parents to visit. Involve students and showcase their work to increase participation.

This occasion also affords the school an opportunity to provide beneficial workshops, such as increasing awareness on health issues or parenting tips, such as disciplining strategies or helping children with homework. Door prizes and refreshments that are donated by local merchants add additional incentives for parents to attend events.

How can we ensure that parents will attend?

Utilize all community resources, such as the media and local businesses, to help ensure success. Ask the local media to advertise the event to parents and businesses. Suggest that businesses allow employees time off to visit their child’s school or extend the activities into the evening for those parents who work late. Request support from local leadership, such as the mayor and city council. Perhaps they might adopt a resolution endorsing the local parenting activities and encourage parents to attend.

Make your event as convenient as possible for all parents (i.e., working, non-working, non-English speaking, those without transportation and childcare, and those with Disabilities). Make your event fun and informative. Keep information sessions brief and interactive. Consider a carnival-type arrangement in the gymnasium that allows visitors to move from station to station at their own pace and according to their particular interests.

What does the research say about parent involvement?

The most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is not family income or social status, but the extent to which the student’s family is able to (1) create a home environment that encourages learning; (2) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children’s achievement and future careers; and (3) become involved in their children’s education at school and in their community.

Students whose parents are actively involved in their education:

- Achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents’ educational level.
- Reach higher levels of achievement, receive higher grades and test scores, have better attendance, and complete homework assignments more consistently.
- Exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.
- Have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in postsecondary education.

(Source: National PTA’s National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, www.pta.org)

What are the goals of Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month?

- To have a unified/coordinated event.
- To serve as a catalyst for year-round parental and family involvement.
- To seek parental input at the school level.

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
• To raise awareness of state initiatives such as the Statewide Accountability System, the ARMT, ARI, and AMSTI.
• To allow local schools and school systems to highlight their own successful programs and initiatives such as technology and career tech opportunities, arts in the schools, reading and math achievement, after-school programs, etc.
• To assist local schools and school systems with the media and business support.
• To have parents visit schools, feel welcome while there, witness firsthand what schools offer their children, and leave feeling that they have contributed to the school, as well as gained from their experience.
Planning Tips for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month

This guide is designed to assist you in planning activities for Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month. We hope you will review the suggestions/guidelines and use them to design an event that fits the needs of your school and community. This planning guide also includes the 2012 logo, letterhead template, samples (correspondence, invitation, news release, etc.), and parent and school/school system evaluation forms. Use the logo in publicizing your event. Customize the template and samples to suit your needs.

NOTE: Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month materials are available online at www.alsde.edu.

Keep in mind that the suggestions offered in this guide are merely examples of topics, activities, or handouts that you can share with parents. You will know of others that apply to your school, but may not be mentioned here. For example, a useful session for your school might be “How to Conduct a Successful IEP meeting” or other special education issues. Any of the suggested handouts can be displayed on tables or distributed in bags or folders for parents. You can implement other creative ideas and sessions to engage parents. Adapt these guidelines specific to your school and community. You may decide to hold a one-day event, a week or weekend of open house, or a series of events throughout the month of October.

This is an occasion to seek input and support from parents, community leaders, partners in education, PTAs, PTOs, and other volunteers. Everyone can share in the planning of your event. Remember to include parents AND grandparents, guardians, older siblings, and other relatives.

Have students create welcome banners with the 2012 theme for Statewide Parent Visitation Month: Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School. Create “I Have Visited My Child’s School Today” recognition certificates, stickers, pencils, etc., for parents. These items make parents feel important and special. In addition, parents become “walking advertisements” for your school!

Good luck with your event. Again, we remind you that the activities should be representative of your community and your school. What’s important is what works for your school and community. Be creative and have fun!

Your Notes for Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month:
Checklist for Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month

- Form a planning committee.
  Include everyone—faculty, support staff, parents, students, public information officers, parent involvement coordinators, community members, etc. Partner with PTAs, PTOs, businesses, civic groups, higher education, etc.

- Assess the needs of your parents by asking students and parents for their input.
  Survey parents on programs they would like to see and other needs they may have. Are they concerned about violence in schools? Do they need transportation or childcare? Would they be willing to serve on the planning committee?

- Design format(s) and convenient time(s) that fit the needs of your parents.
  Decide what works best for parents in your community. Vary activities, formats, and schedules. You may choose to have a general session that leads into concurrent sessions, or you may want to give parents a choice of ongoing activities. You might decide to invite parents to stop by for school visits on their way home from work. Activities could revolve around a sack lunch or supper. Some schools have had successful results with morning and late afternoon sessions that last two hours each.

- Send “Save the Date” announcements EARLY.

- Call on community members.
  Ask for speaker suggestions, volunteers, refreshments, and door prizes.

- Give parents a reason to attend—add an element of fun.
  Distribute door prizes. Involve children in the activities. Combine Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month events with previously scheduled activities, such as fall festivals, homecoming, Red Ribbon Week, or Open House.

- If planning parent-teacher conferences, keep them positive.

- Provide transportation and childcare.
  Work with your system’s transportation and community education coordinators or contact community organizations.

- Provide services for non-English speaking parents and those with disabilities.
  Federal Programs and Special Education staff can assist you.

- Showcase student art and school work with displays, exhibits, and performances.

- Distribute Parent Month Evaluation Forms.
  Have a central collection point. Compile forms and use them to design next year’s format.

- Keep the media informed before, during, and after the events.

- Publicize school events at local malls, supermarkets, restaurants, doctors’ offices, etc.

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Checklist for Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month (Continued)

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
Mail School/School System Evaluation Form following your event but no later than November 19 to Mrs. Carolyn E. Townsend, State Department of Education, Gordon Persons Building, Room 3323, P. O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101.

Thank all of those who helped make your event a success and start planning now for next year’s Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month!
Sample Activities for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month

- Schedule parent-teacher conferences.
- Showcase student art, work samples, science projects, writing portfolios, etc.
- Incorporate other events such as fall festivals, open house, homecoming, etc.
- Celebrate school anniversaries/milestones.
- Celebrate Lights on After School on October 18 (www.afterschoolalliance.org).
- Celebrate National Community Education Day.
- Hold a systemwide open house.
- Open the school library after school hours for students and their families.
- Feature school successes and advertise future events.
- Distribute school information packets and student handbooks.
- Set up a carnival-type event in the gym so parents can rotate through stations.
- Create newsletter/calendar to send home that advertises October schedule of events.
- Take events to other venues outside of school, such as malls and community centers.
- Serve refreshments and give door prizes.
- Give class reunion-type awards: parent or grandparent of the day, parent with most children attending your school, parent who came the farthest distance from work, etc.
- Ask for mayor’s proclamation for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month.
- Host a variety of sessions to appeal to a wide range of interests and academic levels: CPR training, Adult Basic Ed/GED, Community Ed class schedules, etc.
- Invite local dignitaries, former students, local celebrities, etc.
- Feature a faculty art show, in addition to student work.
- Publicize student and faculty honor rolls for awards, grants, scholarships, etc.
- Display banners made by the students.
- Recruit student volunteers to register attendees, serve refreshments, act as guides, babysit younger students, etc.
- Have a “Make-and-Take” art station for parents and children.
- Feature a story-telling time for younger children.
- Make Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month a class project for a certain grade or discipline (English, drama, journalism, art, music, photography, graphic design, technology, etc.).

Your Ideas for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
Other Suggestions for Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month

- Remember transportation and childcare needs to enable more parents to attend events.
- Collaborate with other agencies such as the county extension service and churches to provide transportation, parenting workshops, childcare, etc.
- Make provisions for non-English speaking parents and parents with disabilities.
- Contact county public health departments for health and nutrition handouts.
- Remember that many agencies and Web sites offer free, low-cost, and bilingual services (see Internet Resources on page 23).
- Contact other schools for ideas.
- Recruit ideas from students. Students can help with planning, publicity, registration, and technology demonstrations. Older students might babysit younger students.
- Vary hours of school events to accommodate schedules of working parents.
- Contact local businesses to donate refreshments and door prizes.
- Ask businesses to give employees time off from work to attend this event.
- Follow up with parents, as appropriate.
- Work with your local PTA or PTO.
- Be prepared to create signs or add name tags for last-minute visitors.

Make the News:

- Notify local news media about Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month as soon as possible (see Sample News Release on page 21).
- The Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month logo is included in this guide for use on all printing and presentations. Logo and other materials are available online at www.alsde.edu.
- Keep the media informed of key developments including:
  - Schools participating.
  - Employers agreeing to cooperate.
  - Programs and activities being planned.
  - Invitations being sent to parents.
  - Companies that are supporting the event.
- Use media to keep parents informed about Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month developments, speakers, schedule changes, etc.
- Publish Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month schedule of local events in your area newspaper.
- Post notices throughout your community (malls, restaurants, supermarkets, other businesses, etc.).
- Write an editorial about what your school has done, is doing, or could be doing with more parent involvement.
Follow-Up for Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month

Not only will evaluations and follow-up with parents contribute to the future success of Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month, but they are very important aspects of continual parent involvement.

A sample Parent Evaluation Form is provided on the next page to copy and distribute to parents. Be sure to collect evaluation forms from parents before they leave your event. Participants are more likely to complete evaluations if they do so before they leave the event.

The School/School System Evaluation Form on page 14 and online at www.alsde.edu should be mailed following your event but no later than November 19 to Mrs. Carolyn E. Townsend, Alabama State Department of Education, Gordon Persons Building, Room 3323, P. O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101. Submit only one copy per school/system.

Say "THANK YOU!" to all of those who helped in making your event a success and start planning for next year’s event.

Your Notes for Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

Parent Evaluation Form

Thank you for visiting (name of school) today. Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation of your experience today with Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month’s events. We hope to have this event again next year and would like your comments to help us with our future planning.

1. What did you expect from Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month event?

2. Did our program meet your expectations? Why or why not?

3. What did you like most about Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month program for parents?

4. What was your least favorite part of Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month program for parents?

5. Did the events or sessions help you understand what your child has learned and will be learning during this school year?

6. What element or session would you like added to next year’s program?

7. We want to keep you involved in the school’s effort to educate your child. Do you have any suggestions on how we can keep working together?

8. Other general comments, feedback, or suggestions?

Thank you for your feedback. Together we can provide your child with the best education possible. Please return this form before you leave to (GIVE LOCATION).
STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

School/School System Evaluation Form

Thank you for participating in Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation form to reflect your experience. We plan to continue this event and your comments will help the Alabama State Department of Education in future planning. Please submit ONE per school/system.

1. If you did not participate in Statewide Parent Visitation Month, please give reason(s) and answer Questions 3 and 9 through 12.

2. How many schools/parents participated in your system’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month event?

3. Please give us the name and contact information of your Parent Involvement Coordinator.

Parent Involvement Coordinator

School/School System

Telephone / Fax / E-mail

4. Please give an overview of the kinds of activities that took place in your community during Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Please check all that apply.

a. ____ General Assemblies  
b. ____ Concurrent Sessions  
c. ____ Refreshments  
d. ____ Drawings/Giveaways  
d. ____ Speakers  
e. ____ Student Involvement  
f. ____ Parent/Teacher Conferences  
g. ____ Other (please describe)

5. Did your schools receive support from local businesses?  ____ Yes  ____ No
If yes, please describe what type of help was received.

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School

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6. What resources did you use to assist in the planning process?
   a. _____ Banner
   b. _____ Video
   c. _____ Stickers
   d. _____ Local business and community leaders
   e. _____ PTA/PTO
   f. _____ Local education foundation
   g. _____ Handouts
   h. _____ Other (please describe)

7. How did you advertise Statewide Parent Visitation Month?
   a. _____ Radio
   b. _____ Television
   c. _____ Newspapers
   d. _____ Letters/Fliers to Parents
   e. _____ Billboards
   f. _____ Banners
   g. _____ Other (please describe)

8. We would like to compile success stories and photos to share statewide. Please e-mail your Statewide Parent Visitation Month success stories and photos to Mrs. Carolyn E. Townsend at ctownsend@alsde.edu.

9. How can the Alabama State Department of Education help you in your planning process?

10. What suggestions do you have for next year’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month?

11. Please give suggestions for next year’s theme for Statewide Parent Visitation Month.

12. Other general comments, feedback, or suggestions?

Thank you for your feedback. The success of Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month depends on you. Please mail your School/School System Evaluation form following your event but no later than November 19 to Mrs. Carolyn E. Townsend, State Department of Education, Gordon Persons Building, Room 3323, P. O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101.

(Sample Memo from Superintendents to Principals)
STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

MEMORANDUM

September ___, 2012

TO: Principals

FROM: Superintendent

RE: Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month

October is Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Our school district has an opportunity to take a leadership role in encouraging and enhancing parent involvement in their children’s education by participating in Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month. This is a time when employers are encouraged to give working parents time off to participate in partnership programs for parents developed by each of our schools. This month is an opportunity for parents and the community to show their support for public education—our schools, teachers, students, and learning.

It is an opportunity to build partnerships with parents and new ways to work together throughout the school year. It underscores the fact that it takes more than our schools to educate our students—it takes parents, families, and communities. There is no better way to involve the community than to invite them into our schools.

We all know parent involvement in children’s education means children learn more, and that is what we all want. In fact, we have worked for years to get greater parental involvement in their children’s education. Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an opportunity to make this happen!

It is critical that you and our teachers be actively involved in this program to make it a success. Please advise your teachers of this program and work with them in ensuring that we make it happen at our schools. Thank you for your anticipated support and participation in this statewide initiative!
ALABAMA’S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

September ___, 2012

TO: Teachers
FROM: Principals
RE: Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month

You may have already heard about Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month and that it is scheduled for October 2012. This event is an opportunity for schools to take leadership roles in building, reinforcing, and improving relationships among parents, teachers, and students.

For years, we have held parent-teacher conferences and have attempted to involve parents in the learning process. However, those meetings usually occur later in the school year, when the environment may not be as comfortable for a first meeting. We also know there are some parents who are uneasy about school meetings and choose not to attend.

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an opportunity for us to open our doors to parents early in the school year. It’s a chance to change for the better the ways in which teachers, parents, and students communicate and work together. It has been stated before—it takes more than schools to teach today’s students—it takes parents, families, and communities.

This event also encourages the community to show support for our school system and provides teachers and parents with the opportunity to build the basis for a positive relationship throughout the school year. I’d like (name of school) to take a leadership role in bringing Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month to our community. The success of this program depends on all of us—especially you, our teachers. I hope that you will sign up to participate and show your support for our school.

Please join me at a planning meeting on (date, time, and location) so we can discuss how we will make this happen in our school to the benefit of us all. Thank you for your support and cooperation in this matter.

(Sample Invitation to Parents)
ALABAMA’S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

Parents & Families – You are invited to:

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
October is Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month, and you are cordially invited to join teachers, administrators, and other parents at (name of school) for Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School events. This statewide celebration is planned especially for you and will give you an opportunity to see what your child is learning and to meet your child’s teachers. Additionally, you will have fun!

You will enjoy art displays and science projects created by your children, demonstrations in our computer lab, and a skit by our drama club. We will have door prizes from (give credit to sponsors) and refreshments. **Mark your calendar!**

**Date:** October__, 2012  
**Time:**  
**Place:**  

Please complete and return the following reply form to let us know if you will be attending. **We are looking forward to seeing you!**

______________________________
Student’s Name and Grade

______________________________
Name of Student’s Teacher

_____ Yes, I will take part in Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month by visiting my child’s/grandchild’s school event on October ____, 2012.

_____ I would like to help. Please contact me at ___________________________  

(Phone number/E-mail)  

Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________
ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

September 2012

Mr. John Doe
XYZ Company
123 Mapleut Drive
Happyville, AL 00000

Dear Mr. Doe:

October is Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. This special event is being planned for parents to strengthen the home/school connection. Schools across the state are inviting parents to join as partners with teachers to strengthen student learning. Parents will visit their child's school to become more aware of Alabama's educational standards as well as innovative programs taking place in (name of school).

You, as an employer, also have an opportunity to get involved. It is no secret that today more parents work outside of the home than ever before. Due to their work schedule, many parents may not have an opportunity to participate in Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month unless their employers support it.

That is where your company comes in! Supporting Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an opportunity for your company to take a leadership role in the community, as well as to demonstrate the value of employee responsibility outside of the workplace. I am sure you will agree that investing in the education of today's students means a more highly educated workforce for tomorrow.

I hope this means your company will allow parent-employees time off from work to attend Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month at (name of school) on October ___ at (time).

Thank you for considering your company's role in Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Please contact me at (phone number/e-mail). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith, Principal
Thomas Jefferson High School

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

September, 2012

Ms. Freeda Charity
Super Tom’s Discount Store
100 Giveaway Drive
Pleasantville, AL 00000

Dear Ms. Charity:

October is Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Schools across the state are inviting parents to join as partners with teachers to strengthen the home/school connection. Parents will use this event to visit their child’s school and become more aware of Alabama’s challenging educational standards and innovative programs taking place at (name of school).

We would like (Super Tom’s) to join us in sponsoring this event. We want to encourage parents to participate by offering door prizes and refreshments. We are asking (Super Tom’s) to help support this event by donating _________ for Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month. In addition, every parent who attends will receive a bag filled with parenting tips and other information.

(Super Tom’s) will be listed as an event sponsor in our Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month publicity. If you have any items such as notepads, pencils, mints, etc., we can include these in the parent bags. I will be calling you within the next week to see how we could better strengthen our partnership between (name of school) and (Super Tom’s). Thank you for your continued support of our school. We look forward to working with you on this exciting event.

Sincerely,

John Smith, Principal
Jamestown Elementary
ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School/System and the Alabama State Department of Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE

CONTACT: (insert name)
(give contact's phone number/e-mail)

OCTOBER IS ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
Visit (Name of School/System)

City of Origin, Alabama. – October is Statewide Parent Visitation Month in Alabama and (name of school/system) is inviting parents and others to Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School by attending a special school event on October ___.

With research that shows students achieve more when parents are involved in their education, (name of school/system) will participate in the Alabama State Department of Education's Statewide Parent Visitation Month on October ___. While the event is referred to as "Parent" Month, anyone responsible for raising school-aged children is welcome to attend. The theme for the event is Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School.

(Insert quote from local superintendent, principal, or other school official here.)

(Name of school/system) has planned special events as a way of informing adults of the importance of their involvement in their school-aged children's education. October has been set aside for special activities aimed at getting parents and others to invest in their children's education and to learn more about what goes on in their children's lives while they are at school.

(Name of school/system) will join with Alabama public schools/systems across the state in hosting Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School Statewide Parent Visitation Month events. "The goal is to connect home and school better," said State Superintendent of Education Thomas R. Bice. "Parent involvement—now more than ever—is a key factor to student success in school year-round. By setting aside a specific month, our public schools can focus on the importance of parent involvement and investment in their children's education."

Scheduled sessions include local and state initiatives such as the Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative, school policies and safety issues.

To learn more about Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month and parent involvement opportunities throughout the school year, contact your local school or school system (include school/system Website address, if available).

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
ALABAMA’S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH
A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

For Broadcast at Football Games, Schoolwide Assemblies, etc.

Ask Local Radio & TV to Use PSA.

Tailor PSA to Reflect Individual System/School Plans.

Target Audience: Parents

Visit your child’s school on October ___ and be part of Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School through Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Join thousands of other parents visiting schools across the state during October to participate in fun activities, learn more about state and local education programs, and find out how you can help your child succeed in school. Call your child’s school for more information.
Internet Resources

**ENGLISH AVAILABLE**

- After School Alliance Lights on After School, October 18: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).
- Alabama Department of Children's Affairs: [www.dca.state.al.us](http://www.dca.state.al.us).
- Alabama State Department of Education: [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu).
- Alabama Department of Public Health: [www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org).
- Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX): [www.alex.state.al.us](http://www.alex.state.al.us).
- Alabama Virtual Library: [www.avl.lib.al.us](http://www.avl.lib.al.us).

**Disclaimer of Endorsement:**

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_Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School_
Internet Resources for Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month
(continued)

- Children’s Trust Fund: www.ctf.state.al.us.
- Communities in Schools: www.cisnet.org, 1-888-371-3606.
- Family Friendly Schools: www.familyfriendlyschools.org, 1-800-658-6082.
- Foundation for Excellent Schools: www.fesnet.org.
- George Lucas Educational Foundation: www.glef.org.
- Governor’s Office: www.governor.state.al.us.

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Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School

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SPANISH AVAILABLE


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Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School
Alabama Department of Education Contacts

Alabama’s Statewide Parent Visitation Month, 334-353-1191:
Mrs. Carolyn E. Townsend, towndsend@alsde.edu.

Federal Programs, 1-888-725-9321 or 334-242-8199:
NCLB Parental Involvement Requirements: Ms. Judy Bohannon, judybo@alsde.edu.
Community Education: Mr. Mark Ward, mward@alsde.edu.

Career/Technical Education, 334-242-9111
Child Nutrition, 334-242-1988
Curriculum, 334-242-8059

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities, 334-242-8165:
  At-Risk Programs
  Safe and Drug-Free Schools
  School Safety

Special Education, 1-800-392-8020 or 334-242-8114
Teacher Certification, 1-800-723-6841 or 334-242-9977
Teacher Education, 1-800-723-6841 or 334-242-9935
Technology Initiatives, 334-242-9594

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age or genetics. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008: Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8165.

Bridging the Gap: Building a Healthy Relationship Between Family and School