Educators are responsible for providing equitable educational opportunities for all students. October 2017 Advanced Placement (AP) courses allow us to increase the rigor in the academic content we provide for students. These opportunities ensure more students matriculate from high school, college and career ready. AP provides high school students the opportunity for college-level study in more than 30 courses in a wide variety of subject areas. Success on an AP exam is defined as a score of 3, 4, or 5—a score research shows is indicative of college success and graduation. The typical student who receives a score of 3 or higher on two AP exams has the potential to save, on average, more than $1,800 at a public four-year college in Alabama and $3,900 at a private institution. In Alabama 49,860 AP tests were taken last year. This is an overall increase of 8 percent from last year. On 19,460 out of 49,860 exams students scored a three or higher; this is a 13.5 percent increase from last year. These reasons combined form the impetus for making AP courses a priority. The benefits of participation are countless. Alabama's continued commitment to expand access to challenging course work for students across the state has once again resulted in an increase in the number of Alabama public school students who have taken and excelled on AP exams. In spring 2017, Alabama public high school students took 49,860 AP exams and earned the equivalent of more than $47 million in college tuition. According to A+ College Ready, Alabama's continued commitment to expand access to challenging course work for students across the state has once again resulted in an increase in the number of Alabama public school students who have taken and excelled on AP exams. In spring 2017, Alabama public high school students took 49,860 AP exams and earned the equivalent of more than $47 million in college tuition. According to A+ College Ready.

In spring 2017, Alabama public high school students took 49,860 AP exams and earned the equivalent of more than $47 million in college tuition.

We must continue to make AP courses a reality for all students. I encourage you to create policies and procedures that encourage teachers to identify students for these higher level courses while putting supports in place so that more students can achieve success in AP courses. An annual report recently released by the College Board, showed Alabama students continuing to demonstrate constant progress in Advanced Placement (AP) participation and progress. In fact, Alabama’s growth in qualifying scores in AP math, science, and English has risen to the highest percent growth of any state in America. This is just the beginning; our aspirations are to see even greater numbers of students participate and progress in AP courses. We know that more improvement is needed, and A+ College Ready and the Alabama State department of Education will work to ensure that Alabama achieves greater results on AP in the future. The real work towards realizing this goal happens in classrooms across Alabama daily. Thank you to our committed students and teachers.

“We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t so far.” — Ron Edmonds
SSA UPDATES - October 10, 2017

INSTRUCTIONAL TOPICS

Approved Academic and Innovation/Flexibility Waivers Form
On June 30, 2017 the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) requested that any waiver, written or verbal, that your school system currently holds be listed on the Approved Academic and Innovation/Flexibility Waivers Form. The form can be downloaded from the ALSDE website. Email the completed form to Mrs. Robin Nelson or Ms. Lori MaGee.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If your system does not currently hold any approved waivers, please complete the form and state “Not Applicable (NA)” and return to the contacts listed above.

Educator Preparation Report Card
The ALSDE will resume the practice of publishing an educator preparation report card for the state and for each of our 27 colleges and universities that prepares teachers. To accomplish that goal, we will send a survey to each new teacher who has completed a college/university based preparation program and to each new teacher’s principal. Please encourage your principals, or their designees, and your new teachers to complete the survey instruments.

Institutions of Higher Education Support
Our educator preparation institutions must provide assistance at no cost to a teacher who experiences difficulty during her/his first two years of employment after completing a college-/university-based educator preparation program if the new teacher is assigned to teach the subject(s) she/he is certified to teach. We encourage you to request that assistance when needs are identified.

Alabama Course of Study: Digital Literacy and Computer Science
On November 1, 2017 we will distribute the draft of the Alabama Course of Study: Digital Literacy and Computer Science. We urge you to provide professional input on the content of these documents. Please also encourage educators in your system, with expertise in this field of study, to review these documents and provide feedback.

Governor’s Computer Science Initiative and Taskforce
Governor Kay Ivey recently made Computer Science a part of her Strong Start, Strong Finish education campaign. This work will focus on developing a unified state vision for computer science and identify strategic pathways to meet our goals. Dr. Jeff Gray, Professor of Computer Science at the University of Alabama and Dr. Barbara Cooper will Co-Chair the Governor’s Advisory Council for Computer Science in Education. Please share any computer science or digital literacy ideas you believe are pertinent for this advisory council. It is critical that Alabama become a leader in this area and that our LEAs are equipped to support students in acquiring skills that will be critical for the workforce. We continue to seek opportunities to provide digital literacy and computer science for our students. Last week 43 educators participated in a code.org professional learning. We anticipate many upcoming computer science learning opportunities for our educators.

Computer Science Grant Opportunities
President Trump recently shared historic support for Computer Science. These computer science grants will provide $200M in funding for K-12 Computer Science. The work from the computer science taskforce will place Alabama in a prime space to be able to apply for the computer science funds.

Student Records and Transcripts
A high school transcript is the official academic record of the courses and credits completed by a high school student. It may be produced in hard copy or electronic format. An official paper copy of the document contains an official signature of the designated school official and the school seal.

Valid Courses
The school system and individual school valid course files should be updated annually to reflect only those courses which are found in the current Subject and Personnel Codes.
SSA UPDATES - October 10, 2017

Transcript Audits
As part of the compliance monitoring process, schools must provide evidence that the School Leadership Team monitors the accuracy of student transcripts at least once each school year. A Diploma Requirement/Credit Checklist for all students must be on file at each school. These may be electronic or hard copy.

Student Data Application in AIM
The Student Data Application portal includes all student data that is replicated from INOW to the Alabama State Department of Education nightly. The view-only access within the portal will help ensure that all student data is correct and accurately reported to the Alabama State Department of Education.

Staff from Counseling and Guidance, Office of Student Learning, and Information Services are excited to announce the addition of the Student Credit Tracking Tool located within the Instructional Services section of the Student Data Application. It is our hope that a variety of school and system-level faculty and staff will utilize the Student Credit Tracking Tool as a resource during academic advising sessions with student and parents, as well as evaluating student transcript information throughout the school year.

Addressing Grade/Transcript Errors
To ensure the integrity of the process for addressing and correcting grade/transcript errors, an official grade/course change form must be approved and signed by the principal prior to any change being made to a student transcript. The school principal must then place a copy of the form in the student’s cumulative record.

If you have questions regarding student records and transcripts, contact Mr. Sean J. Stevens, Education Administrator at 334-242-9111.

Civics Test
The Civics Test is a required component for completing the 12th grade government course starting in the 2018 – 2019 School Year.

Civics Requirements
Students shall answer correctly 60 out of 100 questions made available in multiple choice format.

➢ Questions should come from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
➢ Components of the Civics Test should include: Civics, Geography, American Government, and US History.
➢ LEA will determine the method and the manner in which to administer the Civics test.
➢ Students who do not obtain a passing score may retake the test until he or she obtains a passing score.
➢ A special education student is not required to achieve a passing score unless he or she is learning at a level appropriate for his or her level in a specific academic area AND unless a passing score on the civics test is specifically required in the student's IEP.
➢ Enforcement will comply with Section 16-1-11.1, Code of Alabama.

LEA Curriculum Directors were provided a list of websites that contain lesson plans, activities, study guides, and practice tests.

ESSA Update
The ALSDE has been working with many stakeholder groups to finalize a draft of the ESSA Plan. This draft will be presented to the State Board of Education on October 12, 2017. We plan to submit the Alabama ESSA plan to the USDOE on October 13, 2017. We will send you a copy of the final link to the ESSA plan after it is submitted.
The Office of Student Learning (OSL) exists to support districts and schools in improving the learning for all students. OSL is comprised of Assessment, Instructional Services, Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative, and Regional Support. We are committed to working together to provide a seamless system of service to districts. If you have instructional or support questions, please contact the section Coordinator or Shanthia Washington at or 334-353-1608. Professional development or technical assistance requests for instructional or support matters may be submitted using a support request form HERE.

**Department Updates**

**OFFICE OF STUDENT LEARNING**

Shanthia Washington, Assistant Superintendent

**OFFICE OF STUDENT LEARNING**

Instructional Services, Robin Nelson

**Curriculum and Instruction Meetings 2017-2018 School Year**

Information regarding the ALSDE's 2017-2018 Curriculum and Instruction meetings has been e-mailed to Curriculum Coordinators using the distribution list from the ALSDE Education Directory. If your system did not receive the email please update the “Curriculum/Instruction” position listings in the directory.

Specific information about the Curriculum and Instruction meetings can be accessed by visiting the ALSDE website. You may attend the meeting that best fits your schedule and location. The first round of meetings began at the end of September.

If you have further questions contact Ms. Gay Finn.

**Alabama Council for the Social Studies (ALCSS)**

Annual 2017 Fall Conference

October 13, 2017 · Florence, AL

Social Studies professional development will be offered by leading Social Studies organizations, K-12 educators, as well as higher education professionals from our universities. Teachers will take away the latest ways to engage 21st Century learners.

Sessions will be offered for each of the following strands: Early Childhood Education/Elementary Education; Geography; Middle and Secondary School Level Education; US History; Advanced Placement; College & Career Readiness; Technology; World History; and Government/Economics/Civics.

The conference will include historic tours of Florence, AL and the Shoals area to places such as: the W. C. Handy Birthplace and Museum; the architectural treasure by Frank Lloyd Wright – the Rosenbaums; the Helen Keller Birthplace; the Native American burial grounds; and the famous Muscle Shoals Sound Studio. There will be a variety of vendors and exhibitors.

Register at www.alcss.org or the Facebook page at Social Studies Council of Alabama. You may also email Tama Nunnelley at for more information.

**Hispanic Heritage Month**

During National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15) we recognize the contributions made and the important presence of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the United States. All across the country we celebrate their heritage and culture. Hispanic Heritage Month, whose roots go back to 1968, begins each year on September 15th. This is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile, and Belize also celebrate their independence days during this period as well as Columbus Day (Día de la Raza) which is October 9. The 2017 theme of Hispanic Heritage Month is “Shaping the Bright Future of America.”

**Violins of Hope**

The Alabama Holocaust Commission (AHC) in collaboration with “Violins of Hope – Alabama” is offering a workshop that will provide a unique approach to studying the Holocaust beginning September 18, 2017 in Birmingham and ending in April 2017 with stops in the Coastal region and in north Alabama. Using the book “Violins of Hope: Instruments of Hope and Liberation in Mankind's Darkest Hour,” and the opportunity to personally meet the author – Jay Grymes who brought these instruments back
to life – students will explore the strength of the human spirit and the power of music during one of mankind’s darkest hours. Violins of Hope – Alabama is a partnership with BHEC, UAB’s Institute for Human Rights, the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, the Red Mountain Theatre Company, and ABC 33/40. For more information about the program, contact Ann Mollengarden, Education Coordinator.

Darkness Into Life: Alabama Holocaust Survivors Through Photography
The Birmingham Holocaust Education Center is proud to be able to loan Darkness into Life: Alabama Holocaust Survivors Through Photography and Art to your school, community, or museum. This unique educational exhibit features the stories of 20 Alabama Holocaust survivors. It teaches the history of the Holocaust and offers a rich understanding of its impact on these individuals and their families. The idea of ten photographs grew into a 78-piece exhibit featuring the stories of 20 Holocaust survivors from throughout Alabama. Created to educate, the exhibit was donated to the Alabama Holocaust Education Commission to help teach students about the Holocaust, genocide, bigotry, and most importantly, to join together and say “Never Again!” This traveling exhibit is free and can be loaned to your school all through the school year. Contact Ann Mollengarden for complete details.

State Superintendent’s Visual Arts Exhibit and Bicentennial Celebration
The annual State Superintendent’s Visual Arts Exhibit will be held February 2-23, 2018. The exhibit of student artwork will be on public display in the Old Supreme Court Library of the Alabama State Capitol. An awards reception will be held for the Best of Show, First-, Second-, Third-Place, and Alabama Bicentennial Winners, of award-winning students and their visual arts instructors on February 8, 2018.

School systems may submit up to 12 pieces of artwork. Systems wishing to participate must complete and submit the 2018 System Intent to Participate Form by November 3, 2017. Submit only one form per system. Each system must appoint one local system contact person. This individual will be responsible for distributing the guidelines to all schools, as well as organizing the process to select entries from your system.

Read carefully the updated guidelines. Changes have been made to include the Alabama Bicentennial Celebration and a continuation of the extended exhibition of selected works to be displayed at the State Department of Education.

2018 Guidelines State Superintendent’s Visual Arts Exhibit and Alabama Bicentennial Celebrations
For further information, contact Mr. Andy Meadows, Arts Education Specialist, Instructional Services Section, at (334) 353-1191.

2018 United States Senate Youth Program
The William Randolph Hearst Foundation is sponsoring the 56th Annual United States Senate Youth Program. Brochures about the program may be obtained at www.ussenateyouth.org. System curriculum personnel will be responsible for distributing a hard copy of the exam to principals and/or guidance counselors in high schools with...
grades eleven and twelve. Applications will be reviewed and scored at the state level. Ten semifinalists will be selected for a face-to-face interview. Two finalists will receive a $10,000 scholarship each and will represent Alabama during the week's internship in Washington, D.C., March 3-10, 2018. While in Washington, the winners will be the guests of Alabama's senators. For more information about the program, contact Dr. Carolyn Townsend at 334-353-1191.

October is Alabama’s State Declared Parenting Month
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 (ALSDE) recognizes the need for ongoing, meaningful parental engagement. 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. The ALSDE extends an invitation for all schools and school systems to become a part of this important statewide event. Should you have any questions about parent visitation month, contact Dr. Carolyn Townsend at (334) 353-1191.

History Teacher of the Year Award
William Blake Busbin, the 2017 Alabama History Teacher of the Year, has been named one of the 10 finalists for the 2017 National History Teacher of the Year Award, presented annually by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the nation’s leading organization dedicated to K-12 American history education. Inaugurated in 2004, the History Teacher of the Year Award highlights the importance of history education by honoring exceptional American history teachers from elementary school through high school. The award honors one K-12 teacher from each state, the District of Columbia, Department of Defense schools and US Territories. This is the first time the committee has selected a group of finalists from the state honorees. The National History Teacher of the Year will be selected from the pool of 10 finalists in October 2017. The winner of the National History Teacher of the Year award receives a $10,000 prize, presented by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Eric Foner at a ceremony in New York City on November 8, 2017. Past presenters at the ceremony include the Honorable Sandra Day O’Connor, Good Morning America’s Robin Roberts, First Lady Laura Bush, former US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

New Science Database now available in the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL)
Access Science is an authoritative and dynamic online resource that contains incisively written, high-quality reference material that covers all major scientific disciplines. An award-winning gateway to scientific knowledge. It offers links to primary research material, videos and exclusive animations, plus specially designed curriculum maps for teachers. With these and other online features, AccessScience is continually expanding the ways it can demonstrate and explain core, trustworthy scientific information in a way that inspires and guides users to deeper knowledge. This database is targeted to upper middle through college students and can be found under student resources at www.avl.lib.al.us. For more information or to request training, contact Dede Coe.

New Library Media Standards to be released in November 2017
COMING SOON! The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) new standards will be released at the AASL National Conference in Phoenix, AZ November 3-8. The new standards combine expectations for the Librarian, the Learner and the Library Program into one concise framework which evidences the role of each element. Preliminary release information can be found in the standards portal as it is published here. A short overview can also be viewed here.

Courses of Study
Nomination forms for the 2018-2019 Mathematics, PE and Health Courses of Study committee and task force have been sent to all Superintendents of Alabama public schools.

2018-2019 Physical Education and Health Education State Courses of Study Committee Nominations.

2018-2019 Mathematics State Course of Study Committee Nominations.
October is Alabama's Dyslexia Awareness Month

October has been designated as Dyslexia Awareness Month in Alabama by the State Department of Education (SDE). According to the Dyslexia Advisory Council (DAC), dyslexia impacts between 10 and 20 percent of students in Alabama schools. Reading, writing, and spelling are essential literacy skills for all learning in school and beyond. Students who do not develop these skills early on are at risk for school failure and limited life opportunities.

In our on-going effort to prepare all students to graduate college, career, and life ready, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), working collaboratively with the DAC, has established the following goals for Dyslexia Awareness Month:

- To create awareness of the needs of students with dyslexia at the school, family, and community level.
- To encourage year-round engagement in events to celebrate and embrace students with dyslexia at the school, family, and community level.
- To make available information to schools, families, and communities regarding support and resources for students with dyslexia.

In order to meet these goals, the ARI and DAC suggest a timeline of activities and events for schools, families, and communities throughout the month of October. Please consider including these activities in your district, school, and community calendar and see them as opportunities to create a culture of understanding, support, encouragement, and learning for dyslexic students.

October 2-6, 2017: Dyslexia Awareness Month Kick-off Week for School and Community
Create awareness in schools and communities in your district with “dyslexia day/night,” social media events, school casts, morning messages, etc. using #SayDyslexiaAL17, the official hashtag for Alabama’s Dyslexia Awareness Month. Utilize Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE) trained teachers, school reading specialists, coaches, partners, parents, and community experts to host mini-workshops/seminars and open house community events. Create awareness of resources for support of dyslexia by promoting the International Dyslexia Association-Alabama Branch (IDA-AL) and the Alabama Reading Initiative Dyslexia Websites. Coordinate with local partners and stakeholders to develop community awareness of dyslexia by providing facts, resources, and support to families. Encourage groups to reach out to local experts and develop on-going partnerships to support dyslexia. Work to develop year-round communication, support, and resources for families, school, and communities in your district.

October 9-13, 2017: “Lights, Camera, Action!” Week
Bring technology into the classroom to highlight the many ways in which students with dyslexia can express themselves and communicate by means other than writing. Encourage students to share stories with oral recounting, storytelling, and/or drama activities. Consider a “No Pencil/Pen Day” storytelling competition by utilizing technology solutions such as text to speech, audio and/or video recordings, and recording through pictures so that all students can enjoy expressing themselves.

October 16-20, 2017: Show Your Support Week
Encourage teachers and students to demonstrate support and awareness for dyslexia by wearing red and offering school/class proclamations. Encourage district communication/media personnel to create public service announcements, local news articles, and district communication posts for local school Websites promoting awareness using #SayDyslexiaAL17, the official hashtag for Alabama’s Dyslexia Awareness Month.

October 23-27, 2017: “Famous Dyslexics” Week
Create school and community awareness for the many talents and gifts dyslexic students have by engaging in class projects and school-wide activities that feature famous dyslexic achievers in America and across the globe.

On October 15, the RSA Towers in Montgomery and Mobile will be lit “Dyslexia Red” in recognition of World Dyslexia Day. We encourage all of our schools, districts, and communities to celebrate their 1 in 5 by wearing red in order to bring about increased awareness of dyslexia. Visit Roundtable.
Solutions for more information about the #RedeemingRed campaign.

Please join us in promoting Dyslexia Awareness Month in your community during the month of October by supporting an environment of awareness and understanding for dyslexia in your district, schools, and communities. If you have questions, you may contact Mrs. Karen Porter, ARI Program Coordinator.

Effective Literacy Leaders Learning Communities (E3LCs), Session 2, October 3-October 19, 2017. The session dates and locations for your district are listed below. The E3LCs are a series of professional learning sessions specifically for two district representatives. Due to limited training materials and seating at all locations, districts teams are limited to the LEA ARI key contact (LEA central office leadership) and the district designated LEA lead reading specialist. A professional learning unit (PLU) for those with administrator certification has been approved and will be offered. Each session begins at 8:30 a.m. CST and concluded at 3:30 p.m. CST. Travel expenses for all professional development sessions are part of the ARI allocation sent to each district and the responsibility of the district. These two LEA representatives, identified in your PLSP, will be responsible for supporting school level ARI reading specialists in turn-around ARI training. If your district team has questions you should contact Mrs. Karen Porter, ARI Program Coordinator, at kporter@alsde.edu or by calling the ARI Office at (334) 353-1389.

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<tr>
<th>Systems</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Athens City, Colbert City, Cullman County, Decatur City, Florence City, Franklin County, Haleyville City, Guntersville City, Hartselle City, Lamar County, Lauderdale County, Lawrence County, Limestone County, Madison City, Marion County, Morgan County, Muscle Shoals City, Russellville City, Sheffield City, Tuscaloosa City, Winfield City, and Winston County</td>
<td>October 5, 2017</td>
<td>Russellville City BOE 1945 Waterloo Road Russellville, AL 35653</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2</strong></td>
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<td>Albertville City, Anniston City, Arab City, Attala City, Blount County, Boaz City, Calhoun County, Cherokee County, Cleburne County, DeKalb County, Etowah County, Fort Payne City, Gadsden City, Huntsville City, Jackson County, Jacksonville City, Madison County, Madison County, Marshall County, Oneonta City, Oxford City, Pell City, Piedmont City, St. Clair County, and Scottsboro City</td>
<td>October 12, 2017</td>
<td>Will Valley Recreational Ctr. 4220 Godfrey Avenue NE Fort Payne, AL 35967</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group 3</strong></td>
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<td>Autauga County, Bessemer City, Bibb County, Birmingham City, Chilton County, Dallas County, Demopolis City, Elmore County, Fairfield City, Jasper City, Greene County, Hale County, Jefferson County, Leeds City, Linden City, Lowndes County, Marengo County, Midfield City, Perry County, Pickens County, Selma City, Sumter County, Tarrant City, Trussville City, Tuscaloosa City, Tuscaloosa County, and Walker County</td>
<td>October 4, 2017</td>
<td>Jefferson County BOE 2100 18th Street S Birmingham, AL 35209</td>
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<td><strong>Group 4</strong></td>
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<td>Alabaster City, Alexander City, Auburn City, Chambers County, Clay County, Coosa County, Homewood City, Hoover City, Lanett City, Lee County, Mountain Brook City, Pelham City, Pike County, Randolph County, Roanoke City, Shelby County, Sylacauga City, Talladega County, Talladega City, Tallapoosa County, Tallasse City, and Vestavia Hills City</td>
<td>October 18, 2017</td>
<td>Lee County BOE 2410 Society Hill Road Opelika, AL 36804</td>
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<td><strong>Group 5</strong></td>
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<td>Andalusia City, Baldwin County, Brewton City, Butler County, Chickasaw City, Choctaw County, Clarke County, Conecuh County, Covington County, Escambia County, Mobile County, Monroe County, Opp City, Saraland City, Satsuma City Thomasville City, Washington County, and Wilcox</td>
<td>October 3, 2017</td>
<td>Baldwin Co., Loxley Office 1091 B Avenue Loxley, AL 36551</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group 6</strong></td>
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<td>Barbour County, Bullock County, Coffee County, Crenshaw County, Dale County, Daleville City, Dothan City, Elba City, Enterprise City, Eufaula City, Geneva City, Geneva County, Henry County, Houston County, Macon County, Montgomery County, Ozark City, Phenix City, Pike Road City, Russell County, and Troy City</td>
<td>October 19, 2017</td>
<td>Phenix City Professional Learning Center 1700 17th Avenue Phenix City, AL 36867</td>
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</table>
The AMSTI Professional Learning Support Plan is due soon! If you haven't talked with your AMSTI Regional Director, please contact them. It is important to note that district efforts in writing their ACIP do not need to be duplicated for the PLSP, but can be attached or copied-and-pasted from the ACIP into the PLSP. The AMSTI PLSPs will be due by the end of the day on Friday, October 20, 2017. AMSTI Specialists are marking their calendar now to provide support in AMSTI schools. LEA Key Contacts and AMSTI school principals are able to address with the AMSTI Director any questions or concerns regarding the memoranda through the PLSP process, as well as arrange on-site support.

K-8 Science
Online course registration for second cycle opens October 1. This training is for teachers who have changed grade levels since their initial AMSTI training. Contact your AMSTI Director for more information.

ASIM:

Madeleine Loftin and Jennifer Carden with the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology presented Touching Triton and Collecting Cancer Causing Changes (C4) to ASIM Biology specialists during ASIM's fall statewide staff meeting. As a result, ASIM can now offer training and support on the C4 lab. They can also support teachers in using Touching Triton which is a “serious game” that explains complex concepts in genetics and is freely available on the HudsonAlpha website. Contact your regional ASIM Biology specialist for more information.

Gwyn Huggins, Biology Specialist at Troy University, has scheduled training days aimed at those teachers who may have missed out on training over the summer. The next training opportunity will be October 27th.

To take advantage of these trainings and to find out about other offerings, contact your local ASIM biology, chemistry, or physics specialist. Contact information can be found here or here.

OFFICE OF STUDENT LEARNING
Counseling and Guidance, Sean Stevens

School Counseling and Guidance Advisory Council
A School Counseling and Guidance Advisory Council is designed to provide input and direction for a local school counseling and guidance program both at the school system level and school building level. An advisory council performs this function by:

- Providing input regarding issues facing school counselors.
- Providing direction for continuing in-service and resource material needs.
- Helping to ensure continuity of programs and services.
- Providing an avenue for change as is perceived necessary.

An active advisory council is an expectation for all comprehensive school counseling and guidance programs in Alabama. However, it is not just an activity to complete for the program audit or in preparation for compliance monitoring. A well-organized school counseling and guidance advisory council can support professional school counselors and career coaches in their efforts to more fully implement their programs by establishing a strong voice and advocate.

CollegeCounts Smart Art Contest
The CollegeCounts Smart Art Contest will encourage students to begin thinking about college and planning for their future careers. This program will also bring awareness of Alabama’s 529 College Savings Program and emphasize to families the importance of saving early for college. This contest is open to all Alabama public school students in Grade 4. Artwork to be submitted for this contest must be completed in September and October in participating schools. The contest ends on October 18, 2017. All school system winning entries must be postmarked on or before October 18, 2017 to be eligible. Current students in Grade 4 may enter the contest upon the decision of the school to participate in the CollegeCounts Smart Art Contest and the school counselor submitting the school’s Intent to Participate Form to the ALSDE Counseling and Guidance office. The school counselor will teach a lesson
There are new ACLD approved PLUs available through Alabama Technology in Motion. Sessions will be available soon through Chalkable PD or contact your regional ATIM specialist to schedule special sessions for your LEA.

- PLUASIL600 PLUASIL 6 ACLD, Supporting School Improvement Through A Flipped Approach to Professional Learning
- PLUACLD598 PLUASIL 6 ACLD, Productivity for Technology Leaders
- PLUACLD599 PLUASIL 6 ACLD, Educational Technology for Administrators
- PLUACLD558 PLUASIL 6 ACLD, Digital Citizenship, Literacy, Online Safety and Cyberbullying

AL College Application Week/Cash for College Campaign
The Alabama College Application Week/Cash for College Campaign encourages Alabama high schools to rally around college admissions and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion.

The AL College Application Week/Cash for College Campaign uses local data, research, best practices, and community expertise to focus, mobilize, and improve college admissions and FAFSA completion efforts already happening in schools. This program provides school-based teams with professional development workshops, school counselor toolkits, connections to college and university partners, media resources, and technical assistance, and access to shared data to drive continuous improvement. At the end of FAFSA season, the Alabama College Application Week/Cash for College Campaign will honor local communities’ successes with media recognition, a celebration event, and cash incentives to recognize schools with the greatest improvement in college admissions and FAFSA completion.

The Alabama College Application Week/Cash for College Campaign will be held on October 30-November 3, 2017.

2017 Alabama Counseling Association Annual Conference
The Alabama Counseling Association (ALCA) Annual Conference will be held in Mobile at the Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel, the Renaissance Battle House Hotel and Mobile Convention Center on November 15-17, 2017. As always, the ALCA annual conference will provide professional development for school counselors and offer information on current counseling issues. New counselors may attend the ALCA conference to meet the training requirement expected as part of the State Department of Education (SDE) Counselor Academy.

The theme of this year’s conference is “Back to Life”. Keynote speaker, Joe Sanok, licensed professional counselor, consultant and podcaster. He will deliver his insights on “How to Create “AHA” Moments That Inspire You and Your Clients.” Dr. Mary Fukuyama, counselor, supervisor, teacher and trainer at the University of Florida's Counseling and Wellness Center, will guide our members as she speaks on “Counselor Know Thyself”; and noted author, inspirational speaker and consultant, Craig Boykin, will speak regarding “Making Life Count GED to PhD.” In addition, there will be approximately 100 content sessions on topics of concern and needs to your counselors plus numerous networking opportunities.

The ALCA is mailing registration packets to counselors who are members of the Association. Others may obtain packets by going to www.alabamacounseling.org and clicking on “Annual Conference” or by contacting Dr. Chip Wood with the ALCA 1-888-655-5460 or 205-652-1712.
ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
ALABAMA ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

October 18-20, 2017 · McWane Science Center, Birmingham, AL
http://alabamagifted.org

Save the date! The annual conference of the Alabama Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) is scheduled October 18-20, 2017, in Birmingham, AL. This year’s theme is “Listening to the Voices of Gifted.” This statewide professional development event will bring together gifted specialists and coordinators, classroom teachers, school administrators, parents, preservice teachers, and college/university professors to explore current issues in gifted education. The conference will be held at the McWane Science Center, located at 200-19th Street North in Birmingham, Alabama, and will feature internationally known leaders in the field of gifted education. Convention highlights include keynote speeches, one hour content sessions on a variety of practical strategies for teachers and parents, and hands-on, half-day workshops. Vendors offer a variety of materials and information for gifted educators and parents.

2017 Key Note Speakers

Dr. Dina Brulles
Director of Gifted Education
Paradise Valley Unified School District

Nicholas Provenzano
“The Nerdy Teacher”
Award winning educator and best-selling author
Phoenix, Arizona

REGISTER IN CHALKABLE PD
To receive credit, log into Chalkable PD. Search for one of the following:
PD Title: 2076 AAGC Conference
PD Number: AAGC2017

AAGC is looking for volunteers for conference committees, standing committees, and elected positions. If you would like to be more involved, please let us know more about your interest in serving in our organization.

Questions regarding registration? Contact Julie Altmark.

Purchase orders may be emailed or mailed to:

AAGC Conference Registration
P.O. Box 43765
Birmingham, AL 35243

Contact Julie Altmark for information regarding onsite registration and payment options.

Visit for information regarding onsite registration.
To help ensure that every child is taught by a well-prepared teacher, every school is led by a well-prepared and effective leader, and every school system is led by a well-prepared and visionary instructional leader, the Office of Teaching and Leading coordinates the efforts of the education community to ensure that prospective educators are prepared to begin and continue eligibility for employment in Alabama schools and school systems. Standards adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education (ALSBE) are the basis for reviewing educator preparation programs. A variety of certificate approaches are provided and efforts are made to issue and renew certificates in compliance with ALSBE standards. Assistance is provided to teachers and other educators who are seeking employment and to school systems in need of personnel. Assistance is facilitated for teachers seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards.

General Information

Pay for Advanced Degrees
Three memoranda have been sent to local superintendents concerning changes in the requirements and procedures applicable to receiving a salary increase based on earning a higher degree. If you are not familiar with the changes resulting from Act #2016-198, also known as the Pay Raise Bill, and signed by former Governor Bentley on April 26, 2016, you may wish to access those memoranda from the following links:

- October 2016
- February 2017
- June 2017

Additional and helpful information for educators to consider.

Program Completion Guarantee
For over 20 years, Alabama’s colleges and universities (educator preparation providers, or EPPs) that prepare teachers have been required to provide assistance if a new teacher assigned in-field encounters problems. Here is the statement from the Educator Preparation Chapter of the Alabama Administrative Code, page 262:

(h) Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Accountability.
1. Support for program completers. The EPP shall establish, publish, and implement policies to guarantee the success of individuals who complete its approved programs and are employed in their area(s) of specialization in Alabama. The EPP shall provide remediation at no cost to such individuals whose performance indicates the need for additional support within the first two years after the beginning valid date of the Professional Educator Certificate, which was issued based on recommendation by the EPP. Assistance may be requested by the new employee, the employee’s principal, or the employing superintendent. In no case, shall the EPP be required to provide remediation for more than the first two years of employment.

Educator preparation colleges and universities want their graduates to be successful. Over the years, however, very few LEAs have requested assistance to help specific teachers. New superintendents may not be aware of the support available.
Mathematics and Science Teacher Education Scholarship Program

On July 20, 2017, Alabama deans of education and certification officers were notified about procedures to follow to apply for funding to support Alabama residents who have been unconditionally admitted to an Alabama State Board of Education (ALSBE) approved program leading to certification in mathematics or an area of science. Selected colleges and universities will receive funds provided by the Alabama Legislature to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE). Colleges and universities were required to submit their proposals for funding to be received by August 18, 2017.

The GOOD NEWS is that 17 of our 27 educator preparation colleges and universities replied to ACHE’s RFP, thus indicating a desire to participate in providing scholarships.

ACHE intends to begin dispersing funds to the selected institutions after October 1, 2017. Institutional allotments will be given in four quarterly increments. After October 1, 2017, interested individuals should contact the dean of education or certification officer of the institution where they have been admitted to an ALSBE approved program in mathematics or an area of science. Please share this information with whomever you know who might be interested.

The Educator Preparation Section (EP) is continuing the annual program review process. All programs have gone through the initial team review. Educator Preparation staff are reviewing and finalizing the draft reports with assistance from the summer review team and ALSDE staff in other sections as needed. Some of the team’s reports for programs that were submitted as part of a comprehensive review process have already been returned and programs are working on revisions.

The review team ensures programs use curriculum, field experiences, key assessments, and data analysis to document compliance with the standard of the Alabama State Board of Education. Programs are also required to use data analysis to inform continuous improvement efforts.

The EP Section is now accepting materials for proposed new program, “feedback only” reviews, and response to conditions at any time. The intent is to expedite the review process so the summer team can focus on comprehensive reviews. An expected outcome is that reports will be returned to colleges and more quickly.

A staff member attended a recent meeting in Washington, DC, held by the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP) for state partners as well as the fall CAEP convention to learn about how advanced programs will be reviewed under the national accreditation process.

The Office of Educator Assessment (EA) recently revised the public webpage for assessment to provide the public with more up-to-date information about assessments in Alabama.

ACT WorkKeys has disbanded the website, the phone number and the email account associated with the Basic Skills Assessments for Alabama. In an effort to be responsive to candidates who took tests during this time frame, a form has been created to request verification of ACT WorkKeys Basic Skills Assessment passing scores. The form is located on the Educator Assessment webpage. On the right side, click on “Request ACT WorkKeys Basic Skills Test Results”. Once opened, the instructions and the form are present as one document.

EA has conducted a score setting study for Praxis 5531: Pre-Kindergarten Education. A score has been suggested to the ALSBE.

ETS is preparing to regenerate many of their Praxis assessments. This affords the opportunity to participate in test regeneration and score setting studies. It is a great idea to have Alabama represented at these studies. If you are recommended, please complete the application and submit if asked.

Alabama will be hosting the 2018 Regional edTPA conference. Additionally, there will be a pre or post conference event for Alabama educators.
Applications for National Board Component Support will be reviewed October 3-5, 2017. Applicants will be notified of their status on November 17, 2017, as stated on the application.

Local school systems are encouraged to submit the verification form for their current National Board Certified Teachers. Reference Memorandum dated August 24, 2017.

Educator Certification Productivity Report

Number of applications logged into the database during the month of August: 2,557
Number of certificates and substitute licenses issued during the month of August: 2,576
Number of individuals for whom certificates were renewed during the month of August: 269
Number of files that are pending (awaiting test scores, experience, etc.): 638
Number of answered telephone calls through Customer Service during the month of August: 2,428

Certification Routes

The Educator Certification Section provides a variety of options for qualified candidates to obtain Alabama certification. To date, the section offers over 20 routes to obtain Alabama certification. The current routes offered are as follows:

- Alabama Educator Preparation Program
- Alternative
  - Business and Industry to Educational Administration
  - Interim Employment
  - Provisional Certificate in a Career and Technical Teaching Field
  - Provisional Certificate in Library Media or School Counseling
  - Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field
- Career and Technical Education
  - Additional Teaching Field: Career and Technical Education
  - Career and Technical to a Professional Educator
  - Cooperative Education
  - Degree Equivalent Health Science
- Degree Equivalent Technical Education
- Temporary
- Certificate Reciprocity
- Others
  - Adjunct Instructor
  - Certification Based on Test
  - Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
  - Driver and Traffic Safety Education
  - Emergency
  - Foreign Credentials
  - Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps
  - National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
  - National School Psychologist
  - Speech-Language Pathology Assistant
  - Speech-Language Pathology Professional
  - Speech-Language Pathology Temporary
  - Substitute

Each month, we will highlight a certification route(s) and provide basic information. This month, we will begin with the Additional Teaching Field: Career and Technical Education and Certification Based on Test routes. All-inclusive information for these routes may be found on the application and summary sheet.

Additional Teaching Field: Career and Technical Education
An individual who holds a valid Alabama Professional Educator Certificate in a teaching field and meets occupational proficiency, experiential, and necessary training requirements may seek additional Alabama professional educator certification in selected technical education program areas or health science.
OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEADING
Educator Certification, Shavon Cummings

- Must hold a valid Alabama Professional Educator Certificate in a teaching field
- Two full scholastic years of full-time classroom teaching experience in grades 6-12
- Passing score on the ALSDE approved occupational proficiency assessment(s)
- Session A of the Career and Technical Education Teacher Certification Program (CTE TCP)

Certification Based on Test
An individual who holds a valid Alabama Professional Educator Certificate in a teaching field and meets testing and experiential requirements may seek additional Alabama professional educator certification in selected teaching fields.

- Must hold a valid Alabama Professional Educator Certificate in a teaching field*
- Two full scholastic years of full-time classroom teaching experience in grades P-12*
- Passing score on the Alabama prescribed Praxis subject area test(s)

*The certificate and/or experience requirements are more specific for adding collaborative special education, early childhood, and elementary certification.

The Requirement to Report Misconduct
Each superintendent shall submit to the Alabama State Superintendent of Education within ten calendar days of the decision, the name and social security number of each employee holding an Alabama certificate or license who is terminated, or non-renewed, resigns, or is placed on administrative leave for cause, and shall indicate the reason for such action. Superintendents shall provide personnel records and all investigative information immediately upon request by the Alabama State Superintendent of Education. Superintendents shall not be required to report teachers who are non-renewed without cause. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action against the employing superintendent.

Alabama Administrative Code r. 290-3-2-.04(2)

Events That Trigger a Requirement to Report
- Employment is terminated for cause
- Contract is non-renewed for cause

Examples of Misconduct Requiring a Report
- Allegations of sexual contact or a sexual relationship between a teacher and a child or student. This includes rape, sodomy, dating, explicit text messages, “sexting,” inappropriate intimate contact, possession of child pornography, and professions of romantic love.
- Allegations of the maltreatment of a child or student. This includes child abuse, child neglect, beating a student, choking a student, slapping a student, throwing a drink or food into a student's face, or humiliating a student.
- Allegations of illegal drug use, sale, distribution, or manufacture by a teacher. This includes public intoxication especially at school, the use of marijuana especially if by a bus driver, the illegal distribution of any drug, the illegal manufacturing of any drug, the abuse of prescription drugs.
- Allegations of property crimes. This includes stealing from a school system, the misuse of public or student money, and using public resources or positions for private gain.
- Allegations of cheating on standardized student assessments. This includes when a teacher is alleged to have violated any testing rule established by the Department of Education.
- Allegations of the harassment of colleagues.
- Allegations of falsifying professional qualifications or important documents.

Reports should be mailed to:
Mr. Corey Martin, Assistant Coordinator Background Review
Alabama Department of Education
Office of Teaching and Leading Educator Certification Section
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

Additional questions may be directed to the Educator Certification Section at (334) 353-8567.
The Office of School Improvement and Turnaround (OSIT) oversees and coordinates all school and district improvement initiatives of the ALSDE. As part of its mission, OSIT focuses on a partnership and systems approach to identifying the best evidence-based solutions to improve outcomes in schools and districts throughout the State of Alabama.

2017-18 OSIT Plan of Support
Priority support and assistance from OSIT will be provided to 14 schools and 11 districts.

- 14 schools (representing 10 districts) were selected based on a 5-year consecutive appearance on the AAA list.
  - 3/14 have already received instructional audits, received support with creating action plans to address deficiencies and have been assigned a “coach” to work with school teams on the implementation and monitoring of action plans in 17-18. A similar complementary process is also in place at the district level based on the district review completed.
  - The remaining 11/14 schools and 9 districts will receive the same support and participate in the same improvement processes.
  - An additional district is also receiving prioritized support and technical assistance from OSIT (Barbour County).

Secondary support and assistance may be provided to other previously identified focus, priority, and AAA schools as determined by OSIT staff or as requested by LEAs.

Designated OSIT personnel are also continuing to provide support, coaching, and monitoring to seven SIG schools, representing nine districts.

Happenings in OSIT
Response to Instruction (RtI)
Professional Learning Unit (PLU)
An ACLD approved Professional Learning Unit (PLU) titled Response to Instruction Implementation: From the Central Office Perspective is now underway. Eleven of the participating districts have district level teams taking part collaboratively. The focus is on Response to Instruction (RtI) implementation strategies for central office staff to support implementation of the RtI framework at the district and school levels. Successful implementation of RtI at the school level hinges on whether the district superintendent and central office staff embrace and facilitate the use of the RtI framework as a method for determining instructional and behavioral needs of all students. Activities include collaborative conversations about the philosophy of RtI, the expectations at the state and district levels, how to assess districtwide needs and how to customize support. The goal is to take the focus off of RtI paperwork and place it on true problem solving efforts that lead to targeted services which yield positive results for students. We are looking forward to learning as much as possible from these participating groups about how to effectively facilitate the process of providing tiered systems of support for students. A similar PLU will be developed for school level personnel to be implemented during the 2018-2019 school year. If your district is not participating in this RtI-PLU, but is interested in utilizing some of the materials as you work to support school level implementation, contact Christine Spear at 334-353-5320.

RtI Guidance Document
A draft of the RtI guidance document will be placed on the Office of School Improvement and Turnaround (OSIT) website from mid-October to the end of February for review and feedback. Send your feedback to Christine Spear at 334-353-5320. All feedback will be reviewed and considered as the document is being completed. The final draft will be completed by spring 2018.
School Improvement Grant (SIG)
Supports and Professional Learning
OSIT staff facilitated the fall meeting of all twenty School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools in Montgomery. The theme was “EMPACT”: Expecting Measurable Progress through ACTion, and all schools were represented by their principals, school leaders, and district contacts. Grounded by the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement (turnaround leadership, talent development instructional transformation and culture shift), the session focused on the domains of leadership and instruction. Additional emphasis was placed on formative assessment, and several resources were provided for schools. A highlight of the meeting was a presentation from success strategist and author Jonathan Edison.

The Power of Collaboration and Support
OSIT staff Scott Mohon and Karen Winn collaborated with Russellville City Schools for a year modeling data driven decision making for the district and the school which contributed to Russellville High School’s recent achievement described below.

Russellville was chosen as the host site as a result of their school’s exemplary progress while part of the A+ College Ready program. The school had not offered Advanced Placement courses prior to the program, and in 2017, Russellville students earned 60 qualifying scores.

“Our students developed a mindset that they would be better prepared for life after high school regardless of perception,” said Jason Goodwin, Russellville High School principal. “When I refer to perception, I speak on behalf of an entire school eligible for free lunches, a school system filled with such GREAT diversity that some have said will break Russellville, yet it has made it stronger, a school system whose scores had not shown tremendous growth in the previous 3 years.”

Russellville High School was the first school to receive the designation as an A+ College Ready “School of Excellence” at today’s AP Celebration. A “School of Excellence” meets or exceeds the very ambitious qualifying score goal that A+ College Ready sets for them during their tenure in the program.

Providing Support and Assistance...
Wherever and Whenever!!!
Our OSIT staff are highly qualified and experienced education professionals with a wide variety of skill sets and abilities. Many district and school personnel utilize our employees regularly. Just in the past month, OSIT staff have consulted with many districts in their CIP planning and data discussions. Scott Mohon has provided additional support for districts and schools in reviewing data, as well as guidance about Global Scholar reports and other best practices regarding data analysis and strategic planning.

Melissa Shields recently led classroom rounds at a high school using a rounds tool she created aligned to a school’s identified CIP strategies and activities. This experienced included team debriefs throughout the day which included the curriculum directors, principal, and feeder pattern reading coaches. Each teacher observed also received feedback that day.

OSIT staff are also equipped to facilitate ATLAS trainings for school leaders and teachers, as well as supporting current candidates interested in pursuing National Board Certification. In the month of September alone, OSIT staff have meet with and provided support to well over 200 teachers.

OSIT staff, such as Melissa Shields, are experts in Google classroom and are available to support schools and districts with the utilization of this powerful instructional resource. An example of her work can be viewed here with the creation of a Civics Google form quiz that can be scored automatically and results sent to the district and school. Schools can make a copy and edit it to meet their needs and/or add local questions.

School and districts may also benefit from support with exploring several scheduling options. Last month, Melissa Shields facilitated a "Teaching on the Block" training for a district. Two of their schools were moving back to the block, and she was asked to train teachers on using time effectively, as well as embedded formative assessments and differentiated instruction. Here’s the link to that "Rock the Block" presentation.

As you can see, OSIT staff can support your district and school in many ways. All of our team members, as well as their email addresses are listed below. Please reach out to them with your various requests. We will do our best to support your need!
OFFICE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT & TURNAROUND (OSIT)
Dr. Jermall D. Wright, Special Assistant

Our OSIT Team

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