We are realigning our work at the Alabama State Department of Education, to focus on continuous improvement aimed at supporting all local education agencies. We are creating conditions that will ultimately support Alabama Schools in ranking among the strongest in the nation. We recognize that we cannot do this work alone. To support our efforts, we are engaged in conversations with educators, legislators, students, and community members to ensure multiple perspectives are heard. Our team is committed to leading with the core beliefs Honor, Integrity, Respect and Ensuring an Equitable Education. Our 720,000+ students remain at the forefront of all decisions. We will get it right when we keep the focus on equitable educational opportunities for all students in the state of Alabama.

Superintendent Advisory Committees
Superintendent Mike Sentance and his team have convened committees to support us in advancing our work in the areas of Math, Science and Reading. The chairpersons for these committees have planned work sessions that will lead members on a thought-provoking journey that results in bold recommendations for improving Math, Science and Reading in the state of Alabama. Our committee members represent every district within Alabama. We were very purposeful in selecting the members and we encourage you to share your ideas with your committee person. They will collaborate and make recommendations to the Superintendent for improving our content areas. We are interested in learning from high performing states and countries. It is imperative that the plans we create ultimately have a positive impact on the teaching and learning happening daily in our classrooms.

Black History Month
Dr. Carter G. Woodson established Negro History Week on February 12, 1926 to recognize the many significant contributions African-Americans made to our country. In 1976, Negro History week became Black History Month. It is critical that our students understand American history in order to envision and create a more promising future. Someone recently asked me whether we teach Alabama students about slavery. We address slavery throughout the Alabama Course of Study. We recognize that it is imperative that our students are equipped with knowledge that leads to profound understandings about America’s past and present. February is the month set aside to honor African-Americans who helped advance our great nation. I encourage you to take time, throughout this month, to reflect on the great sacrifices that African Americans made in order for us to enjoy the freedoms we sometimes take for granted as citizens of the United States of America. This link provides a timeline of significant facts and dates that are available to support your learning during black history month.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP):
Our educators are working very hard in schools each day. We want the world to know how much effort we are putting into preparing our students to be college and career ready. The NAEP assessment is used by policymakers, employers, and parents to make judgments about our schools based on the data that is included in "The Nation's Report Card". It is the gold standard for assessing status and improvement in educational achievement. The expectations of Alabama's students are higher than ever and this is the time when every effort should be put forth to ensure that all students perform well.

A few sampled schools have already begun testing their students on the NAEP assessment. Staff from the Student...
From The Deputy State Superintendent

Assessment section and AMSTI have been working behind the scenes and directly with sampled schools to ensure that all selected students have an opportunity to test. NAEP field staff have been communicating with each of the schools to provide support in all pre-assessment activities. Alabama has always had strong participation on the NAEP assessment and this year, with 277 schools selected, we are hopeful that each selected student will participate. Please contact Maggie Hicks in Student Assessment if we can offer additional support in preparing students for the NAEP.

Resources

Educators are responsible for seeking opportunities to improve teaching and learning opportunities. We must employ resources from multiple sources and try new strategies as they become available. The below is a list of resources that I read this month. I believe they will be helpful to you as you work together to build strong professional learning communities in your LEAs.

I recently had an opportunity to learn from a workgroup webinar focused on supporting students below grade level. I recognize that this is an area of challenge for all educators. In this webinar, Jon Saphier shared strategies that successful teachers use to support under-performing students. Click here to listen to the webinar recording.

Ambitious Leadership: How Principals Lead to College- and Career-Readiness

Coaching for Impact: 6 Pillars to Create Coaching Roles that Achieve Their Potential to Improve Teaching and Learning

Equity and ESSA: Leveraging Educational Opportunities through the Every Student Succeeds Act

Scaffolding Complex Texts to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners

Department Updates

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.

Regional Support Coordinators- there are 5 Regional Support Coordinators, strategically placed throughout the state, that work in collaboration with SDE Staff and Regional Inservice Centers to provide differentiated, targeted support to all schools/districts. To request support CLICK HERE.

New Alabama Accountability Schools Orientation-February 2017- Regional Support Coordinators are in the process of conducting face-to-face meetings with districts that have schools on the 2017 list.

Effective Schools Summit PLU- ALSDE is offering an ACLD approved PLU to the participants of the Effective Schools Summit. If you are interested in earning the PLU, please be sure to register in STI PD as well. The STI PD # for the PLU is PLUAoggled501. To earn the PLU, you must also complete the reflection, which can be found here.

Please also fill out the reflection if you are getting the CEU hours. You can access all of this information here. You must be registered in STI for the Effective Schools Summit- STI PD # OSLESS101

Priority and Focus Schools are currently completing mid-year checkpoints and should be uploading evidence in the Turnaround Assurances document in ASSIST.
OFFICE OF STUDENT LEARNING
Instructional Services, Robin Nelson

Library Media Read Across America is March 2! Need ideas or resources for planning your event? Click here for artwork, lesson plans and resources. Be sure to tweet your pictures and share the excitement!

The Arts
The State Superintendent’s Visual Arts annual exhibit is on display February 3-24, 2017, in the Old Supreme Court Library of the State Capitol. On February 9, the Alabama State Board of Education will honor the student winners and their teachers at the monthly K-12 meeting. This year’s Best of Show winner is Joseph Bush of Saraland City Schools. Bush’s teacher is Catherine Wood. “We are honored to have so many creative and expressive students submit art for this year’s show. The arts are an integral part of academics and it is vital to shine a light on the impact programs in our schools make in students’ lives,“ said State Superintendent Michael Sentance. More than 645 student artists statewide entered the annual State Superintendent’s Visual Arts Exhibit to display the artistic talents of Alabama’s public school students in Grades K-12. Last year 514 students participated. We hope you will make time to see this exhibit.

Health and Physical Education
Quality health and physical education programs enhances the quality and productivity of life that we achieve through comprehensive, collaborative, and sequential learning. Evidence shows that physical activity can help improve academic achievement and positively affect cognitive skills, attitudes, academic performance, concentration, attention, readiness to learn, and classroom behavior.

On June 11, 2015, Governor Robert Bentley signed the enactment of Erin’s Law (Act 2015-456). Erin’s Law requires local school boards to adopt guidelines for a child sexual abuse prevention instruction policy, training for Grade K-12 educators on recognizing and avoiding child sexual abuse, and an age-appropriate curriculum in public schools on child sexual prevention education. The Erin’s Law Task Force is completing Erin’s Law State Guidelines to serve as a guide and resource for school systems as they implement Erin’s Law education. This document addresses minimum standards, appropriate practices, and resources. We will release this document in the spring.

A Taskforce is developing Best Practices for Adapted Physical Education in order to identify best teaching practices for physical education teachers in order for students with disabilities to have maximum participation in physical education. The task force will begin work on February 21.

As part of a comprehensive, quality physical education program, every student enrolled in physical education in Grades 2-12 will participate in the Alabama Physical Fitness Assessment (APFA). This assessment focuses on health-related fitness, and is linked to fitness components that may lower student health risks such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and lower back pain. The APFA is designed to assess the comprehensive health and physical fitness of all Alabama students. This assessment, which is criterion-referenced, targets achieving and maintaining a healthy level of fitness in the areas of Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance, Muscular Strength/Endurance, Abdominal Strength/Endurance, and Flexibility.

Spring testing begins on or after March 1. All spring fitness data must be posted into INow Health by June 1.

Save the date for upcoming professional development

April 20 Alabama Champions for Healthy, Active Schools Training, Orange Beach
June 6 Brain-Based Learning Strategies for Academic Success, Auburn University Montgomery, Taylor Center
June 19 Health and Physical Education Workshop, Auburn University
June 27 More Than Child’s Play Physical Activity in Learning Settings for early childhood and physical education teachers, Huntingdon College Roland Arena, Montgomery
July 24 State Health and Physical Education Summer Conference, Alabama 4-H Youth Conference Center, Columbiana

Cursive Writing
The 3rd Grade Cursive Writing Act (Act#2016-352) was signed on May 11, 2016 by Governor Robert Bentley. This Act puts into statute that instruction in handwriting shall include cursive writing so that students are able to create readable documents through legible cursive handwriting by the end of the third grade. The Act also requires each local education agency to certify on an annual basis, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, that the applicable schools in the school district are meeting the cursive writing requirement. Curriculum and proficiency in cursive writing will be defined by each district. In order to certify to the Alabama State Board of Education that the cursive writing requirement has been met, each LEA will use the link below and complete the form including the names of the applicable schools in their district along with the respective proficiency percentages in cursive writing. This form will be submitted by the end of June of each year, beginning with June 2017.

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OFFICE OF STUDENT LEARNING

Instructional Services, Robin Nelson continued...

CCRS Professional Learning Meetings
The final 2016-2017 CCRS Professional Learning sessions will be held February 7-10, 2017 in 17 locations across the state. District teams made up of school principals and central office staff will join together to engage in learning more about Alabama's Science, English Language Arts, and Math standards. We will continue to focus on ways to increase rigorous instruction and learning in K-12 classrooms. Visit the CCRS Web site for information about the 2016-2017 CCRS Professional Learning sessions.

Advanced Placement Fee Reduction Worksheet
The 2016-2017 Advanced Placement Fee Reduction worksheet is available on the Alabama State Department of Education Web site. Students qualifying for free- and reduced-priced lunches may receive a reduction for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate examinations for the 2017 test administration. Please contact Instructional Services at (334)353-1191 for more information.

Leaders Learning: Implementing Instructional Materials in Science Workshop
The Alabama Science Teachers Association (ASTA) and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), in conjunction with the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) will host a Leaders Learning: Implementing Instructional Materials in Science workshop for education leaders in Alabama responsible for K-12 science education. National science education experts will help educators understand what 3-Dimensional learning looks like in the K-12 classrooms. The workshop will be held February 10, 2017 from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm at the Gordon Persons Building Auditorium, Montgomery. Cost is $110 and includes curriculum materials and a one-year membership to the Alabama Science Teachers Association (ASTA). For more information or to register, click HERE.

Awards, Grants, and Scholarships
Each year graduating seniors are invited to participate in the National Youth Science Camp. The National Youth Science Camp (NYSC) is a residential science education program that honors and challenges two graduating high school science students from each state. Scientists from across the nation present lectures and hands-on science seminars and linger to interact informally with student delegates. Delegates are challenged to explore new areas in the biological and physical sciences, art, and music with resident staff members. Opportunities are provided for delegates to present seminars covering their own areas of interest and research. A visit to Washington D.C. permits delegates to visit some of the nation's premier scientific, governmental, and cultural facilities. The NYSC experience includes overnight excursions into the Monongahela National Forest featuring backpacking, rock-climbing, caving, mountain biking, and kayaking opportunities. Delegates are required to participate in the camp program for its entirety as the fast-paced activities and remote location make travel to and from the NYSC very difficult. The deadline for submission of applications for the camp is March 1, 2017.

Each year more than 1.3 million children are reported missing. Law enforcement, citizens, and even children have been instrumental in keeping children safe and returning them home to their families, community, and school. Every year the U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ) takes time to commemorate the valiant and unselfish acts of the many organizations and individuals who bring our missing children home. On May 25, 2017, National Missing Children's Day, we will pause to focus our attention on children who have been recovered, as well as the children who are still missing. Each year the DOJ sponsors a national poster contest and announces the winner at the annual National Missing Children's Day Ceremony in Washington, D. C. The winner of this national contest, along with his or her teacher, and parents will be flown to Washington to participate in this special ceremony. We invite you to join us in our efforts to educate children about safety issues by giving our fifth-grade students an opportunity to participate in this poster contest. The theme for the poster contest is “Bring Our Missing Children Home.” We hope that your system will join in this exciting and important national competition. Please note that the deadline for each local education agency (LEA) to submit system-level winners to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is February 24, 2017. The single winning poster for the state of Alabama will then be submitted to the DOJ for final judging. The state winner will be recognized at Alabama's State Board of Education meeting.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) are the highest honors bestowed by the United States government specifically for K-12 mathematics and science (including computer science) teaching. Established by Congress in 1983, the PAEMST program authorizes the President to bestow up to 108 awards each year. The award recognizes those teachers who develop and implement a high-quality instructional program that is informed by content knowledge and enhances student learning. Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science (including computer science) education. The National Science Foundation administers PAEMST on behalf of The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. This year's awards will honor mathematics and science (including computer science) teachers working in grades 7-12. If you have an outstanding 7-12 mathematics or science teacher (including computer science), please consider nominating him/her for this prestigious award. All nominations must be submitted on the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Website. The nomination deadline is April 1, 2017.

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The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History has established an annual award to honor a History Teacher of the Year for each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Department of Defense, and United States Territories. The state winner will receive a $1000.00 honorarium and will be a candidate for the National History Teacher of the Year Award to be selected in the fall. The school of the state winner will also receive an archive of history books and materials named in honor of the winning teacher. If you know of an outstanding K-12 history teacher, please nominate him/her for this prestigious award. All nominations must be submitted on the Gilder Lehrman Web site at www.gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy. The nomination deadline is March 31, 2017.

The AMSTI Science staff members at the ALSDE will be attending and overseeing the CCRS Professional Learning Meetings designed for district leadership teams. The topic is rigor in science.

Work continues in preparation for this year’s summer institute training, with the revision/rewriting of all units and labs K-12. In April, K-8 veteran AMSTI science teachers will be able to access the newly updated PowerPoints with notes. All updates are designed to help furnish resources for the 2015 Alabama Course of Study: Science.

Facilitation of AMSTI online courses is ongoing. Presently, 307 teachers are enrolled in courses statewide.

The AMSTI Technology Team is developing an innovative Digital Literacy/Computer Science module that will be piloted in classrooms as early as late spring, 2017 (in collaboration with AMSTI-UNA). Watch for announcements pertaining to this pilot opportunity in future telegrams.

Additionally, AMSTI is participating in Digital Learning Day with a digital lesson plan showcase and targeted school visits by AMSTI State and Regional Specialists.
The Student Assessment Section is working to ensure that each individual involved in the administration of a statewide assessment has been appropriately trained. Proper training is a crucial aspect of the state assessment program and requires a great deal of preparation. Additionally, test security training is equally important and ensures that all assessments are administered with fidelity.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs:
Two recorded webinars were posted and made available to systems to provide required training for Test Administrators, Building Test Coordinators, ESL Coordinators, and System Test Coordinators:
(1) Training on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator Manual.
(2) Training on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs District and School Test Coordinator Manual. The test window for ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs opens February 6, 2017 and closes April 7, 2017. Schools are working to get new students added to the portal, setting up test sessions, and completing the required online training for Test Administrators.

ACT Aspire
Training specific to test administration will be conducted February 28, March 2, and March 7-8, 2017. A recorded webinar will also be provided for the test administrator training. Educators can identify specific skills relevant to moving students to the next performance level by utilizing the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs). The PLDs provide statements of knowledge and skills a student must demonstrate to be classified at each performance level. The PLDs provide a “snapshot” of the current skill level obtained by each student. PLDs can also help shape lesson plans and activities and can be accessed HERE.

Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA)
Training for test administration will be completed on February 3, 2017 for all Special Education Coordinators and System Test Coordinators. Sample test items for Grades 3-8, and 10 for Reading, Math, and Science have been posted to the Alabama State Department of Education Web site.

Student Assessment is requesting nominations of teachers to serve on the Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA) Alignment Study Committee. This committee will review the 2015 Alabama Extended Standards in Reading and Mathematics and the 2016 Alabama Extended Standards in Student Assessment is requesting nominations of teachers to serve on the Achievement-Level Descriptors Committee for the Alabama Alternate Assessment. This committee will develop alternate achievement level descriptors in reading, mathematics and science that are aligned to the Alabama Extended Standards. The committee will meet on March 8-9, 2017 in Montgomery.

ACT with Writing
Training specific to test administration will be conducted February 28, March 2, 7, and 8, 2017. A recorded webinar will be provided as well as podcasts.

ACT Online Prep is provided to all eleventh grade students. With the new ACT Online Prep program, a student can prepare anywhere, anytime online and with a mobile app. The student can take a practice test to find out what his/her ACT score would likely be. This program will give the student an opportunity to see practice questions and what the actual ACT test is like.

If a student scored 36 (a perfect score) on an earlier attempt of the ACT during a national administration, the local superintendent is granted the authority to exempt the student from the statewide test. However, students who do not test during the State Testing Event will not be included in any of the ACT State Testing reports or data files for the statewide testing.

ACT WorkKeys
ACT WorkKeys will be administered on February 8, 2017 and the online window will be completed on February 28, 2017.
OFFICE OF STUDENT LEARNING

Educational Technology, Earlene Patton

Educational Technology assists educators and stakeholders to effectively plan, implement, and use technology by providing resources, professional development, guidance in obtaining funding, and technical assistance for learning, teaching, and leading students to become productive citizens.

Educational Technology’s mission is to use technology as a tool to prepare today’s student to become a productive, contributing citizen of tomorrow. The office serves and supports LEAs as a contact in school system technology planning; implements the Alabama Technology Plan for K-12 Education; leads the ACCESS Distance Learning program; and coordinates the Alabama Educational Technology Conference.

Alabama Digital Learning is offering a great selection of virtual field trips for the month of February. Click here to see the February flyer with dates/times/descriptions. The department will also participate in the sixth annual Digital Learning Day on February 23, 2017 in conjunction with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards’ (the National Board) third annual Teaching and Learning conference. Be sure to visit the Digital Learning Day website, featuring new tools, resources, lesson plans, and video profiles of leading districts.

The Alabama Educational Technology Conference (AETC) will open Early Bird Registration on February 1 for $100. Register early to receive the best discount. Preregistration will begin on March 16. The conference will be held at Hoover High School on June 13-15, 2017. Featured speakers include Jeff Utecht, Kevin Honeycutt, and Leslie Fisher; along with one-hour concurrent sessions and hands-on workshops. Visit our website for more information.

Alabama’s Implementation of the Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

In working with the four cohorts of school districts to use a comprehensive Learning Supports System, our districts are seeing improvements in the areas of reducing discipline incidents, absenteeism, and dropout rates. The framework that guides the schools to establish a learning supports system first addresses the operational infrastructure that the district has in place. The district and school leaders that begin by organizing the learning supports leaders, like counselors, social workers, and community groups, along with instructional staff at the planning table, are the most successful. These districts integrate the work toward their academic goals with their efforts at improving attendance and graduation rates. The learning supports framework also offers a way to examine the resources through a mapping process and prioritize the strategies and resources that most positively affect student performance. The Learning Supports Framework has given schools both a comprehensive and targeted systems-based approach to improve the learning environment and performance of their students.

Alabama Superintendents Present at AASA

The AASA National Conference on Education will be held in New Orleans, LA March 1-5, 2017. On March 4, 2017, a presentation will highlight the work of school Superintendents in Alabama that are implementing and sustaining a Learning Supports Framework. The session “Alabama Rising: A Superintendents Initiative to Increasing the Graduation Rate” will describe how districts and schools have used the system to address Alabama 2020 Goals for Student Supports. The session will give examples and strategies of how the Learning Supports Framework is used to increase attendance, reduce discipline referrals, and promote on-time graduation. Eric Mackey, Executive Director of the School Superintendents Association will share the process of implementing from the state level under the direction of Dr. Linda Felton-Smith. Three district Superintendents, Dr. Trey Holladay, Athens City, Jacqueline Brooks, Macon County, and Dr. Daniel Boyd, Lowndes County, will share the experiences of applying the framework to improve their organizational conditions and learning conditions. The partnership of SSA and ALSDE in bringing this opportunity to Alabama will be highlighted.
OFFICE OF LEARNING SUPPORT
Prevention and Support Services Section (PSSS), Marilyn Lewis, Ed.D.

Building a Culture of School Safety
Sponsored through the School Safety Planning-Preparing for the Unexpected Using the Virtual Alabama School Safety System
Grant from the U. S. Department of Education, the Alabama state department of education (ALSDE), Prevention and Support Services Section is offering regional trainings entitled, “Building a Culture of School Safety.” The one-day training sessions have occurred in Opelika and Decatur, with additional sites in Mobile, Mobile County Board of Education, Cypress Auditorium Building B, 1 Magnum Pass on February 14, 2017 and in Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa Career and Technology Academy, 2800 MLK Blvd. on March 7, 2017. Registration begins at 8:30 and participants may register online for the event at http://pdweb.alsde.edu. Trainings exemplify collaborative efforts among ALSDE, and LEAs with their Team of First Responders to demonstrate a seamless process to cover all aspects of school safety and to emphasize the importance of correctly using the Virtual Alabama School Safety System in the event of an emergency. For more information, refer to Superintendent Memo dated December 5, 2016. - Contacts: Prevention and Support Services, Dr. Marilyn Lewis or Mr. Greg DeJarnett at 334-242-8165.

OFFICE OF LEARNING SUPPORT
Special Education Services, Crystal Richardson

Green Ribbon Schools Program
The U. S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Program (ED-GRS) is a federal recognition program that began in 2011. The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has nominated schools since the inception of this award, and has had 18 of 19 nominees win the national award. Honored schools exercise a comprehensive approach to creating “green” environments through reducing environmental impact, promoting health, and ensuring a high quality environmental and outdoor education to prepare students with the 21st century skills and sustainability concepts needed in the growing global economy. Alabama Green Ribbon School winners are honored in May at a picnic lunch after the State Board of Education’s meeting. Alabama Green Ribbon School partners with the ALSDE include, Legacy, Inc., Environmental Education Association of Alabama, Auburn Cooperative Extension Service, Discovering Alabama, NORESCO, and US Green Building Council Alabama Chapter. Various children’s authors donate autographed literature to the schools. The deadline has passed for the 2016-2017 school year; however, you may download this year’s application to review the process and start collecting your data. For more information CLICK HERE.

The Alabama Green Ribbon School winners and national nominees include:

• 2017: Sycamore Elementary School and Childersburg Elementary School, Talladega County School; University of Alabama at Birmingham

The Alabama Association for Prevention, Attendance and Support Services (AAPASS)
AAPASS provides targeted professional development for those in the fields of attendance, prevention, and support services. Topics to include Helping Families Initiative, Nursing Needs of Students and Increasing Attendance Updates. The link to the March 8-10, 2017 conference at Perdido Beach Resort is AAPASS Spring Conference. Contact: Prevention and Support Services, Dr. Kay Warfield at 334-242-8165.

State of Alabama Governor’s 2017 Preparedness Conference
to be held March 15-16 in Prattville, Alabama at the Marriott Prattville Hotel and Conference Center in order to network and share information on preparing for any and all incidents that may impact our communities. “Taking the Next Steps in School Preparedness” will be shared by Prevention and Support Services, Greg DeJarnett at 334-242-8165.

• 2016: A. H. Watwood Elementary School, Talladega County School; University of Montevallo
• 2015: Lincoln Elementary School and Lincoln High School, Talladega County School; Bluff Park Elementary School, Hoover City Schools; Auburn University
• 2014: Brock’s Gap Intermediate School, Hoover City Schools; F. E. Burleson Elementary School, Hartselle City Schools; Homewood Middle School, Homewood City Schools
• 2013: Munford Middle and High Schools, Talladega County Schools; Fayetteville High School, Talladega County Schools; Gwin Elementary School, Hoover City Schools; Talladega County School System (district winner)
• 2012: Munford Elementary School, Talladega County Schools; Winterboro High School, Talladega County Schools; Mill Creek Elementary School, Madison City School

Project SEARCH
Project SEARCH is a one-year high school transition internship program for students with significant disabilities who are in their last year of high school. It is targeted for students whose post school goal is competitive integrated employment. The program takes place in a healthcare, industrial, government, or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of marketable work skills. This program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills in

continued on next page...
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.

Office of Teaching and Leading

A new memorandum has been posted to provide additional information about pay for advanced degrees. The memorandum is accessible here.
The Educator Preparation section is beginning to plan for the summer program review. The review team is composed of trained teachers, college and university faculty, and ALSDE staff members. The review teams analyze evidence submitted for teaching fields and areas of instructional support to determine whether the standards adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education are met. Staff conducted four regional workshops in January 2017. The workshops were conducted as a mock review. Kudos to Huntingdon College, Oakwood University, the University of Mobile, and the University of West Alabama for being willing to share their prior submissions and team reports with others. Staff will present at the February meeting of the Alabama Association of Professional of Educational Leadership (AAPEL) about the Continuous Improvement in Educator Preparation (CIEP) program review process for instructional leadership programs.

In addition to the written tests required for Alabama educator certification, prospective teachers who apply for certification fall semester 2018 and thereafter must have earned an acceptable score on edTPA, a performance assessment instrument. Alabama’s educator preparation institutions are piloting the use of edTPA and are working with prospective teachers to prepare them for edTPA. In addition, since cooperating teachers play such a vital role in preparing teachers, preparation institutions are working with cooperating teachers to help them understand edTPA expectations. In addition, since edTPA will be a requirement for individuals pursuing certification through both traditional and alternative approaches, regional meetings will take place between May and July with edTPA scorers statewide and National Board Certified Teachers to develop training modules to assist individuals completing alternative approaches to earn a Professional Educator Certificate.

Regional Inservice Center (RIC) directors are accepting applications for financial support from teachers who have registered to apply for certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Teachers should direct their questions to their RIC director.