



ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR SIXTEEN FINALISTS COMMITTED TO HELPING STUDENTS EXCEL IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

Well-trained, dedicated, caring, enthusiastic, and innovative teachers are among the ingredients essential to achieving excellence in preparing children to become capable adults. The 16 outstanding educators who have been selected as finalists for Alabama's 2016-2017 Teacher of the Year exemplify these qualities and more, as they have all accomplished great things with the students they teach and interact with daily.

"The educators nominated for this prestigious award nurture the character, intellect, and talent of Alabama's students, and are committed to helping their students achieve success in the classroom and beyond," said Sherrill Parris, Senior Deputy State Superintendent of Education. "They exemplify teaching at its best, and we are proud to have them teaching in our state."

The 16 finalists have emerged from a group of over 140 exceptional educators from across the state who submitted applications for the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program, one of the oldest and most prestigious award programs for teachers. The pool will soon be narrowed down to four, and the 2016-2017 Teacher of the Year will be announced at a ceremony hosted by the Alabama State Board of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education on Wednesday, May 11, 2016, at 6 p.m. at the RSA Plaza Terrace in Montgomery.

Alabama's Teacher of the Year spends the majority of the school year serving as a

Alabama Teacher of the Year Program 2016-2017 District Teachers of the Year

Elementary District I

*Kelly Cleere - Orange Beach Elementary
Baldwin County School System*

District II

*Dawn Davis - Montana Street Magnet
Dothan City School System*

District III

*Kathryne Flippo - Bluff Park Elementary
Hoover City School System*

District IV

*Mikki Powell - Rock Quarry Elementary
Tuscaloosa City School System*

District V

*Dawn Judy Ellis - Peter Crump Elementary
Montgomery County School System*

District VI

*Connie Bowman - Iola Roberts Elementary
Pell City School System*

District VII

*Sandy Georgette Deades Ritchey - Crestline Elementary
Mountain Brook City School System*

District VIII

*Nancy Spencer Brandon - Rainbow Elementary
Madison City School System*

Secondary District I

*Judy Peacock Bridges - Baldwin County High
Baldwin County School System*

District II

*Kathryn Johnson Enos - Enterprise High
Enterprise City School System*

District III

*Vinny Chiamonte - Robert F. Bumpus Middle
Hoover City School System*

District IV

*Joseph Smith, III - John Herbert Phillips Academy
Birmingham City School System*

District V

*John C. Conway - Booker T. Washington Magnet High
Montgomery County School System*

District VI

*Mary Katherine (Kate) White - Guntersville High
Guntersville City School System*

District VII

*Dana Jacobson - Clay-Chalkville High
Jefferson County School System*

District VIII

*Carol Bohatch - James Clemens High
Madison City School System*

full-time ambassador for education and the teaching profession as well as presenting workshops to various groups. Additionally, Alabama's representative is a candidate for the National Teacher of the Year.

Reflecting on her experiences as a previous finalist and as Alabama's current Teacher of the Year, Jennifer Brown said, "Wow! What an honor and

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The Summer Learning Challenge!

To succeed in school and life, children and young adults need ongoing opportunities to learn and practice essential skills. This is especially true during the summer months. Unfortunately, some youth face having no access to summer educational opportunities.

For some of Alabama's students, those months away from school can result in a loss of knowledge and reading ability. The Summer Learning Challenge raises awareness of the summer loss epidemic, shares compelling research on the importance of personalized reading activities and provides access to a variety of free resources to support targeted reading and math summer learning.



There are FREE ways to keep students engaged and excited about education:

- The Lexile-based "**Find a Book, Alabama**" tool offers students over 160,000 books from which to choose. This book-search tool enables individuals to build custom reading lists based on their Lexile range and personal interests and checks the availability of books at the local library. The search tool includes a growing collection of English literary and informational books.
- Children, parents and educators can also pledge to read using the "[Find a Book, Alabama](#)" tool starting May 1st. We encourage all students to pledge to read.
- The Alabama Summer Learning Challenge also includes a [FREE email-based math skills program](#) for children who have just completed 1st through 7th grades. Parents and other summer care-givers can begin registering for the program today.
- **Starting Monday, June 20**, parents will begin receiving daily emails with fun activities and resources to help their children retain math skills acquired during the previous school year. After the program ends on Friday, July 29, parents can print an award certificate to celebrate their child's summer accomplishments!
- This summer, [Stride](#) is FREE to all students in the state from May 1 to July 29. Prevent "Summer Slide" with a cool blend of online math, reading and science skills practice, spectacular video games and peer competitions to pass the lazy summer days. Students may access the [Stride](#) learning platform online anytime, 24-7, on tablets, PCs and Macs.
- [LTS Education Systems](#) offers the [Stride](#) game-based learning program used in many Alabama school districts during and after school hours for fun and personalized learning.
- **Register** and login at www.AlabamaSummerStride.com. LTS will provide a dedicated Parent Support Line for the Summer Learning Challenge. Parents can call in to 1-844-855-4023 for help with Stride.

Resources and Materials

"**Find a Book Alabama**" is offered in partnership with the ALSDE and MetaMetrics, Inc. Choose your reader's comfort with grade-level material or reading ability for a full list of books to read all summer! In English and Spanish. www.lexile.com/fab/alabama.

Don't forget to submit your [Summer Reading Pledge](#) beginning **May 1**.

Print your own [Bookmark!](#)

Print Posters and Flyers for your classroom and library!
 Summer [Math](#) Challenge 8.5x11 size
 Summer [Math](#) Challenge 11x17 size
 Summer Learning Challenge [Flyer](#)
 FAQ [Poster for Librarians](#)
 FAQ [Poster for Parents](#)

Print the Alabama Summer [Reading Program Certificate](#)
 Print the Alabama Summer [Math Challenge Certificate](#)

All Alabama Public Libraries.
 Visit your public library for [book lists](#) and summer reading programs for kids of all ages.

Know the Facts¹ – [Research](#)

How to beat Summer Learning Loss – [Article](#)

Why Summer Learning Deserves a Front-Row Seat in the Education Reform Arena– [Research](#)

Alabama Teacher of the Year to Receive Classroom Upgrades as Part of New Partnership with Interior Elements

The Alabama State Department of Education is

pleased to welcome Interior Elements (IE), the leading supplier of education furniture in the Southeast, as the newest

corporate sponsor of the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program.

Interior Elements will honor the recipient of this prestigious



award by providing the design and renovation of the Alabama Teacher of the Year's classroom. IE will work with industry-

leading manufacturers, Allsteel, KI, Scholar Craft and Interface, in an effort to create a state-of-the-art learning environment.

"Interior Elements has built a sterling reputation among school systems throughout the state while designing 21st century learning environments and will continue to adhere to a high standard of excellence in this significant role of honoring the Alabama Teacher of the Year," said Interior Elements Executive Vice President Dan Chappell.

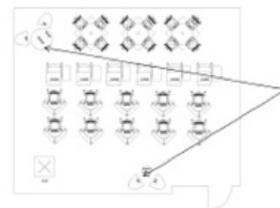
Jennifer Brown, the 2015-2016 Alabama Teacher of the Year, will be the first recipient of the classroom upgrades. Brown, a science teacher at Vestavia Hills High School, said she and Chappell asked her students what type of furniture they would want if given the choice.

"The students mentioned things like rolling desks, standing tables, cushioned chairs, and we thought, 'Why not? Let's go with all of that,'" Brown said.

Brown's new classroom will be "non-traditional," with four different types of furniture. As for the teacher's desk – she won't have one.

"I've decided to ditch the teacher's desk to allow for more space throughout the room. I want my room to feel less like a classroom and more

like a learning space," she said. "We are lucky to have companies like Interior Elements sponsoring the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program. Our future teachers of the year and their students will greatly benefit from this opportunity."



Allsteel Scooch w/ Belong Tables



One of the nation's oldest teacher recognition programs, the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program was established as a means of identifying and rewarding some of the state's outstanding teachers each year.

The selection process for Alabama's Teacher of the Year begins at the school system level. Each school system can nominate an elementary and secondary teacher at the district level. One elementary teacher and one secondary teacher are selected from each of the eight state Board of Education districts. A state selection committee selects 4 teachers from the 16 district finalists to be interviewed for the titles Alabama Teacher of the Year and Alternate State Teacher of the Year.

Alabama Teacher of the Year Sixteen Finalists *from front ...*

a privilege it has been to represent Alabama's passionate and dedicated army of educators who are educating and advocating for students each and every day. I am grateful to have been granted the opportunity to visit, observe, and share stories from many of the classrooms of our teacher champions of Alabama. Congratulations to the 16 teachers chosen to represent their districts. Thanks to each of you for the wonderful work you do with your students as well as the work you do to elevate and strengthen our profession."

INNOVATION CELEBRATION!

State Education "Pilot" Takes Flight as Part of Final Celebrate Innovation Visit

Alabama State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice piloted the state's K-12 school systems a little over four years. So it was only fitting that he spent his last "Celebrate Innovation" tour visit taking flight with the first graduate of the Pike County School System's First in Flight and Leadership Academy, a partnership with Troy Aviation.

Since October 2015, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has been celebrating innovation in schools and classrooms across the state by focusing on innovative programs, schools, classrooms, and teachers who are creating innovative opportunities. As part of "Celebrate Innovation," Dr. Bice, ALSDE staff, and state and local leaders have visited nearly two dozen school systems across the state that are thinking outside the box and coming up with new and creative ways to deliver quality education.

Pike County School System's Virtual High School is a prime example of such instruction. Pike County Superintendent Dr. Mark Bazzell led a panel of administrators, teachers, and students who discussed the Virtual High School. The panel presented a thorough overview of the Business and Finance, Agriscience and Technology, Arts, and flight academies, as well as the system's STEM initiative for students in Grades 5-8.

To kick off his last tour visit, Bice took flight with a plane ride with senior Colton Johnson, the first graduate of the First in Flight and Leadership Academy. The Pike County School System's partnership with Troy Aviation is one of the first of its kind in the state. High school students graduate from the program with full credentials, including their pilot's license. Dr. Bice, whose last day at the helm of the Alabama State Department of Education was March 31, deemed his flight with Johnson "an awesome retirement gift."



Fairfield Students PowerUP for Launch of New Career Tech Partnership

Fairfield Preparatory High School in Birmingham recently hosted the launch celebration of PowerUP, an initiative created to encourage students, especially young women, to consider careers in the trade industry such as construction, mechanics, and HVAC, just to name a few.

The event opened up to literal fanfare, as the FPHS Band performed upbeat selections to ensure students and guests stayed powered up for the host of activities that took place throughout the day, including an assembly, career and



*I urge you to pursue careers that will make you happy,
not just fields where you will earn a lot of money.*

– Do It Yourself Network host Kayleen McCabe

technical education fair, and “PowerUP: It’s a Mother Daughter Thing.” The latter took place at Birmingham’s Alabama Workforce Training Center, bringing together mothers and daughters to teach young girls about the construction industry as a potential career path.

Kayleen McCabe, host of the Do It Yourself Network’s “Rescue Renovation,” served as the day’s featured presenter and special guest. McCabe told the students gathered for the assembly at FPHS that a college degree is not the only path to achieving a successful career, and told them a large percentage of American construction companies are looking for qualified workers.

“The trades industry is in need of more people – people like you,” said McCabe, who noted she has always loved building things. “I urge you to pursue careers that will make you happy, not just fields where you will earn a lot of money.”

Students also heard remarks from Greg Sizemore, Vice President of HSE and Workforce Development Associated Builders and Contractors; Alabama State Board of Education President Pro Tem Dr. Yvette Richardson; and Fairfield City School System Superintendent Dr. Walter Gonsoulin.

Later that evening, more than 450 area girls from Jefferson, Shelby and St. Clair counties participated in the “PowerUP: It’s a Mother Daughter Thing” event. The program featured four sessions, including a panel discussion, hands-on activities, a discussion on higher education opportunities and a networking session with construction employers.

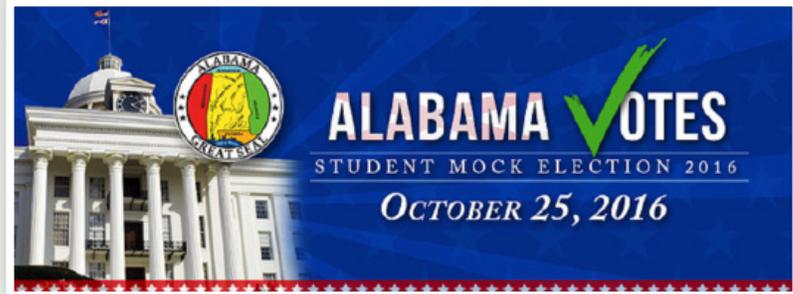
Dr. Mittie Cannon, Director of Training and Workforce Development with the Power and Industrial Division of Robins

& Morton, organized the day’s activities. In addition to the presentation at Fairfield Preparatory High School, the PowerUP program also visited eight schools across the three counties, reaching more than 4,000 area girls.

“I can’t stop at this point, I have to take it to the next level,” Cannon said. “Once we’ve created a pipeline and can identify middle and high school girls who have entered the industry and taken part in this initiative, that’s when I’ll be done.”

– The Birmingham Business Journal contributed to this report.

Mock Election and Convention Aim to Engage Students in the Voting Process



On October 25, 2016, the Office of the Alabama Secretary of State, along with the Alabama State Department of Education, the American Village and Alabama Independent School Association, will host an "Alabama Votes" Student Mock Election for students in Grades 4-12 in the state of Alabama.

"One of the most fundamental rights we as Americans are afforded is our right to vote," said Secretary of State John Merrill. "Our students in the state of Alabama have the opportunity to be a powerful voice in the electoral process, and we must do everything we can to educate them on the importance of their right to vote. The "Alabama Votes" Student Mock Election will generate awareness and introduce to Alabama's student population the concept of elections before the voting age. This opportunity allows students to have an understanding of the electoral process by conducting a mock election for Alabama's November 2016 General Election. Teachers shape the lives and foundation of every student in our state, and it is our hope that you utilize this resource in your classrooms.

Ballots will be distributed to all 1,500 schools in the state through the Alabama State Department of Education, various homeschool networks and the Alabama Independent School Association. Local schools will collect their data and

forward it to the Central Office. From there, the Central Office will report results to the Office of the Secretary of State.

"The 'Alabama Votes' Mock Election is a great way to generate interest and spur excitement among Alabama's student population about civic responsibility, democratic principles, and the upcoming presidential election. This opportunity gives students a platform to discuss their individual viewpoints on everything from social and



One of the most fundamental rights we as Americans are afforded is our right to vote.

- Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill

domestic issues to foreign policy and economics," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice.

"The Mock Election will focus squarely on getting young people engaged in the voting process as they simulate voting for a real-life presidential candidate," Bice continued. "I strongly encourage school leaders to promote and participate in this opportunity. For students, I hope that they will get involved now and continue their interest and engagement as they become voting-aged citizens."

A Student Mock Election Convention at the American Village will be held on July 12, 13 and 14. Students in Grades 9, 10, 11 or 12 as of the fall 2016 school year in public, private, parochial or home schools may participate.

Students and teachers will leave with ideas and materials to carry back to their schools on how to hold a successful convention and mock election. April 22, 2016, is the last day to register for the Student Mock Election Convention. You can find a link to the registration page on the [American Village website](#).



AWF Accepting Nominations for Conservation Achievement Awards

The **Alabama Wildlife Federation** is currently accepting nominations for the 2016 Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards. For over 30 years, the awards have been presented to individuals and organizations that make great contributions to the conservation of the state's wildlife and natural resources.



Alabama Wildlife Federation

The program is designed to bring about a greater knowledge and

awareness of conservation practices and projects, and to give proper recognition to those persons and organizations that bring awareness to the importance of protecting Alabama's wildlife, forests, soils, water and air.

There are 14 award categories, including Conservation Educator of the Year and Youth Conservationist of the Year.

- The Conservation Educator of the Year Award recognizes outstanding contributions by an individual or organization, whether in the classroom or by other means, to promote conservation education to students, youth, adults and the general public.
- The Youth Conservationist of the Year Award recognizes outstanding achievement by a youth, 19 or younger, in the wildlife and/or related natural resource conservation arenas. Accomplishments may include on-the-ground projects, public awareness, and/or conservation education related endeavors.

The nomination deadline is May 27, 2016. For a nomination form, or additional information, visit www.alabamawildlife.org.

Alabama Legislature Commends School Nurses for Dedication to Students



The **State Senate** recently **recognized** the efforts of school nurses for the health care services they provide to children in schools across Alabama.

There are roughly 2,000 part-time and full-time licensed nurses serving almost 750,000 children in Alabama schools. The needs of these students range from health care advice, to routine

administration of medications, to emergency care and a multitude of topics between those levels of care, some of which require one-on-one nursing care in the school setting.

Sen. Gerald Dial was instrumental in facilitating this recognition for Alabama's school nurses.

Thank you school nurses for your tireless dedication to

ensuring the health and safety of our students!



ESL Coaches Present at National Conferences

By Debbie Baeder and Robin Stutts

Why are the English as a second language (ESL) Coaches for the Alabama State Department of Education presenting their coaching model at a national conference?

The year begins with data. The coaches gather to examine district-level language proficiency scores as evidenced by the administration of the ACCESS for ELLs. This assessment is designed by WIDA, the consortium providing English language development (ELD) standards for 36 state education agencies. Based on the progress and proficiency needs of systems, the coaches provide three tiers of technical assistance.

For elementary and secondary teachers, the focus has been on providing specific models for building lesson accommodations at each proficiency level in the core content classrooms and understanding EL program delivery in the areas of language arts and math. The coaches have presented specific examples of planning and executing lessons that allow English Learners to acquire grade-level content alongside English language acquisition. This year the training focused on language arts, both fiction and non-fiction examples, and specific illustrations for math.

The innovative state training has developed into presentations for regional and national venues. At AMTESOL (Alabama-Mississippi Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) and at the WIDA 2015 National Conference, the coaches presented how to effectively accommodate instruction and assessment for EL students who are at English proficiency levels 1 and 2. They have been asked to present at MEGA Conference this year on building a positive culture and climate in the classroom that will provide an inclusive environment not just for English learners, but for all students. Finally, they have also been invited back to present on two additional topics at the WIDA Conference in October 2016. The coaches will present how to develop a mathematical academic language community, as well as accommodate math instruction in the classroom while aligning the WIDA ELD Standards to Common Core Standards. Also, because the ESL Coaching Model for the Alabama State Department of Education has proven so successful, they will illustrate for session participants the guidelines used to successfully address the needs of Alabama's English learners.



Zika Virus Prevention Partnership with Alabama Department of Public Health

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) are collaborating to create awareness about the Zika Virus. As warm weather quickly approaches and mosquito season begins, this vital information will help address public health concerns about the virus.

Primarily, the Zika Virus is transmitted to people through bites from an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. Outbreaks of the Zika Virus have been reported in the United States, with one confirmed case in Alabama. The most devastating results of the virus are brain defects in babies known as Microcephaly and babies born with small heads and big bodies. As a result, pregnant women and women of child-bearing age are most at risk.

We encourage principals in schools with Grades Pre-K through 3 to distribute the Zika Virus coloring book titled *Swat Team Skeeter Beaters Coloring Book* that will be

hand-delivered to the schools by the local county health department environmentalist. The coloring book is packed with information on what families can do to prevent contracting the virus.

Should a school need copies of the coloring book printed in Spanish or additional books, the principal may request them from their health department environmentalist. More information is available on the ADPH Web site at www.adph.org/mosquito by clicking on Zika Virus.

If you need further assistance, you may contact Ms. Sherry Bradley, Bureau of Environmental Services Director, ADPH, at 334-206-5805 or e-mail at Sherry.Bradley@adph.state.al.us or Dr. Marilyn Lewis, ALSDE, Prevention and Support Services Section, at 334-242-8165 or by e-mail at mlewis@alsde.edu.



2016 Statewide High School Programming Contest

Dear Alabama teachers,

The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Department of Computer Science, will host the 2016 Statewide High School Programming Contest on **Saturday, April 30**, in Campbell Hall, 1300 University Boulevard.

All Alabama students are cordially invited.

In the contest, students will be asked to demonstrate their programming skills by attempting to solve six programming problems within a three-hour period. They will compete for monetary prizes. All students will receive a UAB Certificate of Participation. **The deadline for on-time online registration is Friday, April 22.** The registration fee is \$20, which includes lunch. To register go to <http://hspsc.cis.uab.edu/>.

If you need more information or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the HSPC Contest Chair, Professor Alan Sprague, at (205) 934-8513 or sprague@cis.uab.edu. Or you may contact the HSPC Assistant Coordinator at (614) 267-9019 or diazspra@uab.edu.

We look forward to your participation!



The ALSDE App!



The new ALSDE app will help users to navigate the Alabama State Department of Education website faster and with more ease. Obtaining directions, contact information, and calendar dates can all be found on the app. Quick access to the Education Directory, *Alabama Education News* magazine, press releases, links to social media, and more, are right at your fingertips! **Available now!**

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AEN EDITORIAL STAFF

Managing Editor: Dr. Michael O. Sibley

Contributing Editors: Ed Crenshaw, Erica S. Pippins,

Malissa Valdes-Hubert, APR, Beverly Davis

Graphic Artist: Charles V. Creel

AEN CONTACT INFORMATION

334-242-9950 · 334-353-4682 (f)

aen@alsde.edu · www.alsde.edu

Alabama Education News · P.O. Box 302101

Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

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