

Alabama Education News

THE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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ALSDE and Mattie C. Stewart Foundation Team Up for

INSIDEOUT: STAY IN SCHOOL WEEK

A student somewhere in America drops out of school every 26 seconds. That's 7,000 every day, and more than 1.3 million every year.

Sadly, 8 out of 10 high school dropouts will end up in prison. In addition, each class of dropouts costs the United States more than \$329 billion in lost wages – not to mention \$40 billion spent on prisoner incarceration each year.

Such startling national statistics are why the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), [The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation](#), and the Lawler Foundation of Birmingham are partnering to bring even greater awareness to the importance of graduating from high school and taking a frank, honest, look at the reality of what happens to those who do not.

During **"InsideOut: Stay in School Week,"** March 2-6, 2015, the ALSDE is encouraging all middle and high schools throughout the state to dedicate time to watch the 26-minute, emotionally gripping documentary entitled **"InsideOut."** The film, shot in two Alabama maximum security prisons, exposes the devastating and lasting effects of dropping out of school by those who live with the consequences every day – prison inmates.

"The ALSDE acknowledges the serious social, economic, and educational consequences resulting from students dropping out of high school and

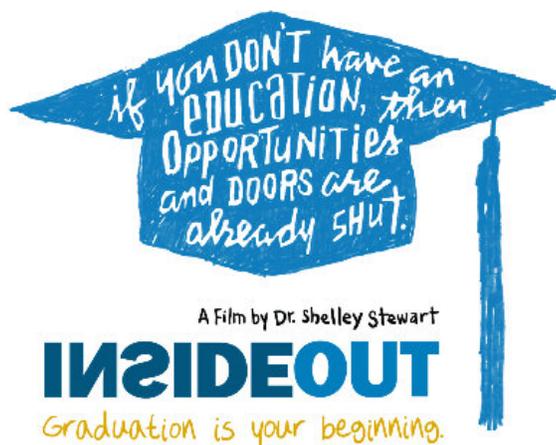
resolves to meet the goal of a 90 percent graduation rate with steps outlined in PLAN 2020," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice, noting that Alabama is moving in the right direction. The state's graduation rate is now at 86 percent and is projected to continue rising.

"Still, across America, too many young people are dropping out of school and must deal with the devastating consequences that often result from not graduating from high school," Bice said. "We applaud The Mattie C. Stewart

Foundation's role in the fight against dropout rates and the Foundation's tireless dedication to increasing student commitment to class work and graduation."

The Birmingham-based [The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation](#) has invested time and creativity to the **"InsideOut: Stay in School Week"** Campaign, with the theme of "Graduation is Your Beginning." The Foundation is teaming up with the Lawler Foundation of Birmingham to cover the cost of production and distribution and will send a copy of the InsideOut DVD to every school in Alabama in a 6-12 grade configuration.

Also during **"InsideOut: Stay in School Week,"** the nationally recognized "Choice Bus" will visit Alabama high schools in Mobile, Montgomery, and Bessemer. The Choice Bus is an experience-



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Three Schools, One University, Honored as 2015 Alabama Green Ribbon Schools

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is pleased to announce the 2015 Green Ribbon Schools (GRS). The schools are honored for their approach to create "green" environments through reducing environmental impact, promoting health, and ensuring a high-quality environmental and outdoor education.

The [winning schools and university](#) are:

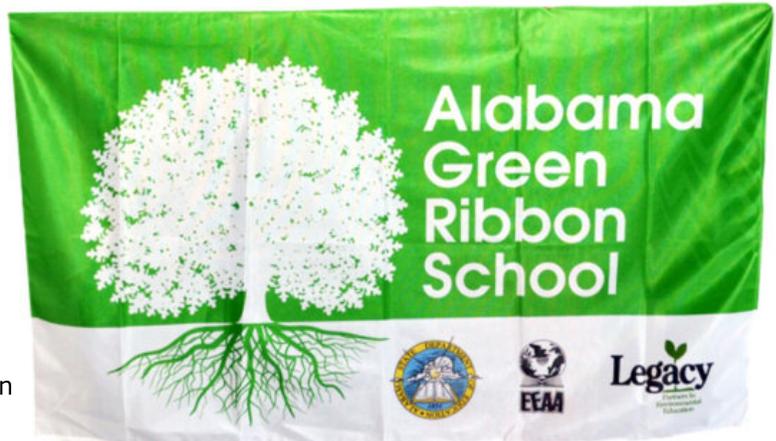
- **Lincoln Elementary School**, Talladega County Schools
- **Lincoln High School**, Talladega County Schools
- **Bluff Park Elementary School**, Hoover City Schools
- **Auburn University**, Auburn, AL

"We are excited to see more schools and, for the first time, a university become [Green Ribbon Schools](#)," said Dr. Tommy Bice, State Superintendent of Education. "Environmental education is an important part of our overall instructional program. We are proud to honor schools that are creating and innovating new ways to teach and learn about conservation efforts."

All nominated and winning K-12 schools will receive State Board of Education recognition at the May 13th meeting. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) worked in collaboration with the ALSDE to nominate Auburn University and will be honoring the university.

All schools will be celebrated with a picnic lunch at Eat South Farm in downtown Montgomery provided by the [Environmental Education Association of Alabama](#) (EEAA). Green Ribbon Flags (seen above), sponsored by Legacy, Partners in Environmental Education, will be presented to each of the schools.

The [U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Program](#) (GRS) is a federal recognition program that began in 2011. 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.

The USDE Green Ribbon School Program recognizes schools that save energy, reduce costs, feature environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement. On Earth Day, April 22nd, the USDE will announce the national winners.

Alabama's [previous GRS state nominees](#) include:

- 2014: Brock's Gap Intermediate School, Hoover City Schools; F. E. Burlison 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 School District winner
- 2012: Munford Elementary School, Talladega County Schools; Winterboro High School, Talladega County Schools; Mill Creek Elementary School, Madison City Schools.

ACCRS Standards of the Week

Feel free to promote on your Web site, newsletter, and social media sites! [Here's the link](#) to the page for all ACCRS Standard of the Week images.

English Language Arts – First Grade

Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly (L.1.1.4)

Talking someone about something in sequence means telling people about something that happened in the same order it happened. The example you might read tells a friend about watching the movie "Frozen." You would talk about what happened first, next, then and last.

It might sound like this:

At first, Elsa and Anna tried to play together. Next, Elsa stopped playing with Anna because Elsa was freezing everyone and the road didn't exist. Then, the snow fell from the sky.

At last, Anna searched for Elsa and she found her and they were happy about again. How readers tell you about another movie they have watched. Remember there is one the whole first, next, then, last and to tell the way to the next order it happened.

DO YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO THIS?

If your student is 100% proficient in your state school and region, Arkansas is a "Classroom of Champions" and your student is ACCRS Child to Know and Able to Do This! Visit [www.alsde.edu](#) for more information.




Growing Minds *and* Hearts for Alabama's Future *by Ann Marie Corgill*



Ann Marie Corgill
2015 Alabama Teacher of the
Year and National Teacher of
the Year Finalist

Martin Luther King put it this way, "Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education." As the **2015 Alabama Teacher of the Year**, my message to our profession, community, state, and nation is to teach not only for college- and career-readiness, but to teach for a civil and productive democracy. By seamlessly integrating social and emotional learning into our current academic standards, we can teach children self-management skills, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, and collaborative and ethical problem solving. We must not only prepare students to be ready for college and careers, we must equip them with the

tools to live as productive, contributing citizens of society for the rest of their lives.

Research shows that with this type of instruction we have the potential to change learning identities and intellect. By integrating social and emotional learning *daily* from preschool to high school, we have the potential to build positive personal attributes, diminish bullying and self-destructive behaviors, and create a sense of safety and belonging for the students, allowing them to take the risks that are necessary for true learning to occur. With a commitment like this, we can cut the dropout rate and skyrocket graduation rates, diminish crime, and wipe out prison overcrowding. With intensive, ongoing training and mentorship for teachers in how to create and foster respectful supportive relationships, how to provide and facilitate opportunities for collaboration, and how to develop student autonomy and independence, along with professional development in the highest quality academic instruction, we can and *will* change the face of public education in Alabama for the better.

Imagine the above characteristics present and palpable in the environments, the conversations, the teaching, and the learning in every school in Alabama. If we invite children into a growth mindset, we give them hope for changing negative behaviors, low self-esteem, and poor academic performance. As Tim Shriver, chairman of the Board of Directors for The Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL), stated, "*The head and the heart are in the same body. We need to be educating both.*" By integrating social, emotional, and academic teaching and learning, we can give Alabama's children hope for the future, and we can stand confident that we are teaching, not just for college- and career-readiness, but for a better democracy.

Cordova Elementary School 2015 Alabama School of Character by Character.org

Character@HEART is pleased to announce that Character.org, a national advocate and leader for the character education movement in collaboration with Character@HEART, named Cordova Elementary School a 2015 Alabama School of Character. The program recognized Cordova Elementary School as a school that has demonstrated its use of character development to drive a positive impact on academics, student behavior, and the Cordova Elementary School climate. Cordova's application has now been forwarded to Character.org to be considered for a 2015 National School of Character.

The [Schools of Character](#) application process is an opportunity for schools and districts to receive thoughtful feedback for growth and excellence in the area of character development through Character.org's [11 Principles of Effective Character Education framework](#). It is also a method of recognizing exemplary schools and districts in the nation.

"Utilizing components of character education is a large part of our student and staff's daily routines," said Mrs. Dianne Williams, Principal at Cordova Elementary School. "We are grateful for Character.org and Character@HEART for their efforts to create a state and national discussion on the importance of character in education." Mrs. Sandra Courington, School Counselor at Cordova, said, "We are eager to carry this distinction for years to come and are hopeful our example will lead other schools in Alabama to participate in this program in order to enhance students' lives statewide." She also expressed that, "The Schools of Character application process was a big encouragement and inspiration to our school!"

Shades Valley's JCIB Team Among "Best In Nation" Verizon Innovative App Challenge Winners

Shades Valley High School's Jefferson County International Baccalaureate (JCIB) Team is among eight teams of students across the country that are the "Best in Nation" winners of the third Verizon Innovative App Challenge.

The national competition, created by the Verizon Foundation in partnership with the Technology Student Association, challenged student teams to develop mobile application concepts that address a need or problem in the students' communities or schools.

JCIB's app concept, VOCAL, will help increase volunteering within the community and bring generations together for a common cause. VOCAL uses a calendar and social media to help people find and volunteer for causes they want to support. Learn more about it [here](#).

JCIB team members include Jerry Hu, Cole Crownhart, Ryan Cook, Chris Arora, Courtney Barkley, and Kevin Jackson. Math teacher Steven McDaniel is the team's advisor.

"This app ties social media to volunteering experiences you can't find in your school's curriculum and encourages team work to solve problems," Crownhart said.

McDaniel echoed those remarks.

"The primary objective of VOCAL is to unite groups of people towards a singular cause through effective organization," he said. "This app uses the raw power of organization to increase volunteering."

"Best in Nation" teams earned their schools \$20,000 in cash grants from the Verizon Foundation to further develop or support STEM-related programming. Each team member received a Samsung tablet, courtesy of Samsung Electronics America. Over the next few weeks, MIT App Inventor Master Trainers from the Center for Mobile Learning at the MIT Media Lab will give the Best in Nation teams onsite and virtual training on coding and app development using MIT App Inventor to develop the teams' apps.

In June, the members of the eight winning teams will be invited to present their apps at the National TSA Conference in Dallas, courtesy of Verizon.

Other "Best in Nation" winners include: Tri-Tech Skills Center, Kennewick, Washington; C. M. Rice Middle School, Plano, Texas; Meyzeek Middle School, Louisville, Kentucky; Cab Calloway School of the Arts, Wilmington, Delaware; Upper St. Clair High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Lime Kiln Middle School, Fulton, Maryland; and Kyrene Aprende Middle School, Chandler, Arizona.



Stonewall Jackson Memorial Fund Scholarships

The Alabama Department of Archives and History is now accepting applications for the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Fund Repayable Scholarship.



In order to qualify, applicants must submit an essay of 1,500 - 2,500 words on a topic or issue that relates to the life of Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. A cover page and an annotated bibliography of sources must accompany the essay. Applicants must also submit an application form.

The scholarship functions as a repayable no-interest loan that must be repaid after graduation from college. One year after graduation, recipients will be contacted to repay the scholarship amount under a scheduled repayment system set up by the individual.

Scholarship recipients are selected based on the historical (80 percent) and literary (20 percent) quality of the essays. Plagiarized or copied essays will be disqualified.

The scholarship evaluation committee will award repayable scholarships of the following amounts: 1st place, \$3,000; 2nd place, \$2,000; and 3rd place, \$1,000.

Repayable scholarship recipients will be announced in May 2015 and monetary awards will be made to the recipients' colleges upon verification of registration. The application deadline is April 1, 2015. More information about the scholarship, as well as the application, can be found [here](#).

Students Bolster Their Brainpower with School Breakfast



To garner increased participation in the National School Breakfast Program, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is encouraging schools across the state to recognize National School Breakfast Week. Slated for March 2-6, 2015, National School Breakfast Week is a weeklong celebration aimed at increasing awareness of the School Breakfast Program among students and parents.

The 2015 theme, "Make the Grade with School Breakfast," reminds everyone in the school community – parents, students, administrators – that a healthy school breakfast sets students up for a day of learning and academic success.

Research shows that breakfast eaters are found to be more content and have better moods than those who do not consume breakfast. In addition:

- Breakfast provides an important contribution to nutrient intake throughout the day and many studies have found a link between breakfast intake and lower weight.
- Children who eat breakfast at school are found to be more alert than those who do not eat breakfast.
- Eating breakfast has been associated with enhanced short-term memory among schoolchildren.
- Students' tardiness rates are typically lower and correspondingly attendance rates are typically higher for breakfast consumers compared with those students who skip breakfast.
- Overall academic and achievement scores are higher for students who consume breakfast more regularly than their peers who typically skip breakfast; the end result being an improvement in grades.

What's Your AVL Story?

The Alabama Virtual Library (AVL) Council

announces its first "My AVL Story" Video Contest. The contest seeks entries from AVL patrons of all ages and locations within the state of Alabama. Are you the patron that accessed AVL when out of work to find a job, a new mom and dad at home researching delivery methods, the university student finishing a thesis paper, or a homeschooling mom seeking the best information resources for your children? *No matter what your story is, the AVL wants to hear it!*

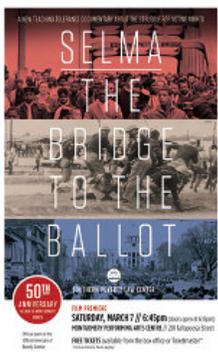
The contest opened for entries Friday, February 13th, 2015, and **closes Friday, March 13th, 2015.**

Participants must read the guidelines in their entirety, post their video to an online hosting site (resources include TeacherTube, YouTube, Vimeo, Google Drive, etc.), and will include the URL to their video as part of their entry. At the conclusion of the voting window, winners of the "My AVL Story" Video Contest will be announced.



The panel of judges will review and evaluate all entries based on creativity, quality of video, and effectiveness in explaining the AVL story, and select a Top 10. The Top 10 will be posted on the Alabama Virtual Library's [Facebook page](#) for voting. After the voting window closes, the creators of the top videos will win prizes that range from GoPro Cameras to Chromebooks to Gift Certificates!

Videos should be in the highest resolution possible and no more than 60 seconds in length. Your video entry should clearly and persuasively explain how the AVL has helped you. What is your AVL story? Enter now by visiting the [application page](#).



SPLC and City of Montgomery to Present *Selma: Bridge to the Ballot*

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), along with the City of Montgomery, are hosting the premiere of the SPLC documentary *Selma: Bridge to the Ballot* at the Montgomery Performing Arts Center (MPAC) on Saturday, March 7, 2015.

The film, which is recommended for students in Grades 6-12, starts at 6:45 p.m. and will be over in about an hour. This is an official event of the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery March.

This is a free event. Tickets are available at the MPAC box office or Ticketmaster, which charges a convenience fee.

INSIDEOUT: STAY IN SCHOOL WEEK

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based learning tool designed to show young people the power of education, as well as the likely consequences of choosing to drop out of school.

"There is no better learning tool than experience itself," said Sherri Stewart, Executive Director of [The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation](#). "We designed our tools to let young people and their families experience first-hand the powerful benefits of education and the likely consequence that await high school dropouts. We know from student and teacher testimonies that we're having a positive impact on their choice to stay in school."

The front half of the Choice Bus is literally a classroom, a visual representation of learning and self-improvement. But the entire second half of the bus is an exact replica of a prison cell. After viewing powerful testimonials and a 4-minute movie, the curtain opens, revealing the prison cell. Students can walk into the uncomfortable living conditions, experiencing the reality that faces the overwhelming majority of those who decide to drop out of school.

Dates and locations for the Choice Bus include:

Monday, March 2, 1:00 p.m.

[Baker High School](#)

8901 Airport Boulevard
Mobile, AL 36608

Wednesday, March 4, 10:00 a.m.

[Carver High School](#)

2001 West Fairview Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36108

Friday, March 6, 10:00 a.m.

[Bessemer High School](#)

4950 Premiere Parkway
Bessemer, AL 35020

The *InsideOut* documentary, originally released in 2007, has been used in 49 states and Canada and has been viewed by more than 15 million students and community organizations. The Choice Bus has visited 21 states and has been experienced by more than 2 million students and adults.



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