

Alabama's Graduation Rate Climbs To New Heights

Graduation Rate of 80 Percent Accomplishes PLAN 2020's 2016 Objective Ahead of Schedule

Numbers recently released from the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) show that efforts to keep students in school are gaining traction as the state's high school graduation rate continues its upward climb. With a high school graduation rate of 80 percent, up from 75 percent just one year ago, and up from 72 percent just two years ago, Alabama is moving in the right direction. **State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice** said for every one percent increase in the graduation rate, about 600 additional students graduate from an Alabama high school. In the past two years, approximately 4,800 more students have not only graduated from high school, but graduated on time.

"Not only is this increase significant for our students, but it is significant for our state's long-term economic impact as well. More students graduating from high school means more students going to college, starting careers, and becoming productive, tax-paying citizens," Bice said. "High school graduates are much less likely to be unemployed or underemployed, less likely to receive public assistance, and less likely to end up on the wrong side of the criminal justice system. Alabama's climbing graduation rates are good news for the entire state."

In 2013, the State Board of Education embarked upon the mission of PLAN 2020, Alabama's framework for education reform, part of which includes making sure students graduate from high school on time and prepared for college and/or a career in the 21st century. As part of PLAN 2020, the state's objective is to reach a graduation rate of 80 percent by 2016 and 90 percent or more by the year 2020. With the graduating class of 2012-13 reaching 80 percent of students graduating on time earlier than expected, Bice said he is encouraged by the state's progress but realizes there is much work to do.

Part of that effort involves addressing the reasons why students drop out of high school and providing support and encouragement. Bice said

school systems around the state are already employing innovative as well as practical tactics to combat what he considers to be one of Alabama's education priorities. "We've seen school systems use their people, funding, time, and other resources in creative ways to meet the needs of students contemplating dropping out," Bice said.

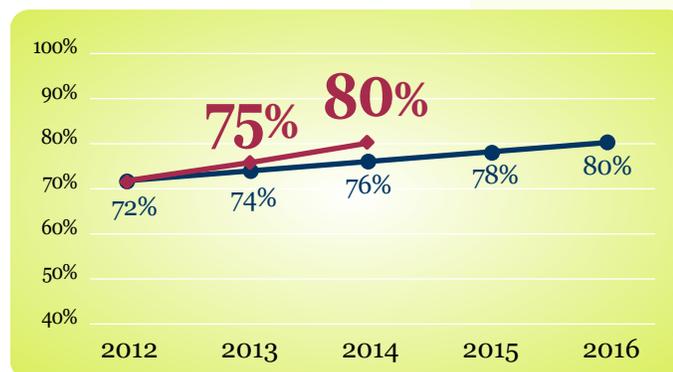
"Students leave school for a lot of reasons. As leaders in education, it is our responsibility to find ways to keep our young people in school."

Bice also said these numbers have particular significance because more than two years ago, Alabama, along with every other state in America, started transitioning to the National Governors Association (NGA) methodology for determining graduation rates. The NGA model is a four-year cohort formula that now provides a more

consistent view of America's high school graduation rate.

"From teachers and counselors to parents and mentors, we all have a vested interest in making sure our students' complete high school prepared and eager to start college or their career. Completing high

school with a quality education and with the ability to compete with students from any other state or country should be common-place," Bice said. "We expect that of our public education system; we expect that of ourselves."



Technology: a Companion in a Student's Life

Roanoke City School System works toward goal of becoming 21st century school district



Critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity.

Visit any classroom in the Roanoke City School System and evidence of the integration of the "4Cs" abounds.

Take, for instance, Knight Enloe Elementary School, where kindergartners are actively engaged in ABCya.com educational games on their laptops that incorporate mathematics, science and language arts while also introducing basic computer skills. Or consider the "iLearn Through Shared Education Communities" display board at Handley Middle School, which showcases how older students are using inventive methods to help their younger peers master core curriculum standards.

Then there is the Handley High School Communities Studies Class, which created an e-book to chronicle the students' findings from an archeological dig at Louina, a once-thriving town on the banks of the Tallapoosa River in Randolph County.

School leaders believe the 4C's are paramount to the Roanoke City School System achieving its goal of becoming a 21st century school system. In addition to incorporating critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity throughout the curricula, the other crucial components the school system has identified for obtaining success include giving teachers the support they need to teach and assess the 4C's and continued support from parents, the board of education, community and other stakeholders. The key to building this foundation is the innovative use of technology.

The 1:1 Method

When it comes to creating an environment for today's learners, Roanoke City School Superintendent Chuck Marcum emphasizes that, "In our students' world, technology is a companion in a connected life."

Seven years ago, the Roanoke City School System embarked upon a \$2.5 million technology initiative to become a 1:1 district by providing access to a laptop or tablet for every student each school day. The system fully realized its goal in the 2012-2013 school year, but this academic year has worked to leverage its investment in technology and basic technology training through the "Teaching 1:1 Professional Development Plan."

"When it came to technology, many teachers expressed concerns that while they felt

they were doing well, they weren't where they wanted to be," Marcum said. "So we looked at how we could create a sustained method of professional development that would help our teachers prepare our students for a world where memorizing facts is obsolete."

In order to accommodate the needs of different teachers in different schools, teachers chose from five different options that were developed for the Roanoke City School System's Teaching 1:1 Professional Development Plan.

Dr. David Crouse, the system's director of professional development and innovation, said each option or path is designed to train teachers to use instructional strategies powered by technology to teach Alabama College- and Career-Ready standards, thereby building classroom communities

It is crucial for students to be more adept at acquiring and using 21st century skills.

— Dr. David Crouse
Roanoke City
School System

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that are collaborative and inquiry-/project-based.

The program provides both in-school and after-school hours of face-to-face professional development over a two-year period. Each month, in every option, teachers learn new teaching techniques, integrate those new methods in their classes, and share their experiences with others in their group (cohort) during after-school sessions.

"We are moving away from 'one and done' professional development in Roanoke City schools," Crouse said. "At the end of two years, we expect instruction to be radically different."

The five options are:

- **eMINTS** – This two-year course developed by the University of Missouri uses interactive group sessions and in-classroom coaching/mentoring to help teachers integrate technology into their teaching.
- **Intel Teach the Future** – A series of face-to-face and online courses developed by the Intel Corporation.
- **eLearning Alabama** – A series of online classes developed by the Alabama State Department of Education and the National Development Center that uses Web-based models to lead to gains in teachers' content knowledge, improvement in their teaching practices, and increases in the achievement of their students.
- **National Board Certification** – Teachers who choose this path will spend at least two years working to become National Board Certified. Teachers may also pursue Take One, which is a one-year option open to any teacher that wants to bank a unit in the certification process.
- **Other** – Using the EdAlabama process, teachers will identify four standards each year and create a PLP for each. During the year, they will implement them in their classroom.

All options include the 48 hours of the required 96 hours of school-based professional development each year. In addition, district trainers will visit each participant's classroom during each of the two years.

"Sustained professional development is a new experience for us. We are in it for the long haul, but it is a step-by-step process," Crouse said. "Still, we look at 1-to-1 as a must. It is crucial for students to be more adept at acquiring and using 21st century skills."

Transforming the Classroom

Roanoke City Schools' Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kim Hendon said the Teaching 1:1 Professional Development Plan was quickly embraced by

teachers when it was introduced to the system. Hendon, who is one of the facilitators for the eMINTS track, attributes this to the fact that teachers were able to choose the option that best suited their interest. In addition, each group is largely teacher-led.

"There has been great transformation in the classroom as our teachers are delivering the type of instruction we want to see," Hendon said. "We have witnessed huge

growth in our teachers, including those who have been teaching for many years. They have all had to change their way of teaching, but they have adapted extremely well."

Hendon noted that when the professional development teams meet, the groups, which all consist of

K-12 teachers, reflect on what instructional strategies have worked and which ones have not. They also talk about the practicality of developing lessons that would be relevant in the elementary, middle and high school grades.

For example, a Handley Middle School history teacher created a lesson for seventh-graders that focused on the three branches of government, with the class broken into "communities" focused on each branch. The students used Google and other search engines to conduct their research. Each team then taught their peers about their respective branch of government. The teachers in the eMINTS group concluded that this type of approach would work well with other project-based lessons across grade levels.

"As a result of implementing this professional development plan, students are more engaged in the classroom – they are

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talking to each other about content," Hendon said, adding that another benefit of instruction powered by technology is the decrease in the number of disciplinary actions throughout the system. "What students don't realize is that they are directing the learning."

Tiger Cubs Ready to Roar

In addition to the Teaching 1:1 Professional Development Plan, new to Roanoke City schools this year is Tiger Cubs, the system's first pre-kindergarten program. Housed at Knight Enloe Elementary, system administrators say the innovative use of technology will be key to the success of Tiger Cubs, which launched this month.

Tiger Cubs includes a traditional full-day class made possible by a First Class Plus Grant awarded by the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs Office of School Readiness and a half-day class funded through a combination of federal and local funds. All pre-K students receive a tablet for classroom and take-home use.

What makes the half-day program, or "Roanoke model," unique is the fact that most of the instruction is tablet-based, using a software program developed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In addition, a surrounding community of learners will receive a tablet that will help prepare them for kindergarten. These students will have opportunities to meet periodically with the teacher to access learning and participate in activities.

The model teacher will spend the afternoons monitoring how much time students spend on a particular subject as well as their progress through an electronic dashboard. Time will also be blocked out for communicating with parents about how well their child is doing.

"We have wanted to offer pre-K for a long time, but had to come up with a creative way to do so," Marcum said, recognizing Crouse and Hendon for the work they did to identify funding for the pre-K program, as well as help to create a 1:1 strategy for Tiger Cubs that is aligned with the system's goals.

"We're very excited about how this program can go a long way toward helping prepare four- and five-year-olds to enter Kindergarten with fewer deficiencies," he said. "Tiger Cubs has the potential to have a bigger impact than any initiative we have undertaken in the last decade."

Crouse agrees. He said the Roanoke model is loosely based on a self-contained, customized tablet software program MIT originally developed for the Nomadic tribes in Ethiopia, Africa. Through self-guided instruction,

within a few months children who used the tablets were more proficient in literacy and had overcome other educational deficiencies. He expects similar results from Tiger Cubs learners.

In addition, he said research shows that students who have participated in a pre-K program are more likely to stay in school and graduate on time. Both Crouse and



Marcum stressed that neither the Teaching 1:1 Professional Development Plan nor Tiger Cubs are meant to replace teachers.

"Education is in the crosshairs of technology," Crouse said, noting that companies like Kodak and Blockbuster Video, both once considered technological pioneers, have had to drastically revamp their respective business models in order to stay viable. "Learning is evolving so much, and we as educators have to adapt." Marcum echoed those remarks.

"The school system has a 93 percent graduation rate and great test scores, but we have to change our way of teaching and learning if we are to remain relevant," Marcum said. "These innovative initiatives are helping to revolutionize learning in the Roanoke City School System and helping us achieve our goal of becoming a 21st century school system."

Huntsville City Schools Partners with Appleton to Deliver Fresh New Approach to Extended Learning

Huntsville City Schools' Afterschool Labs to Launch February 3, 2014

Huntsville Afterschool Labs will launch in Huntsville City schools February 3, 2014. The District, along with Appleton Learning, will introduce students to a new extended learning experience. The new program titled Huntsville City Schools' Afterschool Labs will offer students access to fun recreational games, hands-on STEM activities, assistance with homework and studying, tutoring when needed, and popular extracurricular activities.

The Huntsville City Schools' Extended Day Program currently operates in 19 sites throughout the District and provides safe and affordable after-school care for roughly 1,000 children daily.

"Recently Huntsville City Schools engaged Appleton Learning to evaluate the program in an effort to identify opportunities for expansion and improvement commensurate with the caliber of educational programs characteristic of Huntsville City Schools," said Joey Vaughn, Interim Director of Extended Learning for Huntsville City Schools.

During the course of the evaluation process, the opportunities that were identified centered on the idea of transitioning the existing Extended Day Program to a true extended learning environment by incorporating fun, hands-on activities; homework and academic assistance; and access to extracurricular activities such as dance, music, and karate.

"After a preliminary evaluation of the existing program and extensive discussions with school leaders, it became clear that our goal was to identify an effective and innovative way to extend the school day that was both fun for kids and helped improve academic achievement across the District," said Glenn Clayton, Chief Executive Officer for Appleton Learning. "From this mission, the Afterschool Labs Program was born."

Huntsville City Schools' Afterschool Labs Program will leverage the existing facilities and structure provided by the District and the professional instructional services provided by Appleton Learning to deliver the type of afterschool program desired by the parents, students, and school leaders.

"The Afterschool Labs curriculum includes a variety of modules designed to engage students and make learning fun," adds Vaughn. "The program will work with local school administrators to ensure that the school's afterschool offerings are meeting our student's needs."

Huntsville City Schools' Afterschool Labs, powered by Appleton, will offer parents and students access to the most cutting-edge afterschool experiences available and will enable Huntsville City Schools to become a leader in extended learning.

COSEBOC School Awards Announced

The **Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color** (COSEBOC) is pleased to announce its third annual COSEBOC School Awards designed to celebrate schools demonstrating success in educating boys and young men of color. This year, the COSEBOC

School Awards will be focused



on schools educating 6th Grade students. COSEBOC Award-winning schools will receive a \$10,000 unrestricted grant and their promising practices will be featured at its Gathering of Leaders, April 24-26, 2014, in Jackson, Mississippi.

In addition to focusing on preK-6th grade schools, this year's process has been streamlined to facilitate applicants. All guidelines and forms are available [HERE](#). Interested schools should review the guidelines and complete the application process.

Do you know of a preK-6 school whose male students of color have academic outcomes and personal characteristics that rival statewide averages of all students? If the answer is yes, please encourage them to apply and help spread the word!

Questions?

Contact mdorbu@coseboc.org or 1-855-COSEBOC, Ext 7.



Corley Elementary School Second-Grader Sydney Claire Noles Wins Makeover for Her School Cafeteria

After two rounds of voting and a guest appearance on the "Rachael Ray" show, Corley Elementary School second-grader Sydney Claire Noles has successfully cooked up a \$30,000 makeover for her school's lunchroom by earning the title of the 2014 Uncle Ben's "Ben's Beginners Contest" winner.

The news was greeted with much celebration in the Boaz City School System as Corley Elementary does not have its own cafeteria, which means food has to be brought over from a neighboring elementary school. Sydney Claire's classmates congratulated their hometown hero by hosting an assembly that included a check presentation and a cooking demonstration in which the young chef prepared her winning recipe, "Crockpot Chicken & Rice Supreme."

First Lady Dianne Bentley and Boaz Mayor Tim Walker presented Sydney Claire, 8, with proclamations announcing January 9, 2014, as "Ben's Beginners Day" in the state of Alabama. She was also recognized for her achievement by being presented with the Key to the City by Mayor Walker.

"It is inspiring to me that this young lady, with the help of her family, has reached so many folks about the importance of nutrition in getting a healthy start in life," said Alabama Governor Robert Bentley. "Whether in the kitchen at home or in the school cafeteria, eating healthy, balanced meals is important for our children's well-being."

State Superintendent of Education Dr. Thomas Bice echoed that sentiment.

"It is great to see the community come together to recognize Sydney Claire in her accomplishment," Bice said. "The high level of community support multiplies the positive effect of this award and other efforts we are making to promote healthy lifestyles in our students."

In addition to the lunchroom upgrades, Sydney Claire and her family will receive \$15,000 and return to the Big Apple for a second visit to the "Rachael Ray Show." In December, she and her fellow finalists, Arden Wolfe of New York, N.Y., and Blake Williams of Alpharetta, Ga., appeared in a special segment of the show and got the chance to make "Chicken and Rice Meatballs" with the celebrity chef. As runners-up, Arden and Blake will be awarded \$5,000 individually and \$10,000 to go toward a cafeteria makeover.

This is the second year for the "Ben's Beginners Contest," which aims to help children learn to make healthier eating choices and also encourage families to spend time in the kitchen together making nutritious meals. Contest entrants had to submit a video in which they showed off their culinary skills using Uncle Ben's rice as one of the main ingredients.

Joined by her mom, Rachel (her father, Jason Noles, also made a



hilarious cameo), Sydney Claire's entry was a nearly three-minute video in which she instructed viewers on how to make "Crockpot Chicken & Rice Supreme" incorporating Uncle Ben's Creamy Four Cheese Rice. She even shared the key ingredient in her "Daddy's secret seasoning" blend for the chicken – celery salt.

"Our mission behind "Ben's Beginners" is to inspire more families to get in the kitchen together," said Tim Snyder, vice president of sales and marketing, Mars Food US, the parent company of the Uncle Ben's Brand. "With their winning recipe, the Noles family has inspired families across the state of Alabama to get in the kitchen with their kids and connect with each another."

During the semi-final and final rounds, Sydney Claire's video was one of the most commented on videos on the site, which is a lot considering Uncle Ben's received more than 1,000 entries. Viewers remarked that they couldn't wait to try her recipe and also praised her for her infectious enthusiasm and smile.

For more information on the contest, kid-friendly recipe ideas, or cooking tips, visit www.unclebens.com.

Montgomery County Public Schools Teacher Named State Winner for 2014 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Contest

A **Montgomery County Public Schools** teacher is being recognized by technology giant Samsung for her commitment to foster more enthusiasm for Science, Technology, Education and Mathematics (STEM) careers.

McKee Middle School sixth-grade social studies teacher Carolyn Daniels has been awarded a \$20,000 technology package as part of the 2014 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. As state winner, Daniels will go on to represent the state of Alabama in the national competition, where she will create a 2- to 3-minute video that brings a technology lesson to life. She will also have an opportunity to advance in the competition and win an even larger technology package up to \$140,000 and attend an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., in April.



"I am really humbled by this whole experience. When I undertook this effort, it was really an effort of joy because I really felt like I was doing something that would impact our entire student body," Daniels said, adding that though she applied for the award, her success is largely due to the support she received from McKee Middle School administrators and her fellow teachers.

"We certainly need the technology here at McKee," she said. "Oftentimes our students don't have access to the same technology some of the other schools have. This award from Samsung will play a large role in getting our students prepared to deal with STEM in an ever-changing technological world."

Prior to being selected as the state winner, Daniels was one of six finalists for the 2014 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. Teachers also chosen as finalists are as follows:

- **Stephanie J. Wainwright**, Fairhope High School
- **Karla McInnis**, Hankins Middle School
- **Gina McCarley** and **BeLinda Cross**, Lawrence County High School
- **Lorraine Perez**, Russellville High School

All state finalists are awarded two Samsung Galaxy Tablets for their respective schools. In addition to the tablets, as the state winner, Daniels will receive a technology package consisting of a Samsung camcorder,

Samsung laptop, Adobe Element bundle (a combination of video editing software and Photoshop) and a quick start guide provided by Adobe.

For the second phase of the project, Daniels must complete a project using STEM education and document the results by creating a video with the camcorder and editing software she will receive as part of the technology package. In her Samsung Solve for Tomorrow application, she proposed that she and her students utilize STEM learning to address the issue of violence.

"Violence is so prevalent throughout the country today," Daniels said. "I thought if I could get the students interested in coming up with ways to address this issue and make a change that it would be a very good project for us to undertake."

Daniels said the students will apply the scientific method to come up with a hypothesis of what causes incidents of violence. Then, they will gather information from the local police department to help compile a data analysis, looking at factors such as race, age, educational status and socioeconomic background for the victims and alleged perpetrators of the crimes. Once they have analyzed the data, the students will use their math skills to create charts and graphs that will help them determine what types of programs are needed to help alleviate violence.

"One of the things I think causes violence is that students are oftentimes unaware of the results of some of the activities they get involved in. If they have the opportunity to look at the information in an academic fashion and address some of those issues, then maybe it will help them to make better choices," Daniels said. "That's what I am aiming for: students having

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Alabama State Department of Education Child Nutrition Program Unit Awarded High Honors for Increasing Summer Food Service Program

Alabama is the first state in the nation to receive recognition for substantially increasing the number of Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors and sites in a calendar year.

Erin Swanson-Hall, U.S. Department of Agriculture Southeast Regional Office Deputy Administrator, applauded members of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Child Nutrition



Program (CNP) for the milestone when she recently presented the unit with an award in acknowledgment of the unit's achievement.

"This is truly unprecedented. This is the first time the USDA has recognized a state for such an accomplishment," Swanson-Hall said. "You have set the bar for the rest of the country, and I have no doubt that all of you will accomplish even more in 2014."

Through the efforts of the ALSDE Child Nutrition Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) staff's efforts, Alabama has become the first state in the region to experience a substantial rise in the total number of meals provided to underserved children through the SFSP. A total of 1,650,652 meals were served in 2013, compared to 1,265,105 in 2012.

The 30.3 percent increase, or additional 385,547 meals served, is the highest among the Southeast states and double the growth experienced by Tennessee this year (14.9 percent), according to the latest USDA data. Other states in the region include Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina.

Alabama also leads the Southeast in the percentage increase of total number of summer meals served, including National School Lunchroom Program meals, at 7.3 percent, followed by Georgia with 3.3 percent.

Because the SFSP is one of the most underutilized federal programs – typically around only 10 percent of children who are eligible for the program receive meals – the ALSDE Child Nutrition Program Unit worked diligently this year to increase the number of sponsors and sites.

The ALSDE CACFP Administrator, Alfredia Griffin, said the unit already has 44 prospective new partners for 2014. Swanson-Hall, who reiterated that Alabama is a model for other Southeastern states to follow, was not surprised by the news. "Your enthusiasm, passion and dedication to children speaks volumes," she told CACFP staff.

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access to information so that they can make choices based on intelligence and not on emotions.

Since 2004, Samsung's education programs have contributed more than \$13 million in technology to more than 500 public schools in the U.S. In 2010, Samsung unveiled the Solve for Tomorrow contest to foster more enthusiasm in STEM education. Together with industry and NGO partners, the Solve for Tomorrow contest uses technology as a motivator to raise awareness and interest in STEM learning among teachers and students.

STEM education continues to be a national priority in the United States, as U.S. students are not advancing in math and science at the same pace as in other countries. Through Solve for Tomorrow, Samsung and its partners hope to demonstrate how STEM can positively impact local communities and reduce the technology gap in classrooms.

Daniels shares this goal.

"If you look around today's world, it is very difficult to do anything without technology as technology plays a role in all aspects of our lives," she said. "We envision that our students, by broadening their horizons in STEM



education, will be able to perform unconventional but important types of tasks as they mature into adulthood. They will also be encouraged to choose occupations that require STEM-based skills sets."

To learn more about the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest, [CLICK](#).



Alabama & Mississippi Project Lead The Way Conference

Thursday, February 13, 2014
Auburn University – Auburn, AL

This conference is open to existing Project Lead The Way schools and those interested in implementing the program. There will be interactive sessions for Administrators, Counselors, and Teachers. Come learn new ideas, new resources, and new strategies to start, build or strengthen your Project Lead The Way program.

Registration

\$70 until November 15

\$85 until January 31

\$100 after February 1

Registration fee includes Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack Breaks

REGISTER NOW

www.auburn.edu/pltwregistration

Sessions will focus on the following topics: implementation of PLTW programs (*elementary, middle and high school*), sustaining PLTW programs, creating meaningful business partnerships in supporting your PLTW program, collaboration/sharing of best practices, PLTW certification and student opportunities to name a few.

Tentative Conference Schedule

7:45 – 8:30	Registration
8:15 – 9:30	Breakfast – Keynote
9:30 – 9:45	Break and Browse
9:45 – 10:30	Interactive Sessions
10:30 – 10:45	Break and Browse
10:45 – 11:30	Interactive Sessions
11:30 – 11:45	Break and Browse
11:45 – 1:00	Lunch – Keynote
1:00 – 1:15	Break and Browse
1:15 – 2:00	Interactive Sessions
2:00 – 2:15	Break and Browse
2:15 – 3:05	Interactive Sessions

Attendance at this conference will meet the PLTW counselor training requirement

13th Annual Alabama Middle School Science Bowl

The U.S. Department of Energy and the Alabama School of Mathematics and Science (ASMS) would like to invite your school to participate in the 2014 National



Science Bowl. The statewide Middle School Science Bowl competition will be held at ASMS in Mobile on Saturday, February 22, 2014. The winning team and coach from the Alabama Science Bowl may be invited as the guest of the U.S. Department of Energy for an all-expenses-paid trip to join other state and regional winners from throughout the country for the National Science Bowl. The 2014 National Science Bowl Competition will be held in Washington, D.C., on April 24-28, 2014.

To register for the Alabama Middle School Science Bowl go [online](#) and click the link for "Visitors @ Science Bowl." You must submit your registration form online through the national site. The deadline for entries is Monday, February 3, 2014. No entries will be accepted after the deadline unless openings are still available. A school may request permission to enter up to three teams.

Details about the competition rules and sample questions can be obtained from the National Science Bowl Website. If you have any questions about registering or need additional information, please call Dr. Quintana at 251-441-2137 or e-mail to pquintana@asms.net.

Recent Eufaula High School Graduate Elected To National FFA Officer Team

Each year, the National FFA organization elects six dynamic students to serve as national officers – president, secretary and vice presidents to represent the Central, Southern, Eastern and Western regions of the country.

Jackson Harris, a 2012 graduate of Eufaula High School, has been elected the National Vice-President for FFA's Southern Region. He is currently a sophomore at The University of Alabama, majoring in community development. He is very proud of his local community and still maintains his membership through Eufaula's FFA program.

"I am so honored to have this great opportunity," said Harris. "This reinforces the fact that I have an incredible support group, which includes my local agriscience teacher, Mr. Buster Padgett; my parents, Craig and Kim Harris; and the Alabama FFA state staff. They have invested in me and I am excited about the opportunity to pay it forward during this year of service to the FFA."

This year, students from Virginia, Tennessee, Iowa, West Virginia, Oregon, and Alabama were elected national FFA officers. Each student has committed to serve a one-year term and will travel over 100,000 miles this upcoming year working to inform Americans about the many benefits of Agriscience Education and agricultural-based careers.

"Jackson will represent Alabama well as a national officer – we are so proud of him," said Alabama State Department of Education Specialist and State FFA Executive Secretary Philip Paramore. "This is the second consecutive year that Alabama has had a student elected as a national FFA officer. The mission of FFA is to make a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education."

Harris is an Eagle Scout and was also named a Kiwanis Citizen of the Year. After graduating from college he plans to attend graduate school – he wants to focus his energy on positively impacting rural Alabama communities.

Nationally, the FFA organization serves more than 500,000 high school, college, and professional members. To learn more about Alabama's agriscience education programs or this special national recognition, contact State FFA Executive Secretary Philip Paramore at (334) 844-5595, or visit the National FFA Web site at www.ffa.org.



Choice Bus Makes An Impact At Stanhope Elmore High School

It is important for young people to realize that what happens in their lives, positive and negative, is the result of the choices they make. On November 12, 2013, ninth grade students at Stanhope Elmore High School (SEHS) had a special experience, thanks to former Assistant Principal of SEHS and Secondary Education Supervisor for Elmore County Schools, Dr. Molly Killingsworth. As part of their English classes, they had the opportunity to see the consequences of bad choices through a visit to the *Choice Bus*.

The Choice Bus is sponsored by the Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, and the bus travels the country in order to reach as many young people as possible. SEHS students were provided with real-life examples of the consequences that young people may face if they choose to drop out of school or associate with the wrong people. They also learned the importance of a high school diploma and were presented with stark realities such as the fact that 75% of prison inmates are high school dropouts and that a person who earns a high school diploma will likely make \$1,000,000 more in his or her lifetime than one who does not finish school. The visual part of this learning experience was the students walking through a life-size model of a prison cell, which is in the back of the *Choice Bus*.

Nyseyia Shakur, a student of Coach Jenna Mead, spoke of her experience on the bus saying that it was "eye-opening." When asked what she learned from the *Choice Bus*, she said, "I wish everyone could go on that bus. It showed us that education is the key to success and that making good choices will help your dreams become a reality." Coach Mead's classes were so affected by the *Choice Bus* experience that they decided to create a display using their pledge cards for their peers to see. They wanted those who did not have the chance to go on the *Choice Bus* to have a glimpse at the facts and felt that displaying their pledge cards would be a great way to show their peers the power of good choices and chasing their dreams.

Dr. Killingsworth said, "I wanted to bring the *Choice Bus* to SEHS students to get them to understand that the decisions they're making today will affect the choices they have in the future. When students see individuals who made bad choices as teenagers and ended up in prison, it has a more powerful impact than the teachers explaining to them what they should and should not be doing. Bringing the *Choice Bus* to Stanhope Elmore is one of the various programs being implemented to help increase the graduation rate."



e-Learning for Educators Course Listing

This is a partial listing of available **Spring Semester 2014** courses. [Complete course listing is here.](#)

21st Century Classroom

EDU4401 - Webquests and Hotlists
EDU4403 - Virtual Tours
EDU4404 - Learning Styles
EDU4472 - Using Smart Boards
EDU4474 - iPads in the Classroom
EDU4499 - Teaching First ELLs
EDU6611 - Becoming Online FAC

Elementary School

ELA2412 - Vocabulary in ES
MTH2512 - Complexities of Measurement
REA2451 - Reading First
SCI3671 - Physical Science for K-2
SCI2611 - Electricity and Circuits for 3-5

Middle/High School

ELA3412 - Vocabulary in MS
HIS3712 - Media and History - Cold War
REA3455 - Kids, Content, Comprehension
SCI3673 - Physical Science for 6-8

School and District Leaders

EDU5501 - Data-Driven School Reform
EDU5502 - Integrate Tech w/Curriculum
EDU5503 - Internet Safety for Schools
EDU5505 - Leading School in Web 2.0
EDU5506 - Developing Your PLN
EDU5508 - Google Docs Administrator

ACLD-Approved PLU Courses

PLUACLD199 - pre-requisite: EDU5501
PLUACLD200 - pre-requisite: EDU5502
PLUACLD201 - pre-requisite: EDU5503
PLUACLD202 - pre-requisite: EDU5504
PLUACLD203 - pre-requisite: EDU5505
PLUACLD204 - pre-requisite: EDU5506
PLUACLD205 - pre-requisite: EDU5507
PLUACLD206 - pre-requisite: EDU5508

National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) is March 3-7, 2014.

The NSBW 2014 theme is "Take Time for School Breakfast"

Whether it's traditional breakfast in the cafeteria, breakfast in the classroom, or grab and go, school breakfast can be a real timesaver for families during those busy weekday mornings.

Spread the word to parents and students that school breakfast is convenient, healthy, and a real timesaver!

Doodle 4 Google Competition Kicks Off February 4th, 2014

Before there was an airplane, there were doodles of cool flying machines. And before there was a submarine, there were doodles of magical underwater sea explorers.

Since the beginning of time, ideas big and small, practical and playful, thought-provoking and smile-inducing have started out as doodles. And we're ready for more.

On February 4th, Google will be kicking off the seventh annual Doodle 4 Google competition where we will once again be inviting students, from K-12 to start transforming our homepage into a gallery of imagination.

Look for more details February 4th on google.com/doodle4google/ and stay tuned and get your Doodlers ready.

[Take a look at last year's program.](#)

Girls Engaged in Math and Science-University (GEMS-U)

Girls Engaged in Math and Science-University (GEMS-U) takes over the Coosa River Science Center for the annual GEMS-U Expo. 150 girls selected from across Alabama will showcase STEM projects, interact w/raptors, & camp-in with nature at the GEMS-U Expo.

Learn how your team of girls can get involved for next year's Expo at www.gemsu.org.



SpiRIT Writing Contest

Calling all writers! 10th and 11th grade students can win great prizes by [entering this year's witing contest!](#)

State Board of Education Meetings on Ustream.tv!



See your State Board of Education in action [HERE](#).

See [LIVE](#) video every second and fourth Thursday of the month or [watch the archived videos](#) anytime you want (different Board meeting days in July, November, and December).

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Alabama Education News (USPS #387-290) is published bi-monthly by the Alabama State Department of Education, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101. This publication, authorized by Section 16-2-4 of the Code of Alabama, as recompiled in 1975, is a public service of the Alabama Department of Education designed to inform citizens and educators about programs and goals of public education in Alabama.

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