

Alabama Education News

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ALSDE and AGI Team Up to Provide Farm Fresh Food to Children This Summer



The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (AGI), the Bay Area Food Bank, and the Coastal Alabama Farmers & Fisherman's Market are joining together to create the first-ever Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) feeding sites for children to be held at a local farmers markets in Alabama.

A special kickoff event to usher in the new partnership took place recently at the Coastal Alabama Farmers & Fisherman's Market in Foley. Representatives from the Bay Area Food Bank, Alabama Farmers Market Authority, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition (USDA FNS) Summer Food Service Program and children from the Foley area joined the ALSDE in launching the program during an afternoon filled with food, fun games, and music.

The USDA FNS Summer Food Service Program makes a difference in the lives of children and teens who are at risk of experiencing hunger when school is out by providing access to nutritious meals during the summer. The USDA FNS Southeastern Regional Office asked the ALSDE to consider working with state and local agencies to pilot a summer feeding site that could both help increase SFSP participation and benefit agricultural producers in Alabama.

According to the USDA, farmers markets serve as a unique site location by providing an opportunity to further strengthen connections within the local community, while supplying a safe and educational place for children to eat. Kentucky and West Virginia have established similar partnerships with farmers markets in areas where the need for SFSP feeding sites is high.

From now through the end of July, any child under the age of 18 can receive a free lunch at the Coastal Alabama Farmers & Fisherman's Market from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

All meals will be prepared on site using locally grown fruits and vegetables.

The ALSDE Child Nutrition Program Coordinator June Barrett said the Alabama State Department of Education is proud to join with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and the Bay Area Food Bank to pilot this unique partnership, which will aid in the state's ongoing efforts to close the "summer nutrition gap."

"In addition to providing children in the community with a free lunch, the Coastal Alabama Farmers & Fisherman's Market is implementing activities that will help children learn about agriculture from local growers," Barrett said. "The farmers, in turn, will hopefully see a boost in foot traffic as a result of the families visiting the market, thus gaining new and returning customers."

continued on page 6



Alabama Teachers Recognized For Excellence In Mathematics And Science Teaching

Two Alabama educators are among the 108 mathematics and science teachers who have been selected to receive the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

Marla Hines, a physical science teacher at Vestavia Hills High School in the Vestavia Hills City School System, and Sarah Lowman, a science teacher at Tanner High School in the Limestone County School System, will each receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation to be used at their discretion.

"These teachers are shaping America's success through their passion for math and science," President Barack Obama said in a statement released by the White House. "Their leadership and commitment empower our children to think critically and creatively about science, technology, engineering, and math. The work these teachers are doing in our classrooms today will help ensure that America stays on the cutting edge tomorrow."

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is awarded annually to outstanding K-12 science and mathematics teachers from across the country. The winners are selected by a panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and educators following an initial selection process done at the state level.

Each year the award alternates between teachers teaching kindergarten through 6th grade and those teaching 7th through 12th grades. The recently named awardees teach 7th through 12th grade.

Hines has taught 10th grade physical science at Vestavia Hills High School for six years, and previously taught at Spain Park High School and Bessemer Academy. In her classroom, Hines, who was Alabama's 2012 Secondary Teacher of the Year, focuses on developing a community of learners who work together to master chemistry and physics content.

She said receiving the Presidential Award is a reminder that every day is an opportunity to strive for excellence as she facilitates her students' academic growth.

"I believe that 'excellence' is a very elusive word. Every day, I should be better than the day before – that's what my students

deserve," Hines said. "Continual reflection allows me to model professional growth for my students, which establishes a mindset that we learn from each other and that real learning never ends."

Lowman, an educator for 20 years, taught high school science for the past 10 years. Last year, she was granted a leave of absence from Tanner High School to be a biology content specialist for Alabama Science in Motion. As an ambassador of hands-on science, her impact expanded from a single classroom to over 100 teachers in 34 high schools that serve 7,700 students.

"Along with being the most prestigious honor awarded to science teachers, the Presidential Award means that I conveyed a passion for learning and teaching science to others," Lowman said. "This award confirms that demonstrating diligence in my craft, having high expectations for students, caring for students, and using research-based teaching strategies works for learners of all ability levels and backgrounds."

In addition to the \$10,000 award, Hines and Lowman will go to Washington, D.C., this summer for an awards ceremony, as well educational and celebratory events and visits with members of President Obama's Administration.

[Click here](#) to learn more!



Marla Hines



Sarah Lowman

ACCESS Award Winners Shine at the 2015 Alabama Educational Technology Conference

Hundreds of educators from around the state gathered recently for the 2015 Alabama Educational Technology Conference (AETC) at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC).

The theme for this year's conference, which featured three full days of professional development, was "All Hands on Deck." Educators had the chance to choose from in-depth, hands-on workshops and a smorgasbord of one-hour concurrent sessions led by nationally known visionaries in the technology field and by Alabama practitioners with classroom-tested strategies across the curriculum.

Highlights of the conference included nationally known featured speakers Jeff Utecht, Leslie Fisher, and David Lockhart, who are all top notch in the field of educational technology and bring a fresh new perspective to technology in our classrooms. In addition, State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice delivered the opening address.

The Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide (ACCESS) Distance Learning Program also recognized five individuals who are broadening awareness of the program during the conference. ACCESS aims to provide an infrastructure delivering equitable, quality learning opportunities for all high school students.

The ACCESS Awards recognition program was created as a way to recognize the people in the five key positions who work to ensure ACCESS is a success.

Among the criteria for the awards are work and diligence that had a positive impact on teaching and learning using the ACCESS program; improvement of the quality of education in Alabama's schools; work that reflects the mission and goals of the nominee's school; and utilization of technology to advance education in Alabama.



ACCESS Administrator of the Year
Wes Rogers, Principal,
Elmore County High School,
Elmore County School System



ACCESS Teacher of the Year
Jacqueline (Jaci) Eckell,
Retired Teacher,
Lanett High School,
Lanett City School System



ACCESS Student of the Year
Donovan Cleckley,
Isabella High School,
Chilton County School System



ACCESS Facilitator of the Year
Sheila Johnson,
Ariton High School,
Dale County School System



ACCESS Counselor of the Year
Andrea Perry, Counselor,
Carver Middle School,
Greene County School System

Career Tech Program Ensures Students Graduate Ready for Real Life

The **Alabama Simulated Workplace (ASW)** model rolled out to career and technical education (CTE) educators recently is another way to ensure that students are career-ready when they graduate. It is a perfect companion to work-based learning or Cooperative Education in that it allows students to learn in an environment that most closely resembles the “real world” or actual workplace. A teacher guides students in establishing the course or class period as a “company.” The “company” is given a name; a specific organizational chart based on individual company requirements; and a “board of directors” from local business/industry that serves as advisors and a quality control body. “Real-world” employment practices such as employee check-in processes, uniform or work dress code requirements, and other procedures are put in place and enforced. Students are given opportunities for “advancement” within the leadership structure of the company, and grading practices include significant work-based traits such as work ethic, timeliness, customer service, etc.

The Alabama Simulated Workplace model is a natural part of the progression from student to paid employee and gives students the opportunities to practice real-world skills within the class setting. It is based on a model first seen in West Virginia and can be a “game changer” for preparing tomorrow’s workforce. There are several school systems in Alabama that have implemented the ASW and many others are planning to do so next year. The ASW manual recently distributed provides the rationale for implementation; guidelines; and a multitude of resources for superintendents, principals, CTE directors, and teachers interested in this innovative learning environment.

There is no “one size fits all” concept within the Alabama Simulated Workplace model. It can be tweaked to fit the needs of a particular system or school. In fact, the online version contains an “Employee Handbook” (now known as student

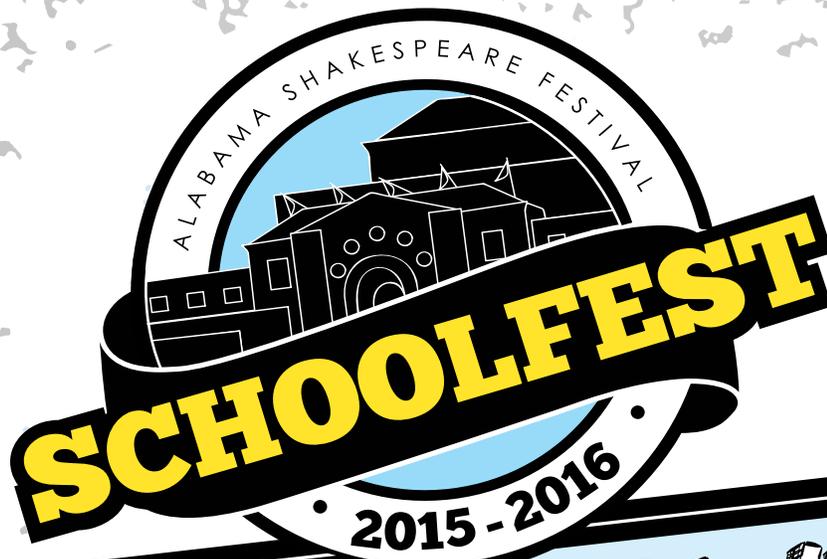


handbooks) that can be personalized for the individual school or company, printed, and distributed to students when school begins. The desire of Dr. Philip Cleveland, ALSDE Deputy State Superintendent of Career and Technical Education/Workforce Development, in publishing the ASW manual was to help mitigate any barriers preventing school systems from implementing the model.

Other than minimal expenses like the purchase of a time-clock system, there are no extra equipment requirements. Teachers involved in ASW now are some of the best spokespersons because they see the difference it has made in their students and the learning taking place in their classrooms. While most of the ASW models seen are in Grades 9-12, it could be modified for middle school classes. It would be a terrific way to introduce the world of work to that age group.

In visiting a school in Calhoun County, several of the students were asked about their Simulated Workplace “company.” They were very animated as they spoke about the various job positions, the work they were doing, and “personnel” issues that had come up over time. In ASW, students learn to handle “personnel issues” or classroom discipline instead of the teacher. Instead of receiving zeros or F’s for not doing assignments or participating in class labs, students received work warnings and, if necessary, were eventually “fired.” Two students pointed to another in the classroom and explained that the student had been “fired” and was now having to work as an “independent contractor.” Their level of engagement and “ownership” of their learning environment was amazing.

Learn more about this and other CTE programs at www.alcareerinfo.org.



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2015-16 SEASON

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- ★ A Midsummer Night's Dream

**Please contact
Stan Thomas at 334.271.5330
or stthomas@asf.net
to make a reservation.**



continued from front page...

Bay Area Food Bank Executive Director David Reaney echoed those remarks. "Keeping kids fed in the summer is a challenge, especially in outside cities, so working with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and the Alabama State Department of Education to find places we can add to our list of summer feeding sites is an opportunity to help struggling families," Reaney said. "Working with the farmers markets also helps bring attention to locally grown produce, and if that helps families get more nutritious food while connecting to lunches for children, I can't think of a much better solution to improving nutrition for growing children."



Alabama SFSP sponsors served a total of 1,995,852 meals in 2014, up from 1,650,896 in 2013. In addition, 172,173 children were served last year, compared with 137,537 in 2013. This year, the USDA FNS has set a goal of serving 200 million summer meals nationwide to children and teens who are at risk of experiencing hunger when school is out – 14 million more meals than were provided in 2014.

Science Course of Study Online Review and Public Presentations

Thank you to all educators, parents and community members who attended the Science Course of Study public presentations, held at 11 locations from May 26-June 30.

The draft Science Course of Study document was posted on the SDE Website in early May until July 6, 2015, for an additional public review (following the full January review). At close of the review on July 6, 2015, 108 submissions were entered online. Ten states, in addition to Alabama, were reported to have commented on the science course of study draft. The information on the second review and presentations can be found [here](#).

At the close of the review on July 6, 2015, the committee received a final list of all of the comments received from online and from the public meetings to consider for revisions. Dr. Bice is scheduled to present a resolution to adopt the science course of study to the state board at the July 14, 2015 Work Session. The State Board will then be asked to vote for adoption of the course of study on August 13, 2015, at the State Board Meeting.

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