



ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Clay-Chalkville High School English Teacher Dana Jacobson Named Alabama's 2016-2017 Teacher Of The Year

Montana Street Magnet Elementary School Teacher Dawn Davis Named Alternate State TOY

A veteran Jefferson County School System educator who draws inspiration from teaching high school students and who values working with teachers in training because of the power to affect change is the 2016-2017 Alabama Teacher of the Year.

Dana Jacobson, who has taught English at Clay-Chalkville High School since 1999, will serve as the state's ambassador for public education and the teaching profession throughout the upcoming school year. A graduate of Smith College and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Jacobson automatically becomes Alabama's nominee for National Teacher of the Year.

"Teachers are visionaries who see that light at the end of the tunnel and find ways to help students get to that light," said Jacobson, who, as the Alabama Teacher of the Year, hopes to motivate more people to enter the education field. "There's nothing better than to see a student growing, and there's no job to me more important than teaching because we pave the way for all sorts of possibilities for students."

Interim State Superintendent of Education Dr. Philip Cleveland announced Jacobson was chosen to serve as the official spokesperson and representative for teachers in Alabama for the next year near the end of a celebration honoring the 12 semi-finalists and 4 finalists who were



Dawn Davis (left) and Dana Jacobson

Teachers are visionaries who see that light at the end of the tunnel and find ways to help students get to that light. - Alabama Teacher of the Year Dana Jacobson

nominated for the coveted title. The awards ceremony is held annually in recognition of these teachers' dedication to education in Alabama public schools.

Cleveland expressed his gratitude to all of the district finalists for their hard work, innovation and compassion, which he said are

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reflected daily in the accomplishments of their students. He said the honorees are not only role models for the students of Alabama, but for their peers as well.

Of Jacobson, Cleveland said, "Dana Jacobson exemplifies the ability of an educator to shape and change lives. She strives to connect with and engage each individual student who enters her classroom and, as such, has been able to provide meaningful, quality learning to tomorrow's leaders. We are proud to have Ms. Jacobson represent our state as the 2016-2017 Alabama Teacher of the Year."

In addition to English, Jacobson teaches ACT Prep, Debate, Speech, Creative Writing, and History of Film, among other subjects. She designs classroom activities so that students can make connections and strives to model those characteristics she believes the world requires: an interest in learning and people; a validation of others, not just tolerance; a desire to solve problems; and a strong work ethic.

Clay-Chalkville High School Principal Michael Lee said Jacobson embodies those qualities and more: "On most days, Ms. Jacobson is the first teacher at school and the last to leave. She does not stop. She is a true giver to students, student teachers, and colleagues."

Dawn Davis, a fourth-grade teacher at Montana Street Academic Magnet School in the Dothan City School System, is the 2016-2017 Alternate State Teacher of the Year.

The first among her siblings to go to a four-year college, Davis, who earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in Elementary Education from Troy University, has spent most of her 20-plus years as an educator teaching in the Dothan City School System. She believes that while she cannot change the many circumstances from which her students come, she can change where they are going in life.

Davis aims to do so by creating a classroom environment where all children realize their worth and potential, which she accomplishes through planning, building a support team, encouraging risk-taking, and utilizing her student's natural curiosity.

"My greatest rewards from teaching come in the form of a smile," Davis said. "When you see a smile cross the face of a child, you know he/she is gaining in knowledge. I am not interested in perfecting students, but I am greatly determined to perfect my abilities to encourage goal-based mindsets so that all children can realize their worth and potential."

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.



U. S. Secretary Of Education Names 2016 Green Ribbon Schools Nominated By Alabama State Department Of Education

U.S. Secretary of Education John King announced that A.H. Watwood Elementary School, Talladega County Schools, and the University of Montevallo are among the 2016 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools.

A.H. Watwood Elementary School, Talladega County Schools, and the University of Montevallo were also nominated at the state level as Alabama Green Ribbon Schools.

"These schools, as well as our numerous past state and national awardees, are models of environmental stewardship and innovative education. We are proud of their continued, sustainable work," said Dr. Philip Cleveland, Interim State Superintendent of Education.

The schools were honored at the May 12th Alabama State Board of Education meeting, followed by a picnic lunch. Across the country, a total of 47 schools, 15 districts, and 11 postsecondary institutions are being honored for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness, and ensure effective sustainability education. The list of 73 total honorees includes 41 public schools and 6 private schools.

Fifty-one percent of the 2016 honorees serve a disadvantaged student body. The list of all selected schools, districts, colleges, and universities, as well as their nomination packages, can be found [here](#). A report with highlights on the 73 honorees can be found [here](#). More information on the federal recognition award can be found [here](#). Resources for all schools to move toward the three Pillars of Green Ribbon Schools can be found [here](#).



For more information on Alabama's Green Ribbon Schools program, please contact Shirley Farrell at 334-242-8317, sfarrell@alsde.edu.

Alabama Learning Exchange Hosts Over 225 Girls In Stem-Related Expo



For the eighth year, the program Girls Engaged in Math and Science University (GEMS-U) hosted over 225 female students from around the state at the GEMS-U Expo in March. The event themed "Thinking Like A..." was held in two locations, GulfQuest National Maritime Museum and the Birmingham Zoo. GEMS-U is an opportunity for Alabama's K-12 female students to be actively engaged in STEM-related activities through formal and informal learning environments.

The girls in attendance have opportunities to collaborate with successful females in STEM-related careers, as well as showcase student-created projects

developed through a collection of math and science lessons aligned to the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards.

The events featured keynote speakers from the Alabama Coastal Foundation and female zoo staff from Animal, Marketing, and Education Departments focusing on the role of STEM-related topics in their work. GEMS-U participants enjoyed educational programs that included STEM-inspired interactive investigations and explorations. The day concluded with the 2016 GEMS-U Exposition during which the girls showcased their projects created in groups at their respective schools.

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INNOVATION CELEBRATION!

Technology Innovation Experience Inspires Creativity For Entire Enterprise City School System

The [Innovation Celebration](#) took an exciting stop in [Enterprise City Schools](#) this April and the Alabama State Department of Education staff members and other invited guests were thrilled to see all the creative ways students are learning! Dr. Camille Wright graciously hosted the staff at Enterprise High School.

Beth Sanders, Coordinator of Technology Integration and Innovation, described a new program called Technology Innovation Experience (TIE) that allows teachers to use technology in the classroom to promote project-based learning and innovative ways to teach and learn traditional subjects. Teachers from around the school gave testimonies on the way TIE has increased understanding and enjoyment for them and the students.

The next stop was the Enterprise High School iMac Innovation Lab where promotional videos were created and presented by students. Check out one they made [right here!](#)

The final stop was the huge Innovation Celebration of Learning Booths Exhibition where over 200 students from all schools in the system showcased projects they have worked on throughout the year. Amazing things were seen by ALSDE staff, teachers from local schools, and other students! The students hosted each booth, giving detailed descriptions of their work, which ranged from a "Resilience Café" where spoken word poetry was presented, animated movies (by 2nd graders!), a TED Talk on the AP Forensic class research on the O.J. Simpson case, Zombie tracking, and so much more!

For more pictures of this amazing day, visit the [ALSDE Flickr page!](#)



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9. Complete your order and receive the tickets in the mail two weeks before kickoff!



SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 10, 2016



STATE



LSU

ULM



INTERESTED IN ADDITIONAL GAMES?

Please give me a call and we can discuss our other ticketing options. If you have family members or friends who would like to attend an Auburn football game this season, please share my contact information with them!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF AUBURN ATHLETICS! **WAR EAGLE!**



MATTHEW SMITH

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“Alabama Votes” Student Mock Election Convention

Alabama’s students have the opportunity to be a powerful voice in the electoral process. Therefore, it is important to educate them on the importance of their right to vote. The Office of the Alabama Secretary of State, along with the Alabama State Department of Education, the American Village, and Alabama Independent School Association, are

partnering for the “Alabama Votes” Student Mock Election on October 25, 2016.



To help prepare teachers and students for the upcoming Mock Election, the

American Village in Montevallo is hosting a [Student Mock Election Convention](#) from July 12-14. Students in Grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 as of the fall 2016 may participate. Students will be selected by their teachers or school administrators who will be able to choose one of the three dates. There is no fee to participate, and lunch will be provided.

Following is the Convention itinerary:

- 11 a.m.** - Welcome, Convention Kickoff and Keynote
- 11:30 a.m.** - Patrick Henry: A Call to Liberty
- 12 p.m.** - Campaign Rally and Lunch
- 1:15 p.m.** - Photos and Videos in the Oval Office
- 2 p.m.** - Closing Session and Red, White & Blue Sendoff
- 2:45 p.m.** - Depart the American Village

The “Alabama Votes” Mock Election and Convention are a great way to generate interest and spur excitement among Alabama’s student population about civic responsibility, democratic principles, and the November 2016 General Election. Students and teachers will leave the American Village with ideas and materials to carry

back to their schools on how to hold a successful convention and mock election.

This fall, ballots will be distributed to all 1,500 schools in the state through the Alabama State Department of Education. 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.

I strongly encourage you to urge your teachers to participate in this exciting opportunity to boost awareness and to introduce Alabama’s student population to the concept of elections. It is my hope that by involving students in the elections process now, they will continue their interest and engagement as they become voting-aged citizens.

To register for the Student Mock Election Convention, teachers can go to the American Village website, www.americavillage.org. Under the American Village Classroom tab, select Student Mock Election Convention. Fill out and submit the registration form. Participation is on a first-registered, first-served basis.



– *Philip C. Cleveland, Ed.D., Interim
State Superintendent of Education*

State Board of Education Recognizes the Addition of 29 Schools to the ALSDE/A+ College Ready Program for 2016-2017

[Twenty-nine additional high schools](#) across the state have been selected to participate in a successful statewide initiative, that will increase the number of students prepared for the challenge of college courses. This new cohort makes a total of 161 Alabama high schools in the ALSDE/A+ College Ready Program that receive comprehensive teacher training and student support to boost enrollment and success in Advanced Placement (AP®) courses in mathematics, science, English, social studies, computer science, and the rigorous courses that lead up to AP.

Alabama has consistently ranked number one among all 50 states in the percent increase in qualifying scores on math, science, and English AP exams from 2008-2015 for all students. Last year the state ranked #3 in the nation for its increase

We applaud these 29 schools for their commitment to their students by becoming an A+ College Ready partner.

- State Board of Education Vice President Jeff Newman

for minority students. "Because of the A+ College Ready Program grant opportunity, Zion Chapel will be the first school in our district to offer onsite Advanced Placement coursework, said Lauren Parker, assistant principal at Zion Chapel High School in Coffee County. "We plan to pilot the AP Program at our school and work toward helping

other schools in our district to also successfully implement Advanced Placement courses."

At its April 14th meeting, the State Board of Education was presented with a resolution recognizing the new schools and gave credit to the partnership between the ALSDE and A+ College Ready for helping thousands of Alabama students become college- and career-ready. "One of the rewards of serving on the State Board is in supporting programs that truly improve student learning and achievement and prepare more Alabama students for college," said Jeff Newman, State Board of Education Vice President. "We applaud these [29 schools](#) for their commitment to their students by becoming an A+ College Ready partner."

A+ College Ready, a division of the A+ Education Partnership, was created with a \$13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) in 2008 to implement a proven college-readiness and Advanced Placement Initiative in public schools throughout Alabama. Key leadership involved in launching and supporting A+ College Ready included the Governor, the State Superintendent of Education, the Alabama Power Foundation, The Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative, Regions Financial Corporation, Boeing and ExxonMobil Corporation. The Alabama State Legislature, with additional support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the National Science Foundation, the US Department of Education, and the Department of Defense, now fund the ALSDE/A+ College Ready Program so the program can continue to thrive. For more information, visit [HERE](#), www.nmsi.org, and www.alsde.edu.

Alabama Learning Exchange Hosts Over 225 Girls In Stem-Related Expo

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GEMS-U is an educational program offered by the Alabama State Department of Education. The GEMS-U program supports the national need to close the STEM gender gap, utilizing teaching strategies to encourage girls' self-confidence and elevate interest in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math. GEMS-U lesson activities and curriculum resources are available through the Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) Web portal for all educators, students, and parents at <http://alex.state.al.us/>.

ECHOES and REFLECTIONS

Leaders in Holocaust Education

What Is Echoes and Reflections?

Echoes and Reflections is a comprehensive Holocaust education program that delivers professional development and a rich array of resources for middle and high school teachers. Echoes and Reflections prepares educators to teach about the Holocaust in a way that stimulates engagement and critical thinking while providing opportunities for students to see the relevance of this complex history to their own lives.

Why Teach about the Holocaust?

Teaching about the Holocaust using Echoes and Reflections helps students make connections with the past, gain relevant insight into human dilemmas and difficult social challenges, and determine their roles and responsibilities in the world around them.

UPCOMING PROGRAM

When: Friday, June 17, 2016

Time: 8:30 to 4:40

Where: Alabama Dept. of
Archives & History,
Montgomery

ALABAMA



DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

Why Use Echoes and Reflections?

It's relevant

Individual stories and visual history testimonies from survivors, liberators, and other witnesses of the Holocaust help students examine contemporary social issues related to fairness and justice.

It's resource-intensive

Extensive primary and secondary source materials aligned with modular, interdisciplinary lessons help students understand what happened during the Holocaust, why it happened, and how it relates to difficult issues they face today. **Plus every participant receives a free, comprehensive Teacher's Resource Guide.**

It's up-to-date

Teacher-friendly materials address academic standards and incorporate a mix of instructional strategies and technologies for use in 21st century classrooms.



It's accessible

Echoes and Reflections provides value to both experienced Holocaust educators who are supplementing their curricula and for teachers new to Holocaust education.

To learn more, visit our website at echoesandreflections.org.

A joint program of the Anti-Defamation League,
USC Shoah Foundation, and Yad Vashem



USC Shoah Foundation
The Institute for Visual History and Education





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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