

# ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

November  
2013  
Issue I

The electronic newsletter of the Alabama State Department of Education

## Ornaments From Alabama's K-12 Public Schools to Decorate Capitol Christmas Tree!

In October, it was announced that one of the four Christmas trees displayed in the State Capitol Rotunda in Montgomery was designated for Alabama's K-12 public schools. Local systems were asked to represent their schools by submitting an ornament for the tree, and **over 60 ornaments** from across the state will adorn one of the trees! This is a great opportunity to positively highlight K-12 education to the many visitors the Capitol receives during the holidays. Each ornament is distinctive and reflective of the school/system it represents. See for yourself!



*continued on next page*





# Legislative Learning Day 2013

Tuesday, October 22 was a great success! Here are just a few photos of the many visits.



Senator Jimmy Holley and Representative Barry Moore visited Hillcrest Elementary in Enterprise.



Senator Phil Williams visited Highland School. (l to r) Dr. Alan Cosby-Superintendent, Lori Moss-Principal, and Senator Williams.



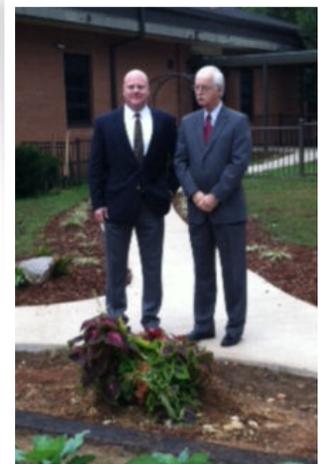
Representative Kerry Rich and Senator Clay Scofield visited Boaz City Schools.



Representative Mack Butler visited John S. Jones Elementary School, Rainbow Middle School and Southside Elementary School.



Representative Craig Ford visited West End Elementary School, Carlisle Elementary School and Sardis High School.



Senator Jerry Fielding visiting Pinecrest Elementary and Sylacauga High School



Representative Becky Nordgren (District 29) visited Duck Springs Elementary School and Hokes Bluff Middle School.



Senator Roger Bedford and Representative Marcel Black visited McBride Elementary School in Muscle Shoals.



Representative David Standridge visited schools in Blount County.



Senator Billy Beasley, and Representative Berry Forte visited Eufaula High School



Representative Wes Long visits Brindlee Mountain Primary School

## Huntsville City Schools Superintendent, Grissom High Students, Brief Experts at AOC Symposium

**A delegation from Huntsville City Schools** recently shared details with national intelligence experts about what the district is doing to help prepare the next generation for careers in cyber security.

Superintendent **Dr. Casey Wardynski**, Grissom High School teacher **Christine Sutton**, and two of her students, **Matthew Rogers** and **James Brahm**, were among the panelists who participated in the session titled "Developing Future EMSO Warriors" during the 50th Annual AOC International Symposium and Convention in Washington, D.C.

The AOC International Symposium and Convention has been the leading annual event for Electronic Warfare (EW), Information Operations (IO), and Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (EMSO) professionals from around the world. This year's theme was "Proud Legacy, Strong Future."

The session speakers emphasized that in order to cultivate more EMSO warriors, the U.S. Department of Defense and K-12 public education leaders must continue to work together to instill passion for STEM fields early in the educational process and to also raise awareness of the opportunities to utilize these skills in defense applications.

"Being invited to attend and speak at this symposium is recognition of the great work that is going on in Huntsville," Wardynski said, referring to the cyber security courses that are offered at Grissom High School. "Industry, the defense industry in particular, and the Department of Defense have taken note of Huntsville's cyber curriculum and our digital conversion."

Grissom High School's Sutton, Rogers, and Brahm discussed the excitement and emphasis placed on the cyber security classes, sharing stories about "ethical hacking competitions" and the camaraderie that adds passion to the educational process.



*Grissom High School seniors Matthew Rogers and James Brahm served as panelists at the 50th Annual AOC International Symposium and Convention.*



*Huntsville City Schools Superintendent Dr. Casey Wardynski talks about what the district is doing to help prepare students for careers in cyber security.*



*Grissom High School seniors Matthew Rogers and James Brahm served as panelists at the 50th Annual AOC International Symposium and Convention.*

"Cyber security is a big issue," Rogers said. "There are 40,000-plus (cyber security) jobs opening. Without the necessary coercion by companies, industries, and the government to get more people to go into the field, you'll never get them because not many people know what EMSO careers are." Several industry and military leaders were so impressed with the students' portion of the presentation that they asked them to consider applying for scholarships and internships offered by their organizations.

"As high-schoolers, it's pretty cool to feel like we are really important, and it was totally awesome being up there with so many other talented industry professionals and professionals in the military who do this stuff for a living," Brahm said. "It was really encouraging to have all of these industry and military professionals come up to us after the session and tell us that they liked what they heard."

Among the other "Developing Future EMSO Warriors" panelists were Lt. Col. Jeffrey Metzger, U.S. Army Cyber Command, and Cmdr. Pablo Breur, U.S. Navy Cyber Command. U.S. Congressman Mike Rogers, R-Ala., who is Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, also attended portions of the conference. [aen](#)

## International Students Experience Life as Alabama High School Students as Part of Cultural Exchange Program

A group of students from countries spanning the globe are getting to experience "Sweet Home Alabama" as part of the PAX Academic Exchange Program.

PAX aims to provide cross-cultural learning experiences for international students and their American counterparts. Teenagers from European, South American, Asian and African nations spend a year or semester with families in the United States and attend public high schools while here.

The exchange students get a chance to absorb American culture, while their host families and classmates in turn learn about their international visitors' native languages, customs and traditions.

Recently a small delegation of PAX Academic Exchange Program ambassadors visited various local and state agencies, including the Alabama State Department of Education, to learn how various government systems work and to also share what they have enjoyed about their time in Alabama so far.

Accompanied by PAX Community Coordinator **Lisa Dabbs**, the enthusiastic group included **Leon Dölle** and **Paul Wohlan**, both of **Germany**; **Voja Levakov** of **Serbia**; and **Queila Farias** of **Brazil**. Dölle and Wohlan both attend Gadsden High School, while Levakov and Farias are students at Cleveland High School and Prattville High School, respectively.

The students said the courses they are taking are comparable to those in their home countries, noting that some classes are extremely rigorous while other lesson plans have been easier to master. And, like most teenagers, they have especially enjoyed the camaraderie they've built with their Alabama classmates through extracurricular and intramural activities.

For instance, Dölle is a member of the Gadsden High School Band – "I play the saxophone, first chair," he states proudly; Levakov is on the football team at Cleveland High; and Farias performs with Prattville High's

Show Choir and is also active in East Memorial Baptist Church's music ministry.

An avid soccer player, or *fútbol* as it is called outside of the U.S., Farias was disappointed that she could not join the Prattville High School girls' team because of an Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) rule. She has already graduated from high school in Brazil and is therefore ineligible to play. She and

Dabbs hope that the AHSAA will consider making exceptions for international students in the future.

Still, Farias has said her time with her host family has been "wonderful" and she has been pleasantly surprised to encounter many Portuguese speakers in Prattville, most of who moved to the city to work for International Paper.

All four students also had the opportunity to soak in the sights and sounds of the Big Apple as part of their PAX orientation. In addition, Dölle and Wohlan took a trip to Disneyworld, Farias went to Universal Studios, and Levakov has traveled with his host family to Gulf Shores and the Florida beaches.

Dabbs hopes more Alabama schools and families will consider hosting PAX Academic Exchange Program students as it is an enriching experience for all who participate. Host families are primarily responsible for providing their international visitors with shelter, food and transportation to various activities. The PAX students' parents typically send them to the U.S. with money to cover miscellaneous expenses such as clothing and extracurricular and social outings, Dabbs said.

PAX is designated as an Exchange Visitor Program, which is administered by U.S. Department of State. The department designates sponsors to administer individual programs and permits such sponsors to issue a DS2019 form, which students use to secure the J-1 exchange visitor visa.

If you are interested in serving as a host family or want to learn more about how your school can get involved with the PAX Academic Exchange Program, call Lisa Dabbs at 205-901-8394, [email](#) or [click](#). 



## Corley Elementary School second-grader enters cooking contest in hopes of stirring up funds for lunchroom makeover



**Sydney Claire Noles** may only be in the second-grade but she is well on her way to becoming a force in the culinary world.

Eight-year-old Sydney Claire, a student at Corley Elementary School in Boaz, entered the Uncle Ben's "Ben's Beginners Cooking Contest" to help children learn to make healthier eating choices and to also win a \$30,000 makeover of the school's lunchroom. Corley Elementary does not have its own cafeteria, so food has to be brought over from a neighboring elementary school.

"I really like to cook and I love to cook for my family," Sydney Claire said. "When I

heard about the contest, I thought it would be fun because I would have the chance to cook and also maybe win some money to help out my lunchroom."

Now, Sydney Claire is one of the top three finalists vying for the grand prize, which has earned her and her family an all-expense-paid trip to New York City to appear on the "Rachael Ray Show." This week, she and her family were scheduled to fly to the Big Apple to talk to the celebrity chef about the importance of getting in the kitchen with your family.

In addition to winning \$30,000 for a cafeteria makeover, if Sydney Claire is named the grand prize winner, she will receive \$15,000 for her family and a second guest appearance on the "Rachael Ray Show." The runners-up each will be awarded \$5,000 individually and \$10,000 to go toward lunchroom upgrades.

Joined by her mom, Rachel (her father, Jason Noles, also makes a hilarious cameo), Sydney Claire's entry for the "Ben's Beginners Cooking Contest" is a nearly 3 minute video in which she instructs viewers on how to make Crockpot Chicken & Rice Supreme using Uncle Ben's Creamy Four Cheese Rice. She even shares the key ingredient in her "Daddy's secret seasoning" blend for the chicken – celery salt.

"The Uncle Ben's Rice just makes the dish taste really, really good!" said Sydney Claire, who is excited about making the dish for Rachael Ray and her audience.

"I really like her," Sydney Claire said. "I would be a little nervous cooking in front of all those people. But as long as I did my best, I would be okay!"

During the semi-final round, her video was one of the most commented on videos on the site, which is a lot considering Uncle Ben's has received more than

1,000 entries, Rachel Noles said. Viewers remarked that they couldn't wait to try Sydney Claire's recipe and also praised her for her infectious enthusiasm and smile.

"It's made me very happy to get all those (website) hits," Sydney Claire said. "People have been really nice and supportive."

Now, the public can [help Sydney Claire win the top prize](#) by going to

***In addition to winning \$30,000 for a cafeteria makeover, if Sydney Claire is named the grand prize winner, she will receive \$15,000 for her family and a second guest appearance on the "Rachael Ray Show." Vote for her [HERE!](#)***

through Dec. 8 to cast votes daily for the "Claire and Rachel" video. The results will be announced around Christmas, Rachel Noles said.

"I hope everyone will vote for me," Sydney Claire said. "If I win, I will be happy! There are a lot of other people who will be happy, too, especially about the new lunchroom." [aen](#)

### Follow the ALSDE on Facebook and Twitter!



Friend or follow the Alabama Department of Education and get access to the most up-to-date information, press releases, event photos, videos, links, and much more! Links to all social media sites can also be found on our [webpage](#).

# State Display Contest Winners Announced

*Students Have Fun While Providing a Positive Message*

In October, the Alabama State Department of Education's Agriscience and Family and Consumer Sciences programs hosted the state's annual Exhibit and Display Contest at the Alabama National Fair in Montgomery.

Agriscience Education exhibits were designed and built by Alabama FFA chapters from across the state. FFA, founded in 1928, prepares middle and high school students for proficiency in agriculture fields. Students participating in FFA develop their leadership skills to have successful careers in the future. They focus on the science, business, and technology of agriculture.

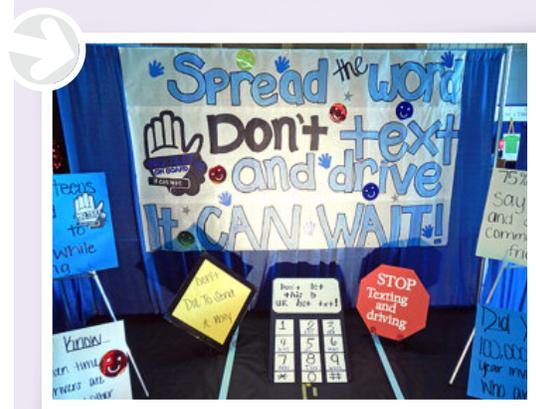
Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) exhibits were designed and built by students participating in Alabama's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapters. This organization founded in 1945 provides students with leadership development through special activities related to consumer education, homemaking, personal development, and community involvement.

To see a brief online video of the winning displays, [click here](#).

Schools were selected to participate in this contest based on their interest and submission of an official contest application. All exhibits had to be well-organized, informative, and educational. Each display had to provide viewers with advice that could potentially impact their lives positively.

For example, Brookwood High School's FCCLA display encouraged Alabamians to avoid the life-threatening practice of "texting and driving." Horseshoe Bend High School's display encouraged students to be "college and career ready."

Alabama's 4-H program also held its state exhibit contest this year at the fair. To learn more about Alabama's annual Exhibit and Display Contest, contact State FFA Advisor Jacob Davis at 334-242-9114 or State FCCLA Adviser Jennifer Adams at 334-242-9113. [aen](#)



**Alabama's 2013 FFA Exhibit and Display Contest winners are:**

- First Place and \$500 - Elmore County High School
- Second Place and \$400 - New Brockton High School
- Third Place and \$300 - Albertville High School
- Fourth Place and \$200 - Billingsley High School

**Alabama's 2013 FCCLA Exhibit and Display Contest winners are:**

- First Place and \$500 - Fairview High School
- Second Place and \$400 - Horseshoe Bend High School
- Third Place and \$300 - Brookwood High School
- Fourth Place and \$200 - Maplesville High School

## Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership Presented to W.H. Council Traditional School Principal Hattie Alexander

In recognition of her exceptional work, Hattie Alexander, Principal at W.H. Council Traditional School in Mobile, was recently presented with the Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership at the 2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The Terrel H. Bell Award recognizes outstanding school leaders for the vital role they play in guiding students and schools to excellence, frequently under challenging circumstances. Principals selected for this award are school leaders committed to fostering successful teaching and learning at their schools and who do "whatever it takes" to help their students meet high standards. They are committed to education as a powerful and liberating force in people's

***The Terrel H. Bell Award recognizes principals for the essential work they do every day to improve our nation's schools.***

– U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

lives. Terrel H. Bell, nominated by President Ronald Reagan, was the second U. S. Secretary of Education.

"Great schools are always a reflection of great principals," U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said. "High-quality examples of leadership can help shape a

school's culture and create an environment where students are excited to learn. The Bell Award recognizes principals for the essential work they do every day to improve our nation's schools."

Principals selected as Bell Award recipients have transformed their schools. Their vision and collaborative leadership styles have produced outstanding results for all their students, regardless of race, language proficiency, or socioeconomic status. They have shown that with effective leadership and teaching and a firm conviction, all students can learn.

The Bell Award is given by the U. S. Department of Education, together with the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Middle School Association, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Principals are nominated by their school communities during the final stages of the National Blue Ribbon Schools application process. [aen](#)



## Two Fairhope Intermediate School Students to Have Artwork Displayed in 2014 GLOBE Calendar

Fairhope Intermediate School students Hudson Holloway and Rosa Martin have won third place for the North America Region in the GLOBE 2014 Calendar Art Competition.

For the art competition this year, students were asked to draw, paint, or show via some other artistic medium how their local community is unique. The entries were judged by a panel of judges from the GLOBE International Scientist Network.

Hudson and Rosa are both participants in the AMSTI-GLOBE Gifted Project, AMSTI's partnership with The GLOBE

Program. GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) is an international hands-on science and education program with over 50,000 teachers in over 110 countries. AMSTI science teachers in Grades K-8 receive training, materials, and support for using GLOBE in their classrooms.

The artwork by Hudson and Rosa, which was chosen from over 260 entries from around the world, will be featured in the GLOBE 2014 Calendar. The calendar will be available for download in December. Winning entries are being highlighted on the [GLOBE Facebook page](#). Click on "Photos" to view them. [aen](#)



## 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).

### ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



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### 2014 ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION K-12 MEETINGS AND WORK SESSION DATES

K-12 Board meetings will begin at 1 p.m. K-12 Work Sessions will begin at 8:30 a.m.

MEETING DATES AUDITORIUM, GORDON PERSONS BUILDING		WORK SESSION DATES PLAZA 104 GORDON PERSONS BUILDING	
January 8	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	January 9	Plaza 104 Gordon Persons Building
February 12	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	February 13	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
March 12	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	March 13	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
April 9	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	April 10	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
May 14	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	May 15	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
June 11	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	June 12	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
July 8	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	July 9	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
August 13	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	August 14	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
September 10	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	September 11	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
October 8	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	October 9	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
November 12	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	November 13	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building
December 10	Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building	December 11	Plaza 104, Gordon Persons Building



## Back To School Photo Contest Winner!

**Lisa McKinney Bermes**, Secretary to the Transportation Supervisor in Madison County was the winner for Southeast region for the **2013 Thomas Built Buses Back to School Photo Contest!** She won \$2,000 for Central School for her photo "Best Friends Catching Up After Summer Break" with students Shelby Hill and Aubrey Barnes and bus driver Thomas Collins.

