



# Alabama Education News

THE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Vol. 39 • No. 4 • Nov 2014

**Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards Review**  
*Learn more!*

**Plan 2020**  
Plan 2020 is the strategic plan for education in Alabama with a goal to prepare all students to be successful in college and/or career upon graduation from high school.  
Plan 2020 will:

- Improve student growth and achievement.
- Close the achievement gap.
- Increase the graduation rate.
- Increase the number of students graduating high school that are college- and career- ready and prepared to be successful in our global society.

**EXAMINE THE STANDARDS**  
ALABAMA COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY

**Plan 2020 Four Pillars**

- Learners & Parents
- Schools & Systems
- Support Systems
- Education Professionals

*There is still time to provide the Alabama State Department of Education with invaluable input on how the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards can be improved.*

## Public Feedback Still Sought For Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards at [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu)

**Now through the week of December 15, 2014**, the public can go to the [Standards Review Homepage](#) and offer feedback on each standard for English Language Arts and Mathematics by grade. Each week, standards for each grade are available for review and comment. While the 7th Grade review is featured this week, participants can still access all available review forms by clicking [here](#).

The purpose of the review is to help raise awareness of what the standards actually require students to learn and assist the ALSDE in strengthening the standards where needed. The department is working continually to ensure that all students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need for college and career, and parents, educators, business and industry, and civic leaders are critical to this effort.

At the conclusion of the public review, the feedback generated will go to the state Mathematics and English Language Arts Course of Study (COS) teams. The only comments that will be considered for action will be those of academic substance that are tied to a specific standard. The COS teams may then provide recommendations to the Alabama State Board of Education.

The standards in the application are arranged by subject and grade level. To respond to standards, participants must enter all required demographic information.

Review participants can select *Agree* if they are satisfied with the standard as written or *Disagree* if they would like to see a standard modified. If *Disagree* is selected, participants will be able to provide suggestions for rewriting or changing the standard.

Participants will be able to review up to 20 standards per form; however, they will have the option of submitting an additional form if they want to review more standards.

### Standards of the Week!

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

### Inside this AEN:

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## Two Alabama Schools Awarded Southeastern Consortium for Minorities in Engineering Grants

**Two Alabama schools** have been awarded mini-grants through their partnership with the Southeastern Consortium for Minorities in Engineering (SECME).

Jennifer Julius received a grant for the

**Walter T. McKee Middle School**, Montgomery County School System, "Exploring Tigers" Club, while Melvin Thompson Jr. was the recipient of grants for the **Loachapoka High School**, Lee County School System, "STEM This" and "We Are Change" projects.

SECME mini-grants enable teachers to be innovative in the classroom and in extracurricular activities to enrich the learning experiences of their students in science, technology, and mathematics (STEM). Proposals are evaluated based on their inclusion of STEM career awareness and an effort to enhance critical thinking, study, and content career application skills.

McKee Middle School will use its grant award for "Exploring Tigers" to create a new SECME Club to compete in the SECME Alabama Regional Competition that will be hosted at Tuskegee University in April 2015. Materials will be purchased for consumable supplies needed for the design and construction of a Mousetrap Car and Bottle Rocketry. Students in the club will

keep an interactive notebook about their experiences.

The grant Loachapoka High School received for "STEM This" will fund projects within the school's 9th-12th grade STEM programs to repair damage on the school's campus pond and 500-gallon tank hydroponics area that was



For more information, visit [www.secme.org](http://www.secme.org).

damaged in recent years due to storms. The award for "We Are Change" will go toward funding equipment for Loachapoka High's new VEX Robotics program.

SECME was founded in 1975 by the Engineering Deans from six southeastern universities: Alabama, Florida, Georgia Tech, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Tuskegee. SECME's mission is to increase the pool of historically under-represented and under-served students who will be prepared to enter and complete postsecondary studies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), thus creating a diverse and globally competitive workforce.



## STEMtastic Day at Mill Creek

**Mill Creek Elementary** in Madison City Schools recently held a STEM expo to promote student interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math careers. It was a hit by all accounts.



Students viewed exhibits and cool demonstrations that gave a visual for what they learned.

"We had a STEMtastic Day at Mill Creek. You could hear the students' excitement as the science educator, Michael Johnson, demonstrated activities from beach balls floating to ivory soap expanding," said school staff.

The expo featured displays from local STEM-based businesses, grade-level presentations, and an opportunity for representatives from STEM-related industries to talk about what they do. Topics included gaming, programming, robotics, web design technology, simulations, math, science, engineering, and others.

The Madison City school district has strengthened its STEM outreach in its high schools and middle schools and is also reaching into elementary schools through STEM-based expos and in-school and after-school programs. Proximity to so much science and technology makes this area a logical place to promote STEM careers. "The students at Mill Creek Elementary are making real-world connections between what they are learning in their classes and how these skills are used in STEM-based careers," Mill Creek Principal Dr. Claudia Styles said.

The STEM Expo was a collaborative effort between Mill Creek, parent volunteers, and STEM-oriented businesses in north Alabama. Special visitors from the U.S. Space and Rocket Center, "Tops" and "Circuit," helped spark excitement and interest among students.

## Two Alabamians Win National Competition

Recently, **Brian Stovall**, a school bus technician from the Limestone County School System, and **K.C. Allen**, a school bus technician from the Lee County School System, represented Alabama in the *America's Best Training & Skills Challenge* held in Kansas City, MO, and associated with the 40th National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) conference in November.



Both Stovall, competing as a Technician, and Allen, competing as an Inspector, were winners in the *Alabama's Best Technician*, held this past June and sponsored by the Alabama School Transportation Association, which qualified them for the NAPT challenge. Stovall and Allen won the national title in the Inspector and Technician categories, setting a precedent of excellence for others to follow. Greg Ray, long-time employee of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and the coordinator for *Alabama's Best Technician*, who accompanied Stovall and Allen to the competition stated, "No other state has ever won both categories in the same year." Both Stovall and Allen are among 2 of the 443 certified technicians responsible for the safety of school buses transporting the children of Alabama to school every day.

"We are very proud of K.C. and Brian for winning this prestigious competition. Their recognition brings honor not only to them as individuals, but also to their school systems and the state of Alabama. Both technicians exemplify the high standard for safety set by the many great mechanics who help ensure safe school buses for Alabama students," said **Joe Lightsey**, ALSDE Director of Pupil Transportation.

The ALSDE, along with Lee and Limestone Counties, as well as others in the School Bus Transportation Industry, are proud of these two gentlemen and hope that their example will set a high level of expectation for the future school bus technicians.

## Congratulations to the Alabama Schools That Made the 5th Annual Advanced Placement District Honor Roll!

**Helping more students learn at a higher level** and earn higher AP scores is an objective of all members of the AP community, from AP teachers to district and school administrators to college professors. Many districts are experimenting with a variety of initiatives and strategies to determine how to simultaneously expand access and improve student performance.

The **honor roll** consists of the 547 school districts in the U.S. and Canada that simultaneously achieved increases in access to Advanced Placement<sup>®</sup> courses for a broader number of students and also maintained or improved the rate at which their AP students earned scores of 3 or higher on an AP Exam.

Inclusion on the 5th Annual AP District Honor Roll is based on the examination of three years of AP data, from 2012 to 2014, for the following criteria:

- Increased participation/access to AP by at least 4 percent in large districts, at least 6 percent in medium districts, and at least 11 percent in small districts.
- Increased or maintained the percentage of exams taken by African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students.
- Improved performance levels when comparing the percentage of students in 2014 scoring a 3 or higher to those in 2012, unless the district has already attained a performance level at which more than 70 percent of its AP students are scoring a 3 or higher.

### Congratulations to:

Athens City

Etowah County

Muscle Shoals City

Pell City

Tallassee City

[www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu)

## ALSDE Teams Up with AT&T for 2015 African American History Calendar

The Alabama State Department of Education and AT&T are once again teaming up for a publication that highlights social justice



advocates, medical pioneers, artists, athletes, and military heroes whose contributions have made a lasting impact on Alabama and beyond.

The 2015 edition of the Alabama African American History Calendar was unveiled recently at the Dorothy Jemison Day Theater at the Alabama

School of Fine Arts in Birmingham. Many of the honorees featured in the edition were recognized at the ceremony and autographed copies of the calendar.

This is the fifth year for the calendar, which was created to identify role models for youth and honor notable African American achievers with ties to Alabama. The publication is distributed to schools across the state as a resource tool for educators and students. Previous editions are accessible [online](#), as are [links](#) to additional helpful study materials.

The **2015 Honorees** are: Zora Neale Hurston, Sheyann Webb-Christburg, Major General J. Gary Cooper, Percy Sledge, Dr. Shelley Stewart, Onnie Lee Logan, Dr. Juanakee Adams, Fred David Gray, Dr. Herman Hodge Long, Sylvester Croom, Louis J. Willie, Jr., and John Mitchell, Jr.

To learn more, contact Social Sciences Education Specialist [Nettie D. Carson-Mullins](#) at 334-353-1191.

## Selma Pre-K Earns Accreditation

The Byrd First Class Early Learning Center in Selma has earned the distinction of receiving accreditation from AdvancED.

According to its Website, AdvancED is composed of a team of education professionals that conducts rigorous, on-site external reviews of PreK-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

Accreditation is recognition that an institution maintains standards essential for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions of higher learning or achieve credentials for professional practice as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

According to Principal Carolyn Keaseal, the school met 94 percent of the 378 indicators on the accreditation criteria grading scale.

**Kudos to Byrd First Class Early Learning Center!**

## International Students Visit ALSDE Offices as Part of Tour of State Agencies



The Alabama State Department of Education received a visit recently from a group of students from countries spanning the globe that is 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 ALSDE, to learn how various government systems work and to also share what they have enjoyed about their time in Alabama so far.

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, send an [email](#) or visit [www.pax.org](http://www.pax.org).

# 2014 Alabama Joint Leadership Conference (JLDC) the Biggest Ever!

With nearly 8,000 attendees, the 2014 Alabama Joint Leadership Development Conference (JLDC) was the biggest conference to date!

The JLDC is the largest non-athletic gathering of youth for an educational purpose in the state of Alabama. The conference focuses on preparing students for both college and career success. The two-day event at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex featured a great line-up of events, leadership workshops, engaging activities, and exciting entertainment at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC).

Among the highlights were featured speakers Winston Groom, author of "Forrest Gump"; former "Survivor" contestant Bobby Jon Drinkard; cycling champ Ron McNeal; and entrepreneur Kent Julian. Alabama's own rising music stars, Donica Knight and Jaycob Curlee, also brought the house down with original music and their renditions of today's top hits.

Thank you to all the business, industry, and education partners who supported JLDC and contributed to its success! Check out #JLDC2014 to view Tweets from the conference and click [HERE](#) to see the JLDC 2014 photo gallery.



# BE READY CAMP

WWW.READYALABAMA.GOV



**Be Ready Camp** is an innovative and unique program that promotes citizen preparedness and participation to sixth graders in Alabama using multiple approaches to learning. Be Ready Camp uses instructional techniques that expand traditional classroom instruction with tool kits, hands-on learning, exercises, take-away materials, and the use of technology to a diverse audience of sixth graders. Incorporated in Be Ready Camp are multiple means of assessment that allow diverse learners to demonstrate their knowledge.

**Be Ready Camp** is a five-day full immersion residential camp located at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

Intertwined throughout Be Ready Camp is the involvement of personnel with homeland security responsibilities at the local, state, and national level. The capstone of Be Ready Camp is a full scale mock disaster exercise incorporating the camp participants with first responders and citizens.

<b>WHO</b>	Open to all Alabama 6th Graders in the 2014-15 School Year
<b>WHAT</b>	The Nation's Premier Youth Disaster Preparedness Camp!
<b>WHEN</b>	March 24-28, 2015
<b>WHERE</b>	U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Huntsville, Alabama

## Applicants must submit an essay answering the question:

**What impact can a disaster have on my community, and what can I do to prepare for and respond to a disaster?**

Essay must be 300-500 words in length. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, and good paragraph structure apply.

Essay must be typed or neatly written in ink.

**Please clearly label all submissions with name, address, telephone number, county and school. Please include a note from parent/guardian permitting your child to apply.**

## Submissions are due by January 31, 2015 to:

Be Ready Camp  
Eight Commerce Street, Suite 1000  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

## For more information, contact:

Brooke Mills  
Serve Alabama Senior Director of Disaster Preparedness, Response and Training  
Phone: 334-954-7456  
Email: [bereadycamp@servealabama.gov](mailto:bereadycamp@servealabama.gov)



## Georgia-Pacific Donates \$10,000

**Georgia-Pacific** recently presented the Demopolis City Schools Foundation with \$10,000 to kick-off the 2015 Membership Campaign. The funds will be used to support the work of the Foundation, including the Classroom Grants Program, which provides \$50,000 to classroom teachers through a competitive grant process each year.



(L-R) Amanda Barnes, Executive Director of the Demopolis City Schools Foundation, Chuck Krecklow, Georgia-Pacific, Sarah Chandler Hallmark, Foundation Board President

## Alabama Seeks At-Risk Afterschool Program Sponsors

**The Alabama State Department of Education**, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), is seeking sponsors to operate the 2014-2015 At-Risk Afterschool Program for Alabama children.

Qualified sponsors are reimbursed for program operating and administrative expenses of preparing and serving meals to eligible children at their sites.

At-Risk Afterschool Program providers give children a safe place to go after school and nutritious food to help students concentrate on homework or join their friends in physical, educational, and social activities. Meals and/or snacks may be served to children in such places as schools, learning centers, community centers, and churches.

### To be eligible, sponsors must:

- Be organized primarily to provide care for children after school or on weekends, holidays, or school vacations during the regular school year
- Provide organized regularly scheduled activities
- Include education or enrichment activities
- Be located in an eligible area
- Show financial and administrative capabilities for operating the program
- Attend training

Potential sponsors may contact Ms. Kimberlei Bowen, Pre-School Nutrition Programs, Alabama State Department of Education, 5302 Gordon Persons Building, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101, or call 334-242-9376, or email [kbowen@alsde.edu](mailto:kbowen@alsde.edu).

The At-Risk Afterschool Meal Handbook is available [HERE](#).

## “Create-A-Greeting-Card” for a Chance to Win \$10,000 Scholarship Award

**The Gallery Collection** is offering a \$10,000 scholarship to the winning student in its 8th Annual Create-A-Greeting Card national competition. In addition, a \$1,000 cash prize goes to the school of the winner.

All designs or photographs must be the original work of the applicant and can include photography, graphic design, paintings, or drawings. The contest is limited to one entry per person.

After the submission period ends, the top five entries with the most votes received from the monthly Facebook voting sessions, along with five entries that the panel of judges have selected, will be the official Top 10 finalists.

Criteria that will be used to determine the scholarship recipient whose entry will be produced and sold as a real greeting card include:

- Overall aesthetic appeal
- Quality of execution
- Creativity and originality
- Successful incorporation of design elements
- Appropriateness for use as a greeting card
- Attractiveness to the Gallery Collection’s corporate and consumer customers
- Suitability as a design in Prudent’s Gallery Collection greeting card line

The **deadline for entries is February 18, 2015**. Applications and examples of previous winning entries can be found online by clicking [here](#). [Email](#) for more information.



## SWANA Seeks Scholarship Applicants

**The Alabama Chapter** of the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) is offering scholarships to college students and graduating high school seniors. Scholarships will be awarded annually to one or more recipients in amounts not to exceed \$5,000 per individual (individual award amounts are based on funds available each year).



The following eligibility rules will apply:

1. Scholarship applicant must:
  - a. Be a graduating high school senior from a high school in Alabama who has been accepted for enrollment in a college or university, or
  - b. Be a college or university student currently enrolled full-time who is pursuing a degree in environmental science, engineering, or other suitable major related to solid waste management.
2. Applicant must be the child or grandchild of an Alabama SWANA member, or be sponsored by a member.
3. Incoming freshman must have a minimum ACT score of 16 and must submit a letter of acceptance from the institution.
4. Currently enrolled college students can be in any year of study (freshman through post-graduate) and shall maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 in collegiate courses to be eligible for the scholarship.
5. Students must be enrolled full time as defined by the college or university.

All completed application forms and back-up documentation must be received by the Chapter by March 1, 2015. Notification to scholarship recipients will be made by the first week of August. [CLICK](#) for an application form.

## Nominations Sought for Excellence in Teaching Awards

**The University of Alabama's** Office of Research in Teaching in the Disciplines wishes to recognize how Alabama teachers create excellence in their classes.

The department is asking teachers to share their unique ideas, or to nominate another teacher who makes learning engaging, interactive, and memorable for students. A plaque for Excellence and certificates of Honorable Mention will be awarded in the following disciplinary areas:

- Excellence in Cross-Disciplinary Teaching (P-12) (across two of the categories below)
- Excellence in Teaching English as a Second Language
- Excellence in Teaching English/Language Arts (P-12)
- Excellence in Teaching Gifted Studies
- Excellence in Teaching Physical Education (P-12)
- Excellence in Teaching Mathematics (P-12)
- Excellence in Teaching Science (P-12)
- Excellence in Teaching Social Studies (P-12)
- Excellence in Teaching Special Education (P-12)
- Excellence in Teaching With Technology in the Disciplines (P-12)
- Excellence in Teaching World Languages
- Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (freshman-senior levels)



Deadline for submissions is by 4:45 p.m. on February 17, 2015. To receive a copy of the submission form and rubric, or for more information, email [Cynthia Sunal](mailto:Cynthia.Sunal).

[www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu)

## 100th Consecutive Football Game Commemorated

On **October 31, 2014**, the Guntersville High School Wildcats and the Albertville High School Aggies played their 100th consecutive high school football game. To have a 100-year continuous rivalry is indeed a special honor! Guntersville High School won the game, 21-16.



Both teams around a special logo created commemorating the 100th game between the two teams. Photo: Shannon Allen, *Sand Mountain Reporter*

## AASB Announces Winners of Best Non-Instructional Practices Awards

**Tarrant City Schools** is the winner of the Best Practices and Innovations Contest sponsored by the Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) and LEAN Frog. The contest, which recognizes best practices in the non-instructional departments of K-12 public schools, highlights how schools across the state are impacting student achievement and promoting the effective and efficient use of public resources during the last two school years.

Tarrant City Schools will receive the \$3,000 Grand Prize for its creative approach to solving child nutrition challenges.

The Best Practices and Innovation Contest runners-up, which will both receive a \$1,000 prize, are Huntsville City Schools, for the system's success with the Summer Food Service Program; and Sylacauga City Schools, for "SOS – Success on Saturday". To learn more, click [here](#).



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*Alabama Education News*  
 P.O. Box 302101  
 Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

*Alabama Education News* (USPS #387-290) is published 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.

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age or genetics.

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