

Alabama Education News

THE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Vol. 39 • No. 2 • Sep 2014

The Future of Public Education Tour Continues!



Tour Stops Left:

- Tuesday, September 23**
Tuscaloosa Career & Technology Academy
Tuscaloosa
- Thursday, September 25**
Helena High School, Helena
- Tuesday, September 30**
Selma High School, Selma
- Thursday, October 2**
Baker High School, Mobile
- Tuesday, October 7**
Jacksonville High School, Jacksonville

There are five stops left in “The Future of Public Education Tour,” which is a great opportunity for parents and members of the community to learn how Alabama educators are working to prepare students to be college- or career-ready when they graduate from high school.

Hundreds of people across the state have come out to hear **State Superintendent Dr. Tommy Bice** and business and industry partners, representatives from Alabama’s community colleges, and other education stakeholders talk about the importance of a quality, transformative education for all students.

To see photo galleries from the stops, or for more information, [click here](#). Not able to make it to a tour stop? View past presentations on the [ALSDE’s UStream Channel](#), or you can see what attendees have had to say about the tour by following #futureofedtour on Twitter!

The tour concludes at Jacksonville High School on Tuesday, October 7.

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PLUS MUCH MORE!	

Six Alabama Schools Named Torchbearer Schools

Lighting the Way to Student Achievement

Six Alabama public schools have earned the prestigious title of Torchbearer School – a high-poverty public school that has overcome the odds to become a high-performing school.

In December 2004, the Alabama Leadership Academy at the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) conducted a book study on *No Excuses: 21 Lessons From High-Performing, High-Poverty Schools* by Samuel Casey-Carter. This book highlights 21 high-poverty schools across America that have beat the odds associated with educating students of poverty by refusing to tolerate excuses for their academic failure. From that research, the Torchbearer Schools Program was created.

State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice said, "Torchbearer Schools do not make excuses, they conquer the challenges, showing how hard work and effort results in high achievement. Torchbearer Schools exhibit exemplary leadership and give support to all students, always moving towards success." 



To be eligible for this prestigious award during 2013-2014, schools must have met certain criteria, to include:

- Have at least an 80 percent poverty rate (percent free/reduced meals).
- Must be among the top 20 percent band of the state using proficiency of the *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT+)*, the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam* and *Alabama Alternate Assessment* from 2012-2013 for Level III and for Level IV.
- Have above state average of students scoring Level IV on both the reading and the mathematics sections of the *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT+)*.
- Have at least a 95 percent participation rate in the "all students" subgroup and all applicable *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* subgroups.
- Have at least 95 percent of twelfth-grade students pass all required subjects of the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE)*.
- Have a graduation rate above the state average (high schools).

Alabama's *2013-2014 Torchbearer Schools:



Anna F. Booth Elementary School (Mobile County)



George Hall Elementary School (Mobile County)



Saint Elmo Elementary School (Mobile County)



Wilmer Elementary School (Mobile County)



Monroe Intermediate School (Monroe County)



Sycamore School (Talladega County)

*Based on 2012-2013 Test Results

Student's Project Leads to Suicide Prevention Curriculum in Thomasville City Schools

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in adolescents and teens.

Amerie Gramelspacher, a junior at Thomasville High School, never dreamed that she would stand before her high school principal asking for a change in the school's curriculum, but that's just what happened recently when Thomasville City Schools' administrators offered overwhelming support for her leadership project on suicide. The new curriculum, which trains teachers and students to be more aware of the signs of teen suicide, will be used in Thomasville High School's health classes this year.

Gramelspacher has been a member of the Girl Scouts since she was 7. She has advanced through the ranks, working toward reaching the highest leadership award, the Gold Award. To attain this honor, a student must move through a rigorous process that teaches them how to step outside of themselves and know what's going on around them. To begin her progression, Gramelspacher had to identify a need in her community, decide on a target audience, and then make her work sustainable after completion.

For Gramelspacher, one issue weighed heavily on her mind. Two recent suicides, one, a family member, and the other, a fellow classmate, had deeply impacted her. She realized that suicide is one subject that people just don't talk about, even though it touches so many. In fact, suicide is the second leading cause of death in adolescents and teens.

"Suicide is like termites in our homes," she explained. "We have to get this topic from behind the walls if we want to solve the problem."

Gramelspacher decided to work on "Suicide Prevention Advocacy."

By becoming more aware of the causes of suicide, both teachers and students could then learn ways to provide assistance and support. Her target audience would be Thomasville Middle and High School students.

After attending an "Out of Darkness" event, a walk held from dusk to dawn to break the silence and bring the issues of depression and suicide into the light, Gramelspacher researched the topic, talking to many experts like Dr. Nina Tocci, a local psychologist who agreed to serve as her community expert. She learned that depression is the number one cause of suicide, but other things, like bullying, abuse, problems at home, and mental illness issues, can trigger teen depression. Since depression affects a teenager's brain much differently than an adult's, the signs of possible suicide are often overlooked or confused with other illnesses.

To fund her project, Gramelspacher sponsored a 5K race and walk. One of her middle school teachers, Stephanie Nobles, was instrumental in helping her with this part of the project. After expenses, Gramelspacher had raised \$500.

The first step for her plan was to get administrators in Thomasville's City Schools to agree to train all teachers to identify the signs of suicide, using free training from The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. At the recent summer Retreat for Administrators, Gramelspacher stood before the group and explained her ideas. The TCS administrators enthusiastically agreed to participate

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Dr. Vic Adkison reads Amerie Gramelspacher's proposal for training all TCS teachers to be more aware of signs of suicide.



To raise funds for her proposal, Gramelspacher sponsored a 5K race and walk.



Lisa Dunn (left) works with Amerie Gramelspacher (center) and Stephanie Nobles (right) to plan the activities for the 5K run. Dunn is the area director for the Alabama Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

National Student Teacher of the Year Named

An Alabama educator has been named the 2014 **National Student Teacher of the Year** by the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in



Education and the Association of Teacher Education, marking the first time the award has been granted to an Alabama student.

Mandy Jayne Stanley, who is now a fourth-grade teacher at Charles A. Brown Elementary School in the Birmingham City School System, will receive a \$1,200 cash prize and national recognition. The award honors

development of classroom management skills; instructional strategies that support the needs of all students; effective interpersonal relationships with students, parents, faculty and staff; and academic accomplishments.

Stanley, who graduated from Samford University in May, said she was honored to have her hard work and dedication acknowledged and cited her professors for their role in this award.

"Every day they modeled what it means to be a dedicated, determined, and data-driven educator who strives to develop relevant and rigorous lessons while building relationships with their students," she said.

Stanley's future plans include becoming a master teacher and an education research analyst.

"I want to aid in America's fight to provide a better education for all of our children, especially the forgotten ones."

Samford curriculum and instruction department chair Betsy Rogers said Stanley's passion about working with children is evident.

"Mandy Jayne is a natural in the classroom with intuitive qualities we wish we could teach," said Rogers, the 2002-2003 Alabama Teacher of the Year and 2003 National Teacher of the Year. "She is an example of the brightest and best we need in the teaching profession." 

Academic Speaking Challenge Could Yield Scholarship Awards Up to \$18,000

The American Legion is looking for high school orators to participate in the 78th annual Oratorical Contest. The contest presents participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities; the history of our nation's laws; the ability to think and speak clearly; and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Over \$138,000 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets an \$18,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$16,000, and third place gets \$14,000. Each state winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest's first round receives a \$1,500 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional \$1,500 scholarship. The American Legion's National Organization awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States.

High school students under age 20 are eligible. Speaking subjects must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution,

with some emphasis on the duties and obligations of citizens to our government. Speeches should be 8 to 10 minutes long. Three- to five-minute speeches on an assigned



topic also are part of the contest. For the 2014 Oratorical Contest, the assigned topics are the First, Fourth, Thirteenth and Twenty-First Amendments.

The 2014 Alabama American Legion Oratorical Booklet can be downloaded [here](#).

For more information, contact Willie Rogers, Alabama American Legion Oratorical Commission Chairman, at 334-467-5039. 

Report Brings Hope for Future of Education in Alabama

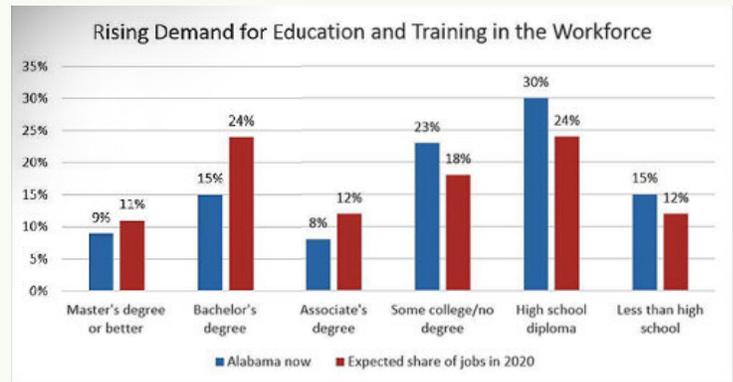
A recent report on education in Alabama, "[Obstacles Into Opportunities: A 90% High School Graduation Rate in Alabama by 2020 Provides the Educated Workforce That is Key to Expanding Our Economy](#)," outlines strategies for addressing numerous issues in our state, including increased unemployment and the number of families living in poverty.

The solution? Improve and expand high-quality pre-kindergarten, set high expectations for all students, support continued learning for teachers and school leaders, and set every student on a pathway to success after high school.

The report was prepared for the Business Education Alliance by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) and Auburn University Montgomery economics professor Keivan Deravi.

Here's what the hard data tell us: by 2020, about two-thirds of jobs in the United States "will require postsecondary education and training of some kind, from the certificate to the graduate level."

Despite this, "Historically, Alabama has set its educational standards lower than other states," according to the report. "Our students have performed poorly on national assessments. Our high school graduation rate has trailed the



national average. Students in some schools, particularly those from poverty backgrounds, have lagged far behind their peers. Our college-going rate is at the national average, but our graduation rates from two-year and four-year colleges are low."

When the graduation rate rose to 80 percent in 2014, State Superintendent Dr. Tommy Bice stated that Alabama was ahead of schedule on its way to reach the Plan 2020 goal of 90 percent. The PARCA report helps translate the higher graduation rate to an increase into Alabama's economy by way of higher employment, earnings and tax revenue.

But, Plan 2020 is not just focused on the

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Building Futures Together: October is Parent Visitation Month

October first marks the start of the Alabama State Department of Education's annual statewide campaign to raise awareness of the importance of parental involvement and the key role that parents play in their child's education. Parent Visitation Month provides an excellent opportunity for school systems to host an open house, schedule parent-teacher conferences, put on workshops that

appeal to a variety of interests, or showcase student work – all with the goal of sharing with parents how they can become partners in their child's education. This year's theme is **Homes and Schools: Building Futures Together**.

Over 30 years of research have proven parent involvement is one of the largest

determining factors related to student success. When parents are involved in their children's education in positive ways, children:

- Achieve higher grades and test scores
- Have better attendance at school
- Complete more homework
- Demonstrate more positive attitudes and behavior
- Graduate at higher rates
- Have greater enrollment in higher education

Each year Alabama hosts a very successful parent visitation month, but it requires each of you to make it happen locally. To assist you, the ALSDE Instructional Services Section has posted materials and tools for your use located [here](#). [The Guide for Schools](#) contains a wealth of information on how to make plans for local parent involvement meetings and activities.

Please take the time to work with your staff on the importance of this effort. Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an excellent way to establish partnerships with parents that can be sustained throughout the school year. 



Educators Liability Trust Fund (ELTF)

from the Alabama Department of Finance

The ELTF Program provides basic liability coverage for school board employees if a claim is made or a suit is filed against them in the performance of their job duties. Coverage began on July 1, 2013, and it applies to occurrences that happen on or after that date.

The benefits of the ELTF Program are similar to these of the General Liability Trust Fund providing coverage for employees of the State of Alabama. The limit of liability is \$1,000,000 per occurrence, which includes your costs of defense.

Who is Covered? Employees of local school boards in the State of Alabama including: teachers, student teachers and aides, administrators, custodians, lunchroom workers, and office staff.

How Much Does It Cost? The ELTF Program is **free** to employees and is paid for by the Alabama State Department of Education. It is administered by the Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Risk Management.

ELTF Claims. If there is an occurrence or a legal suit is filed, please notify Risk Management and the school superintendent (or a designee of the school board) **IMMEDIATELY**. Even if a claim is not filed immediately, please notify our office about any serious incidents that could become a legal suit. Claim Forms are available at www.riskmgt.alabama.gov

For complete information, contact the State of Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Risk Management, P.O. Box 303250, 777 South Lawrence Street, Montgomery, AL, 36130-3250. Phone: 334-223-6120, Fax: 334-223-6154, or www.riskmgt.alabama.gov.



STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE DIVISION OF RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATORS LIABILITY TRUST FUND CLAIM REQUEST	
INSURANCE CONTRACT NUMBER	ISSUE DATE
NAME OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEE	SCHOOL NAME
ADDRESS	ZIP CODE
PHONE NUMBER	EMPLOYER'S NAME
DATE OF OCCURRENCE	TYPE OF OCCURRENCE
DESCRIPTION OF OCCURRENCE	DATE OF SETTLEMENT
NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD	DATE SETTLEMENT
NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OR COUNTY BOARD	
NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY	
STATE	
ZIP CODE	
DATE OF SETTLEMENT	
NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OR COUNTY BOARD	
NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY	
STATE	
ZIP CODE	
DATE OF SETTLEMENT	
NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OR COUNTY BOARD	
NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY	
STATE	
ZIP CODE	
DATE OF SETTLEMENT	

ELTF Frequently Asked Questions:

Do I need coverage other than the ELTF?

The ELTF can stand alone as your liability coverage if you are sued. Risk Management cannot advise you if additional coverage is needed because employees have different exposure to risks.

What if I already have liability coverage?

You can have more than one company or agency providing liability protection. If you continue to carry additional liability coverage, the ELTF Program is considered excess coverage. This means that ELTF administrators will coordinate with administrators from other companies to investigate and process the claim. In the event of an occurrence, employees should notify all companies with which they have liability coverage. Any loss is subject to being prorated between the companies.

Does the ELTF cover employment practice suits?

Covered employees who are sued by other employees are covered provided the program conditions have been met.

Are field trips and activities outside the school covered?

Field trips are covered provided that:

- 1: They relate to an educational activity (or to the job responsibility designated by the Board)
- 2: They have been pre-approved by the local school board. Examples of non-educational activities would be a trip to the lake or theme park, a cruise, or any other activity that does not have an educational component.

Do bus drivers have coverage?

Bus drivers can be covered when not operating the vehicle. For example, coverage is provided if there is an accident helping children on or off the bus. The ELTF Program does not provide liability coverage when related to operating a vehicle on the road. Automotive liability should remain in place to cover an accident involving a school bus or a vehicle licensed for public road use.

Call for Applications for 2015 Alabama Green Ribbon Schools Award

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is proud to partner with the U. S. Department of Education to nominate up to three public schools, one private school, one school district, and one college or university for the 2015 Green Ribbon Schools Award. Alabama was honored to have three national winners of the 2014 Green Ribbon Schools Award: **F. E. Burleson Elementary School**, **Homewood Middle School**, and **Brock's Gap Intermediate School**.

This award recognizes a comprehensive approach to greening schools that incorporates environmental learning with improving environmental and health impacts. Becoming a U. S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School is a two-step process. The first step is to complete and submit the application form to the ALSDE no later

than December 19, 2014.

The Alabama Green Ribbon Schools Advisory Committee will



review the applications to select up to three public schools, one private school, one school district, and one college or university with exemplary green school practices. The second step of the process requires the ALSDE to complete nomination packets to add to the applications of the selected schools to be reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education.

The ALSDE encourages schools with green practices to [complete the application](#). Resources and additional applications may be obtained [HERE](#). The ALSDE will host monthly Webinars to assist schools in the completion of the applications. Dates and times of the Webinars can be found on the application cover sheet and the above Web site.

If you have any questions regarding the application process or require assistance in completing the application, contact Mrs. Shirley J. Farrell at (334) 242-8317 or sfarrell@alsde.edu, or Mrs. Martha Anne Allison at (334) 353-1258 or mallison@alsde.edu. 

Did You Know?

An amendment related to local schools will be on the November 4th ballot for voters to approve or disapprove. It will be listed fourth on the ballot.

- In 1998, the Legislature considered a constitutional amendment (Amendment 621) that would ask Alabama voters to protect local government entities from unfunded mandates. When voters approved the amendment in 1999, it included county commissions and municipalities, but excluded school boards.
- Amendment 621 requires lawmakers to pass by a 2/3 vote any legislation that would impose a new or increased expenditure of local funds of more than \$50,000.
- Amendment 4 on the November 4th General Election ballot would extend the same protection to local schools that county commissions and municipalities currently have in Amendment 621.
- Also included in Amendment 4 is a provision that protects employee salaries and benefits to prevent differing pay scales for state- or local-funded positions.




**WE ARE NOW
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
FOR AETC 2015**

It's that time of year again! Planning is underway for AETC 2015 and we hope you will consider presenting at the conference. All Applications to Present (one-hour, hands-on, iShare, and Student Showcase) are now available at www.alex.state.al.us/aetc, click on Applications to Present.

Honoring the 2014 Summer Learning Challenge Readers

The **Alabama State Board of Education** and the Alabama State Department of Education recognize summer learning is a vital and enriching part of children's education. The annual Summer Learning Challenge raises awareness of the summer learning loss epidemic, shares compelling research on the importance of personalized reading activities, and provides access to a variety of free resources to support targeted reading and math practice.

The Summer Learning Challenge encouraged students to pledge to read five to eight books selected from a personalized reading list, to keep a log of all reading, and to actively engage in math practice every day for a portion of the summer. This year, eight students are recognized for reading over the summer months, keeping a comprehensive log, and submitting the logs to the Alabama State Department of Education. 



The students honored are:

- Adalyn Turner, DeArmanville Elementary School, Oxford City Schools, read 37 books for 700 minutes
- Ella Grace Young, DeArmanville Elementary School, Oxford City Schools, read 25 books for 795 minutes
- Josie Howell, Creekside Elementary School, Limestone County Schools read 54 books for 1722 minutes
- Wyatt Howell, Creekside Elementary School, Limestone County Schools, read 54 books for 4663 minutes (Second Year Summer Learning Challenge Reader)
- Camaryn Herman, Dawes Elementary School, Mobile County Schools, read 8 books for 937 minutes
- James Wiggs, Springville Elementary School, St. Clair County Schools, read 8 books for 375 minutes
- Caroline Price Wilson, Gulf Shores Elementary School, Baldwin County Schools, read 5 books for 600 minutes
- Rider Jernigan, Brewton Middle School, Brewton City Schools, read 5 books for 652 minutes

ALSDE Identifies Bright Spot Schools

Members of the **Alabama State Department of Education's Offices of Research and Development and Prevention and Support Services** recently set out to identify high-poverty schools that are beating the odds by achieving graduation rates that are higher than the state average of 80 percent.

Such high-poverty high schools, called *Bright Spot Schools*, also have low absenteeism (less than 5 percent of the total student population) and low suspension rates (less than 5 percent of the total student population), and foster a school culture that supports student success.



After site visits to selected high schools, staff members from Research & Development and Prevention and Support Services identified eight schools that exemplify characteristics for creating a climate for success, including visionary leadership, shared goals, innovative programs, flexible scheduling, and a zero tolerance attitude for failure.

Of *Bright Spot Schools*, the site visit teams said, "For while it is important to provide students with rigorous academic material, equally important is the need to ensure school climate and culture are conducive to student success. Teachers and students alike seem to thrive in an environment where they feel loved and appreciated. School climate and culture matter in any attempt to improve graduation rates and student outcomes."

The following schools have been named *Bright Spot Schools*:

- **Section High School**, Jackson County
- **Woodville High School**, Jackson County
- **Ramsey High School**, Birmingham City
- **Gaston High School**, Etowah County
- **Talladega County Central High School**, Talladega County
- **Billingsley High School**, Autauga County
- **Ashford High School**, Houston County
- **Houston County High School**, Houston County

Upcoming editions of **Alabama Education News** will spotlight each of these schools – schools that are committed to student success through establishing bonds of trust and respect among teachers and students, supporting students both within and outside the school, and strengthening parental and community engagement. 

School Safety Planning – Preparing for the Unexpected Professional Learning Unit

In joint collaboration, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), the Alabama Geographic Information Program Office, and Auburn University Montgomery (Center for Government and Public Affairs) have developed a School Safety Planning – Preparing for the Unexpected Professional Learning Unit (PLU) that is available at no cost to local education agencies.

The purpose of this PLU is to provide participants holding Instructional Leader Certification with knowledge to create a culture of continuous learning for all participants in the areas of School Safety Planning–Preparing for the Unexpected by fully addressing Standard 7, Management of the Learning Organization, Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders.

Participants will engage in face-to-face and/or online knowledge and content sessions and apply information learned in collaborative meetings with colleagues, online forum discussions, reflections, and assessments. All educators who hold Instructional Leader Certification are

required to complete all Phase I, Phase II, Phase III, and Phase IV Activities. Upon successful completion of this professional study, participants holding teacher certification may earn contact hours.

Please ask personnel to select the location of their choice and register online at <https://pdweb.alsde.edu/pdweb>. The PLU title number for the sessions is PLUACLD235. The deadline for registration at each site is the Friday before the selected site and date. Participants must register by location. The Cullman and Troy sites will be limited to the first 45 registrants and the Prattville and Evergreen sites will be limited to the first 75 registrants.

If you have additional questions regarding this opportunity or registration concerns, contact Dr. Marilyn Lewis or Mr. Tom Mock at 334-242-8165 or e-mail mlewis@alsde.edu or tmock@alsde.edu.

The initial professional development is a face-to-face training and must be attended to earn a PLU at one of the following locations:

September 23, 2014

9 a.m. to 12 noon
Registration 8:45 to 9:00 a.m.
Cullman County EMA
2020 Beech Avenue, SE
Cullman, AL 35056-0924
(256) 739-5410

September 24, 2014

9 a.m. to 12 noon
Registration 8:45 to 9:00 a.m.
Destiny Christian Center
1852 Highway 14, E
Prattville, AL 36066
(334) 358-1313

September 25, 2014

9 a.m. to 12 noon
Registration 8:45 to 9:00 a.m.
Reid State Technical College
Edith A. Gray Library &
Technology Center Room L116
100 Highway 83
Evergreen, AL 36401
(251) 578-1313

September 30, 2014

9 a.m. to 12 noon
Registration 8:45 to 9:00 a.m.
Troy City Schools
358 Elba Highway
Troy, AL 36079
(334) 566-3741

Alabama Association for Gifted Children Conference

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is pleased to announce the 2014 Alabama Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) annual conference on September 17-19, 2014, at the McWane Science Center in Birmingham, Alabama. This annual conference offers an excellent selection of break-out sessions for gifted specialists, administrators, teachers, and parents to support the unique cognitive and affective learning needs of gifted children and youth.

The theme for this three-day conference is "*In Living Color*," celebrating the diversity and creativity within gifted students. Internationally known speakers will provide keynotes for the conference:

Dr. Jerome Morris on Wednesday
Dr. Carolyn Coil on Thursday
Dr. Brian Housand on Friday

The session topics include creativity, technology, Thinking Like Scientists, affective needs, acceleration, higher-order thinking skills, and parenting gifted children. Special focus will be on identifying students from underrepresented populations and differentiating for gifted learners in general education and gifted classrooms. Participants can register for one, two, or three days. A preliminary schedule and registration form can be obtained on the Web site at alabamagifted.org.

We encourage you to support the attendance of your gifted specialists, teachers, counselors, or anyone who works with gifted students. This conference provides professional development, networking opportunities, and resources for teachers to help gifted students achieve annual growth.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact Ms. Shirley Farrell or Ms. Nancy Johnson at (334) 242-8114.

Student's Project Leads To Suicide Prevention Curriculum In Thomasville City Schools

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by training all Thomasville City Schools teachers this fall. The second part was to purchase a student video curriculum for THS health classes to use this year and years afterward. The third part was to purchase and frame awareness posters for Thomasville Middle School. These would be placed in the halls of TMS.

"We are so excited that Amerie is taking on this youth leadership project," stated **Dr. Vic Adkison**, Superintendent of Thomasville City Schols. "Her advocacy for Suicide Prevention certainly supports the Board's priority to improve school safety through an effective 'Bullying Prevention' program."

Gramelspacher will know in mid-September if the Girl Scouts will approve her project. Regardless, she has been deeply moved by this journey. "When I first started, it was only about getting my Gold Award," she said. "Now, after meeting so many people whose lives have been impacted by suicide, it has touched my heart and made me more respectful, more connected to the problem, more passionate." In fact, she is now thinking about majoring in psychology.

Gramelspacher, a junior at THS, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Gramelspacher.



Amerie Gramelspacher went before the Thomasville City Council to request permission to hold the 5K race and walk.

Report on Education in Alabama Brings Hope for Future

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graduation rate, but in preparing students for real life after they graduate. These potential gains add credibility to the strategies outlined in Plan 2020.

Those strategies already being implemented to help increase the knowledge and skill level of tomorrow's graduates include:

- Raising the academic standards for K-12 education and other initiatives like dual enrollment programs in many high schools.
- Expanding Advanced Placement courses and support.
- Expanding pre-k, and fully implementing the Alabama State Department of Education's "Plan 2020" that is putting the necessary steps in place to raise Alabama's graduation rate to 90 percent by 2020.

[Read the full report here.](#)

Story from A+ Education Partnership

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Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8165.