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ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

The electronic newsletter of the
Alabama State Department of Education

From the Superintendent



As your State Superintendent I write today with great concern as public education continues to come under question by certain members of Alabama's legislature. Even after being provided facts with supporting evidence to address their concerns, their words and actions indicate a level of disregard for the facts. They also appear unwilling to acknowledge the exceptional accomplishments and innovative programs occurring across our state. They choose instead to focus on an abundance of non-factual scare tactics all centered on an unfounded federal government overreach into Alabama's public education system being accomplished through, of all things, Mathematics, and English/Language Arts academic standards.

The only overreach that I can determine is potentially occurring is from within our own state and is contained in Senate Bill (SB) 403. This bill, should it be approved, overrules the vote of the constitutionally created Alabama State Board of Education and its adoption of our current Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts. Our Alabama standards were reviewed, developed into course and grade sequences, and recommended for adoption by Alabama teachers, principals, university faculty, and lay appointees and included multiple opportunities for public input following Alabama's approved course of study adoption process.

What is also not being communicated is the negative ripple effects of SB 403 should it be approved. Our standards, regardless of what they are called, are the basis upon which local school systems develop curriculum and associated instructional plans and materials that include textbooks, upon which formative, benchmark, and summative assessments are created, upon which our entire school and school system accountability system is based, and upon which our state's long-awaited waiver from No Child Left Behind is based, which will release us to truly meet the needs of all children and ensure each one graduates college and career ready. All of this will be dismantled should SB 403 be approved.

These negative ripple effects do not even include the most important negative implication that will occur at the classroom and student level. All the hours of individual and collective work by teachers and leaders over the past three years to develop and implement the best possible learning opportunities for

our students will be halted, and this will require months, if not years, to reassemble, and, for what – a political win? Surely our students have greater value.

This next week will be a crucial week for public education in our state. I urge you to make sure your voices are heard, that the parents of your students realize what is at stake, and that the legislators you elected hear from you as they consider not only their vote on SB 403, but also the upcoming education budget and other bills that will effect public education not just for today but for years to come. You also need to thank the many legislators who have taken a stand in our defense and for many—at great political risk. They are our champions because they stand for something far greater than an upcoming election – they stand for our children – our future! Alabama's public education belongs to its people – fight hard to retain it!

Contact your Alabama State Senator:



Contact your Alabama House of Representatives Member:



Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

The Alabama Finalists for the 2012 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) could not help but beam with pride as they were showered with accolades during a luncheon hosted in their honor at the Capital City Club in Montgomery.

Surrounded by their principals, superintendents, spouses and others who supported them on their journey, the elementary school teachers were recognized for contributions to the classroom and to the profession. PAEMST is the nation's highest honors for K-12 mathematics and science teachers, and the program alternates each year between honoring elementary and secondary teachers.

Alabama's 2012 Presidential Finalists are:

Mathematics Finalists

Jessica Ellzey, Meadowlake Elementary School, Mobile County

Rita Schell, Hall Kent Elementary School, Homewood City

Pamela Smith, Edgewood Elementary School, Homewood City

Science Finalists

Kim Bowen, Rainbow Elementary School, Madison City

Danielle Peterson, Greystone Elementary School, Hoover City

ALSDE Director of Curriculum Cynthia Brown commended the educators on their achievement. She said math and science are important parts of the curriculum, "not only in the state and nation, but in the world."

"We recognize your work, you recognize your work," she said. "Continue to be the persons you are, representing Alabama and yourselves well."

Enacted by Congress in 1983 and administered by the NSF on behalf of The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the PAEMST program identifies eligible K-12 teachers who exemplify the highest standards of mathematics and science teaching. Since 1983, more than 4,200 teachers have been recognized for their contributions to mathematics and science education.

The 2011 Alabama PAEMST Awardees, Suzanne B. Culbreth, a math teacher at Spain Park High School, and Chanda Davis, a science teacher at Huntsville High School, shared highlights from their experiences last year in Washington, D.C., where honorees attended a series of recognition events and professional development sessions. Both agreed that meeting and taking pictures with Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, was an unforgettable moment.

Culbreth, who is the 2012-2013 Alabama Teacher of the Year, said she also thoroughly enjoyed meeting and collaborating with

other educators from across the nation, while Davis shared tips for responding to requests for media interviews and speaking at various engagements.

"The thing I appreciate so much about the Presidential Awards is the door it opens and the opportunities it provides," Culbreth said.



Jessica Ellzey, Rita Schell, Kim Bowen, Danielle Peterson
(not pictured: Pamela Smith)

Each PAEMST Finalist received the NSF Certificate of Honor in Mathematics and Science Teaching at the luncheon, as well as other tokens of recognition. Prior to the celebration, the teachers received resolutions from the Alabama State Board of Education in honor of their hard work.

For more information about the program, visit www.paemst.org, or contact Carolyn Townsend, Instruction Section, Alabama State Department of Education, 334-353-5440 or ctownsend@alsde.edu.

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Celebrating the Life of A True Hero: Charles "Chuck" Poland

Hero.

It was the word often repeated as Dale County educators, students, parents, law enforcement personnel and citizens came together at Midland City Elementary School to celebrate the life of bus driver **Charles "Chuck" Poland**. The stage in the school's cafeteria was designated as a place of honor for Poland's wife, Jan, and daughter, Lydia, as well as the students Poland picked up each day on his bus route, the same students Poland died for while protecting them when a gunman boarded the bus on January 29 and demanded two children be handed over. Poland resisted, and all but one student escaped.

His sacrifice is not lost on them.

"I'm new to the school. But Mr. Poland treated me like his own, and every time I got on the bus, he greeted me with a smile and a handshake," said Tré Watts, who had just moved to Midland City about a week before the incident. "Mr. Poland let me know that there are still good people out there."

Ashley Thornton shared a similar story. She remembered how her grandparents' long-time friend would greet each student with a "Good Morning!" when he picked them up for school and tell them to "Have a good afternoon!" as they departed the bus for home.

"He was always happy, he would always smile," she said. "(On that day) I found out what type of person he really was. I promise you, he was the best person I have ever met."

Dale County Superintendent Donny Bynum talked about the connection Jan Poland has made with the children on her late husband's bus route. Though she didn't know many of them personally prior to January 29, she now considers all of them "her children," which was evident by the hug she gave each student at the March 14 State Board of Education Meeting.

Each child was recognized by Board members with a resolution at the meeting, which was followed by the dedication of the Charles "Chuck" Poland Memorial on a wall near the Alabama State Department of Education executive offices. The family and students also met Governor Robert Bentley as part of their visit to Montgomery and were honored at a reception hosted at the Gordon Persons Building by the ALSDE.

"We will never forget Mr. Poland. Each day that goes by, Mr. Poland's memory will grow stronger in our hearts."

— Dale County Superintendent Donny Bynum

"A lot of good has come from bad. We have all learned and understand the importance of serving others and the power of love," Bynum said. "We will

never forget Mr. Poland. Each day that goes by, Mr. Poland's memory will grow stronger in our hearts."

Several others also spoke fondly of Poland during the Celebration of Life ceremony, including Dale County Sheriff Wally Olson, Dale County District Attorney Kirke Adams and Alabama Patriot Guard Senior Captain Jimmy Shiver. State lawmakers Steve Clouse and Harri Anne Smith brought greetings from Governor Bentley and the Legislature, while Smith also presented the students on Poland's bus with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Midland City Municipal Court Judge Will Matthews said he wrote a letter to President Barack Obama, which was personally delivered to the president by U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-AL. In the letter, he asked the president to consider posthumously bestowing the National Medal of Freedom to Poland. It is the highest civilian award in the United States.

"I know you get a lot of letters from ordinary citizens," Matthews

read from the letter. "But I hope you take this one to heart."

After the ceremony in the cafeteria, the celebration was moved to the Midland City Elementary School field, where dozens of red, white and blue balloons were released. Those gathered continued to cheer, many with tears in their eyes, long after the balloons floated out of view.



2012-2013 Teacher Of The Year Nominees

144 District Nominees for Alabama's 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year are listed below. The "Sweet 16" are highlighted in yellow. Two educators in this list will be Alabama's 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year and Alternate State Teacher of the Year!

Name	District	System	School
Lauren Brannan	1	Mobile County	J.E. Turner Elementary
Christin Ferguson	1	Saraland City	Saraland Elementary
Ashley McPhillips	1	Baldwin County	J. Larry Newton Elementary
Lori Parker	1	Andalusia City	Andalusia Middle
Wanda Buckelew	1	Butler County	McKenzie High
Kathy Irby	1	Mobile County	Clark-Shaw Magnet
Robert McKillion Jr.	1	Baldwin County	Daphne High
John Cammack	1	Opp City	Opp High
Della White	1	Chickasaw City	Chickasaw City Elementary
Shari Powell	1	Butler County	Greenville Middle School
Amanda Banner	2	Henry County	Headland High
Gwendolyn Beck	2	Tallapoosa County	Dadeville Elementary
Fredericka Brown	2	Chambers County	LaFayette Lanier Elementary
Margaret Clark	2	Ozark City	D.A. Smith Middle
Molly Clark	2	Opelika City	Carver Primary
Amber DeBlanc	2	Auburn City	Richland Elementary
Kristen Keeshan	2	Lee County	Beauregard Elementary
Michelle Lee	2	Houston County	Rehobeth Elementary
Michelle McKnight	2	Geneva County	Samson Middle
Vivia Peebles	2	Henry County	Abbeville Elementary
Amy Pippins	2	Enterprise City	College Street Elementary
Tracy Pruitt	2	Dothan City	Montana Street Magnet
Chenequia Simpson	2	Russell County	Oliver Elementary
Amy Stamp	2	Phenix City	Phenix City Elementary
Ronnetta Wade	2	Eufaula City	Eufaula Elementary
Marsielena Williams	2	Ozark City	Carroll High
Debra Byrd	2	Lee County	Smiths Station High
John Chapiewski	2	Russell County	Russell County High
Megan Driggers	2	Enterprise City	Dauphin Jr. High
Sara Fenn	2	Eufaula City	Admiral Moorer Middle
Casie Harcus	2	Geneva County	Slocomb High
Barbie Nelson	2	Dothan City	Northview High
Angela Mills	2	Opelika City	Opelika Middle
Seth Stehouwer	2	Chambers County	Career Technical Center
Kristen Thomas	2	Phenix City	Central Freshman Academy
Matthew York	2	Auburn City	Auburn High
Brian Weeks	2	Elba City	Elba High
Taryn Brodie	3	Elmore County	Wetumpka Elementary
Ginger Aaron-Brush	3	Shelby County	Valley Elementary
Elaine Graham	3	Vestavia City	Vestavia Hill Elementary Central
Karen Kissic	3	Sylacauga City	Pinecrest Elementary
Jean Remson	3	Talladega County	B. B. Corner Elementary
Sara Womack	3	Hoover City	Greystone Elementary
Chris Stephens	3	Talladega City	Raymond L. Young Elementary
Brian Copes	3	Shelby County	Calera High
Jeff Johnson	3	Hoover City	Hoover High
Christine Morman	3	Homewood City	Homewood High
Samuel Poague	3	Elmore County	Holtville High
Amy Stephens	3	Talladega City	Talladega Career Tech Center
Sandra Tuck	3	Talladega County	Talladega County Central High
Kim Whitten	3	Vestavia Hills City	Vestavia Hills High
Karmen Deerman	4	Bibb County	Woodstock Elementary
Myeshia Glover	4	Fairfield City	C.J. Donald Elementary
Alison Grizzle	4	Birmingham City	P. D. Jackson Olin High
Leigh Herring	4	Tuscaloosa County	Brookwood Elementary School
Jennifer Hines	4	Tuscaloosa City	Central High School
Jerome Isley	4	Homewood City	Hall-Kent Elementary
Tracy Jefferson	4	Bessemer City	Greenwood Elementary
Curtrina Jones	4	Birmingham City	Glen Iris Elementary
Keisha Matthews	4	Hale County	Moundville Elementary
Jonathan Allen	4	Jefferson County	Minor High
Donna Randall	4	Hale County	Hale County High
Beth Sanders	4	Tarrant City	Tarrant High
Andrea Suttle	4	Bibb County	Bibb County High School
Althenia Morrow-Tate	4	Tuscaloosa County	Sipsey Valley Middle School
Janet Walker	4	Bessemer City	James A. Davis Middle
Lauren Breeding	5	Montgomery County	James Wilson Jr. Elementary
Rhonda Burch	5	Monroe County	Monroeville Elementary School
Connie Grimes	5	Washington County	Chatom Elementary School
Shan Higginbotham	5	Clarke County	Jackson Intermediate School
Derrick Hurt	5	Bullock County	Union Springs Elementary
April McDaniel	5	Clarke County	Thomasville Elementary School

Name	District	System	School
Jessica Tatum	5	Pike County	Goshen Elementary School
Tiffney Abston	5	Thomasville City	Thomasville Middle School
Micheal Ard	5	Monroe County	Monroe County High School
Ashley Becton	5	Washington County	Millry High School
Sharon Denison	5	Pike County	Pike County High School
Donna Hughes	5	Saraland City	Saraland Middle School
Ken Spear	5	Montgomery County	Sidney Lanier High School
Kelli Davis	5	Thomasville City	Thomasville High School
Dianna Adams	6	Albertville City	Albertville Elementary School
Shannon Anderson	6	Morgan County	Danville Middle School
Tracie Boland	6	Cullman County	Vinemont Middle School
Elizabeth Cox	6	Pell City	Williams Intermediate School
Priscilla Garrison	6	Cullman City	Cullman City Primary School
Magan Glover	6	Piedmont City	Piedmont Middle School
Karen Hazelrig	6	Blount County	Cleveland Elementary School
Shelley Hughes	6	Decatur City	Benjamin Davis Elementary
Lisa Mallett	6	Calhoun County	White Plains Elementary School
Amanda Milazzo	6	Mountain Brook City	Cherokee Bend Elementary
Shea Merriweather	6	Anniston City	Tenth Street Elementary School
Rachel Noles	6	Boaz City	Boaz Intermediate School
Beverly Parker	6	Jacksonville City	Kitty Stone Elementary School
Sharlene Pollard	6	Cherokee County	Centre Elementary School
Hope Tennant	6	St. Clair County	Margaret Elementary School
Abbie Thomas	6	Arab City	Arab Primary School
Brenda Bennett	6	Pell City	Duran Junior High School
Jeffrey Brown, Jr.	6	Boaz City	Boaz Middle School
Staci Butts	6	St. Clair County	Ashville High School
Brandi Cantrell	6	Arab City	Arab High School
Cynthia Greene	6	Morgan County	Cotaco School
John Griffin	6	Calhoun County	Walter Wellborn High School
Amy Hill	6	Decatur City	Oak Park Middle School
LaTisha Jackson	6	Cullman County	Cold Springs High School
Adam Johnson	6	Mountain Brook City	Mountain Brook Junior High
Kortney Johnson	6	Albertville City	Albertville High School
Tracy Johnson	6	Cherokee County	Cedar Bluff High School
Janice Samuels	6	Guntersville City	Guntersville Middle School
Amber Patterson	6	Guntersville City	Guntersville Middle School
James Smyre, Sr.	6	Anniston City	Anniston High School
Joshua Alan Swindall	6	Cullman City	Cullman Middle School
Regina Tawbush	6	Blount County	Cleveland High School
Ann Bettis	7	Trussville City	Paine Intermediate School
Melissa Bryan	7	Jasper City	T. R. Simmons Elementary
Brandi Davis	7	Fayette County	Fayette Elementary School
Brenda Hancock	7	Jefferson County	Clay Elementary School
Heather Hackett	7	Sheffield City	L. E. Willson Elementary School
Daphnae Hogan	7	Florence City	Weeden Elementary School
Karen Kilpatrick	7	Lawrence County	East Lawrence Elementary
Kathy Perkins	7	Tuscaloosa City	Vemer Elementary School
Wendi Thornton	7	Muscle Shoals City	Webster Elementary School
Lynnette Walker	7	Marion County	Hamilton Elementary School
Daniel Ball	7	Florence City	Florence Freshman Center
Belinda Cross	7	Lawrence County	Lawrence County High School
Beth Fulmer	7	Fayette County	Fayette County High School
Ray Hessler	7	Jasper City	Walker County High School
Lisa Myrick	7	Sheffield City	Sheffield High School
Brandon Peters	7	Trussville City	Hewitt-Trussville Middle School
Lori Roberts	7	Muscle Shoals City	Muscle Shoals High School
LaTasha Bell	8	Huntsville City	Hampton Cove Elementary
Stephanie Johnson	8	Jackson County	Bridgeport Elementary School
Farrah Kilgo	8	Etowah County	Ivalee Elementary School
Meche Morgan	8	Gadsden City	W. E. Striplin Elementary
Nancy Page	8	Limestone County	Blue Springs Elementary
Cynthia Rhodes	8	Madison City	Madison Elementary School
Sharon Rush	8	Athens City	Julian Newman Elementary
Regan Webb	8	Scottsboro City	Brownwood Elementary School
Caroline Wilson	8	Madison County	Legacy Elementary School
Anita Campbell	8	Etowah County	Gaston School
Samantha Fleming	8	Limestone County	Career Technical Center
Michael May	8	Athens City	Athens High School
Elizabeth Parker	8	Madison County	Sparkman Middle School
Betrina Thomas	8	Gadsden City	Gadsden City High School
Julie Williams	8	Huntsville City	Huntsville High School

Alabama's 2013 Culinary Championship

If you have ever watched the hit television show Iron Chef you have seen an action-packed contest. This month, Alabama's top high school culinary arts students competed in Birmingham at the Culinard—the culinary institute of Virginia College—to earn top state awards and a possible spot to represent our state at the upcoming 2013 Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) National Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

"Teams were made up of three students currently enrolled in the culinary arts program at their high school," said Judy Brown, Alabama Career and Technical Education (CTE) Specialist and Culinary Arts Coordinator. "The contest focused on each student's ability to use internationally accepted food preparation standards and equipment to produce a quality product."

The average salary for certified "Executive Chefs" often exceeds more than \$75,000 annually.

"This event was an excellent opportunity for Alabama's high school students to extend their early knowledge of cooking," says Chef Antony Osborne, Academic Dean of Culinard. "We had 14 top student teams competing. This was a great opportunity for these students to further develop their lifelong career skills."



Teams had to successfully prepare one of the following menus (from scratch) in order to advance to the national competition:

- Menu 1: *Chicken Supreme with Spinach Salad and Homemade Mustard Vinaigrette Dressing*
- Menu 2: *Chicken Veloute' with Field Greens Salad and Freshly Prepared Raspberry Vinaigrette Dressing*
- Menu 3: *Chicken Alfredo with Garden Salad and Homemade Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing*

To see a copy of the full menu guidelines and professional recipes used for this contest [CLICK](#):

Schools that participated in this year's state championship were: Albertville High School, Auburn High School, Bob Jones High School, Calhoun County Career Technical Center, Charles Henderson High School, Cullman

County Area Career Center, Dothan Technology Center, Florence High School, Fort Payne High School, Hewitt-Trussville High School, Huntsville Center for Technology, Limestone County Career Technical Center, Pelham High School, and Wenonah High School

FCCLA is a national organization devoted to preparing family and consumer sciences students for leadership and future career opportunities. Alabama has more than 7,000 members who enjoy the many benefits this organization offers. To learn more, contact Alabama State Department of Education CTE Specialist and Culinary Arts Coordinator, Judy Brown, at 334-242-9113.

Top Winners at Alabama's 2013 Culinary Competition

Gold Medal Winner (1st Place Overall): **Huntsville Center For Technology**

Silver Medal Winner (2nd Place Overall): **Cullman Career Technical Center**

Silver Medal Winner (3rd Place Overall): **Wenonah High School**

All Gold Medal winners received \$3,000 scholarships to the Culinard. Top winners also received Williams-Sonoma gift cards (worth \$25 to \$100 each). Johnson and Wales University provided all First Place winners with \$1,000 scholarships, Second Place winners with \$500 scholarships, and Third Place winners with \$250 scholarships.

Each team was judged on planning (making time schedules, organizing their work areas, obtaining needed supplies) and overall food production.



ACLD Submission Deadline Nears

The Alabama Council for Leadership Development (ACLD) reviews school systems' professional study submissions throughout the year. Proposals deemed acceptable are approved as

PLU credit for professional staff who hold valid Alabama



instructional leader certificates. Those holding such certificates may include, but are not limited to, selected central office staff, principals, assistant principals, career technical education directors, teachers, and other educators.

Although superintendents may grant locally approved PLUs, school systems may wish to seek ACLD approval for locally developed professional studies. By seeking ACLD approval, an instructional leader has the opportunity to earn an ACLD PLU in his/her respective school system. Therefore, as directed by the local superintendent, professional development coordinators, curriculum specialists, or other designated personnel are encouraged to submit the professional study on behalf of the school system via the ACLD's online Instructional Leadership Professional Study Application (ILPSA) system at least two months prior to the date of initial implementation.

To request access to the professional study application, complete the Contact ACLD form at <http://www.leadershipalsde.com>. The submission deadline for the upcoming meeting is **April 17, 2013**. For complete information, contact Telenia Madison, State Department of Education, Office of Teaching and Leading, at 334-353-5230 or tmadison@alsde.edu.

Virtual Alabama School Safety Summit

Hundreds of law enforcement personnel, educators and emergency management and homeland security officials from across the state came together at the Montgomery Performing Arts Centre recently for the **Virtual Alabama School Safety Summit**.

The two-day summit focused on three core areas: using Virtual Alabama and other school safety technologies; understanding and mitigating behavioral issues and schools; and developing and exercising effective emergency operations plans for schools.

Several state agencies partnered for the conference, which was coordinated by Auburn University Montgomery's Center for Government; the Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Department of Homeland Security, Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center and Alabama Geographic Information Program Office.

Alabama Department of Homeland Security Director Spencer Collier said he received a call shortly after the conference began from his counterparts in New York who wanted to know how such partnerships are formed.

"We often hear how Alabama lags behind, but here we have states like New York calling us," Collier said. "Other states are looking at Alabama as a model."

Collier said his department is working to ensure that 100 percent of the state's law enforcement officers receive active shooter training and to provide

"Run, Hide, Fight" training for the private sector. The instructional video of the same name, produced by the Houston Police Department, provides instructions on what to do if caught in an active shooter event.

Collier also noted that the benchmark of the Department of Homeland Security's school safety initiative is

Virtual Alabama, an online portal accessible to law enforcement, emergency management and key education personnel that houses safety plans for Alabama's K-12 public schools.

Alabama State Department of Education Superintendent Dr. Tommy Bice said systems such as Virtual Alabama are beneficial because there is not a "one size fits all" safety plan for those 1,500 schools. Each has specific needs, which are best coordinated at the local level, added Bice, who was a featured luncheon speaker for the first day of the summit along with Collier.

"I never thought we would have an Alabama-specific incident," Bice said, referring to January 29, 2013, when a Dale County bus driver was shot and killed and a student on the bus was taken hostage. "I had the opportunity to spend a day down there (Midland City) and came away more impressed than ever with the value of a locally coordinated response system."

Like Collier, Bice reiterated the importance of partnerships. He said mental health has often come up in conversations about school safety, prompting education officials to work more closely with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to ensure children with specific needs are able to access services.

"This is a collective effort," Bice said. "The safety of our students is our No. 1 priority. We will do a much better job protecting children if we do this together."



ACT College and Career Readiness State Nominees

Five Alabama high school seniors honored as state finalists in a program that celebrates achievement and creates awareness around the goal of college- and career-readiness

ACT has partnered with Alabama and select states for the College and Career Readiness Campaign. Nominated students must have exemplary ACT scores, high grade point averages and significant academic, professional, school and community involvements.



The program helps to further the Alabama State Board of Education's vision for "Plan 2020: Every Child a Graduate—Every Graduate Prepared for College, Work, Adulthood in the 21st Century."

On March 14, 2013, resolutions celebrating the students were at the Alabama State Board of Education meeting. The state winner, Sheree Gremillion, chosen at the board meeting, will have the opportunity to be chosen by ACT as the national winner. The national winner will be honored at the National Gala of College and Career Readiness in Washington, D.C., in May.

The five state finalists were selected by school staff as an ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign student nominee and are as follows:

State Winner - Sheree Michelle Gremillion of Rogers High School,



Lauderdale County Schools. Gremillion has a 3.9 GPA and scored a 33 on the ACT Test. Rogers High science teacher Traci Jones, who nominated Gremillion for the ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign, said Gremillion's determination is evident. *"She is a very good student and works hard to maintain excellent grades and is highly*

motivated," Jones wrote in her nomination letter. "I am so proud of her for scoring 33 on her ACT. This score, coupled with her grades and work ethic in my classes, speaks volumes about her academic ability."

Keaton Brooks Galloway of Lamar County High School, Lamar County



Schools. Galloway has a 4.0 GPA and scored a 32 on the ACT. Nominator and Lamar County High English teacher Ernestine Chandler is not surprised by Galloway's achievements. *"Of the nearly 5,000 students I have taught over the years (including seven years teaching college), Keaton stands out as my number one student,"* Chandler

wrote in her nomination letter. "Keaton settles for nothing less than his very best in any classroom or extracurricular endeavor."

Sarah Brooke Haygood of Boaz High School, Boaz City Schools.

Haygood, who has a 4.0 GPA and scored a 32 on the ACT, currently ranks



at the top of her senior class. Boaz High guidance counselor Becky Boddie said she has never met a student as ambitious as Haygood in her 30 years of education. *"Sarah embodies the characteristics of leadership that we wish for all students: responsibility, determination, personality, compassion, citizenship and empathy, just to name a few,"*

Boddie wrote of Haygood.

Alyssa Nicole Cunningham of Meek



High School, Winston County Schools.

Cunningham has a 3.8 GPA and scored a 32 on the ACT, which is quite significant, said

guidance counselor and nominator Lauren Archer. *"She has the highest ACT score ever achieved at Meek High School, so we are very proud to nominate her on behalf of Winston County,"* Archer said in her nomination letter, adding that Cunningham has shown tremendous academic and social growth from Grades 7-12.

Jeremy Lee Burgess of Enterprise



High School, Enterprise City Schools. Burgess has maintained a 4.0 GPA since his sophomore year, scored a 31 on the ACT and is

poised to be the valedictorian of Enterprise High's Class of 2013. Guidance counselor Cami McClenny, who nominated Burgess for the ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign, said, *"Academically, Jeremy is among the brightest students I have had the pleasure of working with in my 16-year career in education."*

In addition to striving to become college- and career-ready by taking Advanced Placement and Honors classes or courses at local community colleges, the five finalists are involved in extracurricular activities such as marching band, the National Honor Society and Scholars' Bowl, as well as volunteering in their communities. At the conclusion of the Alabama State Board of Education meeting, ACT hosted a luncheon at The Young House in Old Alabama Town to honor the five finalists and their parents or guardians, along with a representative from each student's school or district.

New Hope High School Works to Change Stigma

If you turn at the New Hope sign off of Old Highway 431 you'll find a rural Alabama town. It's less than nine square miles with a population that almost touches 3,000. Inside New Hope High School, only 300 students walk the halls.

"We're a small school, very rural. We don't get a lot of funding. We are not a Title 1 school, so a lot of people make fun of us because of our location and our dropout rate," said Kaitlyn Walls, a NHHS senior.



Kaitlyn and a group of other student leaders are working hard to change their school's image. It all started with a new school motto. "We've formally been known as 'No Hope for New Hope' so we wanted to rid ourselves of that, and we came up with the 'New Pride, New Passion, New Hope,'" Walls said.

With a renewed sense of hope in their school, a group of NHHS students painted the halls with inspirational quotes in bright colors. A red leadership wall features eight special students every month. "I think people are very proud to be here. We are kind of a hidden treasure. Nobody really knows what goes on here," said Walls.

With school PRIDE on the walls, a new PASSION for success and new HOPE in their future, it's easy to see that New Hope High School lives up to its new motto.

Source: WAAY TV

Calera Eagles Marching Band and President Barack Obama's Inauguration Ceremony

U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus paid a visit to Calera High School recently to congratulate members of the Calera Eagles Marching Band for their performance in President Barack Obama's Inauguration Ceremony.

"You were participating in one of the oldest, most famous ceremonies in the world, and that is the transition of government peacefully," Bachus said to marching band members gathered in the school's auditorium.

Al.com also reported that Bachus, R-AL, told the students that participating in the Inauguration Ceremony is "something you will remember all your life."

The President's organization committee for the Inauguration Ceremony selected the Calera Eagles as Alabama's marching-band representative to perform in the Inauguration parade on Jan. 21. Band director Ryan Murrell said the band members had planned to meet Bachus in Washington, D.C., on their trip but it didn't happen.

"We're very excited and honored for him to take the time to come down and talk to the kids," Murrell said about the representative's recent visit.

Murrell in an interview with al.com said participating in Obama's Inauguration Ceremony required band members to raise between \$68,000 and \$70,000 in a month's time to afford the trip. "It's was just a huge ordeal and about 98 percent of the money was donated," he said, thanking the community.

The marching band consists of 132 students from the middle and high schools in Calera.

"Almost 13 years ago I marched in it as a student at Homewood," Murrell told Bachus about participating in the Inauguration parade. "That ultimately is my main goal, to give them opportunities to go anywhere."

Calera sophomore Mary Embry said it was "mind-blowing" to visit Washington, D.C., and seeing first-hand "how much our country has accomplished."

"To be there in person is way better than seeing it in a picture," she said. Annalee Baker, also a sophomore, said she will cherish the moment always. "It's a great opportunity that we will remember forever," she said.

As far as upcoming plans for the band, Murrell said the group is getting ready for the spring concert in May. Don't expect another presidential honor anytime soon, though.

"It's kind of hard to beat that in the span of a year," Murrell said.

Source: al.com



To the far right, Head Director Ryan Murrell, Elana Brister, Dawn Bone and Randy Clark.

AMSTI: An International Model For Success

Change the Equation (CTEq) is heralding the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) as an international model for math, science and technology classroom instruction and learning – one that is being studied by 21 European countries, China and Mexico, as well as other states.

Change the Equation states on its website that some promising programs don't deliver in the end, though that has not been the case with AMSTI:

"AMSTI shows that by lining up their supports for teachers, states can get things moving in the right direction."

CTEq is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, CEO-led initiative that aims to mobilize the business community to improve the quality of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning in the United States. The group released the statement on the heels of a recent U.S. Department of Education study that showed students gained an average of 28 extra days of schooling in math when they participated in AMSTI.

In addition, exploratory results indicated that students who attended AMSTI schools and classes for at least two years showed a gain of four percentile points when compared with students who did not attend AMSTI classes. These gains compare to an average of 50 extra days of schooling in math.

"We are extremely pleased to have the solid evidence from this major study confirm previous external evaluations that AMSTI is making a dramatic difference in the lives of students," said AMSTI Director Steve Ricks. "The results are a testament to what Alabama teachers can achieve when provided with the proper professional development, resources and support."

Deanna McKinley, a sixth grade teacher at Daniel Pratt Elementary School, echoes those remarks. She said the program is at the core of her teaching.

"We are extremely pleased to have the solid evidence from this major study confirm previous external evaluations that AMSTI is making a dramatic difference in the lives of students."

– AMSTI Director Steve Ricks



together a piece of paper towel until it fit into a straw. The students then deposited their seeds in the straw and McKinley placed the straws in cups. The class discussed whether the seed could grow without soil, determining that plants need air, water and sun to grow.

"It (AMSTI curriculum) is hands-on and easy to teach," McKinley said. "The more they interact, the more they remember the material. I love it."

Ricks agrees that students learn math and science by doing math and science.

"We provide all of the materials and equipment they need," he said. "Teachers are provided with professional development, teaching materials, access to technology and other supports to help them adopt these new programs."

State Superintendent Dr. Tommy Bice said the goal of AMSTI is not to just graduate students, but to ensure they are prepared for the workforce or college. Programs that develop students' analytical skills put the state on the right track.

"This is an affirmation of what we've felt and known for almost a decade," Bice said. "Alabama's future is bright as these young minds are challenged to think

critically and solve complex problems with no obvious answer – the 21st-century skills business and industry are asking of our graduates."

Alabama Secretary of Commerce Greg Canfield, who also chairs and is responsible for implementing the state's economic development strategic plan, Accelerate Alabama, said, "Of all the things we are doing, bringing education to the table and continuing the implementation of programs such as these are most important. What we do in education today will have a major impact for the next 20 to 25 years."

Source: Alabama Department of Commerce

George Hall Elementary Visits State House

A 4th Grade Social Studies class from George Hall Elementary School from Mobile (a Blue Ribbon School) recently toured the Alabama State House with **State Superintendent Dr. Tommy Bice** and **Lt. Gov. Kay Ivy**. The students were educated, entertained, and had a great time!



State Board of Education Meetings on Ustream.tv!



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or [watch the archived videos](#) anytime you want (different
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EDUCATEAlabama Survey Results Available!

The 2013 EDUCATEAlabama Surveys were open to all practitioners to provide feedback on the 2012-2013 EDUCATEAlabama online process from March 1-31, 2013.



A total of 3,843 people completed surveys (3,375 teachers, librarians, and counselors, 423 school-based instructional leaders, and 45 superintendents and central office staff).

The Alabama State Department of Education appreciates all local education agency personnel who took the time to respond. Survey results will be used to guide improvements to the EDUCATEAlabama formative evaluation process during 2013-2014.

Select the following links to review final 2013 EA Survey results:

[Reviewer Survey](#)

[Evaluator Survey](#)

[Evaluatee Survey](#)

Quick-Thinking Heroes at Daniel Pratt Elementary



During the lunch period (12:25-12:50) at Daniel Pratt Elementary, a student started choking. Staff Member Mrs. Culpepper noticed the situation and called for help from another staff member, Mr. Freeman. She then notified the school nurse. Mr. Freeman quickly went to the 6th grade student and began doing the Heimlich maneuver. He was successful in dislodging the food in the student's throat. The student was taken to the school nurse for further evaluation. Due to the quick response and lifesaving procedure conducted, Prattville Fire Department (represented by Chief Terry Brown and Lt. Travis Rodie) and Mayor Bill Gillespie presented both teachers with a certificate of appreciation. Mr. Freeman and Mrs. Culpepper are true heroes!