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ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

The electronic newsletter of the Alabama Department of Education



Superintendent's Message

Take one mission-focused technology education teacher, a group of exceptional young men and women, a need and a desire to meet that need, and what do you have? Calera High School.

This is what I experienced last week during a visit to Calera High School. The students in Brian Copes' Technology Education class have built an all-terrain vehicle that can be disassembled, shipped to anywhere in the world, and reassembled for use in places where no transportation has ever existed. In this case, that place is the Cloud Forest in Honduras. While this alone is remarkable, what truly makes this story so special is that the students are in fact traveling to Honduras to train the villagers in assembling the ATV to be used to transport supplies and serve as a medical transport vehicle to villages where no roads exist. The only means of transportation has been by foot and rope bridges.

If this were not enough—these same students and their teacher have researched the area and found that many of the villagers have lost limbs due to illness and lack of available medical care. As they developed their ATV they realized that some of the same technology used in the construction could be used for joints in prosthetic legs and arms. So not only will these students teach villagers to reassemble the ATV, they will also be fitting villagers with prosthetic legs and arms they have constructed in consultation with a local prosthetic company.

As I sat and listened to these young men and women explain their planning and construction process, I had to continually remind myself I was listening to highschoolers. The most profound message, however, was their unselfish desire to spend part of their summer serving others in a



State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice

place totally unfamiliar to them, but knowing that it is their responsibility to the greater good to not let what they have learned stop at the classroom door.

Public education is often described as a broken system, but each and every day I am learning that not only is it not broken, it is producing globally aware and caring citizens focused on what should be a lesson for all of us – to care for those who for reasons beyond their control cannot care for themselves.

Survey Results

THANK YOU to everyone who took our most recent **AEN READER'S SURVEY!** Here is a quick look at just one question. A link to all survey responses is coming soon!

Q: I would like to see more articles about:

A: Top Five responses by rank and percent:

- 1 (51%) – Professional Development
- 2 (39%) – Legal Issues
- 3 (33%) – Technology
- 4 (31%) – Legislative Updates
- 5 (29%) – Teacher Education and Certification

Improved Nutrition Standards For School Meals Introduced

Changes Begin Fall 2012

The new nutrition standards for school meals are great news for the nation's children. The [new meal requirements](#) will help school nutrition professionals build on the work that Alabama public schools have done to provide more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthier entrees in school cafeterias.



Alabama has already made huge progress towards meeting the new nutrition standards, offering increasingly healthier choices for students across the state, beginning with the Student Health Initiative to decrease low-nutritive snacks and sugary sodas in 2005. Since then, eighty-three award-winning schools have continued healthy habits, introducing whole grain breads and grain products, more fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and healthier meal preparation techniques.

Changes beginning this fall include:

- Fruits and vegetables will be served each day.
- Hot and cold sandwiches will be offered on whole wheat bread products.
- Recipes have been revised to lower sodium for entrees and vegetables.
- Pre-plated salads/salad bars are encouraged to be offered every day with vitamin-packed romaine lettuce and spinach.
- Milk will be either unflavored 1% or unflavored and flavored fat-free.
- Other beverages offered will be unflavored water and 100% fruit juices.
- Fried foods are being replaced by baked products to include baked chicken and baked white and sweet potato fries.

Perry Fulton, Director of Child Nutrition, said, "It is important to encourage students to try these healthier food options. The ADE school nutrition staff has found great ways to get students excited about healthy food choices and will continue to work on creative solutions to ensure healthy foods are prepared and served to students in an appealing manner."

Some of our innovative initiatives will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Encouraging local school programs to reach out and implement a farm-to-school program that will bring fresh, local produce into the cafeteria and teach students about what foods are grown in their communities. The ADE continues to support Alabama farmers by entering into contracts for products such as sweet



- potatoes, watermelons, cantaloupe, apples, and Satsuma oranges.
- The ADE has partnered with Auburn University's Extension Services to introduce some exciting new healthy recipes using herbs and spices.
- Student taste tests are being conducted to get feedback directly from students and get them involved in foods purchased and the local menu planning process.
- The state will be featuring the Harvest of the Month program to promote the introduction of a new fruit or vegetable to students every month.
- Local school districts are encouraging schools to offer unlimited fresh fruits and vegetables to students.
- Local school districts are encouraging child nutrition staff to offer students small free samples of fresh fruits and vegetables to encourage them to try something new.
- Numerous training programs have been provided and will continue to target healthier menu planning and food production methods for child nutrition professionals throughout the state.
- Posters and information sheets will be printed and sent to all districts to disseminate information to students and parents.

The ADE encourages school administrators, teachers, and parents to support this effort by encouraging students/children to give the healthier meals a try. Students are far more likely to pick up a fruit or vegetable in the lunch line if they are encouraged by their teacher or they have been introduced to healthier foods at home. Each one of us is responsible for educating and improving the health and well-being of our children.

Photos from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Green Ribbon School Nominees Announced

Three Alabama public schools were nominated for the new United States Department of Education (USDE) Green Ribbon Schools Award. The nominations, which were sent to the USDE, include **Mill Creek Elementary School** (Madison City), **Munford Elementary School** (Talladega County), and **Winterboro High School** (Talladega County).

[The USDE Green Ribbon Schools](#) will recognize winning schools that save energy, reduce costs, feature environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement. The recognition award is part of a larger USDE effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about practices proven to result in improved student engagement, academic achievement, graduation rates, and workforce preparedness, as well as promote a government-wide aim to increase energy independence and economic security.

"The schools that applied went through a rigorous review process for this award," said **Dr. Tommy Bice**, State Superintendent of Education. "I am very proud of the teachers, staff, students, and parents who applied to be Alabama's first Green Ribbon Schools. The enthusiasm, hard work, and creativity



demonstrated by the three awardees provide an excellent environment for a well-rounded education with an emphasis on addressing the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century."

Mill Creek Elementary is the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certified school in north Alabama (certified April 2011) and the first school in Alabama to use the LEED for Schools rating system. It is only the second public school in the entire state to receive this national recognition for environmentally responsible design.

Munford Elementary is the first school in the southeast modeled after a forest and integrates forestry, conservation, and environmental education themes throughout the curriculum. Through "theme immersion," daily instruction uses the physical design and interactive exhibits to convey environmental elements.

Winterboro High students are prepared for their future through project-based learning that is heavy in real-life science, technology, and math applications. Students are engaged in projects



that involve problem-solving activities related to environmentally friendly structures, greenhouse-related science, and the value of healthy lifestyles.

In addition to the selected nominees, Bear Exploration Center (Montgomery County) and Marbury High School (Autauga County) also applied for the Green Ribbon Schools Award.

Applications were evaluated in March by a team of representatives from business, industry, state agencies, and environmental

organizations. Applications included information based on high achievements or demonstrated improvements in three eligibility areas. The

nominated schools excelled in the areas of environmental impact and energy efficiency, healthy school environments, and environmental and sustainability education.

In the coming days, the USDE will announce the national awardees. A total of 33 states, the District of Columbia, and the Bureau of Indian Education were each allowed to nominate up to three public schools and one private school. The national awardees will be honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The schools will receive State Board of Education recognition in the May 10th meeting and a picnic lunch for up to five representatives from the nominated schools, provided by the [Environmental Education Association of Alabama](#) (EEAA). The schools will also receive Project Wild and Project Wet, a curriculum and teaching guides, provided by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. EEAA will also provide the registration of one school to its 2013 Conference and membership to the organization.



Alabama's Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Prepares the Next Generation of Productive Citizens

The **Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC)** program is an elective course, which is taught by retired professional military personnel at local high schools throughout the United States. JROTC combines classroom instruction and extracurricular activities focused on:

- Attaining an awareness of the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of citizenship
- Building self-discipline
- Building life skills
- Providing rewarding leadership opportunities

Currently, there are **56** different Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps JROTC programs in Alabama. More than 8,000 students statewide are enrolled in these programs.

The overall mission of America's JROTC program is to motivate and develop young people. It is not the intent of these programs to train students for the military. The supporting objectives of JROTC are ethical values and good citizenship, effective communication and logical thinking, improved physical fitness, incentive to live drug-free, positive self-motivation and management, teamwork, and the pursuit of a successful career.

History of America's JROTC Program

JROTC was started in the United States with the passage of the National Defense Act of 1916. Under this historical provision, high schools nationwide were authorized the use of federal military equipment and active or retired military professionals as instructors. Each school had to follow a rigorous course of student development requirements. The first official JROTC battalion in the United States was founded at Leavenworth High School in Kansas. Each branch of the U.S. military now maintains a JROTC program, which is organized into units. As of 2006, there were over 3,000 units nationwide.

Today, in order for a secondary school to obtain a JROTC program, a school system must apply with one of our nation's military branches of service, provide adequate facilities and space, and also commit to a two-year obligation to continue the program (if selected).

If you would like to learn more about Alabama JROTC, contact Petro Johnson (Education Specialist and State Liaison for JROTC) at 334-242-9114 or pjohnson01@alsde.edu.



BOARD BRIEFS

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2012

- Announced Intent to Repeal Career and Technical Education Rules, 290-3-2-.23 – 290-3-2-.26, of the Teacher Certification Chapter and Adopt New
- Announced Intent to Amend Alabama Administrative Code, Teacher Education Chapter, 290-3-3



- Resolution Commending St. Clair County High School, St. Clair County School System, for Winning Three National Quill and Scroll International Honor Society for High School Journalists 2011 Yearbook Excellence Contest Awards
- Appointment, 2012-13 State Textbook Committee, English Language Arts, Grades K-12 (Includes Reading and Literature, English Language and Composition, Handwriting, Speech, Spelling, and Dictionaries)
- Resolution to Appoint Substitute Members to the Science State Course of Study Committee
- Resolution for Approval of a Teacher Education Program, Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama
- State Superintendent's Report

Date, Time, and Place of Next Elementary/Secondary Meetings:

April 26, 2012, Work Session

Gordon Persons Building - Plaza 104
Montgomery, AL 36130

May 10, 2012, State Board Meeting

9:30 a.m.
Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building
Montgomery, AL 36130



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Alexander City School Recognized for Best Environmental Program

Radney Elementary School's gifted student program was honored on Friday, March 1, 2012, when the Best Environmental Education Program (BEEP) Award was presented to Radney teacher **Laurie Barrett**.

The award was presented to Mrs. Barrett by Shirley Farrell, President of the Environmental Education Association of Alabama, during their annual conference at Camp McDowell near Jasper, Alabama.

Some of the reasons voiced for the 2012 BEEP Award going to Mrs. Barrett and her students: "She empowers her students with a spirit of ethical responsibility for the future of their natural world and a wealth of teaching points about environmental matters by partnering with representatives from Lake Watch of Lake Martin and Alabama Water Watch (AWW) at Auburn University.

Events included water quality monitoring of a stream behind their school and Lake Martin; learning about algae and invasive plant species; learning about the concept of watersheds and how non-point source pollution like eroded soil degrades water quality; having hands-on experiences with geology, geography and forestry; learning the art of orienteering; and weekly hikes in the woods behind the Radney School. Mrs. Barrett's efforts enriched the lives of her students in countless ways and serve as an inspiration to other environmental education teachers throughout the state."

Mrs. Barrett has worked closely with Lake Watch of Lake Martin water monitors, Dick and Mary Ann Bronson and Tom and Pat Lynch, who assist with the numerous special topics several times a month. The students gain knowledge about water science and an appreciation of their water resources through testing water quality via AWW methods, including Water Chemistry, Bacteriological, and Stream Biomonitoring. They contribute to the AWW statewide online water quality database through their regular monthly monitoring of Lake Martin. Mrs. Barrett enriches learning in the sciences further by incorporating activities from Exploring Alabama's Living Streams, an accredited environmental education curriculum developed by AWW (with major input from Lake Watch monitors, Dick and Mary Ann Bronson).

Mrs. Barrett's husband Tom and daughter Ava were present at the ceremony, as were Dick and Mary Ann Bronson from Lake Watch of Lake Martin and Dr. Bill Deutsch from Alabama Water Watch. Lake Watch of Lake Martin has made a commitment to continue its environmental education support to Radney School for school year 2012-2013, and beyond.

For additional information on Mrs. Barrett's activities with her gifted class, [CLICK HERE](#) or [HERE](#).



Laurie Barrett (center) holding 2012 BEEP Award, with husband Tom and daughter Ava, along with the Bronsons (Lake Watch of Lake Martin) and Bill Deutsch (Alabama Water Watch)

Professionals Respond to EDUCATEAlabama Surveys



The 2012 EDUCATEAlabama Surveys were open to all practitioners to provide feedback on the 2011-2012 EDUCATEAlabama online process from March 19, 2012, through March 31, 2012.

A total of **3,102 people completed surveys** (2,703 educators, 317 school-based instructional leaders, and 82 central office staff).

The Alabama 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 2012-2013.

Select the following links to review final 2012 EA Survey results.

- [Evaluates Survey Results](#)
- [Evaluators Survey Results](#)
- [Reviewers Survey Results](#)

COMING SOON!

LEADAlabama

Alabama Professional Learning Collaborative

A Formative Evaluation System for Central Office and Building-Level Administrators.
Implementation Date: August 1, 2012

LEADAlabama Training

Introductory Webinar – May 2012

Face-to-Face Training (*Superintendents and Evaluation Coordinators*) – June 2012

Webinar Training (ALL LEADAlabama Users) – July 2012

Training locations, dates, and times to be announced.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Christopher Blair

LEADAlabama Project Administrator

(334) 353-0478 or cblair@alsde.edu

AWARDS/OPPORTUNITIES

Marbury Technology Innovation Awards



Now is your chance to recognize the technology innovators in your school or district. Nominations are open for the 2012 Marbury Technology Innovation Awards. Learn more [HERE](#).

SUPER Teacher Institutes – Summer 2012

The Alabama Humanities Foundation is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The AHF is funded by the NEH, the State of Alabama through the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, and donations from corporate and private foundations and individuals. Program content directly addresses Alabama's mandated courses of study. Participants renew and expand their content knowledge, gain new perspectives on a wide range of humanities topics, learn practical classroom applications, and develop a multi-disciplinary approach to the humanities – Entirely Free of Charge.

All 4th-12th grade teachers currently teaching in Alabama public and private schools are eligible. School librarians, administrators, and pre-service teachers are encouraged to apply and will be



considered on a case-by-case basis. There are NO costs apart from your travel to and from the program site. All applications require a \$50 fully-refundable security deposit.

To apply, visit www.ahf.net and follow the detailed application instructions or contact Thomas Bryant at tbryant@ahf.net.

Rosenthal Prize for Innovation in Math Teaching

The Museum of Mathematics (MoMath) is pleased to announce the inaugural **Rosenthal Prize for Innovation in Math Teaching**. Designed to recognize and promote hands-on math teaching in the upper elementary and middle school classroom, the Rosenthal Prize carries a cash award of \$25,000.



MoMath is looking for the highest caliber applicants in the country. Math teachers affiliated with the Alabama Department of Education are invited to apply now. Please feel free to share this information with any interested parties.



Fourth through twelfth grade math teachers at schools in the United States are eligible for the Rosenthal Prize. Preliminary applications are due Friday, May 11, 2012. Visit rosenthalprize.momath.org for more information.

ALEX Invites Entries for the 2012 iChallenge Podcast Showcase!

The Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) is excited to host the third annual



iChallenge Podcast Showcase! This thrilling opportunity challenges teachers, students, and informal educators to create short, enhanced video podcasts and submit them to ALEX. Find out how easy it is to create podcasts and win technology prizes, incentives—and fame, while having fun at the same time! All you need is located on the [iChallenge website](#).

This year ALEX is encouraging podcast creators to incorporate the theme "Healthy Body, Healthy Mind." This 2012 theme is inspired by **The Year of Alabama Food**, a campaign sponsored by the Alabama Tourism Department celebrating Alabama's rich diversity of home-grown and prepared dishes. While Alabama is known for fine cooking and sports, unfortunately, there is strong evidence that our children need to learn about healthy lifestyles. What better way to teach them than through videos prepared by Alabama's educators and students?

Last year's program resulted in over 200 entries and added over 150 new podcasts to ALEX's gallery360°, Alabama's Podcast Gallery.



Additionally, ALEX has unveiled the Alabama iTunes U page in Apple's iTunes Store. This allows the very best of Alabama's educational podcasts to be shared not only on ALEX, but also around the world on iTunes U!

Prizes will once again be awarded for the best in class podcasts in a variety of categories, including a Best Themed Podcast.

To learn more about the iChallenge, head over to [ALEX](#) and click on the iChallenge button or contact Keith George at 334-242-9594 or kgeorge@alsde.edu.

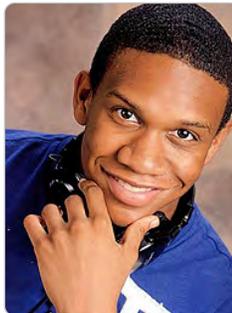
CONGRATULATIONS!

Sparkman Indoor Percussion Ensemble Named Alabama State Champions

On Saturday, March 31, 2012, the Sparkman Indoor Percussion Ensemble was named Southeastern Color Guard Circuit (SCGC) and Alabama State Champions at the SCGC Championships in Nashville, TN. Performing its 2012 program "Redemption," the Sparkman Indoor Percussion Ensemble (SIP) scored a 90.25 and competed against ensembles from Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky. This victory makes SIP two-time SCGC and Alabama Gold Medalists for 2011 and 2012 after only three years of competition. SIP is under the direction of Jack Albert, with Chase Marsh, Andy Kruspe, and Corey Winter as additional instructional staff. Congratulations!

Sparkman High Student Receives \$5000 Appleton Learning Award

Appleton Learning recently announced its \$5,000 Hometown Scholarship recipient. **Corban Swain**, a senior at Sparkman High School, was awarded the scholarship based on his ACT score increase (from a 23 to a 33). He will be recognized at the Sparkman High School Awards Banquet on May 15th. Applications were judged on the total point increase from the applicants' first test or baseline score and their final test score.

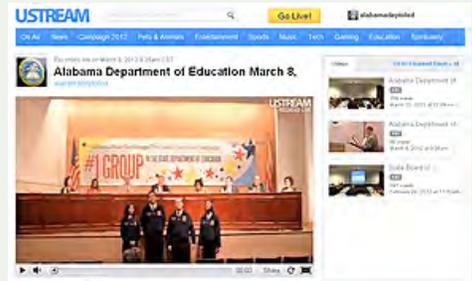


Elmore County Students Attend the Alabama State Science and Engineering Fair

Seventeen students from Elmore County (Wetumpka Middle School, Redland Elementary School and Wetumpka High School) attended the Alabama State Science and Engineering Fair held at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Alabama, on April 5-7, 2012, where they all competed against 250 students from all over the state of Alabama. This year, Elmore County students received 10 special awards. Lucas Lynn and Dalton Cape won multiple special awards on their projects: "Centsable Power: Can Coins Be Used Instead of Batteries?" and "Can Non-Newtonian Fluids Stop a Bullet." Garret and Kyle Tyson won two special awards on their team project, "Still Standing," and Aaron Simonton received the Best in Category special award for his project, "Credit, Debit, or Bacteria."



State Board of Education Meetings Now on Ustream.tv!



See your State Board of Education in action - Online at <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/alabama-department-of-education>. See LIVE video every second and fourth Thursday of the month or watch the archived videos anytime you want (different days in July, November, and December).

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