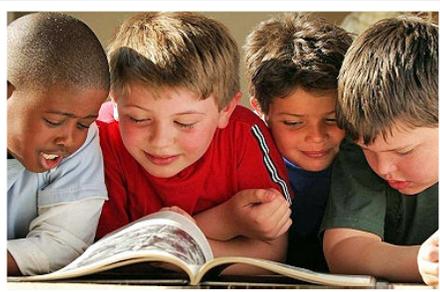


# ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

August  
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Issue I



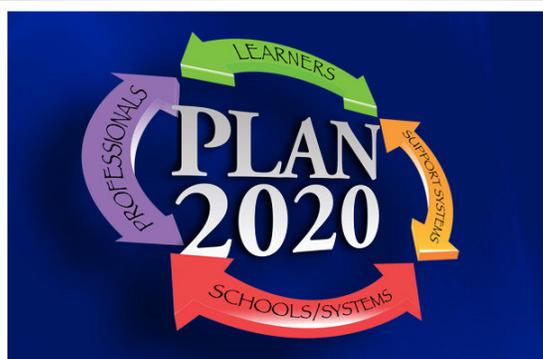
## From the State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice

**As we begin this new school year** I want to share some insights with you following a summer of exceptional learning opportunities with Alabama educators. Over the summer, I have participated in several conferences beginning with the CLAS Conference, followed by the SSA Conference, MEGA Conference, and this week six back-to-school convocations in some of Alabama's exceptional local school systems. During this three-week window I have had the honor of speaking with over 10,000 Alabama educators. What I have learned from these experiences is that there is a renewed excitement about the future of public education in our state as we shift our focus from Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to College and Career Readiness for ALL students under our waiver from No Child Left Behind and the full implementation of Alabama's PLAN 2020.



As I shared during each of these meetings, this new concept is such a paradigm shift to our focus for the last decade that it will take time to internalize. For example, the list for AYP did not come out in August but rather a shift was made to Priority and Focus schools for support and turnaround, credit will be given for growth and continual improvement, there will be multiple ways to be college- and career-ready, and high school assessments are no longer a gatekeeper to graduation. What we now have is an opportunity to refocus our innovative and creative

**WHAT WE NOW HAVE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFOCUS OUR INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE EFFORTS ON STUDENTS AND RELEVANT AND ENGAGING LEARNING RATHER THAN JUST A SCORE ON A TEST.**  
— STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION DR. TOMMY BICE



efforts on students and relevant and engaging learning rather than just a score on a test. Yes, tests will forever be part of the equation but no longer count as an all-or-nothing measure of accountability, but rather one part of a much bigger picture we know as public education.

I have pursued this work for 35 years and have seen many shifts, changes, reforms, and initiatives come and go, but this new work has no one single magic

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## From the Superintendent

*continued from the front...*

bullet – it is based on sound instructional practice found in what I refer to as “absolutes.” I have used these absolutes throughout my career, and they have yet to fail me, regardless of the student populations or subjects I taught. You will hear me reference these absolutes regularly in my communications surrounding our new focus on student learning. These “absolutes” are as follows:

- 1. Teach to the standard.** This sounds so very simple but in practice it requires a deep understanding of content and its relationship to the real world. It requires understanding what the knowledge and skill set of a student looks like when they meet the standard, and it cannot be fully realized with a heavy reliance on a textbook or some other single resource. What I can say with absolute certainty is that if we teach to the standard and the assessments we give are aligned to those standards, the test should no longer be the focus.
- 2. Develop a clearly articulated K-12 curriculum to reflect the scope and sequence of instruction most appropriate for your learners based on the content standards.** Without this alignment within grades, within subjects, across grades and subjects, horizontally and vertically, instructional chaos occurs, and learning is marginalized. When there is alignment, students, teachers, and all involved have a clear direction and expected outcomes.
- 3. Align human, programmatic, and fiscal resources to support the implementation of the aligned curriculum – the enacted and taught curriculum.** This alignment assures that the resources needed for student success are in the right place at the right time and in the right quantity for educators to do their jobs.
- 4. Progress monitor regularly through formative, interim, and benchmark assessments.** Regretfully, assessment has become a negative term over the past decade because we automatically associate it with AYP and sanctions when in fact it is an integral part of instruction if used appropriately. Know with absolute certainty that these assessments only have value at the local level, which is where they will remain.
- 5. Adjust/differentiate instruction based on your formative, interim, and benchmark assessments.** If we are not using assessments for this purpose, I would ask why we give them in the first place. There is such power in the information from these assessments that can impact instruction on a day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month basis. Again, students who need extra attention can receive it in a timely manner, students who need to be accelerated can be provided with these opportunities, and then “the test” is an opportunity to showcase your achievements.

As we move into this new world of opportunity, please exercise flexibility and innovation to achieve these “absolutes.” We will be successful – I guarantee it!

## Glen Iris Elementary Receives Award



A group of faculty members from **Glen Iris Elementary School** went to Houston recently to receive a 2013 National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) Excellence in Urban Education Award.

Glen Iris was one of 16 schools to be honored this year and one of only 78 ever to receive NCUST recognition.

According to NCUST, the winning schools “serve low-income communities, have multiple challenges; yet, they have outstanding evidence of academic achievement for all students. Winning schools contribute to an ever-growing effort to understand how educators can create excellent urban schools for all students.”

## Alabama School Nurse of the Year

**Carol Rutledge**, a registered nurse who serves South Hampton Elementary and Daniel Payne Middle Schools, has been named Alabama School Nurse of the Year.



The Alabama Association of School Nurses (AASN) selected Rutledge from nominees who were submitted from districts around the state.

## Student Enrollment Procedures



**With the start of the new school year fast approaching,** we need your assistance in assuring that all children in Alabama have access to a quality education regardless of their race, ethnicity, birthplace, or the birthplace of their parents. Please be mindful of the following student enrollment procedures and ensure that this

information is implemented consistently in all of your schools and shared publicly via all school and school system Web sites, etc.

1. Each school should have a designated person or persons responsible for student enrollments.
2. If there is a question about the sufficiency of documentation provided by a parent/guardian, the school should always enroll the student first and then seek any clarification or additional information that may be needed.
3. Regarding the use of a Social Security Number (SSN) for enrollment purposes, schools should make it clear that providing a child's SSN is voluntary, explain how the number will be used and the legal authority for the request, and explain that if a parent/guardian chooses not to provide a child's SSN that will not bar a child from enrolling in school. Failure of a parent/guardian to provide a child's SSN will not bar a child from being enrolled in school. No parent/guardian should have to provide his/her SSN in order to enroll a student.
4. Assign a unique student identification number to any student enrolling without a SSN per Alabama regulations.
5. A student's birth certificate may be requested in order to verify age. However, schools may not bar a student from enrolling because the student has a foreign birth certificate or presents no birth certificate. A flexible approach should be taken that would allow for alternative documentation to prove age such as a religious, hospital, or physician's certificate showing date of birth; a baptismal certificate; an entry in a family Bible; an adoption record; an affidavit from a parent; previously verified school records; etc.
6. While schools request documents for proof of residency, it is not a requirement in state law that parents/guardians provide an Alabama driver's license or Alabama ID for that purpose. Under no circumstances should schools deny enrollment to students because their parent/guardian does not produce an Alabama driver's license or state-issued ID. Residency may be established through multiple means including a utility bill/residential lease.

No child is to be denied enrollment in any school or participation in school activities and programs based on the immigration status of the child or the child's parents/guardians. If you have any questions regarding enrollment issues, contact the Prevention and Support Services Section of the Alabama State Department of Education at 334-242-8165.

## CCRS Update

**Alabama's College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS) are in full swing!** With the implementation of English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy standards this year and Mathematics standards last year, schools are well on the way to increasing the rigor in the classroom and better preparing students for college, work, and adulthood. CCRS Teaching Academies were held this summer to assist teachers in designing exemplary lessons and units around CCRS. Approximately 650 teachers attended these Academies and are producing lessons/units that will be shared with teachers across the state.

***"Attending the CCRS Summer Academy was an educational and enriching opportunity. I value the State Department of Education leadership that guided me to a deeper understanding of the CCRS."***  
 – *Patrice Wasden,*  
*Troy City Schools.*

Academy participants will meet in October to make final edits on the lessons/units that will be posted online for all teachers to access. In addition, ARI and AMSTI regional staff are assisting teachers with understanding the standards as well as with instructional strategies. There is much excitement in classrooms across Alabama as students are actively engaged in ELA and mathematics.

Once again, CCRS Implementation Teams from each LEA will meet quarterly during the 2013-14 school year. Meetings will be held in each of the eleven in-service regions and provide a venue for sharing professional learning and resources that assist LEAs with implementation. Information about dates and locations of these meetings can be found on the [CCRS Web site](#). If you have questions or about CCRS, [CLICK HERE](#).

## 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Since 2003, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has overseen the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program. Grants are awarded to applicants that propose to create learning centers that provide academic enrichment

opportunities in low-performing schools with high concentrations of students with greater economic disadvantages. This year, the United States Department of Education awarded Alabama over \$17M for the establishment of 55 new 21st CCLC grantees and the

continuation of 89 grantees. In order to produce well-rounded students, Alabama's 21st CCLCs balanced academic enrichment with other personal, social, and emotional supports. Alabama's 21st CCLC programs serve more than 21,000 students and their families each year.

In order to facilitate continuous program improvement, there are two initiatives being implemented in 21st CCLCs across Alabama during the 2013-2014 year: The Alabama STEM Studio for Afterschool Learning (TASSAL) and the Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS). TASSAL utilizes a series of hands-on, inquiry-based activities that integrate STEM principles in a fun, non-threatening learning



environment. This program provides professional development in order to prepare 21st CCLC staff to effectively implement STEM activities and create authentic learning experiences for their students. The APAS is an assessment system that allows afterschool programs to

utilize surveys and observational tools in order to gain perspectives of key stakeholders to facilitate in program improvement. These initiatives are intended to improve focused efforts related to program improvement while providing Alabama's students with the skills they need to be successful in the 21st century work force.

As part of the social and leadership development of students, each year 21st CCLC programs implement an on-going service learning project. This year, students of the New Hope Learning Center hosted a "Fun Run" for a healthy lifestyle along with family and community togetherness! Students learned how to cook healthy meals and how to properly exercise in addition to entrepreneurship skills through research and advertisement!

More than simply a means of improving students' skills, these programs facilitate the partnering of community-based organizations and individuals, which strengthens bonds within the community and builds support structures for individual students. There is every indication that Alabama's 21st CCLC programs will continue to benefit Alabama's families through high-quality instruction and activities, reaching out to those who are most in need of these services.

## Tracy Roberts Completes Comprehensive State Board of Education Member Orientation

Alabama State Board of Education Member Tracy Roberts has completed two days of intensive training provided at no charge by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) to help new board members become highly effective state education policymakers.

Roberts, who represents District 1, joined state board members from 17 states and territories in sessions that covered basic boardsmanship issues such as the responsibilities of boards and their members, the sequence of policy development, and Robert's Rules of Order. Sessions were also offered on more advanced subjects, including how to provide effective state leadership through board actions.

"New Board Member training was valuable time spent with people who have vast experience at the state level and, like me, are new to state policymaking," Roberts said. "What I discovered is that all states are unique, yet they share many common concerns and issues. It was great to discuss and seek solutions together. I look forward to having a new resource for state education work."

"At this pivotal time in public education, it is critical that state board members acquire the knowledge and skills they need to represent the students of their respective states," said NASBE Executive Director Kristen Amundson. "These volunteer leaders give their time, energy, and expertise to their respective states, and we proudly work to support them not only at the outset of their education policymaking careers, but throughout their service."

State boards are responsible for setting statewide education standards, including academic standards, high school graduation requirements, teacher professional qualifications, and statewide testing programs. For more, [CLICK](#).



## Alabama State Department of Education Moves Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

As part of a steadfast commitment to ensure a world-class education for all students, the Alabama State Department of Education has released a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports design document and district roll-out plan. ALSDE officials, area superintendents and representatives from Scholastic recently unveiled the new design document during a news conference.

"We are so optimistic about the power of this new design that builds on previous efforts to address the barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students," said Dr. Linda Felton-Smith, Director, Office of Learning Support. "It unifies and moves student supports away from reacting to problems toward system development with a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention."

The intent is to fully integrate the learning support system as a primary component of our school improvement policy and practice and focus on:

- Reframing current student/learning supports programs.
- Re-deploying resources.
- Developing in-classroom and school-wide approaches, including learning supports found effective in the state's high-poverty/high-achieving schools.
- Developing the capacity to implement learning supports through leadership training.
- Revamping infrastructures at the school, district, and state levels.
- Developing and implementing accountability indicators directly related to the learning support system and fully integrating them into school improvement accountability.

Ten districts will implement the design starting this fall:

**Bessemer City**  
**Chickasaw City**  
**Etowah County**  
**Butler County**  
**Decatur City**  
**Perry County**  
**Calhoun County**  
**Dothan City**  
**Shelby County**  
**Lauderdale County**

Other districts will be phased in over the coming years.

"This new direction will help advance Alabama's PLAN 2020, which outlines four priorities, including the learners, the support systems, the school systems, and the professionals," explains Dr. Tommy Bice, State Superintendent of Education. "Each of these four components of the plan has to function together like an 'eco-system' so that we can meet our objectives of improving student growth and achievement, closing the achievement gap, increasing the graduation rate, and increasing the number of students that are college- and career-ready. Student support is a vital part of that total system."

Our work in Alabama to design and implement this exciting body of work is being supported by Scholastic Consultant Dr. Rhonda Neal-Waltman, former Assistant Superintendent with Mobile County Schools, and Drs. Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor from the UCLA Center for Mental Health.



## Blue Cross/Blue Shield Awards Grants

To help prevent childhood obesity, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama's school grant program is awarding \$197,515 in grants to 22 schools statewide for the 2013-2014 school year. The grants are for the implementation of school-based health and wellness programs, efforts to emphasize increased exercise, nutrition education and parental involvement during the school year. Each school is receiving a grant up to \$10,000.

### Congratulations to the following schools receiving grants for the 2013-2014 school year:

**Airport Intermediate** (Elmore County Schools)  
**Albert Turner Sr. Elementary** (Perry County Schools)  
**Arcadia Elementary** (Tuscaloosa City Schools)  
**Bear Exploration Center** (Montgomery County Schools)  
**Bluff Park Elementary** (Hoover City Schools)  
**Childersburg Elementary** (Talladega County Schools)  
**C.J. Donald Elementary** (Fairfield City Schools)  
**Forest Oaks Elementary** (Shelby County Schools)  
**Harlan Elementary** (Florence City Schools)  
**Huntington Place** (Tuscaloosa County Schools)  
**Ivalee School** (Etowah County Schools)  
**Jemison Elementary** (Chilton County Schools)  
**Joseph Lisenby Elementary** (Ozark City Schools)  
**Mt. Olive Primary** (Russell County Schools)  
**Oak Mountain Elementary** (Shelby County Schools)  
**Ogletree Elementary** (Auburn City Schools)  
**Owens Cross Roads** (Madison County Schools)  
**Pick Elementary** (Auburn City Schools)  
**Pinecrest Elementary** (Sylacauga City Schools)  
**Pintlala Elementary** (Montgomery County Schools)  
**Taylor White Elementary** (Mobile County Schools)  
**Thompson Intermediate** (Shelby County Schools)

## Alabama Shines At 37th Annual SECME Summer Institute And National Student Competition Day

Alabama educators and students came together to celebrate “the best of the best” in STEM-focused education during the 37th Annual SECME Summer Institute’s Professional Development, Pipeline Diversity Summit, and National Student Day Competitions.

A delegation of representatives from the Alabama State Department of Education and the state’s public secondary and postsecondary schools participated in professional development workshops and competitions at the conference hosted by the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) College of Engineering in Daytona Beach, FL.

SECME’s mission is to increase the pool of historically under-represented and under-served students who will be prepared to enter and complete postsecondary studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), thus creating a diverse and globally competitive workforce.

Summer Institute professional development content presenters included: Dr. Susan Davis, State Courses of Study Administrator, and Dr. Michal Robinson, Science Curriculum Specialist; Myra Jackson, UA/UW Alabama Math, Science Technology Initiative (AMSTI); and Kim Worrell, Mobile County Schools.

Of special note were middle grades teachers/presenters

who trained with collaborative university faculty as a component of Tuskegee University’s Math and Science Partnership: A NanoBio Science Partnership for the Alabama Black Belt Region. University faculty from Alabama State University, Auburn University, Tuskegee University, and The University of Alabama created content for the “Tuskegee NanoBio Science Academy,” which was presented by: Belinda Hart (Macon County Schools); Bettie Lucky (Perry County Schools); Jane McGowan (Selma City Schools); Yolanda Nickelson (Dallas County Schools); and Melisa Smith (Montgomery County Schools).

Schools from Alabama were also well represented during the SECME National Student Day Competition. Middle and high schools vied for awards such as “SECME Engineering Design: Mousetrap Car,” “SECME Engineering Design: VEX Robotics,” “SECME Essay” and “SECME Engineering Design: Bottle Rocketry.” Walter T. McKee Middle School, Montgomery County Schools, was named the 3rd place Bottle Rocketry National Winner in the Middle School Division.

Today, SECME is a non-profit alliance that extends to 70 school systems, 43 major engineering universities, and industries and agencies in 16 states, the District of Columbia, and Grand Bahamas. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

## Andalusia City School System Highlighted on *Let’s Move* Blog

The **Andalusia City School System** was recently highlighted in First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move* Blog for being proactive in meeting new meal standards.

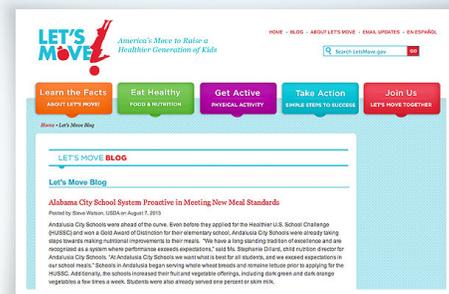
According to the post by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) writer Steve Watson, even before Andalusia Elementary School was awarded the Healthier U.S. School Challenge (HUSSC) Gold Award of Distinction, the school system was already taking steps towards making nutritional improvements to its meals.

“We have a long-standing tradition of excellence and are recognized as a system where performance exceeds expectations,” Stephanie Dillard, Child Nutrition Director for Andalusia City Schools, said in the blog post. “At Andalusia City Schools we want what is best for all students, and we exceed expectations in our school meals.”

Schools in Andalusia began serving whole wheat breads and romaine lettuce prior to applying for the HUSSC award. Additionally, the schools increased their fruit and vegetable offerings, including dark green and dark orange vegetables a few times a week. Students were also already served one percent or skim milk, the blog post states.

“Increasing whole grains and fruits and vegetables is beneficial in any child’s diet,” Dillard said. “The new meal pattern is teaching children at a younger age how to eat healthier and to make better choices. If we reach students at school and teach them how to lead a healthier lifestyle by good food choices and physical activity, this will not only lead to healthy students but also help families lead a healthy lifestyle.”

Read more about the school system’s efforts and see photos [HERE](#).



## New Honor Ribbon Acknowledges Special Needs Students' Achievements

**It happened almost 10 years ago**, but Earnestine Woods still can't get the image out of her mind.

Woods was working as a resource officer at Jefferson Davis High School in Montgomery, and on this particular day she was keeping an eye on students as they picked up their caps, gowns, stoles and other graduation regalia in the days leading up to the school's commencement exercises.

She noticed that one of the school's special needs students was standing in a line with students who were waiting to collect honor cords. Woods said he was excited about completing the Community Based Instruction (CBI) program, which helps special needs students develop age-appropriate skills for functioning outside the school environment after graduation.

Like his peers, he thought he deserved some sort of special recognition, and was disappointed when he made his way to the front of the line and was told he would not receive an honor cord.

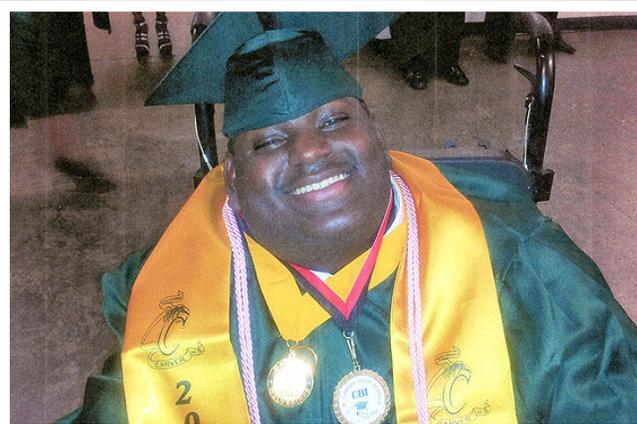
"He wouldn't budge," Woods said. "He just kept standing there waiting to get an honor cord for his accomplishment. He couldn't understand why they wouldn't give him one."

Woods was able to lure the young man away from the table, but only after she gave him a makeshift "honorary honors token" and "made a vow to him that if it is the last thing I do, I will make sure special needs students are recognized for completing the Community Based Instruction program."

Woods has been working diligently to keep her promise and recently formed a partnership with Montgomery Public Schools and Charlie's Trophies in Montgomery to provide honor ribbons to graduates of the system's CBI program. She hopes to expand the initiative to other Alabama school systems.

"I am of the belief that these students should be recognized just as their peers are for their accomplishments and reaching this milestone in their life," said Woods, who now serves as the E Director of Have a Heart for Children. The organization, which Woods also founded, aims to provide social and educational opportunities to enhance the welfare of children, including after school, mentoring, summer and athletic programs, among others.

Each red and black honor ribbon is affixed to a gold medallion that is inscribed with the name of the school granting the CBI certificate as well as the graduating year. CBI is aligned with skills that relate to specific Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals or objectives, including enhancing social skills, communication and academic achievement. The program also prepares special needs students for successful transition to adulthood after graduation, as well as helps them live independently.



Katrina Johnson, Director of the Department of Special Education for Montgomery Public Schools, said the system is thrilled about its partnership with Have a Heart for Children. At the end of the 2012-2013 school year, honor ribbons were given to more than two dozen MPS special needs students. "It is really important for our students to be recognized for completing the (CBI) program," Johnson said, noting that CBI combines

academic instruction in the classroom and field experiences, such as taking special needs students on a shopping trip where they have to select and pay for their purchases. "We are thrilled to be able to offer the honor cord to our (CBI) students as it not only gives them a sense of accomplishment, but gives them the chance to be afforded the same opportunity as their peers."

"Montgomery Public Schools is really grateful to have such a caring partner in Earnestine Woods," Johnson said. "We are extremely thankful for her interest in our students and are excited about partnering with her for future programs."

Woods is happy to help.

"All children need to be recognized, so I felt like this was just something I had to step up and do," she said.

"The goal is to get schools throughout the state – maybe even all over the country – to get on board with this. I believe it can happen."



## “Summer Food Rocks!” Raises Awareness for Underutilized Program

“USDA!” “YMCA!” “USDA!” “YMCA!”

With that chant, more than 200 YMCA Goodtimes summer campers helped set the tone for the Alabama State Department of Education Child Nutrition Section inaugural Summer Food Service Program Kickoff Rally. “Summer Food Rocks!” was the first event of its kind, which works with the YMCA and other summer feeding sponsors in more than half of the state’s 67 counties.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is one of the most underutilized federal programs, with around only 10 percent of children who are eligible for the program receiving meals. More than 21 million children in the country receive free- and reduced-price meals during the school year, but during the summer only about 1 in 10 of those kids (3 million) get free meals through federal summer feeding programs.

Hosted in conjunction with the 3rd Annual National Summer Food Service Program Kickoff Week (June 10-14) and the YMCA’s “Healthy Me Week,” the rally aimed to raise awareness for the need for more organizations to administer the SFSP in Alabama communities with the highest need.

Robert McGaughey and Jeff Reynolds of the Montgomery YMCA, City of Montgomery “Health and Wellness Czar” Michael Briddell, and ALSDE Child Nutrition Program Coordinator June Barrett served as “Summer Food Rocks!” speakers. Several special guests also came out to show their support for the program, including Gilbert Rochon and Patricia Saul Rochon, President and First Lady of Tuskegee University, and Representatives from the U. S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service Southeast Regional Office.

If your organization is interested in becoming a 2014 SFSP sponsor or site, contact [Danielle Turk](#) (ALSDE Education Specialist), [Alfredia Griffin](#) (ALSDE Education Administrator), or call 334-242-8249.



## Alabama’s School Safety Measures get National Notice

**The deaths of seven children** after a mile-wide tornado demolished an Oklahoma public school raises new questions about America’s infrastructure and whether we can do a better job of guarding against the threat of tornadoes and dangerous winds. The short answer is yes. We can indeed save lives and maybe even reduce property damage. But how we go about doing this will make all the difference.

So far, only Alabama has ordered storm-safe construction of new schools. Carla Percival-Young, an architect with Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood Inc., has designed six new schools for storm safety. “The one thing we do not do is build a stand-alone shelter,” she said, “because it costs too much and we want children into that center in less than 10 minutes.”

A planned addition to Andalusia Middle School includes an interior multipurpose room designed to withstand storm winds with walls made of thick concrete and reinforcing rods.

The new school also has windows, which are good for education and a

***Only Alabama has ordered storm-safe construction and has designed six new schools for storm safety.***

sense of well-being. If a tornado approaches, heavy steel shutters inside the building lock in place, letting the winds throw the glass outward, but leaving those inside safe. The shutters do not look like industrial-strength protectors, Percival-Young said, but rather what they will be in normal use: frames for marker boards.

[Complete story.](#)

## 2013 ACCESS Awards

**The Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide (ACCESS) Distance Learning Program** is recognizing five individuals who are broadening awareness of a program that aims to provide an infrastructure that delivers equitable, quality learning opportunities for all high school students.

The recipients of the inaugural ACCESS Awards were recognized and presented with their awards during the 2013 Alabama Educational Technology



Conference held at the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex from June 11-13, 2013.

ACCESS was launched on November 1, 2004. The distance education initiative offers opportunities for students at their local community schools that would have otherwise not been possible by providing a blended learning model that provides resources, connectivity, and professional development.

Larry Raines, Program Administrator for ACCESS, said the awards recognition

program was created as a way “to recognize the people in the five key positions who work so hard to make ACCESS a success.” Some of the state winners could be eligible for and nominated for national distance learning awards, Raines added.

Among the criteria for the first ACCESS Awards are work and diligence that had a positive impact on teaching and learning using the ACCESS program; improvement of the quality of education in Alabama’s schools; work that reflects the mission and goals of the nominee’s school; and utilization of technology to advance education in Alabama.

The winners were selected by a panel from nominations sent in by the three ACCESS Support Centers at The University of Alabama, Troy University, and Madison City Board of Education.



**The first ACCESS Awards recipients are:**

- **ACCESS Administrator of the Year:** Laura McBride, Principal  
Brookwood High School  
Tuscaloosa County Schools
- **ACCESS Teacher of the Year:** Jeff Johnson, Science Teacher  
Hoover High School  
Hoover City Schools
- **ACCESS Counselor of the Year:** Vickie Looser, Counselor  
Lanett High School  
Lanett City Schools
- **ACCESS Facilitator of the Year:** Staci Williams Toole  
Northview High School  
Dothan City Schools
- **ACCESS Student of the Year:** Frances Ann Hudson  
Fayetteville High School  
Talladega County Schools

The 2013 Alabama Educational Technology Conference kicked off with ACCESS Teacher and Staff Day for active teachers, facilitators, and

***ACCESS offers opportunities for students by providing a blended learning model that provides resources, connectivity, and professional development.***

interested professionals. One of the highlights of that day was the keynote address given by Jeff Utecht, an internationally renowned speaker who shared his wealth of knowledge of interacting with high school students around the world through distance learning programs.

## Six Educators Receive Marbury Technology Innovation Award

*A group of K-12 educators, administrators and support personnel are among the winners of the 2013 Marbury Technology Innovation Award.*

The award, sponsored by the Alabama State Department of Education, honors Chiquita Marbury's invaluable years of service as a technology innovator in Alabama by recognizing educators who are exemplary models of technology teachers and leaders.

"Transforming learning one child at a time" was Marbury's daily pursuit. After 10 years, this passion is continued through the Marbury Technology Award program. The winners who reflect the Marbury standard of excellence and who continue her dedication and commitment to education are (l to r):



- **District Technology Coordinator:** Debbie Rice, Auburn City Schools
- **School Administrator:** Tricia Culpepper, Cullman City Primary School, Cullman City Schools
- **Middle School Teacher:** Molly Bates, Russellville Middle School, Russellville City Schools
- **Elementary Teacher:** Davina Mann, Owens Cross Roads School, Madison County Schools
- **High School Teacher:** Keith Fulmer, Hoover High School, Hoover City Schools
- **Superintendent/Central Office Staff:** David Crouse, Roanoke City Schools

Each of the award winners received a trophy of recognition at the 2013 Alabama Educational Technology Conference (AETC) at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC) in Birmingham, AL. The awards ceremony took place during the opening session on Wednesday, June 12, 2013.

Although only the winners were recognized during AETC, the following educators were **2013 Marbury semifinalists**:

- **Stephane Bolton**  
Harlan Elementary School  
Florence City Schools
- **Shannon Hill**  
Lincoln Elementary School  
Talladega County Schools
- **Linda Bean**  
Cullman Middle School  
Cullman City Schools
- **Allison Papaleo**  
Oak Hill School  
Tuscaloosa City Schools
- **Blake Busbin**  
Auburn High School  
Auburn City Schools
- **Julie Powell**  
Elmore County High School  
Elmore County Schools
- **Teresa Davis**  
Morris Slingluff Elementary School  
Dothan City Schools
- **Brooke Morgan**  
Munford Elementary School  
Talladega County Schools
- **Nathan Anderson**  
Cullman City Schools
- **Michele White**  
Mobile County Schools
- **Jan Harris**  
Cullman City Schools
- **Karen Jensen**  
Madison County Schools

Finalists were chosen from a pool of nominations from fellow Alabama educators based upon innovation and creativity; impact on teaching and learning; leadership; teamwork and scholarship.



## Charles "Chuck" Poland Jr. Act Signed Into Law

A person who stops or delays a school bus in an unauthorized manner could face jail time under a new law named in honor of the Midland City bus driver who died while protecting the children he transported to and from school each day.

The **Charles "Chuck" Poland Jr. Act**, passed recently by the Alabama Legislature and signed into law by Governor Robert Bentley, now makes it a Class "A" misdemeanor to trespass on a school bus. Such offenses include a punishment of up to a year in jail.

Poland was fatally shot on January 29, 2013, when a gunman boarded his bus and Poland refused his demand to hand over two children. Due to Poland's heroic actions, all but one student escaped. The gunman took that child to an underground bunker, from which he was rescued unharmed after a six-day standoff.

Alabama Sen. Cam Ward, R-Alabaster, and State Rep. Alan Baker, R-Brewton, were instrumental in introducing the bills that led to the legislation. Alabama State Department of Education Pupil Transportation Director Joe Lightsey



commended the lawmakers for their hard work on behalf of the state's students and drivers, noting that unauthorized entry on Alabama school buses has increased dramatically in recent years.

"All too often, unauthorized persons have boarded school buses and threatened or assaulted students and school bus drivers. Current trespass laws do not specifically address the unauthorized entry of a school bus," Lightsey said. "The Charles 'Chuck' Poland, Jr. Act specifically addresses the issue of trespassing on an Alabama school bus and will help school systems protect students and school bus drivers by vigorously prosecuting persons who do so."

**A person commits the crime of trespass on a school bus in the first degree if he/she is found guilty of any of the following:**

- Intentionally demolishing, destroying, defacing, injuring, burning or damaging any public school bus.
- Entering a public school bus while the door is open to load or unload students without lawful purpose while at a railroad grade crossing or after being forbidden from doing so by the bus driver in charge of the bus or an authorized school official.
- As an occupant of a public school bus, refusing to leave the bus after the bus driver in charge of the bus or authorized school official demands that they do so.
- Intentionally stopping, impeding, delaying or detaining any school bus from being operated for public school purposes with the intent to commit a crime.

## State Board of Education Meetings on Ustream.tv!

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