



February 21, 2012



page 2 Alabama Green Industry Training Center

page 3 Study Shows AMSTI Effectiveness

page 4 Good News in Alabama Schools!

page 5 HealthierUS School Award Winners

ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

The electronic newsletter of the Alabama Department of Education



Dr. Tommy Bice,
State Superintendent of Education

Message from the Superintendent

Throughout the month of February we are celebrating the successes of and acknowledging the value of career and technical education. The career and technical education programs of today have a new relevance in our effort to ensure that every student graduates from high school and is career- and college-ready. According to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly one-third of the fastest growing occupations will require an associate's degree or some level of postsecondary or other technical training beyond high school.

In Alabama we have for far too long considered academic preparation and career and technical education as two distinct entities applied to two distinct groups of students. Our goal moving forward is to create a blended model of delivery where academic knowledge and career and technical skills are one in the same with multiple pathways for students to pursue their career interests whether they intend upon graduation to enter apprenticeship training or postsecondary education, or pursue advanced degrees in our universities.

Many of Alabama's career and technical education courses are creating an environment that integrates core academics with real-world relevance. One of my favorite experiences while serving as Deputy State Superintendent of Education was visiting Section High School in Jackson County. I was introduced to a very dynamic physics teacher who did not have access to the perfect laboratory setting for her students. At this same school was a technical education teacher where many of the skills he was teaching involved physics concepts. These two teachers combined their individual expertise. The physics students went to the technical education teacher for lab, and the technical education students went to the physics teacher for theory. It was advantageous for all involved as students who may have never taken a career and technical course found its



relevance to a high-level science course, and students who may have never signed up for physics realized just how capable they were because they understood its relevance to real-world situations.

Over the next several months, our State Board will be considering how to create opportunities within our middle and high school requirements for schools to create these types of learning environments where all students have an opportunity to learn and to apply their learning in preparation for careers and successful competition in a global economy.

The HistoryMakers 2nd Annual NEH Summer Institute for School Teachers

The HistoryMakers is proud to announce **The HistoryMakers' 2012 NEH Summer Institute for School Teachers in Chicago, Illinois from Sunday, July 8, 2012 – Friday, August 3, 2012.** Teachers from across the country will compete for 25 spots as Summer Scholars. These Summer Scholars will spend the month of July studying the subject of *African American Political History: From Reconstruction to the Present.*

Visit *The HistoryMakers'* [website](#) for more information. For more information on eligibility, [CLICK HERE.](#)

New Partnership Promotes “Green Industry” Education in Alabama

In an effort to further support green industry certification and environmental education in our state, the Career and Technical Education Section of the Alabama Department of Education has partnered with the Appalachian Regional Commission, Alabama Cooperative Extension System,



Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, the Alabama Green Industry Training Center, and several corporate partners to create the *Green Industry Web*.

This new partnership will establish opportunities for Alabama students to earn certification and experience in the career areas of *Landscape Management* and *Urban Forestry*. Participating agriscience teachers statewide will be trained and certified in each of these areas, and then supported as they transfer this specialized knowledge into their classrooms and ultimately student credentials that are *business and industry* recognized nationally.

Initial professional development opportunities for this program will be in Landscape Management and will be conducted during upcoming workshops starting in June.

Resources for this new initiative are being provided thru “live training”



work sessions, and via a special online library, which contains professional PowerPoint presentations, classroom videos, and reproducible documents.

The *Green Industry Web*, administered by the Alabama Green Industry Training Center (AGITC), is being set up as an interactive way to provide educators with specialized training through the use of Internet and web resources. Through this new partnership, agriscience teachers will be able to access cutting-edge materials in many green industry subject areas.

To learn more about the *Green Industry Web* or to get additional information on how to participate in this initiative, [visit the AGITC website](#) or contact Career and Technical Education Administrator Collie Wells or Education Specialist Philip Paramore at 334-242-9111.



Alabama Green Industry Training Center
P.O. Box 383031
Birmingham, AL 35238-3031
205-981-2326

Liberty City Middle School YouTube Video Goes Viral

The world is catching on to a profound message sent via YouTube from a group of diverse middle-school students in a Madison City public school.

“I’m Human” became a collaborative video production of a very powerful and creative message, and it has gone viral. Carried by compelling music, the message connects the viewer with a world view of humanity.

Steven Mathis, 8th grade language arts teacher at Liberty Middle School, had a vision for the project, and he shared it with his language arts colleague and broadcast media teacher, **Daniel Whitt**.

Filed and produced in only one week, the video features all shapes, sizes, colors,



and ages of people with very unique,

yet very common human qualities. The idea was born from Mr. Whitt’s experience with **The Challenge Day**, an organization with a vision “that every child lives in a world where they feel safe, loved and celebrated.”

An [A+ Education Partnership](#) story.

Did YOU Know?



Barton Academy in Mobile, AL was the first public school in the state. It was established in 1835-36.

Barton Academy was named for Willoughby Barton, an Alabama state legislator from Mobile, who introduced an act that created the Board of School Commissioners of Mobile County on January 10, 1826. This was the first Board of Education in Alabama.

Math Gains for AMSTI Students Compare to an Average of 28 Extra Days of Schooling

Five-Year, \$3 Million Study Shows Significant Effectiveness of Program



The Alabama Department of Education's (ADE) homegrown program, the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI), demonstrates significant effectiveness on student achievement in a [report](#) from the United States Department of Education (USDE).

In 2006, AMSTI was selected for one of the largest math and science studies, with approximately 30,000 students and 780 teachers in 82 schools. The [study](#) included an analysis of student achievement, teacher practice, demographic data, professional training logs, classroom observations, professional development surveys, interviews with teachers and principals, and on-line surveys. As part of its contract from the USDE, the Southeast Regional Educational Laboratory SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, aided by the research firm Empirical Education Inc. and the Academy for Education Development, mounted this randomized controlled trial to determine the effectiveness of AMSTI.

- ▲ Findings showed statistically significant and meaningful student achievement in AMSTI schools. Students who attended AMSTI schools and classes for one year showed a gain of two percentile points on the SAT-10 mathematics problem solving assessment when compared with students who did not attend AMSTI schools. These gains compare to an average of **28 extra days of schooling in math**.
- ▲ Exploratory results indicated 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 schools. These gains compare to an average of **50 extra days of schooling in math**.
- ▲ While the results for science were not statistically significant in the first year, over a period of two years, students in AMSTI schools showed significant gains when compared to students in non-AMSTI schools, with a five percent gain in scores.
- ▲ Despite the fact that AMSTI does not explicitly teach reading skills, after one year, students in AMSTI schools showed a gain of two percentile points on the SAT-10 reading assessment when compared with students who did not attend AMSTI schools. These gains compare to an average of **40 extra days of schooling**.

"The results affirm Alabama's investment in AMSTI as a premier professional development delivery system for STEM education. Alabama's future is bright as these young minds are challenged to think critically and solved complex problems with no obvious answer – the 21st century skills business and industry are asking of our graduates," said **State Superintendent Dr. Tommy Bice**.

Math results were based on SAT 10 mathematics problem solving scores for Grades 4-8. Reading results were based on the SAT 10 reading assessment scores for Grades 4-8. Science results were based on the SAT 10 Science test, which is administered only in Grades 5 and 7.

The study occurred during the time when AMSTI was growing at a rate unparalleled by any similar initiative in the nation. During such growth periods, initiatives typically show reduced or lower achievement scores, yet AMSTI was able to produce gains during the process. The study took advantage of the ADE's rollout of AMSTI to specific regions during the study years.

In the study, AMSTI had a positive and statistically significant effect on classrooms. AMSTI posits that in order to improve student achievement, teacher instructional strategies should include higher levels of hands-on, inquiry-based instruction. AMSTI teachers rated their students as more engaged than non-AMSTI teachers. In both math and science classrooms, AMSTI teachers engaged in significantly more "active learning" practices such as inquiry instruction, hands-on activities, and practicing higher-order thinking skills.

Steve Ricks, Director of AMSTI, said, "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. The results are a testament to what Alabama teachers can achieve when provided with the proper professional development, resources, and support."

AMSTI has become an international model for math, science, and technology classroom instruction and learning and is being studied as a model by 21 European countries in addition to Russia, China, and Mexico, as well as many other states.

For a WebEx Presentation of the study, [CLICK HERE](#)

GOOD NEWS

Stories about great things happening in Alabama Public Schools.
Submit your school's **GOOD NEWS** by emailing a story (and pic) [HERE](#).

Huffman Middle Students Learn About Earthquakes

What should you do if an earthquake occurs?

The students at Huffman Middle School (Birmingham City Schools) can tell you.

The school participated in the **Great Central U.S. ShakeOut** event on Feb. 7. The students joined more than a million people who participated in earthquake drills at 10:15 a.m.

They learned about Drop, Cover and Hold On, the protocol for personal protective action when an earthquake strikes.

The Central United States Earthquake Consortium and nine states including Alabama participated.

Feb. 7 was the 200th anniversary of the last of the 1811-1812 earthquakes that destroyed the town of New Madrid, MO., and created Reelfoot Lake in northwest Tennessee.



Win a Trip to Space Camp for Your Entire Fourth-Grade Class!

Tomorrow is the last day to submit your name for the Rocket City Space Pioneers Lander! **Don't miss it!**

Visit the [website](#) to register and find instructions and rules regarding the contest, downloadable lesson plans, Lunar Lander cardboard assembly kits, and activity sheets for classroom learning.

The entire winning class will receive a three-day 'Pathfinder' trip to [Space Camp](#) at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, a transportation voucher, and a stipend for the teacher of the winning class.

The [Rocket City Space Pioneers](#) (RSCP) are competing in the \$30 million [Google Lunar X PRIZE](#) to build a Lander that will go to the moon.

Mobile County Schools Celebrate Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month February 1-29, 2012

Among the special activities scheduled are: exhibits at Colonial Bel Air Mall, career messages on school marquees and school websites, guest speakers, career speakers on topics such as industry trends and career readiness, CTE Open Houses, Career Days, banners, signs, bulletin boards, announcements in parent bulletins, school newspapers, student recognitions, field trips, etc.

This month-long celebration will emphasize the role of career and technical education in the future career success of students and its importance to their academic achievement. Currently, two out of every three high school students in Alabama participate in a career and technical education program. These students have an opportunity to explore their career options in more than 300 courses, earn advanced diplomas, and receive college credit.

Career Academies in Birmingham High Schools

The Birmingham City School System has been making tremendous progress in the implementation of career academies in our high schools. The academies, or school-within-a-school programs, will link academic and career and technical education programs to provide students with a quality experience as they enter careers or college.

The initial listing of academies include the Academy of Health Sciences at Carver and Jackson Olin; Academy of Engineering at Carver; Academy of Urban Educators at Parker; Academy of Hospitality and Tourism at Wenonah; Academy of Business and Finance at Woodlawn; and Academy of Architecture and Design and Huffman. Additional academies will be coming online in 2013.

Birmingham City Schools' goal is to ensure that all of its students are prepared for the future!

Kate Shepard Elementary Students Celebrate AMSTI Day

Kate Shepard Elementary (Mobile County Schools) celebrated AMSTI Day on February 2nd. The AMSTI activities gave parents an opportunity to go into their student's classrooms and observe their child completing hands-on math and science activities.

Classes like Mrs. Ray's participated in an AMSTI science lesson on wind speed. They made flags and went outside to observe the wind speed using the American flag as the measurement instrument. They concluded there was "Some Wind" in their observation.



Alabama Education 2011-2012 Quick Facts Now Available!



[CLICK HERE](#) to download a pdf copy

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

President – Gov. Robert Bentley
District 1 – Randy McKinney, Vice President
District 2 – Betty Peters
District 3 – Stephanie Bell
District 4 – Yvette M. Richardson
District 5 – Ella B. Bell
District 6 – Charles Elliott
District 7 – Gary Warren
District 8 – Mary Scott Hunter

State Superintendent of Education and Secretary and Executive Officer – Thomas R. Bice

AEN EDITORIAL STAFF

Managing Editor: Dr. Michael O. Sibley
Contributing Editors: Ed Crenshaw | Malissa Valdes
Graphic Artists: Mary Nell Shaw | Charles V. Creel

Contact **Alabama Education News**
334-242-9950 (p) · 334-353-4682 (f)
aen@alsde.edu (e) · www.alsde.edu (w)

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

Alabama Education News (USPS #387-290) is published bi-monthly by the Alabama Department of Education, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101. This publication, authorized by Section 16-2-4 of the *Code of Alabama*, as recompiled in 1975, is a public service of the Alabama Department of Education designed to inform citizens and educators about programs and goals of public education in Alabama.

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age or genetics. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008: Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8165.

Congratulations to 83 Alabama Schools: USDA HealthierUS School Challenge Award Winners!

Due to innovation and commitment in the area of child nutrition, [83 Alabama public schools](#) have been awarded the prestigious United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) HealthierUS School Challenge Award. Alabama has more districts to win the award and has more Gold Award winners than any other state in the nation.

Perry Fulton, director of Child Nutrition for the Alabama Department of Education (ADE), said, "This is the second year we've received the award. We have increased the number of schools awarded from 50 to 83 schools. This increase shows significant effort in producing great results from the way foods are prepared, less pre-packaged foods being offered, to what ends up on the plates of our students."

The goal of the **HealthierUS School Challenge** (HUSSC) is to improve the health of the Nation's children by promoting healthier school environments. To help meet the goal, the [Food and Nutrition Service](#) identifies schools that have made changes to:

1. Improve the quality of the foods served.
2. Provide students with nutrition education.
3. Provide students with physical education and opportunities for physical activity.

The **HealthierUS School Challenge** was established to recognize schools that are creating healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Four levels of superior performance are awarded: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Gold Award of Distinction. Schools receiving a HUSSC award will commit to meeting the criteria throughout their four-year certification period.

To qualify for the awards, a school must submit a formal application and meet basic criteria set forth by the Food and Nutrition Service. The HUSSC criteria reflect the recommendations of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the Institute of Medicine published recommendations (April 2007) for foods that should be served in schools outside of the organized school lunch meals. HealthierUS Schools must also have a local school wellness policy as mandated by Congress. Local school wellness policies support the HUSSC initiative and affirm that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

For the complete list of Alabama winners, [CLICK HERE](#).

