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ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

The electronic newsletter of the
Alabama State Department of Education

1854

From the Superintendent

Recently the College Board released the 9th Annual Advanced Placement (AP) *Report to the Nation*, and Alabama public schools showed large gains from 2002-2012 in Advanced Placement. AP is a rigorous academic program that offers high school students the chance for college-level study in 34 courses with a wide variety of subject areas. AP supports Alabama's goals of improving postsecondary access and increasing college persistence and completion rates.

PARTICIPATION & SCORES - %			
	2012	2007	2002
Test-Takers	25.7%	11.0%	8.6%
3-5 Exam Scores	11.1%	6.3%	4.8%

PARTICIPATION & SCORES - NUMBERS			
	2012	2007	2002
Test-Takers	9,852	4,181	3,103
3-5 Exam Scores	4,258	2,398	1,710

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS' PROGRESS			
	2012	2007	2002
Test-Takers	2,300	513	453
3-5 Exam Scores	401	142	97

The focus of Advanced Placement in Alabama is on (1) increasing rigor in the classroom, (2) promoting equity among the population of successful AP students, and (3) supporting instruction that encourages every child to graduate high school being college- and career-ready.

In Alabama over the past ten years the number of graduates who took an AP course in high school has risen by over 218 percent, from 3,103 to 9,852. In fact, there are more students

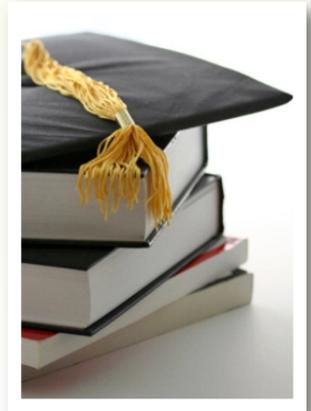
scoring a grade of 3 or higher in 2012 than the number of students who took the exam in 2002.

Success on an AP exam is defined as a grade of 3 or higher – a score research shows is indicative of college success and graduation. In 2012, 4,258 Alabama students scored a grade of 3 or more, up from 1,710

in 2002. Scoring a grade of 3 or higher allowed students in 2012 to earn credit for college courses, saving \$12,911,208 yearly in tuition expenses at the average rate of \$284 per credit hour.

Because of the collaborative work of our local school systems, the A+ College Ready Program, and the Alabama State Department of Education, our students are being provided with unprecedented opportunities and support to receive college-level instruction and college credit as part of their high school program. Not only are increasing numbers of students enrolling, but under-represented groups of students are enrolling and receiving qualifying scores.

Alabama personnel will make a presentation at the College Board Collaborate Southern Regional Forum, March 7-8, in Atlanta, GA. On June 19-21 The Advanced Placement Summer Institute for Administrators will be held in Jacksonville, FL. Additional professional development opportunities and the complete AP report are available online at www.collegeboard.com. Find AP course information [HERE](#). For more information, contact College Board Public Affairs at 212-713-8052.



12 MYTHS and FACTS about the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards

1 **✗ MYTH:** Parents will lose control of their children's K-12 education under the Common Core State Standards Initiative.
✓ FACT: There is no change in parental control from Alabama's previous standards to the College- and Career-Ready Standards based on the Common Core. Input is encouraged by parents and other stakeholders throughout the process of determining and adopting standards.

2 **✗ MYTH:** Most parents remain unaware of the specific details of the Common Core State Standards.
✓ FACT: All of Alabama's standards, adopted two years ago, can be accessed and read by anyone on the Alabama State Department of Education Website: www.alsde.edu/html/CoursesOfStudy.asp. Public hearings were held throughout the state before adoption by the State Board of Education.

3 **✗ MYTH:** Education decisions in states with the Common Core will ultimately be mandated by unaccountable bureaucrats and special interests in Washington, D.C.
✓ FACT: According to the Alabama State Board of Education's resolution adopting the standards on November 18, 2010, the SBOE remains the "sole and exclusive entity vested with authority" over Alabama's public schools.

4 **✗ MYTH:** The Common Core invades students' privacy by requiring the collection of personal information, which will be shared with the federal government and private organizations without parents' permission, and it requires that students be tracked from preschool through their careers with data that will become part of a national database.
✓ FACT: The Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards, as well as the Common Core State Standards, are only academic standards for each grade in math and English. Neither set of standards mandates any type of data collection. The state of Alabama has no reporting requirements associated with its involvement with the Common Core State Standards Initiative as it is not a Race to the Top state, not a participant in the Race to the Top funded assessment consortia, nor a recipient of the federally funded longitudinal data system grant.

5 **✗ MYTH:** The U.S. Department of Education is funding the development of national curriculum guidelines, modes, and materials, which creates a national curriculum.
✓ FACT: Many organizations are creating various instructional materials for teachers to access, just like they always have. Local systems retain control of their curricula.

6 **✗ MYTH:** The U.S. Department of Education is funding the creation of national assessments based on the Common Core standards, which creates a national testing system.
✓ FACT: States can voluntarily select their own assessments. Alabama is not involved in the consortia helping to guide assessment creation. Alabama has chosen to work with ACT, an existing college- and career-readiness test provider.

7 **✗ MYTH:** The U.S. Department of Education is violating federal laws that prohibit any federal direction, control, or supervision of curricula, programs of instruction, and instructional materials in the elementary and secondary schools, and this is an invasion of states' rights.
✓ FACT: None of this is based in fact. Each school system in Alabama retains complete authority to develop its own curriculum, without fear of reprisal from the government. Lesson plans and daily curriculum are created by local teachers and administrators.

8 **✗ MYTH:** The Common Core de-emphasizes classical literature and American history and will replace literary works about Western Civilization with informational texts such as executive orders and work manuals, which will further diminish students' knowledge of the moral, historical, and cultural foundations of our country.
✓ FACT: Students will spend more time reading informational texts, but in science and history classes. The new standards actually encourage teachers to use historical documents like the Constitution and Federalist Papers. The majority of texts students will study in English class will still include novels, short stories, poems, and plays.

9 **✗ MYTH:** The Common Core violates the founding principle that parents and states, not federal government, control local education.
✓ FACT: According to the Alabama State Board of Education's November 18, 2010, resolution adopting the standards, the SBOE remains the "sole and exclusive entity vested with authority" regarding Alabama's public schools. Public hearings were held throughout the state before adoption by the State Board of Education.

10 **✗ MYTH:** Implementation of the Common Core will cost Alabama taxpayers many millions of dollars to revamp state education systems.
✓ FACT: Alabama adopts new standards every six years. Funding for the adoption and selection of related materials is included in Education Trust Fund budget.

11 **✗ MYTH:** Alabama taxpayers had no voice or vote in adoption of the new state standards. The Legislature needs to protect its citizens against an overzealous federal government and keep education decisions local by protecting state education sovereignty.
✓ FACT: State Board of Education members are popularly elected representatives of the citizens of Alabama. The SBOE held public hearings regarding the standards' adoption in 2010. The resolution adopting the standards maintains the SBOE is the "sole and exclusive entity vested with authority" regarding Alabama's public schools.

12 **✗ MYTH:** The Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards and the Common Core violate the 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) by requiring the collection and sharing of non-academic information on students.
✓ FACT: Alabama's College- and Career-Ready Standards are academic standards that say nothing about collection of student or teacher data or information. Regardless, all student and teacher data is already protected by FERPA.

Celebrating Career Preparation and 21st Century Learning

This month, local school systems statewide have been celebrating Alabama Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month – February 1-28. To commemorate this event, many school systems have held special activities such as career fairs, college and business tours, Job Shadowing Days, and professional dress and etiquette workshops for students.

Mobile County's Career and Technical Education program displayed interactive exhibits at Bel Air Mall to inform local residents of all of the great opportunities available to students participating in career tech programs.



Students from Gulf Shores High School's Health Science Academy tested a professional da Vinci Surgical System robot, which is used to perform minimally invasive surgeries. The South Baldwin Regional Medical Center sponsored this special event. The da Vinci Surgical System enables surgeons to perform complex procedures through small incisions, which helps patients to have faster recovery times.

Why is Career and Technical Education Important? "Prime-age" employees (individuals between the ages 25 to 54) are projected to be more than 60 percent of America's labor force in 2020. Many national experts now believe that middle and high school students need to have more diverse educations in order to be competitive in the future. Across our state more high school students are earning specialized career credentials, which are giving them a "real edge" in being hired for top employment opportunities and considered for top internships.

"A well-educated and highly skilled workforce is exactly what our nation must maintain to remain strong and prosperous in the future," says Philip Cleveland, Director of Alabama Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development. "CTE is a vital part of the total education system and provides students with essential life skills and prepares them for the "world of work" and postsecondary learning. CTE Month has just been a great time for Alabamians to visit our state's local CTE programs to see all of the great hands-on learning taking place in our classrooms."

Last year, a special leadership panel made up of 65 leading Alabama professionals worked to develop new strategies to further the impact of Alabama's career tech programs. The Career and Technical Education Commission, appointed by Governor Bentley and the Alabama State Board of Education, researched effective ways to ensure Alabama's CTE programs remain an important part of the state's overall economic development process.

Interesting Facts and Statistics:

The high school graduation rate for Alabama CTE concentrators is more than 90 percent. CTE concentrators are students who earn two or more credits in a program of study.

Nationally, CTE programs have been shown to reduce high school dropout rates.

Examples of some of the career fields that Alabama's CTE students can prepare for are Education Administration, Engineer, Journalism (radio, television, print), Aquaculture, Sports Turf Management, Human Resources, Graphic Design, Public Relations, Culinary Arts, Social Work, Medical Professions (physician, nursing, dentistry), Marine Technology, and many other career fields.

Currently, about 461,000 students statewide participate in CTE programs. These students participate in programs of study in the following areas:

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications
- Business Management and Administration
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

To learn more about Alabama CTE Month or any of the special activities that took place in your community, contact your local Board of Education; visit www.alcareertech.org; or contact Alabama CTE Information Specialist, Ed Crenshaw, at 334-353-5220.



Law Day 2013

The Alabama State Bar and the Law Day 2013 Committee have established a competition for students in Grades K-12 in celebration of Law Day on May 1, 2013. This year's theme is "Realizing the Dream: Equality for All."

Students can participate in essay, poster, and social media competitions.

The deadline for student entries is Friday, March 29, 2013, and winners will be announced on or before April 15, 2013.

For additional information, contact **David E. Rains**, Chairman of the Law Day 2013 Committee, at 205-344-5000 or **Associate General Counsel Juliana Dean** at 334-242-1899.

For details and application, click [here](#).

State School of Character

Vestavia Hills Elementary East School has become the first State School of Character (SSOC) in Alabama.

The SSOC program, a Character Education Partnership (CEP) program coordinated in Alabama through Character @ Heart, recognizes schools where teachers, parents and community members work together to positively shape the social, emotional and character development of students.

In SSOC schools bullying is rare; cheating and discipline problems decline; test scores, grades and homework completion go up; and attendance and graduation rates are high, among other factors, according to the CEP.

Applicants selected as an Alabama State School of Character hold their designation for three years and their applications will be forwarded to the national level for consideration as National Schools of Character (NSOC).

Character @ Heart will host four workshops this summer across the state to train schools on the SSOC/NSOC application process. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#) or contact Executive Director Pam Morgan at 334-272-4276.

Alabama Educational Technology Conference Coming in June!



AETC 2013 is being held June 11-13 and will be back at the **Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC)**.

AETC will provide three full days of professional development. You can choose from in-depth hands-on

workshops (Tuesday-Thursday) or a smorgasbord of one-hour concurrent sessions (Wednesday-Thursday) led by nationally known visionaries, Kevin Honeycutt, Jeff Utecht, and Leslie Fisher, in the technology field and by Alabama practitioners with classroom-tested strategies across the curriculum. [Visit the Website.](#)

AETC was developed to help educators at all levels increase their understanding of the role of technology in education. With the required implementation of the Technology Education Course of Study in Grades K-12, professional development in integrating technology into the curriculum has become more in demand than ever before.

Who Should Attend? Classroom Teachers, Technology Coordinators, Administrators, School Board Members, Media Specialists, Principals, Curriculum Specialists, Superintendents, Business Leaders, and Higher Education/Postsecondary Educators.

Concurrent Sessions: Meet people who face the same challenges you do – and have found answers they are willing to share. Over 150 concurrent sessions will be offered throughout the conference.

Workshops: Back again are the popular hands-on workshops and "Bring Your Own Laptop (BYOL) workshops. There is a \$15 fee for each BYOL and a \$25 fee for each three-hour workshop, in addition to the regular conference registration. Three-hour workshops will be offered June 12-13 during the full conference, with additional three-hour workshops offered on June 11 during the pre-conference for participants registered in advance.

Exhibit Hall: Come see one of the largest technology vendor shows held in Alabama showcasing state-of-the-art hardware, software, and uses of technology. Participants will have an opportunity to preview the latest and greatest in educational technology.

Registration and Hotel information can be found on the [AETC website](#).

ALL THREE DAYS

- Early Bird Registration (February 1-March 15): **\$65** (Full conference only)
- Preregistration (March 18-May 27): **\$75**
(\$5 discount with receipt of 10 or more registration forms sent together)
- Late/On-site Registration (After May 27): **\$85**

ONE DAY ONLY

Preregistration One Day Fee: **\$40** · Late/On-site One Day Fee: **\$50**

HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

BYOL Workshop Fee: **\$15** · 3-Hour Workshop Fee: **\$25**

Regional Anti-Bullying Trainings

In an effort to make the information available to school personnel, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Prevention and Support Services Section, is offering eight regional sessions titled "Regional Anti-Bullying Training." All sessions are from 9 a.m. until 12 noon and resigstration is held 30 minutes prior to the session. The dates and locations of the sessions are:

March 7, 2013	Jefferson County Board of Education Board Room 2100 18th Street South Birmingham, AL 35209
March 8, 2013	Madison City Board of Education Board Room 211 Celtic Drive Madison, AL 35758
March 11, 2013	Baldwin County Trojan Hall 9300 East Lawson Road Daphne, AL 36507
March 12, 2013	Enterprise City Schools Service Center 1648 East Park Avenue Enterprise, AL 36331
March 18, 2013	Russellville City Board of Education Board Room 1845 Waterloo Road Russellville, AL 35653
April 8, 2013	Montgomery County Board of Education Teacher Training Center 515 South Union Street Montgomery, AL 36104
April 9, 2013	Demopolis High School 701 Highway 80 East Demopolis, AL 36732
April 10, 2013	Jacksonville State University In-Service Center 100 Gamecock Drive Anniston, AL 36265

Sessions will focus on possible solutions and consequences that will equip students to address bullying while also engaging the school, community, and parents. Participants will be taught skills to moderate in forum settings approaches to reduce bullying in schools and communities. The training will address root causes of bullying as participants receive strategies on how to create a culture of respect in schools and communities.

Each local education agency (LEA) is invited to include school counselors, school administrators, counseling coordinators, social workers, as well as other LEA personnel as designated by their superintendent and/or principal.

Please ask personnel who plan to attend to select the training date of choice and register online for this event at <https://pdweb.alsde.edu>. Seating is limited to 60 participants per session. The PD title number for the sessions is AB2013. The deadline for registration at each site is the Friday before the selected training date. Online registration instructions are enclosed.

If you need clarification or have additional questions regarding this opportunity, please contact Ms. Frances Stewart by e-mail at fstewart@alsde.edu, Mrs. Ceceilia Mills by e-mail at cmills@alsde.edu, or Mrs. Janice Webb by e-mail at jwebb@alsde.edu or each may be reached at 334-242-8165.

PLU Opportunity

STI PD Title Number:
PLUACLD140C (General Construction)

STI PD Title Number:
PLUACLD140G (General Industry)

The **goal** of the CareerSafe Professional Development Program (CSPDP) is to enhance all educators' knowledge of workplace and classroom safety. The CSPDP is designed for teachers, administrators and others within the educational community responsible for creating a safety mindset.

Prerequisite: Participants must purchase and select one of the two CareerSafe Online OSHA 10-Hour courses at the cost of \$25.00 per course (fee subject to change). To register for the selected course follow the instructions on the CareerSafe Online website at www.careersafeonline.com.

Objectives:

- Challenges participants to learn more about OSHA's safety standards in order to provide the leadership necessary to create a safe environment within the classroom, lab and school setting.
- Enables participants to learn and develop an individual programmatic safety portfolio and implementation plan for local approval.
- Helps develop an inclusive documented culture that emphasizes the importance of safety, OSHA and the "StartSafe. StaySafe." philosophy within the school environment.

Registration closes March 5th. The next session is scheduled March 5 - June 5, 2013. Be sure to purchase the selected module. Then, login to STI PD at <http://pdweb.alsde.edu> and get on the roster for PLUs today!

For more information, contact Lana Ford at 231-245-3096 or send an email to sucessequation.lanaford@gmail.com.

ACLD PLUs



Need an ACLD PLU by June 2013?

Professional Development Your Way (PDYW) @ EDVANTIA

To register and participate in the EDVANTIA professional studies, participants must have an active STI PD account! If you need an STI PD account, please contact your school system's STI PD Manager. If you are not employed in an Alabama public school, you must contact Lori Newton, State Department of Education, at 334-353-1118 or send an [email](#). Edvantia cannot create an STI PD account for you.

Shared Leadership

STI PD Title Number: PLUACLD044
This 10-week online professional study will provide participants with the knowledge and ability to plan for and sustain continuous school improvement in classrooms, schools, and school systems/local education agencies (LEAs). This professional study is facilitated and supported through Edvantia's course management platform. Participants will earn one (1) ACLD PLU upon successful completion.

Registration Dates:

2/18/2013 – 3/4/2013

Start – End Dates:

3/18/2013 – 5/31/2013

Additional Professional Study

Opportunities: If you are interested in other professional study opportunities approved by the Alabama Council for Leadership Development (ACLD), go [HERE](#) and SEARCH. Once you find a professional study of interest, contact the provider listed on the ADDRESS BOOK to register.

School Safety Policy Reaffirmed

Alabama State Board of Education members have unanimously passed a resolution reaffirming the school safety planning process, as well as recommendations for future action, to ensure a safe and caring learning environment for students.

The current policy has been amended to require the number of intruder/active shooter drills be increased to a minimum of two per year, though it is left up to the discretion of local school systems to determine whether more drills are needed. The push for advanced training and services was made in light of recent mass shootings across the country and, most recently, in our public schools.

Each school system must also designate an individual or individuals who will participate in active shooter training provided by the Office of Homeland Security, which houses electronic versions of school safety plans that key school and law enforcement personnel and first responders can access. Those comprehensive plans – developed in collaboration with community organizations and leaders – already require regular drills for fire, severe weather, natural disasters, and intruders.

The resolution also states that the Alabama State Department of Education and all other state agencies come together to form the Healthy Kids and Healthy Families Coalition to address access to needed services, especially mental health services.

In addition, **Alabama State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice** has submitted suggestions to the Alabama Legislature regarding recommendations for school safety. No legislation had progressed to a vote at the time of publication.



FREE Drawstring Backpacks!

The ALSDE has several drawstring backpacks free for the asking thanks to the Mattie C. Stewart Foundation!

These are the perfect size for taking a water bottle and workout clothes to the gym, or for bringing a couple of books to class. They are black, have a zippered pouch, and have "STAY IN SCHOOL" in bold letters on the back! You must arrange some form of shipping, or you may pick them up here at the ALSDE. [Send an email](#) for more information on these free bags, but hurry – supplies are limited!



Digital Learning Month Comes to a Close!



The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Technology Initiatives Office – ACCESS Distance Learning, kicked off Digital Learning Month on February 6, 2013. The focus of Digital Learning Month used Alabama’s digital story to showcase ways of using contemporary tools to ensure Alabama students are college- and career-ready. The ALSDE, in partnership with the Alliance for Excellent Education, participated in the national Digital Learning Day campaign, which was held on February 6, by attending the Digital Town Hall meeting from 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m. The national campaign celebrates innovative teaching and highlights practices that make learning more personalized and engaging for students, exploring how digital learning can provide all students with the opportunities they deserve – to build the skills needed to succeed in college, a career, and life. For more information on Digital Learning Day, visit <http://www.digitallearningday.org/>.

Governor Robert Bentley issued a proclamation naming the month of **February as Digital Learning Month**.

Virtual field trips (VFT) through interactive videoconferencing (IVC) included: Dauphin Island Sea Lab’s shark dissection and a live estuary exhibition of marine animals and plankton; NASA and Space Camp with

“The Helen Keller presentation was great. Our second grade had just finished a story about her. Thanks for your help.”

— Rhonda West

“Thank you for this opportunity for our teachers and students.”

— Cindy Mitchell

“Thanks for that wonderful opportunity. I hope there will be some more like that with an actual research scientist who explains the scientific method of doing a research project.”

— Marilyn Stephens

sessions on Living in Space, Toys in Space, and Career Opportunities; UAB Spinal Cord Research facility’s investigation and cutting-edge discoveries with stem cells in curing paralysis; Helen Keller Foundation’s spokesperson, great-grand-niece of Helen Keller, Keller Johnson-Thompson, about America’s First Lady of Courage; Josh Johnson and the weather team from WSFA-TV; Justin Martin from Outdoor Channel’s “The Season” and his life as an outdoorsman and businessman; Farley Nuclear Plant’s overview of the nuclear plant operations; and the Pro

Football Hall of Fame’s artifacts and historical documents they have to offer. Students were also able to take an electronic field trip of the U.S. Capitol as well as participate in a Reading Discovery session with Mrs. Barbara Bush.

Professional development opportunities for teachers held through WebEx and livestreaming TV included: topics about resources for elementary, middle, and high school teachers provided by EBSCO; scientific-based research about the effects of artificial sweeteners presented by Faulkner University’s research department; and higher-order thinking using the iPad, presented by Technology in Motion trainers.

All IVC sessions were recorded and are available at <http://tcs.asc.edu>.

The WebEx sessions were recorded as well and are available on the ACCESS Distance Learning Website, <http://accessdl.state.al.us>, click on Digital Learning Month. The flyer with complete information on each session can be found here as well.

Plans are to continue these learning opportunities throughout the year by providing three sessions a month – one for each grade level – elementary, middle, and high school. Session information will be posted on the ACCESS Distance Learning Website. We hope you will take advantage of these great resources to share with your students.

For questions or additional information, please contact the Technology Initiatives Office, ACCESS Distance Learning, Linda Jarzyniecki, lindaj@alsde.edu, 334-242-9594.

Students Learn Test-Taking Skills

Nearly a dozen Notasulga High School (NHS) students opted to return to the classroom on a recent Saturday to learn ACT test-taking tips that they later came back and taught to many of their peers.

Eleven students participated in a one-day prep course focused primarily on the math portion of the college entrance exam. The session was taught by other area high school students, and the NHS students in turn shared what they learned about with 25 classmates.

In addition, a group of community volunteers recently purchased an online program, Prepme.com, to further help NHS students prepare for the ACT, as well as the SAT. More than half of the 50-member senior class has already logged on to the school’s Prepme site, which is designed to give each student a more personalized learning experience.

Opp City + Regional Teams = CCRS Transition!

On **August 28 2012**, Dr. Thomas R. Bice, State Superintendent of Education, introduced the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Regional Planning Teams (RPTs) that were developed for each of the 11 [Alabama Regional Inservice Centers](#) to provide customized differentiated support and services to local education agencies (LEAs). RPTs assist LEAs in transitioning to the [College- and Career-Ready Standards](#) (CCRS) and provide precise and differentiated support based on LEA and school needs as determined by data analysis and joint planning.

CCRS Implementation Team training provides information needed by our instructional leaders to create layers of school-based training, action steps, and accountability. Strong evidence of CCRS Plan implementation in our classrooms is displayed through embedded professional development, specific lesson development, observations/walk-throughs, ongoing dialogue, and documented follow-up regarding next steps.

Mr. Michael Smithart, Opp City Superintendent, shares how his system's educators are transitioning to CCRS by effectively partnering with the ALSDE Regional Planning Teams with [A Message from Opp City's Superintendent](#).

"Without the generous assistance of our Regional 11 Support Staff (Rhonda Ayers), our efforts to facilitate the CCRS Plan would have been unsuccessful, resulting in increasingly frustrated educators, therefore limiting their abilities to favorably impact their students."
– Emily Edgar, Opp City Assistant Superintendent

"As a special education coordinator, I am excited that these new standards are increasing the expectations we have for all students, including those with exceptionalities."
– Sharon Spurlin, Opp City Special Education Coordinator

"The move to College- and Career-Ready Standards represents a paradigm shift in education that affects everyone connected with education, including educators, their students, and families. We see a more rigorous curriculum, significantly higher expectations, and a shift from product to process." – Ron Snell, Opp High School Principal

"Our vision is to educate our students to compete globally in any area they choose. I believe CCRS have given them that opportunity. The CCRS professional development creates a smooth transition for educators to this new phase of rigorous instruction."
– Aaron Hightower, Opp Middle School Principal

"This professional study has provided insight on the rationale behind these key shifts, demonstrating the effect it will have on how and what teachers teach, ultimately impacting how our students learn in today's world." – Brett Kinsaul, Opp Elementary School Principal

For information on CCRS and ALSDE Regional Planning Teams contact Ms. Phyllis Montalto at pmontalto@alsde.edu.



CCRS Team, led by Opp High School Principal Ron Snell, discussing the next steps in the implementation of its CCRS Plan.



1st-grade teacher, Macie Taylor, assisting her students using informational text to create a poster during science class.



Opp High School seniors working with a study guide and graphic organizer with embedded CCRS Anchor Standard 2.



4th-grade students sorting facts on a graphic organizer during an Alabama history class.

Minor High School Band Students Win Scholarships

Eight Minor High School (Jefferson County) band students have been offered \$389,000 in band scholarships! Carlton Wright is the Minor High School band director.

Three colleges from two different states see lots of musically gifted students and potential college students from Minor High School. College representatives from Alabama A & M University, Tennessee State University, and Alabama State University (ASU) have recently been on the campus offering scholarships to talented students to come to their respective colleges. Students have not made final decisions yet for their college destinations next fall.



Front row from left: Kiara Gaston (clarinet), Keyana Cole (clarinet), Jade Nieves (tenor saxophone), and Adia Hunt (euphonium). Back row from left: Dr. James Oliver, Director of Bands, ASU; Joshua Chaney (euphonium), Gregory Voner (trombone), Christian Jackson (percussion), Aaron Moore (euphonium), and Assistant ASU Band Director Ernest Harris.

NASA to Teach Students the Engineering Design Process

The ALSDE Federal Programs Section supports the Kids First Awareness 21st Century Community Center and is pleased to announce that the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) Academic Affairs Office will provide afterschool children and staff professional development training and student education opportunities through NASA's Beginning Engineering, Science and Technology (BEST) Students project. The event will be held on **March 16** in Alabaster.

NASA's BEST Students project is a collection of activities designed to teach students the Engineering Design Process (EDP) through problem-based, hands-on activities. The EDP is designed to help students understand that engineers must "imagine and plan" before they can build and experiment.

The MSFC team will provide professional development for 21st Century Community Center staff in the morning, and in the afternoon the Kids First staff will teach the children with NASA education specialists on hand for support. For more information, visit www.kidsfirst123.com or call 205-706-9467.

Librarian Wins \$1,000 Grant

Shades Valley High School librarian Carolyn Starkey won a \$1,000 grant from Channel 42 in its grant program "One Classroom at a Time." The library purchased a new wireless printer that allows students to email their papers directly to the printer 24/7 for later pick up. Pictured is Ken Lass presenting the check to Ms. Starkey.



RSS Meetings

Regional Support Staff (RSS) meetings are being held in 10 regional locations around the state. The next RSS meetings will be March 19-20.

Regional Planning Team members are strongly encouraged to participate in the RSS meetings.

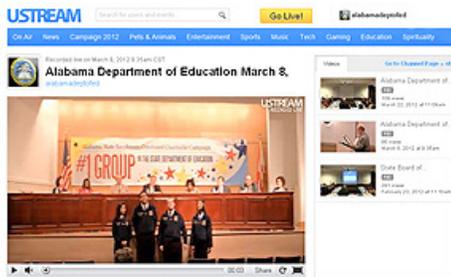
Who: State and Regional Staff members from AMSTI, ARI, and IS (Instructional Services)

What: RSS teams meet monthly to learn together and plan together.

In February, teams reflected on joint classroom visits made in January. It was interesting to share different perspectives and to begin to develop a more common language about instruction and student learning.

It is exciting to see the staff members from the different initiatives come together as one team to provide better service to the LEAs.

State Board of Education Meetings 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).

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Six Students Honored as Top Youth Volunteers

Six Alabama students are among a select group of young Americans that is being honored as the nation's top youth volunteers for 2013 as part of the 18th annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

Kristen Ashley of Trussville and **Emily Whittington** of Mobile have been selected as the state's top youth volunteers for this year. Each will receive a \$1,000 award; an engraved silver medallion; and a trip to Washington, D.C., on May 4-7 for the program's national recognition events.

Ashley, a senior at Hewitt-Trussville High School, founded a service club at her school and then led its 48 members in raising more than \$14,000 to provide elementary school students from low-income families with food to eat on weekends.

Whittington, an eighth-grader at Knollwood Christian School, works with her church to gather needed supplies for low-income residents of a local apartment complex and has supplemented the effort by organizing a clothing and toy collection drive at her school.

During the May events in Washington, a committee will name 10 national honorees who will receive additional \$5,000 awards; gold medallions; crystal trophies; and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for the charitable organizations of their choice. Both Ashley and Whittington are being considered for this honor.

Four other Alabama students have been named distinguished finalists and will receive bronze medals at local ceremonies:

- **Sarah Arwood**, a senior at Parrish High School, who founded a high school athlete scholarship in honor of her late cousin who died in a car accident.
- **Eli Nafziger**, a freshman at Hewitt-Trussville High School, who started a garden at his middle school to provide experiential learning opportunities for special education students.
- **Micah Smith**, a junior at Hoover High School, who organized a neighborhood lemonade stand that raised more than \$8,000 to drill wells and provide clean drinking water in undeveloped countries through the national Neverthirst organization.
- **Caitlin Wall**, a senior at Florence High School, who initiated an awareness and fundraising campaign that raised more than \$4,000 to support Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's efforts to find a cure.



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