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# ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

The electronic newsletter of the Alabama Department of Education

## Message from the Superintendent

**H**appy 4th of July to all as we celebrate and honor our wonderful country and the individual and collective freedoms it affords us. Over the past two weeks I have had the opportunity to participate in several local and statewide meetings where teachers and leaders from Alabama schools met to enhance their practice and prepare for the upcoming school year. I must say that I left each of those meetings more encouraged than I have been in some time about the future of public education in our state. In each of those meetings we discussed the need for greater expectations for our students than those set under No Child Left Behind, the need to provide innovative and creative learning environments for our students where their individual strengths and interests can be developed to their greatest potential, and the need for flexibility from one-size-fits-all rules and regulations that stifle the ability to create and innovate, and, most importantly, meet the individual needs of our students.



Dr. Tommy Bice, State Superintendent of Education

Due to the foresight of our State Board of Education a first step toward this new focus on education has been achieved with notice from the U.S. Department of Education that Alabama's request to freeze the Annual Measureable Objectives at the 2010-2011 level has been approved and will be applied to the AYP results to be released this August. An even greater result of this move by our State Board is that it gives our state the opportunity to proceed with plans for a more balanced and meaningful assessment and accountability system that takes the focus away from just a test score in the spring to one where assessment is embedded in our day-to-day instructional process (where it has the most potential impact on students) and an accountability system that focuses on multiple measures beyond the test score to capture the true picture of what happens in public education.

Over the next few weeks you will be hearing and seeing more details about this opportunity to return the focus of education to serving our students rather than a system of external accountability, and one where innovation and creativity are encouraged, supported, and rewarded – not regulated to the point of extinction. I have stated more than once over the past few weeks that I am as excited about the future of public education in our state as I have ever been, and I urge you to reach out to your State Board members and thank them and encourage them as we set our bold new agenda for the future.

### Follow the Alabama Department of Education on Facebook and Twitter!

Friend or follow the Alabama Department of Education and get access to the most up-to-date information, press releases, event photos, videos, links, and much more! Links to all social media sites can also be found on our [webpage](#).



## Closing the Gap with Summer Opportunities

**Achievement gaps are truly profound** among students in middle-class homes and their peers in households with fewer resources. But resources available in Alabama that are free or low-cost extend summer learning opportunities to those who may otherwise not have access. It is important that parents and caregivers encourage continuous summer learning activities for the children in their care, but some need help getting connected to the available opportunities.



As mentioned in the last issue of A+ *Alabama's Education News*, the SDE launched its "[Summer Reading Challenge](#)," and it provides numerous online resources for parents, teachers, and students. This state-hosted [webpage](#) contains links to help find books by interest, grade level, and accelerated-reader level. Visitors to the page can also locate a local public library and connect with summer tutors for kids struggling to read at their appropriate grade level.

[A+ College Ready](#) has teamed up with Impact Alabama to offer three Summer Advanced Placement Institutes in Birmingham, Huntsville, and Tuscaloosa as a part of Impact Alabama's CollegeFirst initiative.

This third annual summer enrichment program is specifically designed to prepare students for rigorous Advanced Placement courses, primarily in English, math, and science. Three universities serve as host sites for CollegeFirst, which is sponsored by Boeing, Wells Fargo, and Maynard, Cooper & Gale. ([Click here](#) to download the news release for the Birmingham site.)

Listed below are more online local and statewide resources for fun, educational activities; age-appropriate reading lists for students; academic, athletic, and fine arts camps; and many helpful articles for parents, caregivers, and summer tutors.

- [Education.com](#)
- [Calhoun Community College](#) summer camps (Huntsville)
- [4-H Summer Activities](#) Alabama Farmers Cooperative Extension System in all Alabama counties
- [Auburn University](#) summer camps (academic, music, and sports)
- [University of Alabama](#) summer programs for K-12
- [Alabama School of Fine Arts](#) summer programs
- [Association of Alabama Camps](#) outdoor experiences

A video produced by [Horizons National](#) to promote summer learning initiatives provides a compelling and simplified look at how these gaps begin before Kindergarten and continue to widen—largely because of learning loss in the summer.

This is not an all-inclusive list. Research other opportunities by contacting your local county or city board of education. [Click here](#) to access the SDE system directory.

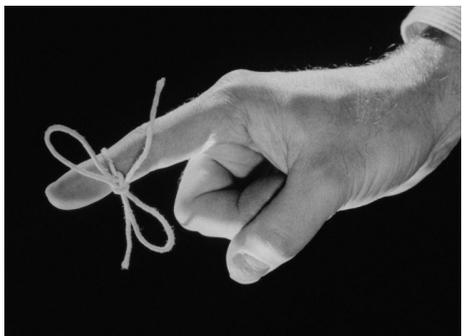
Source: [A+ Education Partnership](#)

## Summer Reading Challenge

### Sign the Pledge to Read All Summer Long

For Alabama's students, summer is a time of fun, but those months away from school can result in a loss of knowledge and reading ability. To combat summer learning loss, the Summer Reading Challenge has begun! Encourage students to pledge to read and learn over the summer months!

Find [book links](#), [videos](#), and other resources including printable [bookmarks](#) that have been posted [HERE](#). Share this with friends and family to help our students retain and increase their knowledge over the summer!



**Reminder!**  
**August 2012**  
**is the**  
**implementation**  
**date for the**  
**College- and**  
**Career-Ready**  
**Standards for**  
**Mathematics!**

Click [HERE](#) for  
instructional resources.

## EDUCATEAlabama 2012 Training

### Target Audience:

Local Education  
Agency (LEA)



Evaluation, Technology, and  
Professional Development Coordinators;  
Principals; Assistant Principals; Career  
Technical Education Coordinators;  
\*Teachers (\*Suggested teacher leader  
team with two or three teachers from  
each school); Representatives of  
Professional Associations, Agencies,  
Organizations; and interested individuals

### Purpose:

- Share technology improvements to online process in 2012-2013
- Emphasize importance of EDUCATEAlabama for all users
- Support "quality" Professional Learning Plans, professional growth, and Supporting Evidence
- Hear from LEA practitioners
- Offer a Question and Answer Session

### 2012 Dates/Locations

#### July 10

Central High School, Tuscaloosa

#### July 11

Huntsville High School, Huntsville

#### July 12

Handley High School, Roanoke

#### July 24

Daphne High School, Daphne

#### July 25

Honeysuckle Middle School, Dothan

#### July 26

Carver Senior High School, Montgomery

#### July 31

Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery

### All Sessions:

Sign-in: 9:00 a.m.

Session: 9:30 a.m – 12:30 p.m.

### Registration and Training Details

Access STI PD [HERE](#)

Select PD TITLE: EA2012

Contact Chris Wilson at 334-353-8924

or [educatealabama@asc.edu](http://educatealabama@asc.edu)

## Teach For America Impacts Alabama

**RECENTLY** featured in the *Birmingham News*, Teach For America (TFA) teachers are making a remarkable impact in Alabama public schools. Wyatt Smith, TFA history teacher at Birmingham's Carver High School, is described by a student as someone who "goes out of his way to help us learn." ([Click here for full article](#))

Smith is just 1 of 15 TFA teachers in Birmingham and among the 85 in Alabama who are reaching approximately 5,000 students in the six counties making up the Black Belt region. According to the TFA website, "On average, more than 91% of students in our partner school districts are considered low-income, and 88% of the student populations are African American."

"I believe every child can learn, no matter who they are or where they're from," said TFA teacher and Golden Apple Teacher of the Year award recipient, Josh Carpenter. The Golden Apple is awarded each year by CBS affiliate WAKA in Montgomery and recognizes teachers in Alabama who have made an "outstanding impact" in the classroom.

Carpenter came to Frances Marion High School two years ago from the TFA program to teach English and drama and to coach football and baseball at this Perry County school. TFA's positive and profound impact on Alabama's Black Belt has been attributed to highly motivated and innovative teachers like Carpenter who believe that education is far more than just a path to learn a trade. In his television interview with WAKA he stated, "It's about building something in this community and in this world that is life-changing, connecting all the parts of your life (to make a difference), ... that's powerful."

The Education Trust Fund budget recently passed by the Alabama Legislature and signed by Governor Robert Bentley includes continued funding for the TFA program, although the funding was cut by about \$39,000 for FY2013. J.W. Carpenter, the Executive Director of Alabama's office for TFA, said that this funding "gives the Black Belt districts access to a highly selective pool of teachers, especially in math and science, and a partnership with an organization with a strong track record for results."

The state funding is used to supplement the cost of teacher recruitment and professional development. TFA also raises local, private-sector money annually amounting to about \$3,000 per teacher.

"Without the state funding," said J.W. Carpenter, "we would have to significantly scale back our efforts in the Black Belt due to the lack of private financial resources there."

More than 48,000 individuals applied for the 2011 class of TFA, of which only 11 percent were accepted. One of the most sought after qualifications, according to TFA, is a sincere passion and commitment to set high expectations for student achievement in low-income communities and "to give everything they have in the classroom," supporting students to meet these expectations.

[Click here](#) for a map on Alabama TFA teacher placements.



Source: [A+ Education Partnership](#)

## Alabama Schools Win First-Ever U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School Award

**Munford Elementary School** and **Winterboro High School** were 2 of the 78 U.S. Department of Education (USDE) Green Ribbon Schools announced during Earth Week that were recognized at a national ceremony in Washington, DC, on June 4, 2012. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan joined White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Chair Nancy Sutley, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa P.

Jackson, and U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin to address the honorees and congratulate them for their exemplary practices.

Munford Elementary School and Winterboro High School were among 78 inaugural honorees representing 29 states and the District of Columbia. The program was developed by the USDE with support from the White House CEQ, the EPA, several other agencies, and dozens of non-profit stakeholders.

Representatives from winning schools received plaques and banners in recognition of their high achievement in saving energy, reducing costs, providing healthy learning spaces, and offering education geared toward the challenges of the 21st century.

"These schools represent a broad portfolio of urban, suburban, and rural communities working to provide students with a high-quality, well-rounded education; healthy living; clean environments; and best practices for reducing our environmental impact," said Secretary Duncan. The U.S. Department of Education [released a document](#) with highlights from the 2012 honorees.

"The Green Ribbon Schools program is a wonderful example of our overall National Prevention Strategy to increase the number of Americans who are healthy at every stage of life," said U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Benjamin. "These schools show us how we can make health and wellness a part of our children's everyday lives."

In 2012 more than 350 schools completed applications to 30 state education agencies. Schools will have another opportunity to apply to their state education agencies for nomination to the Department this winter. Next year's program criteria will be published this summer for states to develop those competitions and will require state agencies to submit their nominees in early 2013. Sixteen states have already indicated their intent to nominate schools in the next round of the competition.



Munford Elementary ▲ Winterboro High School ▼



## After-School Childcare Scholarship Awarded

**Cherry Penn**, After-School Childcare Supervisor and 21st CCLC Programs Manager for Baldwin County Public Schools, has been offered the White-Riley-Peterson Policy Fellowship. This is great news as work diligently continues in Alabama to establish an afterschool network for our students. Penn said, "Alabama is currently in the process of establishing the Alabama Afterschool Community Network (ALACN); and the work associated with this fellowship will positively impact the progression of this process. Students across our state will benefit from more clearly defined quality standards to strengthen our out-of-school programming efforts. Our goal is to ensure the Alabama Afterschool Community Network will become a means to provide readily available resources, training, and professional development for our programs and their staff."

The scholarship allows the nominee to join a broad national cross-section of 15 leaders from diverse organizations whose interests intersect in after-school and expanded learning opportunities. Fellows will participate in a ten-month process, including an intensive week-long fall workshop in Greenville, S.C. (October 21-26, 2012), that will create a cohort of entrepreneurial, networked policy leaders capable of strengthening policy in support of after-school and expanded learning opportunities.

## AETC RECAP

The annual [Alabama Educational Technology Conference \(AETC\)](#) provided teachers and administrators with in-depth, hands-on workshops.

Educators from across Alabama recently spent two days at Trussville High School learning new ways to incorporate technology into the classroom. [Check out this video](#) from the Southern Education Desk and Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a recap of the conference.

## Alabama Council for Leadership Development

The [Alabama Council for Leadership Development](#) (ACL D) reviews school systems' professional study submissions throughout the year. Proposals deemed acceptable are approved as PLU credit for professional staff who hold valid Alabama instructional leader certificates. Those holding such certificates may include, but are not limited to, selected central office staff, principals, assistant principals, career technical education directors, teachers, and other educators.

Although superintendents may grant locally approved PLUs, often LEAs want to seek ACLD approval for locally developed professional studies. As directed by the local superintendent, the ACLD encourages professional development coordinators, curriculum specialists, or other designated personnel to submit locally developed professional study via the ACLD's [online Instructional Leadership Professional Study Application](#) (ILPSA) system. The ACLD meets a minimum of five (5) times annually to review professional study applications. To allow sufficient time for ACLD review, it is important to submit the professional study application at least two months prior to the date of initial implementation of the professional study.

The submission deadline for the upcoming meeting is July 6, 2012. The professional study applicants will be notified by July 25, 2012. For complete information, contact Telena Madison, Alabama Department of Education, Office of Teaching and Leading, at 334-353-5230 or [tmadison@alsde.edu](mailto:tmadison@alsde.edu).

## Physical Examination Now Required for School Bus Drivers

*Compliance Mandatory by August 14, 2012*

The signing of the *Lieutenant Dexter Holcomb Act*, Section 16-27-4.1, Code of Alabama (1975), by Governor Robert Bentley on May 14, 2012, puts in place new requirements for any person driving a school bus transporting students. The person must have successfully completed a physical examination by a licensed physician at his or her own expense.

"This new requirement will help Alabama school systems and school bus drivers continue transporting students safely. I encourage all school bus drivers and others holding an Alabama School Bus Driver Certificate to contact their local school system transportation office immediately to learn more about complying with this new regulation," said



**Joe Lightsey, Director of Pupil Transportation**, Alabama Department of Education.

The Act mandates a driver must be in compliance by August 14, 2012. A driver must be "physically qualified" to operate a school bus "transporting students to and from school or school-related events." The general provisions of the Act are:

- A person may not be allowed to drive a school bus transporting students unless he or she is physically qualified.
- The physical qualifications "mirror" those required for a Department of Transportation Medical Card.
- The Act applies to new, current, and future school bus drivers, including substitute drivers.
- The results of the physical examination must be documented on forms prescribed by ADE and maintained at the school system's central office.
- Drivers may be "grandfathered" for any condition if the doctor states that the condition will not adversely affect their ability to control and safely operate a school bus. A signed waiver is also required.
- Drivers who fail to comply with the Act will lose their Alabama School Bus Driver Certificate.

On June 14, the Alabama State Board of Education adopted an *Alabama Administrative Code* (AAC) Emergency Rule (290-2-4-.08) to assist school systems in complying. The Emergency Rule provides that no person may be allowed to operate a school bus transporting students to or from school or school-related events unless that person is physically qualified in accordance with Section 16-27-4.1 of the *Code of Alabama* (1975).

# Professional Development

## InformationNOW Professional Development Online!

The benefits of professional development are immense and impact teachers and students in a positive manner. Whether it is the hiring of new teachers, role changes within the school or district, or the need for a refresher by current staff, online professional development is a necessity in 21st Century learning. Ongoing professional development of the Statewide Student Information Systems, *InformationNOW*, is available online and includes several resources to enhance skills and increase knowledge of the product.

Be sure to take advantage of accessing these powerful resources, including both role-based and feature-based videos and courses, at a time that is convenient for you.



### The online resources include:

**Knowledge Base** - STI's knowledge base contains over 6,000 answers to the most frequently asked questions about STI products. Access the answers to your questions [on the support website](#) under Knowledge Base (login required).

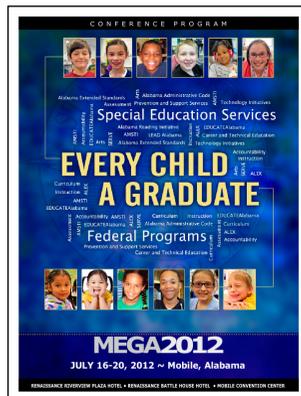
**Video Tutorials** - Do you want to learn at your own pace? [CLICK HERE](#) to view a series of role-based video tutorials that offer demonstrations on scheduling, teacher portal gradebook, and teacher portal classroom activities (login required).

**Scheduled Webinars** - These are for those times when you need a refresher on functionality used seldom throughout the year, such as end-of-the-year processes or scheduling. Scheduled webinars are [available for you](#) to learn from the comfort of your desk.

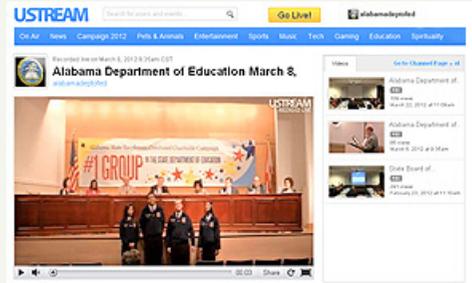


# MEGA 2012

**JULY 16-20, 2012**  
**Mobile, Alabama**



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



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

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