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ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

The electronic newsletter of the Alabama Department of Education

Message from the Superintendent

Graduation Rates – The New Baseline

As a lifelong educator, and now State Superintendent of Education, I have been afforded an incredible opportunity to see Alabama and its public education system through a broad lens. I see and hear about inspiring innovations and programs created to promote the advancement of quality public education throughout this great state. I also know about the areas of public education in this state that need improvement. One of the areas of particular interest to me is the national epidemic of high school dropouts. This is not an Alabama problem but rather one that affects every state in America. As a state and as a nation we have an indelible responsibility to make sure all of our children receive the best education possible—an education that prepares them for college, work, and life in the 21st century.

I am a firm believer that in order to fix a problem you must first identify and own it. Recently, the Alabama Department of Education announced, for the first time, the state's graduation rate based on the newly implemented four-year cohort rate formula. The National Governors Association (NGA) that includes governors from all 50 states has

come together and agreed upon this one graduation rate formula that will be used nationwide. Now, instead of tracking an entire class and averaging the graduates, Alabama has the ability to track each individual student through his or her high school years and make a clear and precise determination about each student's graduation status.



In Alabama, the graduation rate using the NGA cohort formula is 72%. It is important to understand that the NGA cohort formula tracks students in a lock-step fashion from the ninth grade through high school graduation. In order for students to be considered a graduate by these new guidelines, students must complete high school within the four-year window with no exceptions. Those who are retained a grade or have to repeat a year due to other circumstances are not counted as graduates in the NGA formula nor are students who complete their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Unfortunately, there was some misunderstanding by those who declared a graduation rate of 72% is a drop from last year's graduation rate, when actually the two cannot be compared. The NGA graduation rate formula of 72% is not an indication that fewer students are graduating from high school than in years past. Prior years' graduation rates were derived using a different formula; a formula that was reviewed and approved by the United States Department of Education but is no longer being used. It is a misconception and unfair to teachers, students, and parents alike to call the change in graduation rate a drop. It is a new beginning with a formula that is more specific, accurate, and uniform with all other states across the country. On the surface, I can understand how some may have misunderstood the concept; they looked at last year's rate, compared it to this year's rate, and drew a conclusion that the numbers fell. It was also reported that Alabama's dropout rate (under this new formula) is at 8% – the lowest in our state's history. *continued ...*

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!



Take Part in This Opportunity for Nutritious, Consistent Meals

The school year has ended and students enjoy long afternoons in the sun with friends and family. But what happens when the normal lunchtime routine that exists at school is gone? For many students in the state, getting three meals a day doesn't come easy. The need for a free or reduced breakfast and lunch that is normally served by schools during the school day still remains when summer begins.



The Alabama Department of Education's Child Nutrition Program offers help for those who do not have access to consistent nutritional meals. The **Summer Feeding Service Program** and **Seamless Summer Program** are designed to fill the gap and make sure children can get the nutritious meals they need. Both programs were created to ensure children in low-income areas could continue to receive meals during long school vacations when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast.

The Summer Feeding Service Program has locations in many local communities in the state. They are often local churches or community centers. The food is prepared and served at the sites to all school-age children, 1-18 years of age. The Seamless Summer Program is also a state-run summer feeding program. The meals from this program are served at local schools. There is no charge for either program and students can come for breakfast and/or lunch at available sites.

To find the Summer Feeding Service sites in your area, visit [2012 Summer Food Service sites](#). To find Seamless Summer sites, visit [Seamless Summer in School Districts](#) or call your local Board of Education and speak to the Child Nutrition Director.

"The Summer Feeding programs are not well known to many parents. We want to help ensure all school-age children are receiving proper nutrition during the summer months," said **PERRY FULTON, DIRECTOR OF CHILD NUTRITION AT THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**. "We encourage all qualifying children to visit the sites and receive the meals offered."



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

Click [HERE](#) for instructional resources.

Graduation Rates – The New Baseline

continued from front

This year begins a new baseline by which all future graduation rates can be compared. At 72% we are not where we want to be, but we own this status and have set an aggressive trajectory for improvement with this data. We can more accurately identify schools and school systems experiencing the greatest problems with graduation rate and strategically align resources to address their individual needs.

However, the fight against school dropouts is not one that is waged solely on school campuses. It affects education, business and industry, the state prison system, and each of our homes and communities. It will take a combined effort of parents, educators, churches, community leaders, students, and everyone interested in a better tomorrow for Alabama to make sure we stay focused on our goal of seeing every child not only graduate, but graduate on time and prepared with the best education possible.

Importance of EDUCATEAlabama and LEADAlabama

Please take a few minutes to view [this video of Dr. Tommy Bice, State Superintendent of Education](#), as he discusses the importance of EDUCATEAlabama (EA) and LEADAlabama (LEAD), the formative evaluation online processes for teachers/educators and instructional leaders serving students in Alabama's schools. Dr. Bice's words are timely as practitioners prepare to implement EA in Year 3 and LEAD in Year 1, beginning August 1, 2012. For EA and LEAD 2012 summer training opportunities, see pages 3 and 4 in this AEN issue. Questions? Email EA [here](#), LEAD [here](#), or call 334-353-8924.

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

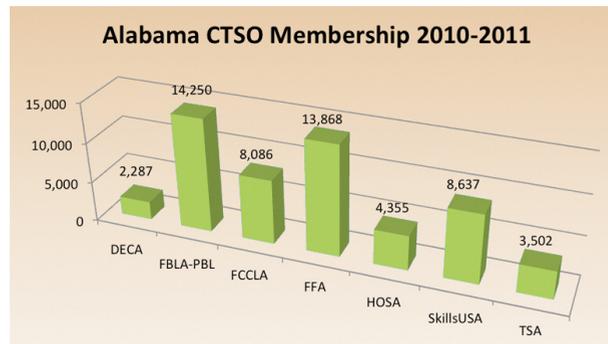
or educatealabama@asc.edu

Alabama's Career and Technical Education Student Organizations Create Opportunities for Students

At the heart of America's success is its strong and resilient workforce. Today's fastest-growing and highest-paying careers require advanced communication and technical, time-management, and leadership skills.

The primary focus of Alabama's Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) is to ensure students are prepared for a lifetime of academic success, and for the "real world of work."

CTSOs are not clubs. They are a powerful instructional tool that works best when integrated into the total classroom curriculum by committed and innovative teachers.



Alabama CTSOs currently serve more than 54,000 members.

There are seven different nationally recognized CTSOs in Alabama.

- **Technology Student Association (TSA)** prepares America's youth for careers in technology-based occupations.
- **DECA** prepares students for entrepreneurial, marketing, finance, and management careers.
- **Future Business Leaders of America - Phi Beta Lambda (FBLA-PBL)** prepares students for business-related professions.
- **FFA** prepares members for leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture.
- **Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)** prepares family and consumer sciences students for top career and leadership opportunities.
- **Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)** prepares students for exciting medical-related careers.
- **SkillsUSA** prepares students for careers in technical, skilled, and service occupations.

CTSO activities are integral to the total educational system because they provide instructional strategies to develop, improve, and expand occupational competencies related to a particular career and technical education subject matter; are an extension of the classroom/laboratory instructional program, which enriches and enhances classroom learning; and present organized activities for students to gain valuable leadership skills, making them more employable and prepared to become productive citizens.

To learn more about these organizations, or to get additional information on how to participate, contact the Alabama Department of Education's Career and Technical Education Section at 334-242-9111.



Professional Development

Alabama Council for Leadership Development

The [Alabama Council for Leadership Development](#) (ACLD) 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 the 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 Tena Madison, Alabama Department of Education, Office of Teaching and Leading, at 334-353-5230 or tmadison@alsde.edu.

LEADAlabama Announcement

Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program (PEPE) Central Office, Principal, Assistant Principal systems will be replaced by **LEADAlabama** as the online formative evaluation process for central office and building-level administrators in Alabama's schools. All school system administrators who are evaluated with **PEPE** will be formatively evaluated using the **LEADAlabama** online process beginning August 1, 2012.



LEADAlabama Implementation Training

Target Audience: LEA Superintendents and Evaluation Coordinators

Access STI-PD - <https://pdweb.alsde.edu/pdweb/> to attend one of the following sessions

June 18, 2012	June 19, 2012	June 20, 2012	June 21, 2012
Athens Regional In-service Center	University of Montevallo	Auburn Regional In-Service Center	Troy Regional In-Service Center
8:30 AM-12:30 PM	8:30 AM-12:30 PM	8:30 AM-12:30 PM	8:30 AM-12:30 PM
STI-PD#: ATHRIC	STI-PD#: LEAD2012	STI-PD#: EARIC584	STI-PD#: TU20261
LEADAlabama 2012	Max. Session Size: 100	Max. Session Size: 70	Max. Session Size: 100

For more information, contact: Dr. Christopher Blair at (334) 353-0478 or cblair@alsde.edu

When Does Your Certificate Expire?

Do you know you can view your certificate(s) on the Alabama Department of Education's Web site? For the Public Certificate Search link, [click here](#).

All certificates expire on June 30th of a given year. The requirements to continue a certificate must be completed by the expiration date on your certificate. Certificates cannot be continued prior to the year of expiration. Currently, Local



Education Agencies (LEA) continue certificates of their employees through the Online Renewal System (OLR), if applicable. During the year of your certificate's expiration, you may wish to check with the Human Resources Department of your LEA to see if additional information for your renewal needs to be submitted to the LEA. For individuals who are not eligible for renewal through OLR or are not employed with an LEA, a complete application packet must be received in the Teacher Certification Section of the Office of Teaching and Leading no later than the expiration date of the certificate.

As a professional educator certified by the Alabama Department of Education, it is your responsibility to stay abreast of requirements to maintain valid certification.

For requirements to renew a Professional Educator Certificate, an Administrative or Supervisory Certificate, or a Career and Technical Certificate: Type, Level, and Specialty Area [click here](#).

If you have questions regarding the renewal of your certificate, you may e-mail the Teacher Certification Section at tcert@alsde.edu.

Congratulations!

Minor High School Wins National School Change Award

Minor High School was awarded the National School Change Award sponsored by Dr. Lew Smith, Director of the National Principals Leadership Institute in New York, at a grand celebration on May 8, 2012. Since the award's establishment in 2000, 830 schools from 45 different states have been nominated as schools that have significantly changed for the better. Only six winners are awarded each year after responding to 16 significant school change criteria and providing data and documentation to support their quest for the national award. Between 60 and one 100 nominations are received each year. The National School Change Award is the only award of its kind, and winning the award is compared to winning the "Superbowl" or "World Series." Congratulations to Principal David Pike, the faculty, staff, and students!



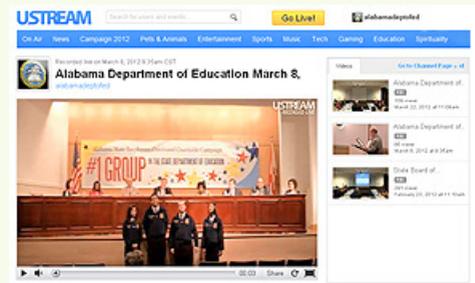
New Market Elementary School Named a 2012 Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School!



New Market Elementary School, Madison County Schools, has been named a 2012 [Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School!](#) Based on the Blueprint for Excellence assessment process, New Market School met or exceeded the criteria for all nine categories. Designation as a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School lasts for five years, at which time the school will be eligible for revalidation. Blue Ribbon Lighthouse Schools commit to sharing expertise and exemplary practices with other schools on a local, regional, and national level as well as providing mentoring and networking to schools seeking guidance and assistance in school improvement initiatives.

Best practices from the school and school and teacher highlights will be included in the Interactive Library of Best Practices database on www.blueribbonsschools.com. Through these initiatives, information will be shared from America's best schools with other schools all around the country. The award will be presented in a ceremony during the banquet at the Blue Ribbon Schools Blueprint for Excellence National Conference in Florida at Disney's Contemporary Resort Hotel (December 4-8).

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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