

ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

MARCH 2003

WHAT'S INSIDE ...

- Anatomy of a Report Card
- Section Spotlight – Pupil Transportation
- School System Highlight – Jefferson County Schools
- Arts Education Month

REPORT CARD SHOWCASES PERFORMANCE

ACCOUNTABILITY EARNS TRUST

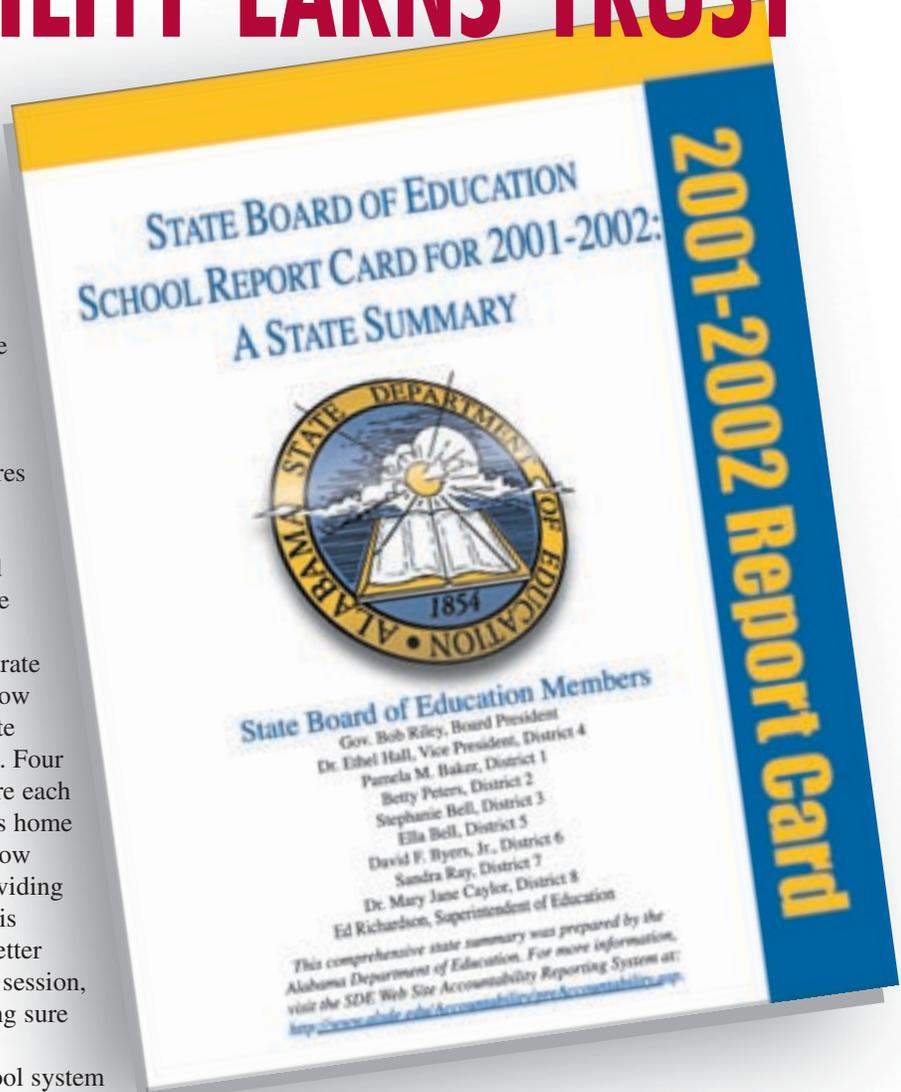
Trust is difficult to earn. The Alabama Board of Education and people in the state's public school systems are working hard to earn the trust of students, parents, and communities. Becoming more accountable is one way of earning trust.

Since 1995, Alabama has led the nation in the effort to show accountability for K-12 education. Alabamians have called for raising standards for students and educators – and we've responded. Today, our public schools have the highest test scores and the lowest dropout rate in the state's history. However, if more funding is not raised, the state's public school systems will again face proration and most likely lose valuable gains that have been made thus far.

One of the most important efforts to demonstrate accountability is the use of **report cards**, which show the performance of public schools. In 1996, the state began producing school accountability report cards. Four years later, Alabama became the first state to require each public school to send report cards with letter grades home to parents. "Alabamians must have confidence in how their schools operate," said **GOV. BOB RILEY**. "Providing parents and citizens with the knowledge they need is essential to help increase awareness and to make better informed decisions." During the current legislative session, lawmakers must also be held accountable by making sure schools receive additional funding.

This year more than 800,000 school and school system report cards are ready for distribution by school systems statewide. Gov. Riley and the State Board of Education are requesting every school include the new cards when the next individual student report cards are sent home.

There are multiple versions of the report cards containing more valuable information than in year's past. Elementary, Middle, High, and K-12 schools each receive cards customized to their needs. For the first time, testing results at the school level are broken out by subgroups for comparisons with the local system and state to help provide parents and educators with a performance benchmark.



EACH REPORT CARD IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS:

- STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
- GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION
- TAXPAYER'S REPORT

Several more revisions have been added to help meet the federal requirements of *No Child Left Behind* legislation. There is also a report card for each school system showing the combined results for all schools in the district and a new state report card containing a comprehensive state summary

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with breakout information for each school system.

Additionally, 2001-02 report cards include student assessment results from the *Stanford 9*, *Alabama High School Graduation Exam*, *Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing*, and *Alabama Alternate Assessment*, disaggregated by subgroups in easy-to-read tables and charts.

The online versions of the report cards, on the Alabama Department of Education Web site, contain more information by linking to the state Department's [Accountability Reporting System](#). The Accountability application on the Web has been enhanced to show information by schools, grades, subjects tested, and subgroups. Users can also view new categories reporting All Grades and All Subtest. Equally beneficial is the addition of a new graphing tool that visually displays results. Visit www.alsde.edu to review state, school system, and school report card data. 🍏

REPORT CARD TIPS FOR TEACHERS

1. Familiarize yourself with your individual school's report card.
2. Review results, paying attention to where improvements can be made.
3. Meet with other grade-level teachers in your school to discuss and plan strategies for closing achievement gaps.
4. Encourage parents to ask if they have questions or concerns about results.
5. Direct parents to the Web to review the state and school system report cards.
6. Call your Alabama Department of Education team leader for additional assistance.

Data indicate teachers certified to teach a specific subject.

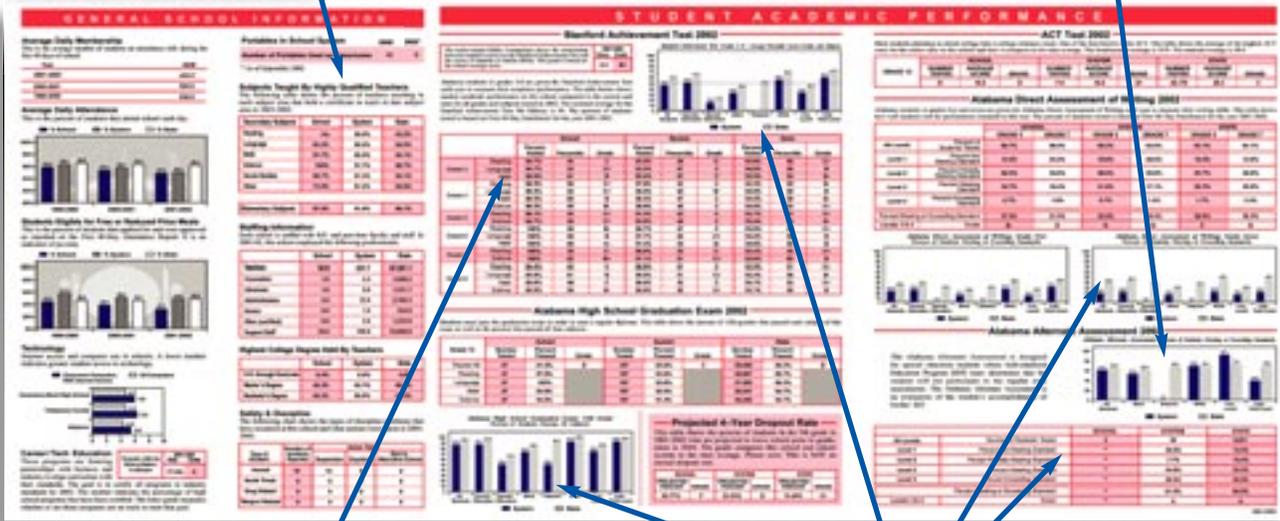
Subjects Taught By Highly Qualified
The following table shows the percent each subject area that hold a certificate area in 2001-2002.

Secondary Subjects	School
Reading	91%

Assessment administered to special education students who do not participate in regular assessments.

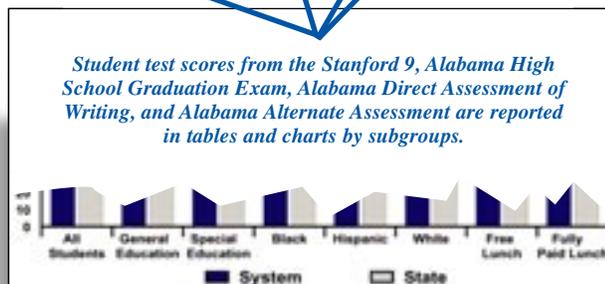
Alternate Assessment 2002
Alabama Alternate Assessment

ANATOMY OF A REPORT CARD



A percentile score on student tests are compared to system and state scores by grade and subject.

		School		Grade
		Percent Tested	Percentile	
Grade 3	Reading	94.7%	43	C
	Language	94.7%	53	C+
	Math	96.8%	81	B
Grade 4	Reading	95.8%	56	C+
	Language	96.8%	52	C+
	Math	96.8%	80	B
Grade 5	Science	96.8%	35	B-
	Reading	96.1%	52	C+
	Science	94.7%	86	C+



EXAMPLE OF A 2001-02 K-12 SCHOOL REPORT CARD.

Additionally, each Elementary, Middle, and High school also receives customized report cards. Pullout boxes indicate new data being reported for the first time as part of *No Child Left Behind* legislation.



2002 STATE FINALISTS

ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS:

- Katherine Dee Chandler, Trace Crossings Elementary School, Hoover City
- Linda Kay Jones, Fairhope Elementary School, Baldwin County

SECONDARY MATHEMATICS:

- Wanda Jean Burns, Mountain Brook High School, Mountain Brook City
- Victoria Thomaston Cato, Pizitz Middle School, Vestavia Hills City
- Susan Boyer Clopton, Simmons Middle School, Hoover City

SECONDARY SCIENCE:

- William J. Helf, Homewood High School, Homewood City

PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS ANNOUNCE FINALISTS AND NEW CRITERIA



Six outstanding Alabama teachers have been selected as 2002 state finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The six have been nominated in three categories – elementary mathematics, secondary mathematics, and secondary science. One teacher will emerge from each category to receive distinction as a Presidential Awards winner, a \$7,500 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for his or her school, and an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to attend a series of events recognizing and honoring the national-level Presidential Awardees. National winners will be announced this month.

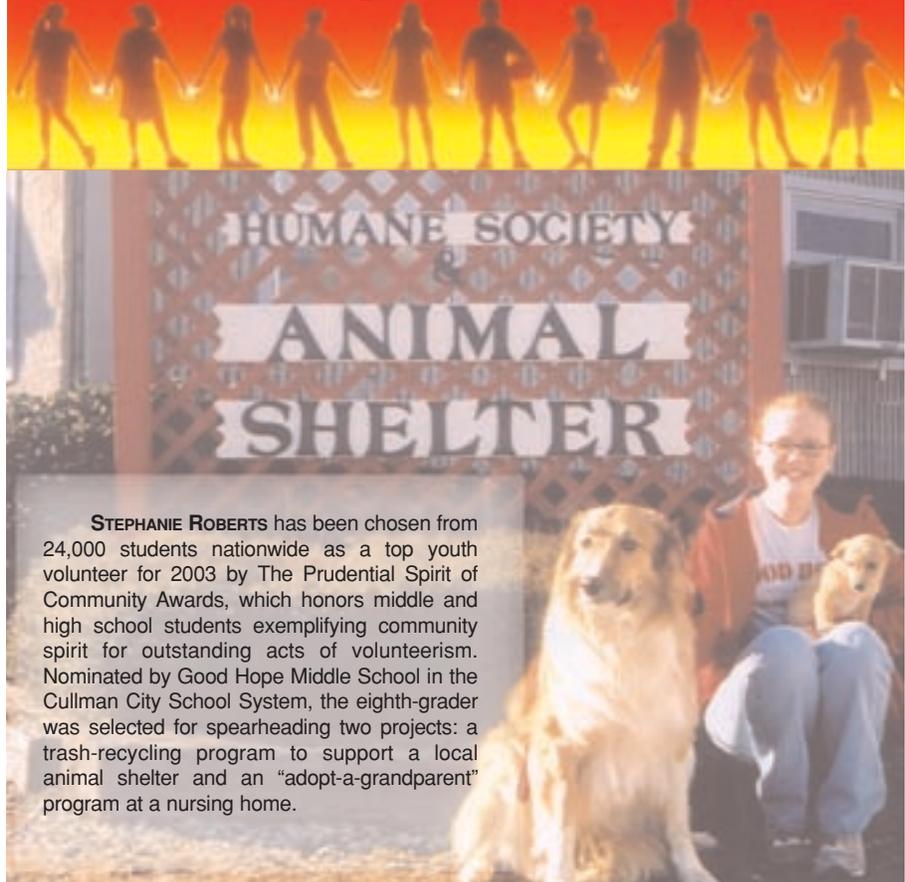
There have been several changes in the PAEMST Program. Beginning in 2003, the competition will alternate each year between teachers of Grades 7-12 and teachers of Grades K-6. In 2003, teachers of Grades 7-12 mathematics and science in each state and the four U.S. jurisdictions will be eligible to apply. Teachers of Grades K-6 will be eligible for Presidential Awards in 2004. Up to three state-level finalists may be chosen in mathematics and in science.

Applications are now being accepted from Grades 7-12 mathematics and science teachers for the 2003 PAEMST. Teachers may be nominated by anyone – principals, teachers, students, or other members of the general public. Self-nominations will not be accepted.

Nomination and application forms may be downloaded from the [NSF Web site](#). Completed applications are due to the state coordinators by May 1, 2003.

For additional information, contact **GINGER MONTGOMERY**, PAEMST State Coordinator for Science at gmontgomery@alsde.edu, or **DR. SARAH MASON**, PAEMST State Coordinator for Mathematics at smason@alsde.edu. Both coordinators can be reached at the Alabama Department of Education at (334) 242-8059. 🍏

The Prudential Spirit of Community Award



STEPHANIE ROBERTS has been chosen from 24,000 students nationwide as a top youth volunteer for 2003 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, which honors middle and high school students exemplifying community spirit for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Nominated by Good Hope Middle School in the Cullman City School System, the eighth-grader was selected for spearheading two projects: a trash-recycling program to support a local animal shelter and an "adopt-a-grandparent" program at a nursing home.

MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT www.prudential.com/community/spirit/ or www.principals.org/prudential.cfm.

State Superintendent's Art Show kicks off Arts Education Month



State Superintendent of Education Ed Richardson pins on the winning Best Of Show ribbon to a black and white sketch done by senior Rachel Wells, who attends Vestavia Hills High School.

The awards ceremony for the 25th Annual State Superintendent's Visual Arts Exhibit was held February 22, 2003, in Montgomery, officially kicking off March as Arts Education Month.

Artwork entries were received from over 200 K-12 students from across the state. Each school system was encouraged to submit student artwork in each of the two categories for each grade division.



Teaching arts in Alabama schools is a reward for students and educators alike. The following are a few examples of the many positive arts programs in our schools. Whether its music, photography, dancing, acting, or painting, creativity generated by Alabama students is flowing like the colors of a rainbow painted on a canvas.



STUDENTS ON THE MARCH

Congratulations to the Montevallo High School Band and **DIRECTOR CRAIG BATES** for being chosen to march in the Lord Mayor's New Year's Day Parade in London, England in January 2003. The MHS band was one of only a dozen bands from the United States invited to perform. The annual parade is the largest New Year's Day parade in Europe, drawing an estimated crowd of 1.5 million. Montevallo High School is located in the Shelby County School System. The superintendent is **EVAN MAJOR**. The principal is **DR. GEORGE THEODORE**.

The Murphy High School Band has received the luck of the Irish after receiving an invitation to march in the 2004 St. Patrick's Day Parade in Dublin, Ireland. The band, under the direction of **STAN CHAPMAN**, previously performed in Ireland before a crowd of 600,000-plus in 2000.

(Continued on Page 6)



Winners of the 25th Annual State Superintendent's Visual Arts Show pose for the camera after being honored during an awards reception, Feb. 22, in Montgomery.

CATEGORY I:

Two-dimensional work (may include painting of any medium, drawing of any medium, or mixed media).

CATEGORY II:

Photography or graphic design (computer-generated work).

BEST OF SHOW

RACHEL WELLS – Vestavia Hills High School, Vestavia Hills City

1st PLACE, GRADES 7-8, CATEGORY I

NATASHA AMJED – Robert F. Bumpus Middle School, Hoover City

1st PLACE, GRADES 7-8, CATEGORY II

LAURA MOSELY – Ira F. Simmons Junior High School, Hoover City

1st PLACE, GRADES 9-10, CATEGORY I

HANNAH BLACK – Mountain Brook High School, Mountain Brook City

1st PLACE, GRADES 9-10, CATEGORY II

ANDREW COTTON – Booker T. Washington Magnet High School, Montgomery County

1st PLACE, GRADES 11-12, CATEGORY I

CHELSEA STANDIFER – Mountain Brook High School, Mountain Brook City

1st PLACE, GRADES 11-12, CATEGORY II

MATTHEW STUCKWISCH – Auburn High School, Auburn City

(Continued from Page 5)

Murphy High School is located in the Mobile County School System. The superintendent is **DR. HAROLD DODGE**. The principal is **DOUG ESTLE**.

CLAY ARTISANS HOLD STATE CONFERENCE AT LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL

Students of Spain Park High School in the Hoover City School System will reap enormous benefits from the 18th Alabama Clay Conference held at the school in February. More than 300 artisans from across the United States gathered for one of the largest regional ceramic art conferences in the nation, held for the first time in a high school.

As part of the conference, nationally known artist **PETER KING** built a 12-foot-tall clay facade that will remain at the entrance to the school's theater. Two university ceramics art professors, **SCOTT MEYER** (University of Montevallo) and **LOWELL BAKER** (University of Alabama) performed a demonstration on building kilns, which in turn were donated to the school's art department.

The conference, sponsored by the Alabama State Council on the Arts, provided live demonstrations to students during art class periods. The principal of Spain Park High School is **WILLIAM BROADWAY**. **DR. CONNIE WILLIAMS** is acting superintendent of Hoover City Schools.

MAGNET STUDENTS REACH OUT TO SPECIAL CHILDREN

Handicapped students from the Children's Center in Montgomery recently received a special treat from arts program students from Booker T. Washington (BTW) Magnet High School in the Montgomery County School



As part of the 18th Alabama Clay Conference, nationally known artist Peter King built a 12-foot-tall clay facade that will remain at the entrance to Spain Park High School's theater. Photo credit: Spain Park Student Ross Snyder

System. A "Children's Art Celebration" was held at the Children's Center, March 4. The program featured music, dancing, singing, and artwork from the Children's Center students. The event celebrated an ongoing project enabling BTW visual arts students to work with the handicapped students to produce paintings and other artwork.

BTW is led by principal **QUENTIN ROSS**. The principal of the Children's Center is **RALPH GRISWOLD**. **CLINTON CARTER** is the superintendent of Montgomery County Schools. 🍏



Students at Graham Elementary School are exploring a variety of creative dance movements with instructor Sycamore Toffel. The activities in these classes also reinforce concepts students are learning in their classrooms, such as building patterns, symmetry, attention to details, and teamwork.



Booker T. Washington Magnet High School visual arts students spend time painting with students from the Children's Center in Montgomery.

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION



According to a November 2002 survey, many motorists are still

breaking the law by illegally passing a stopped school bus. Although illegal school bus passings have decreased by over 27 percent from the spring of 2002, the issue of school bus safety still needs addressing.

A survey conducted last spring by the Alabama Department of Education's Pupil Transportation Section revealed motorists were not taking school bus safety seriously enough. In the one-day study, with two-thirds of local public school systems reporting, revised numbers indicate 1,996 illegal school bus passings occurred. However, results from the most recent survey conducted Nov. 13, found illegal school bus passings decreasing to 1,778 with 82 percent of local school systems reporting. On that date, the Alabama Department of Education requested all public school bus drivers observe and

record vehicles illegally passing their school buses when the stop arm was extended.

"Under Alabama law, traffic from all directions is required to stop for a school bus that loads or unloads schoolchildren. Additionally, traffic is not to proceed until the school bus has resumed motion or the red lights are no longer flashing. This applies to both two- and four-lane highways," explained **STATE ADMINISTRATOR OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION JOE LIGHTSEY**.

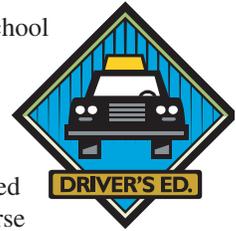
The decrease in the number of illegal school bus passings could be contributed to a statewide billboard safety awareness campaign, which began in December 2000. For the third year, school bus safety awareness billboards stating "STOP for School Buses. It's the Law!" are located along highways in six major metropolitan areas in Alabama. The purpose is to remind Alabama motorists to stop for school buses that are loading and

unloading children. Each day, more than 374,000 Alabama students are transported to and from local schools by school buses.

Lightsey feels to help decrease offenses, new legislation is needed to address funding for increasing local law enforcement and traffic violation fines.

Another component of Pupil Transportation is Driver Education, which assists in training

Alabama's high school students to safely operate motor vehicles. Driver and Traffic Safety Education is offered as an elective course primarily for 10th grade students who wish to obtain a learner license from the Alabama Department of Public Safety.

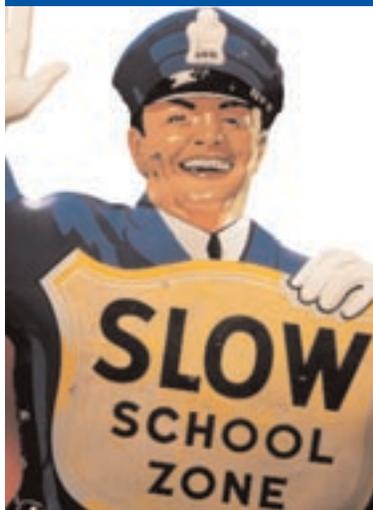


"Public education in Alabama is committed to a comprehensive program which promotes safe driving habits," said **STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION ED RICHARDSON**. "I believe that one part of the solution to the problem of death and injury caused by traffic accidents is a public awareness effort involving our young people."

The course is divided into two phases – classroom instruction and behind the wheel instruction – taught by certified instructors. Due to a shortage of certified instructors in recent years, the Alabama Department of Education is now assisting local school systems in seeking new driver and traffic safety instructors. Guidelines have been established offering Preliminary Certificates to certified teachers who want to teach Driver Education. Applicants must complete the state department's basic and advanced driver education courses being offered this summer.

State law also allows a driver education instructor to be a third-party testing agent of the Alabama Department of Public Safety and the Alabama Department of Education to administer the driving portion of the Driver License examination. Instructors must obtain certification. For further information, contact **MICHAEL BASSETT**, Driver Education and Traffic Safety, Alabama Department of Education, at (334) 242-8220 or mbassett@alsde.edu.

DO ALABAMA DRIVERS KNOW THE LAW WHEN IT COMES TO STOPPING FOR SCHOOL BUSES?



According to key findings of both surveys, the majority of illegal school bus passings:

- Are executed by motorists in cars;
- Occur on two-lane roads;
- Take place on the left side of the school bus;
- Are directed from the front to the rear of the bus; and
- Happen at bus stops where one to five students are being loaded or unloaded.

A complete copy of the survey, including local results, can be obtained by visiting the Alabama Department of Education Web site.

School System Highlight

JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

This donated billboard, which cost approximately \$550 per month, has been up since July 2002.

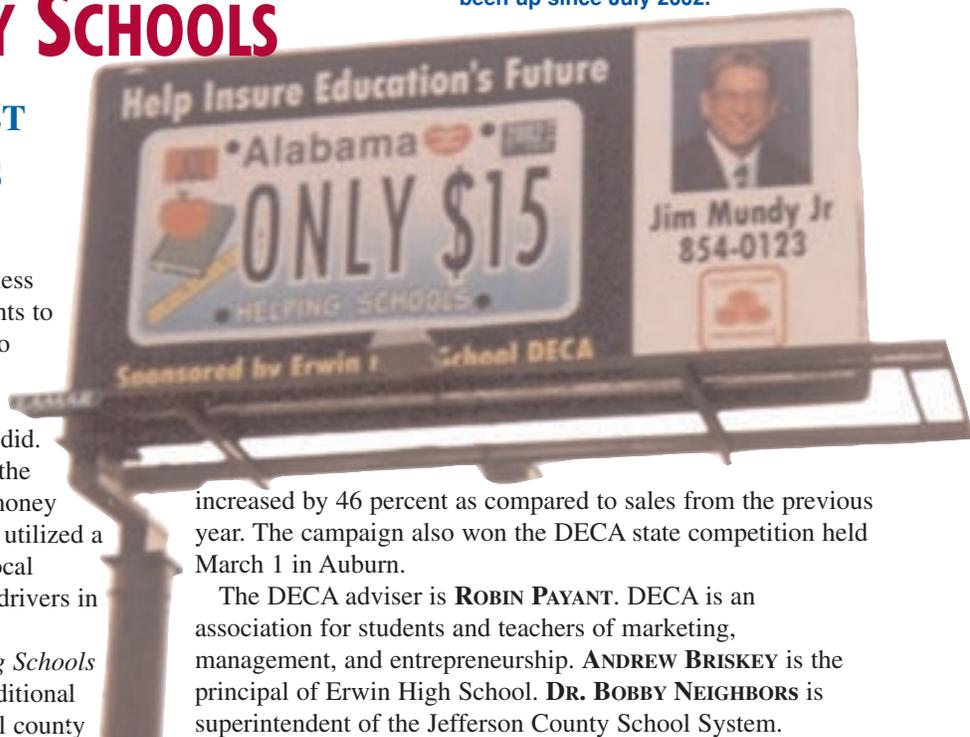
DECA STUDENTS MARKET HELPING SCHOOLS TAGS



What better way to teach solid business sense than to actually allow students to plan a public relations campaign to market a specific product? That's exactly what members of the Erwin High School DECA chapter in the Jefferson County School System did. But these high school marketing students went the extra mile to promote a project that generates money to Alabama schools. The students designed and utilized a billboard, brochures, letters, newspapers, and local television media to get their message across to drivers in the Birmingham area.

The message is a simple one – Buy a *Helping Schools* Tag, Help Insure Education's Future. For an additional fee, motorists can purchase tags from their local county license commissioner's office for the standard renewal/purchase fee, plus an additional \$15, of which \$11.63 is earmarked for schools. The purchaser can designate money from each tag sale to a particular school system. That revenue goes directly to the school system for assistance in purchasing textbooks and classroom supplies. *Helping Schools* tags also send a strong message of support for Alabama's public schools, which will be helpful during the R.E.A.C.H. – Realizing Every Alabama Child's Hopes campaign to increase financial support for our schools.

Students solicited local businesses for financial support for the campaign. In fact, several businesses purchased tags for their commercial fleet of vehicles. By the end of this successful campaign, *Helping Schools* tag sales in Jefferson County had



increased by 46 percent as compared to sales from the previous year. The campaign also won the DECA state competition held March 1 in Auburn.

The DECA adviser is **ROBIN PAYANT**. DECA is an association for students and teachers of marketing, management, and entrepreneurship. **ANDREW BRISKEY** is the principal of Erwin High School. **DR. BOBBY NEIGHBORS** is superintendent of the Jefferson County School System.

For more information on purchasing *Helping Schools* tags, contact your county license commissioner or visit the *Helping Schools* Tags Web site at www.HelpingSchoolsTags.org. 🍏

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Kick Butts Day – Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, April 2, is an annual initiative that encourages activism and leadership among elementary, middle, and high school students. [Click here](#) to download classroom materials.

From Mountains to the Sea, a two-day, all-expense-paid workshop for K-12 educators wishing to bring nature into the classroom. Five sessions are being held in June at Lookout Mountain, DeSoto State Park, and Little River Canyon National Preserve. For information, contact Bill Martin, Jacksonville State University Little River Canyon Field School, at (256) 782-8010 or [click here](#).

Application deadline: April 15

Legacy will host summer teacher institutes **June 22-27**, at the Southern Environmental Center/Birmingham Southern College, and **July 20-25**, at Camp Beckwith in Baldwin County. Teachers participate in exciting field trips, learn from content lecturers, and engage in hands-on teacher activities. Contact Sallye Longshore, Educational Programs Director, at (334) 270-5921, 1-800-240-5115, or [click here](#).

AWARD AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

ALFA Teacher of the Month Award is accepting applications from principals. ALFA awards \$1,000 to each principal selected and \$1,000 to each of their schools. A principal will be selected for June and July 2003. [Application and criteria](#) are available online, or contact Anne Graham at (334) 242-9950 or [click here](#). **Application deadline: April 3**

Alabama Safe Schools Initiative 2003 Awards of Excellence, sponsored by the office of the Alabama Attorney General, recognizes schools demonstrating excellence in their school safety planning, training, and collaboration efforts. [Click here](#) for more information, or to receive a copy of the 2003 nomination packet, or contact Lynn Childs in the Office of Attorney General, at (334) 242-7300.

Application deadline: April 15.

"One Class at a Time" sponsored by Birmingham's WIAT-TV CBS 42 is awarding weekly \$1,000 classroom resource grants to K-12 teachers in the station's viewing area. To qualify, interested teachers must complete an application form and submit a brief essay describing their classroom needs and the benefits to students. A winner will be selected every week for the next year. [Apply online](#) or contact the station at (205) 322-4200.

MARCH 

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH		ARTS EDUCATION MONTH	
Mar. 3-7	NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK		
Mar. 3-11	ALABAMA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION		
Mar. 10-14	ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION EXAM ADMINISTRATION		
Mar. 13	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING		
Mar. 27	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION WORK SESSION		

APRIL 

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH	
Apr. 10	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Apr. 14-20	YOUNG PEOPLE'S POETRY WEEK
Apr. 22	EARTH DAY
Apr. 24	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION WORK SESSION
Apr. 25-26	ALABAMA PTA CONVENTION



ALABAMA Education News

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Copies available in Braille or other forms upon request.

BOARD BRIEFS

FEBRUARY AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED:

- ❖ Released Teacher Testing Results
- ❖ Passed Resolution Commending Jacquelyn Zimmerman for Achieving a Perfect Score on the ACT
- ❖ Passed Resolution Commending WIAT-TV CBS 42 for Its Support of K-12 Education
- ❖ Passed Resolution Commending Anita Gibson as One of Five Finalists for the 2002 National Education Association Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence
- ❖ Passed Resolution Recognizing March 2003 as "Arts Education Month" in Alabama Schools
- ❖ Passed Resolution Recognizing March 3-7, 2003 as "School Breakfast Week" in Alabama Schools
- ❖ Held a Public Hearing on Transfer of Credits from Accredited and Nonaccredited Private Schools
- ❖ Passed Resolution for Adoption of Mathematics, Health Education, and Physical Education State Course of Study and the English Language Arts Course of Study Addendum (Reading)
- ❖ Passed Resolution Appointing 2003-04 State Textbook Committee for Mathematics, Health, and Physical Education
- ❖ Approved Substitution of Later Edition of Textbooks
- ❖ Authorized Review of Teacher Education Programs, Troy State University-Dothan
- ❖ Introduced Reginald Sorrells as New Alabama Department of Education General Counsel
- ❖ Passed Resolution Endorsing National Education Association's "Read Across America" Program