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ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

The electronic newsletter of the Alabama Department of Education

Message from the Superintendent



Dr. Tommy Bice,
State Superintendent of Education

THIS PAST WEEK I was invited to participate in a joint meeting of the faculty from the University of Montevallo and a team of educators from the Shelby County School System. This was the second meeting of a planned effort to come to a consensus regarding the knowledge and skills high school graduates need to be successful as a first-year college student and, most importantly, what a collaborative effort between K-12 and higher education might look like to ensure student success – a primary goal of our PLAN 2020.

It became quite clear early in the discussions that while academic content knowledge is foundational, it is rather those crucial, yet elusive to traditional measurement skills that appear to fall within the gap of the two systems. Over the past decade, K-12 has fallen victim to an external accountability measure we call Adequate Yearly Progress that should have been reauthorized over four years ago. As a result, the skills valued most at the college level, and by business and industry, skills of critical thinking, inquisitiveness, analysis of complex text for undefined

K-12 has fallen victim to an external accountability measure we call “Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).”

answers, are often lost as we become consumed with a score on a test in the spring that by design fails to measure these most needed skills.

I share this experience knowing that over the next several weeks our schools will become consumed with ensuring our students are prepared for the “test.” I also share this to assure you that your state board and the decision makers in Montgomery are well aware of the unintended and negative consequences of our current system and have committed to see it replaced with a balanced and

meaningful assessment and accountability system that has an instructional focus. As an immediate and intermediary step in this process, your state board is considering an application to the USDOE to freeze our Annual Measureable Objectives, which will allow our students and teachers room to explore and learn in a non-threatening environment while aspiring to new goals where students are prepared to think critically, to problem solve, and to work collaboratively to solve problems. Envision a teaching and learning environment with this renewed focus ... the future holds great promise.

Did YOU Know There Are:

- 744,621 public school students in Alabama
- 8,282 Pre-K Students
- 57,602 Kindergarten Students
- 285,071 Elementary Students
- 176,051 Middle School Students
- 217,615 High School Students
- 381,964 Boys
- 362,657 Girls



Plan 2020 Unveiled at Board Meeting

"WE ARE AT THE TIPPING POINT OF DOING SOMETHING

GREAT," said Dr. Tommy Bice during the State Board of Education work session Feb. 23rd, as he rolled out his proposed strategy, "Plan 2020," in his second month as Alabama's State Superintendent.

[The strategic plan](#) stresses the importance of building on recent gains in student achievement by placing greater emphasis on preparation for real-world challenges. "We not only want every child to graduate; we want every child prepared for college work and adulthood in the 21st century," said Dr. Bice. "Prepared means that students are gaining not just knowledge but the ability to apply knowledge."

ACT, the college admissions test, determines "readiness scores" that indicate whether a student is likely to be successful in college-level work. Based on data from 2011, only 18% of Alabama students achieved the benchmark score or above on all four sections of the ACT exam, and among the students admitted to college, 34% had to take remedial courses.

When we contrast results of students on the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam* – passed by 95% of Alabama's students – it is clear that there is a gap between expectations for a high school diploma and the level of work expected of students who attend college.

"Let's own it, and let's work together to do something about it," said Dr. Bice, referring to the startling statistics.

Plan 2020 outlines four priorities, including the learners, the support systems, the school systems, and the professionals. Dr. Bice explained that all of these have to function together like an "eco-system" to meet the following objectives:

1. Improve student growth and achievement.
2. Close the achievement gap.
3. Increase the graduation rate.
4. Increase the number of students that are college- and career-ready.

The plan includes metrics for measuring progress. The Board will set targets and continuously review and prioritize what is working.

Among the strategies outlined, Dr. Bice noted that bringing about a more unified system from prekindergarten to the business world is imperative to creating a successful and powerful workforce in Alabama. Alabama is among only eight states without some sort of "P-20" collaborative body including representatives from Pre-K, K-12, higher education, and the workforce that reviews the state's entire educational pipeline to address systemic problems that occur because of the lack of coordination between the separate entities.

Another challenge in preparing each student successfully, according to Dr. Bice, is in the structure of the support systems in each school.

"Students should enter the ninth grade with a four-year plan based on their individual skills, talents, and interests," explained Dr. Bice, as he described the ideal learning environment he hopes Plan 2020 will

promote. Strategies are designed to increase the attendance rate, elevate rigor and engagement in the classroom, foster cultural and behavioral improvements (by reducing disciplinary infractions), promote improved health services, and, above all, "to get guidance counselors back to doing what they are supposed to be doing."

Dr. Bice

acknowledged that with the constant reduction in

funding, many guidance counselors have become "assistant principals," carrying the load of extraordinary duties that hinder them from guiding each student on a path of individual success. In his plan, adequate funding is paramount. But he also stated the reality of those limitations.

"We have to help our systems find ways to be more creative, granting them more flexibility," said Dr. Bice, "so that we are resourcing and supporting them based on the unique needs of the system."

"Recent reports on the remarkable improvements in reading and math demonstrate that when we set goals, provide support, and focus on outcomes more Alabama students succeed," said A+ President Caroline Novak. "Now we need to increase our efforts to bring educators and citizens together to further develop and accomplish the strategies in Plan 2020 so that doing something great is truly within our reach."

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



Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers and Students Earning Highly Respected National Credentials

Teacher Training Scholarship Initiative and is offering a total of six different \$1,000 scholarships to foodservice teachers statewide. Scholarship winners will be announced in April.”

The restaurant industry is expected to add about 1.3 million new jobs over the next decade, with total employment reaching 14 million by 2021. Also, current data shows the average salary for a certified “Executive Chef” exceeds *more than \$75,000 annually*.

The **National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)** is another specialized credential also offered in Alabama. This program measures the total skills of students who complete either secondary or postsecondary technical programs. NOCTI assessments consist of written and performance-based components. Family and Consumer Sciences assessments currently available in Alabama are *Commercial Foods, Culinary Arts – Level 1 and Level 2, and Hospitality Management – Food and Beverage*. The **American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)** Pre-Professional Assessment is also available and consists of written examinations in culinary arts areas.

To register for the ProStart Level I

Training, which will be offered in June, use [this link](#) (click on the Register for 2012 Summer Institutes link).

To learn more about these specialized credentials for teachers and students, or to get additional

information on how to participate, contact Dr. Nan Burgess, Alabama Department of Education Career and Technical Education Administrator, or Education Specialist Judy Brown, at 334-242-9111.

OVER THE PAST DECADE, America’s culinary, hospitality, and tourism industries have become some of the leading sources of new employment opportunities in the country. According to the National Restaurant Association, U.S. restaurant sales reached \$580 billion last year – *up more than 2.4 percent*. Alabama’s Family and Consumer Sciences teachers are earning specialized credentials to ensure their students are prepared for successful and productive careers in the future.

Food safety has always been a top priority in the United States.

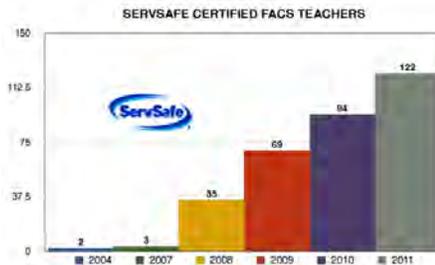
ServSafe, which was introduced to Alabama teachers in 2008 and then to students statewide in 2009, is a nationally recognized credential focused on quality food standards and management. Alabama was one of the leading states in the nation to offer this specialized certification to teachers and also high school culinary arts students.

This certification is valid for a five-year period. Once teachers earn their initial credential, they then have an opportunity to become **ServSafe Proctors**, which means they are qualified to teach and also test students on ServSafe standards.

Starting in 2010, all restaurants in the U.S. were required to have at least one employee certified to ServSafe standards. Health inspectors now must deduct 5 points from a restaurant’s overall health score each time it does not meet this requirement.

This year, **ProStart**, a new national certification, will be introduced in Alabama for the first time. This is also a specialized credentialing program for both teachers and students. ProStart focuses on professional-level culinary techniques and food management skills. This program encourages real-world educational experiences and hands-on career development. This is a two-year career and skill-building program.

“Teachers interested in registering for this summer’s upcoming *ProStart Level I Training* must enroll at the national ProStart website,” says Judy Brown, Alabama Department of Education Career and Technical Education Specialist. “This workshop will be held in Birmingham at the renowned Culinary Institute on June 17-22. The Alabama Restaurant Association’s Educational Foundation has started a *ProStart*



Shelby County's Vincent Elementary School Hosts Leadership Day

THERE IS A LEADER IN EVERYONE, according to a program known as *The Leader in Me*. The program is based on Stephen R. Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" and is being implemented by the staff and students at Vincent Elementary School. Mrs. Beverly Miller recalls wondering what makes some leaders different from others. Why do some children look adults in the eye and speak with confidence while others will not make eye contact with anyone?

"When two of my teachers came to me with the book *The Leader in Me*, I immediately knew I wanted our school to implement Stephen Covey's principles. A team of teachers saw the need for the students at Vincent to become more responsible, creative, and tolerant of differences. We shared the book with our faculty and staff members and they were sold. We all knew this was what we wanted for our students. The faculty

spent four days training in the summer of 2009 in an effort to prepare students to be leaders in the 21st century. Our goal was to increase students' ability to think for themselves, take initiative, get along with others, and solve problems. We realized that all children have leadership potential that just has to be developed. We have the responsibility to help them see that they can become leaders and that they have the power to make a difference in the world," shared Miller.

The Covey program follows several mottos: "Be Proactive," "Begin with the End in Mind," "Put First Things First," "Think Win-Win," "Seek First to Understand Then to be Understood," "Synergize," and "Sharpen the Saw." Students are learning that leadership is about doing the right thing even when no one is watching. They are accepting roles such as being student greeters; they welcome visitors by shaking the visitors' hands, looking them in the eye, and welcoming them to their school or classroom.

On January 11, 2012, Vincent Elementary School held its first annual Leadership Day. For this special event VES invited community stakeholders and educators from other schools to come learn about the school's unique leadership model. The day provided an opportunity for the staff and students to share their leadership insights and experiences with those who attended. VES hosted 25 guests including personnel from the Shelby County Central Office, members of the Shelby County Board of Education, and other leaders from the community as well as the state. VES faculty and students shared examples of their work with the "7 Habits" and their commitment toward being a "Leader in Me" school.



Participants gained a better understanding of the "7 Habits" and how they are incorporated into daily learning. They witnessed student achievement through data notebooks and discovered the joys of being a "Leader in Me" school. Students shared their academic data notebooks, which were created based on their individual academic and personal needs. Students have taken ownership of the goals written in these notebooks as they track progress. Guests also witnessed students exercising leadership as they helped plan the day, greeted guests, gave school tours, gave presentations, and sang songs. Over 170 students were featured in VES

Leadership Day.

The "7 Habits" teach universal principles such as responsibility, integrity, and respect. The principles are blended into the school culture by teachers who are well trained, committed to living the habits themselves, and who weave them into every aspect of the school day. Stephen Covey's program encourages the teachers and staff to see the leader that lies within every

child. Using the philosophy of the "7 Habits" as the primary tool, teachers gently sculpt each child in a way that honors his or her individuality and emphasizes his or her unique strengths and gifts. Each student learns that he or she has something important to do with his or her life. They learn that they are entirely capable of doing just that by setting goals and making responsible decisions that lead to attaining them.



AWARDS/OPPORTUNITIES

Alabama Education 2011-2012 Quick Facts Now Available!

EDUCATEAlabama – LEAs Speak Out!

Four 12-15 Minute, Pre-recorded WebEx sessions

In the below WebEx sessions, selected LEA Superintendents and Evaluation and Technology Coordinators discuss EDUCATEAlabama 2011-2012, highlighting what is working well, areas for improvement, specific requests to the Alabama Department of Education for consideration in 2012-2013, and the upcoming EDUCATEAlabama Survey 2012. To view each session, click the school system name.



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Dr. Kathy Murphy, Superintendent
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Mr. Jim Cunningham, Superintendent
Mr. Ronnie Crabtree, Evaluation Coordinator
Mr. Greg Titshaw, Technology Coordinator

[Phenix City](#)

Dr. Larry DiChiara, Superintendent
Mrs. Lisa Coleman, Evaluation Coordinator
Mr. Joe Blevins, Technology Coordinator

For complete information, contact the Alabama Department of Education, Leadership and Evaluation Section at 334-353-8924 or educatealabama@asc.edu.

SAMMY Awards 2012

AMERICA'S MILK PROCESSORS (the folks who bring you the "got milk" campaign) and USA TODAY are announcing the 15th annual "Scholar Athlete Milk Mustache of the Year" (SAMMY) 2012 Award Program. The SAMMY Award



Program recognizes outstanding high school seniors throughout the United

States. A standout scholar athlete from your high school could be one of the 25 winners who will receive:

- A \$7,500 college scholarship from the Milk Processors Education Program
- An invitation for winners, parents, and/or guardians to attend a SAMMY 2012 awards weekend at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL, in June 2012.
- An opportunity to be pictured in a special congratulatory Milk Mustache ad in a June 2012 issue of USA TODAY.

From now until March 19, 2012, teachers, coaches, principals, guidance counselors, athletics directors, parents, and relatives are encouraged to nominate a scholar athlete for the SAMMY 2012 Award. Additionally, all high school seniors may self-nominate themselves for the award.



SAMMY 2012 applications will be accepted [online](#) until March 19, 2012. Visit facebook.com/milkmustache for more information.



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

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

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