

# ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

October 2003

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# A BUMPY ROAD LIES AHEAD FOR ALABAMA SCHOOLS

**After the defeat of Amendment One by Alabama voters Sept. 9, state officials have been forced to make drastic budget cuts to programs and staff in Alabama's public school systems to fill a \$300 million K-12 funding shortfall.**

**D**uring a special session, the state legislature approved a \$4.2 billion Education Trust Fund budget Sept. 26. Approximately \$80 million was slashed from educational programs in the state's K-12 budget and Alabama Department of Education budget for fiscal year 2004. Unfortunately, it was necessary to shift money from the classroom to cover the rising costs of employee health insurance premiums and other teacher expenses. Sadly, this shift forced cuts in textbooks, professional development, technology, and library enhancement by over \$54 million. Additional cuts were made to the High Hopes graduation exam remediation program and the student at-risk program, as well as the fine arts and career technical initiatives. Legislators also provided funding for non-state agencies for only the first quarter of 2004. After that, those agencies must find their own monies.

The state Department of Education budget has been reduced by 15 percent – over \$12 million. This will mean hiring freezes, and personnel and program cuts, including money earmarked for programs targeted to at-risk students. Tragically, the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) and Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) were kept at level funding, which means expansion to non-ARI and AMSTI schools across the state will be

(Continued on Page 2)

“*All of these cuts will have a severe negative impact on the academic performance of our students*”

– Ed Richardson,  
State Superintendent of Education

The state Legislature completed the special session in which it examined ways to fill a \$675 million overall budget (General Fund and Education Trust Fund) deficit by the beginning of the fiscal year.

## – CUTS & SAVINGS –

- An addition of \$265 million in one-time federal funds
- \$11.7 million cut from legislative discretionary grants, non-state agency funding, and nonessential spending
- \$200 million-plus in across-the-board Education and General Fund agency cuts
- \$50 million from medical insurance co-pay increases for educational personnel and universities paying for retiree medical insurance
- \$60 million in reductions in Medicaid programs, day-care availability, and increased state employee medical insurance co-payments

(Continued from Page 1)

impossible. “All of these cuts will have a severe negative impact on the academic performance of our students,” said

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

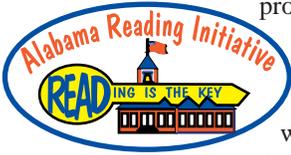
EDUCATION ED RICHARDSON. “Since

salaries and benefits cannot be

prorated, at this

point we also

anticipate layoffs of teachers and support personnel this spring, which will definitely affect class size and services to students and parents.”



Several options are on the drawing board to assist local school systems with meeting their own budget shortfalls. Shortening the school year, charging fees for elective classes and extracurricular activities, and funding only core curriculum are ideas that surfaced in legislative hearings during the September special session. More comprehensive information is forthcoming following the completion of individual school system budgets. Proposed budgets from local school systems are due to the state Department of Education Oct. 15. More than one-third of the state’s 129 public school systems are expected to begin the new fiscal year, which began Oct. 1, with less than one month’s operating expenses in reserve. After additional cuts are made, the number of systems facing dire financial difficulties is expected to increase.

### WHAT ARE SCHOOL SYSTEMS GOING TO DO?

Each local school system has different needs. Some are more prepared to deal with the budget crisis than others. Take Vestavia Hills City for instance, which faces a 6.5 percent budget cut – approximately \$1 million SUPERINTENDENT DR. JAMIE BLAIR is thankful his system has the Vestavia Hills City School Foundation, which has raised over \$1 million in pledges from public and private entities since its inception in 1996, to help

schools avoid a funding crisis. Other systems aren’t as fortunate. Baldwin County Schools will take on \$3.3 million in state cuts and Tuscaloosa County Schools will operate with \$2.2 million less in state funding. Many systems will be forced to put building improvements on hold, which could be especially detrimental to the state’s newest system, Leeds City. “And what will become of poor school systems, which didn’t have enough funding to begin with?” asked State Board Member, District 5, ELLA BELL. “I’m afraid the outlook will be grim,” said Richardson during the state Board of Education’s September work session. “Unless we receive additional funding for our programs and improvements, I predict that test scores will decrease and dropout rates will go up within two years, and we will see the progress that has been made begin to unravel.”

Local superintendents met in Montgomery Oct. 3, to discuss options to help them prepare local fiscal year 2004 budgets.

The Alabama Department of Education is not in this sinking financial crisis boat alone. With the General Fund budget being cut by \$66.8 million, other state agencies are drowning as well with huge leaks in their budgets of 18 percent or more. For example, 250 jobs will be cut from the State Department of Public Health. The state’s court system will see the elimination of over 400 positions.



Alarming, the 2004-2005 year doesn’t look any brighter. STATE FINANCE DIRECTOR DRAYTON NABERS predicts that rising costs in health care, pensions for state employees, and Medicaid combined with the loss of this year’s \$265 million federal windfall and other expected expenses could put the state in a worse financial crunch to the tune of a \$470 million deficit, especially if the economy doesn’t recover to increase collection of existing taxes. 🍏

**THE MESSAGE ON AMENDMENT ONE WAS CLEAR. Alabamians want smaller state government and fewer services (education, public safety, care for the young, sick, and elderly) and do not want to pay any additional amount to bring our state equal to others in our surrounding region. As a result, tough decisions and leadership will be needed when legislators reconvene Feb. 3, to begin tackling the fiscal year 2005 budget.**

## TIETZ RECEIVES OUTSTANDING GERMAN EDUCATOR TITLE

**GLÜCKWÜNSCHE** ... or congratulations to **NELLIE TIETZ**, a foreign language teacher at Baldwin Arts and Academics Magnet School in Montgomery.

Tietz will celebrate National German Week, Oct. 6-11, by being named the 2003 Outstanding German Educator at the secondary level by the American Association of Teachers of German. The 6,000-member organization selects three winners each year – one at the elementary level, one for secondary education, and one who teaches college-level German. Tietz will be honored at the association's annual meeting in Philadelphia in November.



**NELLIE TIETZ**

**BALDWIN PRINCIPAL JEANETTE WRIGHT** said, "Tietz is an outstanding teacher who gives whatever it takes to ensure the success of student achievement in the area of foreign language. We are fortunate to have her on our staff, but sadly due to this year's budget restraints, our school will be unable to continue German instruction."

Tietz is a 28-year veteran teacher who has taught both in the United States and Germany. She will remain at Baldwin to teach French. 🍏

## ACT IS PERFECTION FOR THREE ALABAMA STUDENTS

**S**coring a perfect 36 on the ACT college entrance exam gains high school students admittance to the most elite colleges and universities in the nation. That's exactly what three Alabama students have to look forward to in their educational and career dreams.

The three students were among 12,000 Alabama students – 355,000 students nationwide – who took the ACT in June of 2003. They are also only three of 72 in the nation who aced the test by achieving the highest possible score. 🍏

The state Board of Education honored the trio during their K-12 September board meeting in Montgomery. Resolutions were approved for:

- **ALEXANDER CHENG**, Lamp Magnet High School, Montgomery County Schools
- **ELIJAH RIDDLE**, Jefferson County International Baccalaureate High School, Jefferson County Schools
- **ROB EBERLY**, Daphne High School, Baldwin County Schools

## ALABAMA GETS AN A IN U.S. HISTORY CURRICULUM

**G**rades recently published by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute show Alabama is among the top states in the nation with the best state academic standards for U.S. History. *Effective State Standards for U.S. History: A 2003 Report Card* is a comprehensive state-by-state analysis in 48 states and the District of Columbia based on K-12 education standards on comprehensive historical content, sequential development, and balance.

"The report states Alabama parents have every reason to be impressed with what their children are expected to know about American history – and will be tested on – by the time they graduate high school. It also indicates that the Alabama U.S. history curriculum is an outstanding example of education reform. "That tells me we are right on target with providing standards-based reform resulting in stronger student achievement for meeting the federal requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*," said **STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION ED RICHARDSON**.

Six states – Alabama, Indiana, New York, Arizona, California, and Massachusetts – earned top marks with numerical scores of 27 or above out of a possible 30. Twenty-three states earned Fs with numerical scores of 14 or below. Alabama scored 27, along with Arizona, California, and Massachusetts. Additionally, Alabama ranked third among states in the nation with the highest points scored in the comprehensive historical content standard.

State standards for U.S. history (or social studies standards containing U.S. history) were graded by the number of points received out of a maximum possible score of 10 for each of the three individual criteria listed above. Alabama's assessment was based on the *Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies, Bulletin 1998, No. 18; Standards and Objectives (Social Studies) for the Alabama High School Graduation Exam*, and *Today's Students, Tomorrow's Citizens: Pathways for Learning, Social Studies*.

The study was authored by Sheldon Stern, former chief historian at Boston's John F. Kennedy Memorial Library.

**CLICK HERE** to visit the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation Web site for further information and more detailed results. 🍏



“... we are right on target with providing standards-based reform and stronger student achievement for meeting the federal requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.”

— **Ed Richardson**  
State Superintendent  
of Education

# Section Spotlight – FEDERAL PROGRAMS

The Federal Programs section of the Alabama Department of Education welcomes new **COORDINATOR MAGGIE RIVERS**, who was recently assigned by **ASSISTANT STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION FEAGIN JOHNSON** to the post Aug. 25. Rivers



**Federal Programs Coordinator Maggie Rivers examines a grant application with staff member Sonja Callines.**

has very strong federal program roots. Her career began in the Mobile County School System as a Title I aide in the 1970s, where she worked her way to the top as that system’s Federal Programs coordinator in 1997. Most recently, Rivers was employed by the state Department of Education as an education specialist in Federal Programs and as the state liaison/coordinator of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Rivers feels the biggest challenge of her new position will be ensuring compliance with the many different aspects of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). “I am committed to making a difference in the lives of Alabama students, and will work diligently with local school systems and schools to assist them in implementing the programs and strategies that are so important to students, parents, and teachers,” exclaimed Rivers.

Her duties include overseeing numerous federal program guidelines and regulations under NCLB. Some of these programs encompass English as a Second Language (ESL), Migrant Education, 21st Century Community Grants, Comprehensive School Reform, and Improving Teacher Quality Education Grants.

Currently Rivers and her staff are reviewing the programmatic components of the required NCLB consolidated applications. She and her staff will also meet with Federal Program coordinators from across the state in Montgomery, Oct. 27-28, to provide training and updates on NCLB. 🍏

**DIRECTORY OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS STAFF**

- Ms. Maggie Rivers [mrivers@alsde.edu](mailto:mrivers@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Ann Allison [aallison@alsde.edu](mailto:aallison@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Sheryl Coleman [scoleman@alsde.edu](mailto:scoleman@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Marva Dillon [mdillon@alsde.edu](mailto:mdillon@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Carolyn DuBose [cdubose@alsde.edu](mailto:cdubose@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Martha Holloway [mholloway@alsde.edu](mailto:mholloway@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Rosemary Mobley [rmobley@alsde.edu](mailto:rmobley@alsde.edu)
- Mr. Edmund Moore [emoore@alsde.edu](mailto:emoore@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Bambi Perrigin [bperrigin@alsde.edu](mailto:bperrigin@alsde.edu)
- Dr. Dorothy Riggins [driggins@alsde.edu](mailto:driggins@alsde.edu)
- Mr. Robert L. Ritchey [britchey@alsde.edu](mailto:britchey@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Dely Roberts [droberts@alsde.edu](mailto:droberts@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Novelette Seroyer [nseroyer@alsde.edu](mailto:nseroyer@alsde.edu)
- Ms. Billy Womble [bjwomble@alsde.edu](mailto:bjwomble@alsde.edu)

**(334) 242-8199 OR 1 (888) 725-9321**

- Federal Programs Section Coordinator; Compliance Issues
- Migrant Education Program
- Title I; Learn & Serve
- Title I, Neglected & Delinquent; Parenting
- Title I; Indian Education
- Coordinated School Health
- Title I, Even Start Family Literacy
- Title V, Innovative Programs
- Title I; Title VI, Rural & Low-Income Schools
- Title 1; Education for Homeless Children and Youth
- Dependent Care Grant Program; 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Title I; ESL
- Title I, School Improvement
- Title II, Professional Development; Special Projects



**The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is designed to develop community learning centers that help build better communities, serving kindergarten through eighth-grade children and their families beyond the regular school day. Activities include academics, enrichment, the arts, and family programs.**

# School System Highlight – DALLAS COUNTY

## CONNECTING HOME AND SCHOOL

**G**reat things are happening in education all over our state, but in one rural west central Alabama school system, things are “on the move.” Starting with the beginning of the school day in the Dallas County School System – the Early Bird Program encourages students who arrive at school early to eat a well-balanced breakfast and read books until school starts. At the end of the school day many of the system’s high school students participate in the Jobs for Alabama Graduates (JAG)

### LINKS TO SUCCESS IN DALLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

The percentage of high school seniors passing the Alabama High School Graduation Exam increased from approximately 78 percent in 2001-2002 to over 85 percent in 2002-2003.

Three former Dallas County students, who transferred to the esteemed Alabama School of Mathematics and Science in Mobile, graduated this past spring.

Southside High School’s Air Force Junior ROTC unit was the only unit in Alabama and one of only 93 out of 960 units worldwide to receive the Distinguished Unit Citation in May 2003.

Members of the Southside High School State Technology Students of America took top honors at the annual technology conference held in April 2003 in Montgomery.

Superintendent May’s daily radio broadcast to the community keeps parents and the public informed of school system activities.

Parental outreach includes the use of a Federal Programs Technology Lab, which is used for professional development for teachers and is available to parents for weekly computer training classes



**Over 1,650 people attended the Dallas County Schools Parent Celebration at the Wallace**

**Community College gym, Sept. 8. Superintendent Wayne K. May, upper right. Guest speaker Harvey Alton, bottom left.**

program – administrators, educators, students, and parents are involved in the achievement process.

**SUPERINTENDENT WAYNE K. MAY** believes, “The success of our children depends on our schools connecting with the home. Our parents are just as important as our teachers to the academic and social success of our students.”

Over 1,650 people attended the Dallas County Schools Parent Celebration at the Wallace Community College gym, Sept. 8. The special event was the brainchild of **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR DOROTHY IRVIN** and her assistant **ELAINE POOLE**. Area sponsors donated door prizes, nationally recognized motivational speaker **HARVEY ALSTON** encouraged parents to set positive examples and get more involved with their child’s schoolwork, and **SENATOR HANK SANDERS** made a surprise visit

to congratulate the school system’s administrators and staff for, “the hard work and excellent results being accomplished in our schools.”

The Alabama Reading Initiative and Reading First Program have made significant differences in Dallas County Schools. Both are funded through the system’s federal programs section, headed by **COORDINATOR TONYA CHESTNUT**. As is common in most rural school systems, the majority of schools within the Dallas County School System are Title I schools (10 out of 14). Chestnut credits an open line of communication with the Alabama Department of Education Federal Programs section as one of many important factors of improved student achievement in her system.

To discover more exciting events going on in Dallas County Schools, [CLICK HERE](#) to visit their Web site. 🍏

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES

The **APT Classroom 2002-2003 Schedule** allows teachers to search programs by grade level and curriculum. By using the Search feature, teachers can look through APT's full schedule by title, subject, or key words and arrange to send themselves reminder e-mails about upcoming programs.

The **Alabama Arts Rural Touring School Program** provides opportunities for rural schools to schedule performances by an Alabama group or artist. [CLICK HERE](#) to contact the Arts in Education program manager.

The **Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF) Outdoor Classroom/Schoolyard Habitat Planning Guide** is now available for use in developing and maintaining a hands-on outdoor education and conservation habitats on school grounds. To order a copy, call AWF at 1-800-822-9453.

**Education in the New Millennium (ENM)** encourages libraries to join the ENM Education Network. [CLICK HERE](#) to go to the Internet reading library available for public libraries throughout the United States and around the World.

## AWARD AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The **Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher** program is open to full-time teachers and administrators in Grades 1-12. The 2004 competition offers a fully funded three-week study visit to Japan. [CLICK HERE](#) to apply online or request an application packet, or contact Jaime McQueen at 1-888-527-2636. **Application deadline: Dec. 10**

**Toyota's Investment in Mathematics Excellence (TIME)** grant is available to K-12 math teachers for innovative projects enhancing mathematics education within a school. [CLICK HERE](#) to contact them or call 1-888-573-8463. **Deadline: Jan. 7, 2004**

The **2004 Toyota TAPESTRY** program awards 50 grants of up to \$10,000 each and a minimum of 20 "mini-grants" of \$2,500 each to K-12 science teachers who propose innovative science projects that can be implemented in their school or school district over a one-year period. Grants are sponsored by Toyota and administered by the National Science Teachers Association. [CLICK HERE](#) to apply online or call 1-800-807-9852. **Deadline: Jan. 16, 2004**

# BOARD BRIEFS

## SEPTEMBER AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED:

- ✓ Approved Resolution Proclaiming October as Alabama Statewide Parent Visitation Month
- ✓ Approved Resolution Commending Alexander Cheng, Elijah Riddle, and Rob Eberly for Achieving a Perfect ACT Score
- ✓ Approved Annual Report of *Lee v. Macon* Special Education Consent Decree – Executive Summary
- ✓ Approved a Teacher Education Program, Auburn University
- ✓ Approved the Appointment of Jim Methvin to the Alabama School of Fine Arts Board of Trustees
- ✓ Selected District 7 State Board Member Sandra Ray as the 2003 Delegate to the Alabama Association of School Boards Delegate Assembly

## NEW BOARD MEMBER APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR



**RANDY MCKINNEY**  
DISTRICT 1

The state Board of Education welcomes newly appointed District 1 board member **RANDY MCKINNEY** to its fold. McKinney, appointed by Governor Bob Riley on Sept. 11, fills the vacant seat on the eight-member panel made up of veteran educators and business leaders.

McKinney is a real estate broker and attorney who resides with his family in Orange Beach. He is a National Honor Society graduate of Minor High School in the Jefferson County School System. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of South Alabama in Mobile, a Masters of Religious Education degree from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and a law degree from the Birmingham School of Law.

Currently McKinney is the regional director for Realty Executives for Mississippi and Alabama specializing in office development and commercial and investment real estate. In 1999, he was chosen Baldwin County Realtor of the Year. 🍏

## WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION ...

# FINDING A TINY GEM CALLED JAPAN

By Julie Lazzari, Fairhope High School, Baldwin County Schools

Not so very long ago, in a land far, far away I discovered a wondrous land, a tiny gem called Japan. I was fortunate enough to be one of 50 teachers nationwide, selected by the Toyota International Teacher Program to travel to Japan this summer for the quintessential educational fieldtrip. My companions and I traveled to six cities and visited a variety of sites all in keeping with the program themes: history, education, environment, and technology. Upon reflecting on these four interwoven themes, I have come to the understanding that this tiny country, which is the size of California with a population four times that state, is diligently seeking balance. Not unlike our own country, seeking to maintain a balance with its past traditions and keeping an eye on a global vision for its future.

There were many facets of this tiny gem that surprised and amazed me. Visiting an elementary school, the children greeted the tall strangers from the West with unbridled enthusiasm and impeccable manners – smiling, bowing, and chanting, “How do you do?” These students sang and danced for us with such passion that I thought my heart was going to come out of my chest. In the high school visit, students still sat in the post-WWII desks, but had lively interaction and discourse with their teachers. A specific objective in the school philosophy is for the faculty to get to know each student as an individual. The extracurricular activities included not only sports, but also culture clubs such as tea ceremony, calligraphy (Kenji) and swordsmanship (Kendo). Nurturing cultural traditions is an important part of the curriculum. To enhance students’ global understanding and improve their speaking skills, all third-year advanced English students travel abroad for three weeks.

Because of its size, Japan is a condensed world which uses its space



Lazzari gets patriotic with Japanese students.

and natural resources carefully and creatively. As I now reflect on the ways that I will integrate this experience into my curriculum this fall, I ask myself if I am doing the best job I can to maintain a balance with my students’ education. Am I placing the same amount of importance on social skills and good manners as I am on the course objectives? Am I relaying to my students consequences of taking for granted the abundant resources of our country? Am I helping them to prepare for a productive future and yet being mindful of the significance of their family and cultural traditions? Am I using technology to develop new ideas

and new products? Answering yes to all these questions will be my challenge for the new school year. 🍏

### FIVE OTHER ALABAMA PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS ALSO TRAVELED WITH THE PROGRAM THIS SUMMER:

- Vanessa Chandler, Lee High School, Huntsville City Schools
- Anita Colley, Oak Grove High School, Jefferson County Schools
- Kay Harris, Shades Valley High School, Jefferson County Schools
- Gary Kubina, Citronelle High, Mobile County Schools
- Mark Raines, Central High School East, Tuscaloosa City Schools

## HOT OFF THE PRESS!

## 2003-04 EDUCATION DIRECTORY

Copies are available for purchase for \$20 each by contacting Claire Roeder at (334) 242-9760 or [croeder@alsde.edu](mailto:croeder@alsde.edu).

You’ll find a complete listing of schools, school systems, and state Department of Education personnel.



## Shooting Straight As An Arrow ...

# ALABAMA'S NATIONAL ARCHERY IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries along with the state Department of Education has implemented a pilot program introducing Olympic-style archery to physical education (PE) students in 16 middle schools throughout Alabama. The two-week curriculum entitled "Archery – On Target For Life" is modeled after a successful program created in Kentucky. Two schools from each of the eight state Department of Education districts were selected for inclusion in the pilot program. The Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries provided all of the necessary equipment to schools and required physical education teachers to attend training prior to implementing the program this school year.

[CLICK HERE](#) to contact Ray Metzler with the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries or call 1-800-245-2740. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information about the archery program. 🍏



**Ron Ashley, Physical Education Teacher, and archery program student, Floyd Middle Magnet School, Montgomery.**

### WHAT TEACHERS REPORT ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- Students are enthusiastic about learning archery.
- Student behavior and attendance are improved on archery days.
- Students that historically resist PE class are eager to participate in archery.
- Students who excel in archery class are not stereotypical athletes.

### SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR THE PROGRAM

- Floyd Middle Magnet School, Montgomery County
- Eclectic Middle School, Elmore County
- Riverton Middle School, Madison County
- Hewitt-Trussville Middle School, Jefferson County
- Hubbertville School, Fayette County
- Pittman Middle School, Jefferson County
- Phillips Preparatory School, Mobile County
- Simmons Middle School, Jefferson County
- Central Baldwin Middle School, Baldwin County
- Charles Henderson Middle School, Troy City
- Andalusia Middle School, Andalusia City
- Brookhaven Middle School, Decatur City
- Alexander City Middle School, Alexander City
- Curry Middle School, Walker County
- Jemison Middle School, Chilton County
- Ider Middle School, DeKalb County

**OCTOBER** HALLOWEEN

<b>STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH</b>		4
10/9	ALABAMA BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING	11
10/13	COLUMBUS DAY (State Holiday)	
10/15-17 & 20-22	ALABAMA READING AND MATHEMATICS (Pilot Test)	18
10/18-25	NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK	25
10/23	ALABAMA BOARD OF EDUCATION WORK SESSION	
10/29-30	PREVENTION & SUPPORT SERVICES WORKSHOP	

**NOVEMBER**

					1
11/11	VETERAN'S DAY (State Holiday)	6	7	8	
11/13	ALABAMA BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING & WORK SESSION		14	15	
11/16-22	AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK				
11/27	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (State Holiday)	22			
23		24	25	26	27
30					29



# ALABAMA Education News

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## Alabama Board of Education Members

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- Dist. 2 - Betty Peters, Dothan
- Dist. 3 - Stephanie W. Bell, Montgomery
- Dist. 4 - Ethel H. Hall, Vice Pres., Fairfield
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and Secretary and Executive Officer  
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### Editorial Staff - (334) 242-9950

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- Contributing Editor - Anne Graham
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## TEACHER OF THE MONTH FOR OCTOBER

*Raymond L. Young Elementary School, Talladega City Schools  
State Board of Education District 3*

Pattie Thomas is October's Teacher of the Month. Representing State Board of Education District 3, Thomas teaches first- and second-graders at Raymond L. Young Elementary School in the Talladega City School System. Thomas and her school each receive \$1,000 from ALFA Insurance Company and the Alabama Farmers Federation.

Thomas graduated with honors from Jacksonville State University, earning bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education. She is a National Board Certified Teacher as an Early Childhood Generalist. Thomas believes every child can learn and to teach a child's mind, a teacher must reach a child's heart. She also reaches out to parents with a weekly newsletter. Thomas is an often-requested teacher, who earns praise from parents and grandparents whose children have been in her class.

In 2004, ALFA will honor one teacher from each of Alabama's eight school board districts as well as two principals and two private school teachers. Application deadline for public school teachers is Oct. 15. The next application deadline is Dec. 15 for K-12 principals.

[CLICK HERE](#) for application information. 🍏



**PATTIE THOMAS**

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