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ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

The electronic newsletter of the Alabama State Department of Education

From the Superintendent



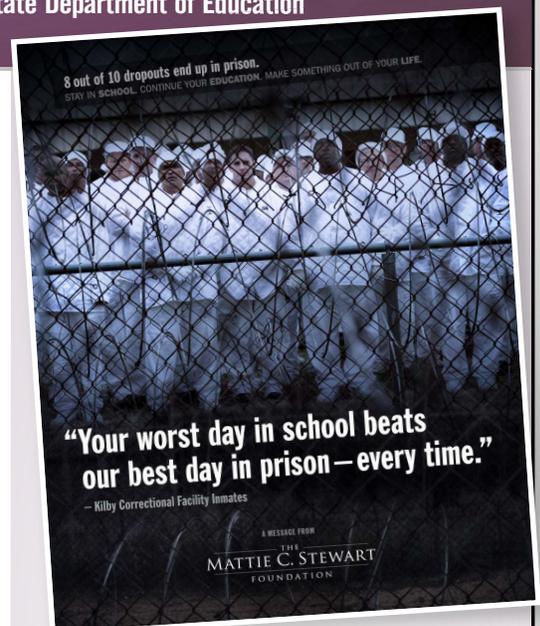
Dr. Tommy Bice, State Superintendent of Education

If you will be perfectly honest, you may be able to clearly recall being in elementary or high school and having a bully in your school. You may also remember how it felt to not possess the courage or skills to stop some things from happening to yourself or a friend. Regrettably, many students today are in the same predicament, yet what many of them experience is far worse than when we were in school due to the ever-expanding world of technology/ electronics and social media. Bullying is reported to be the most common form of violence in schools

today (verbally and physically).

Nationwide, **October is Bullying Prevention Month**. School personnel across the nation have provided awareness activities stressing the importance of recognizing and defusing bullying tactics among students in their schools. I trust that your school has incorporated themes and awareness activities into the daily school environment so that your students may become better equipped to handle the tactics of bullies and the aftermath of such bullying. We expect so much of students in school today that having to deal with fear and anxiety caused by bullies only detracts them from staying on course to have success academically.

I would like to ask all school personnel in Alabama to make a renewed effort to become more aware of student behavior in your school. Let's all make a personal commitment to learn to recognize and stop bullying activities and behavior among students so school can be a positive learning environment for **ALL** students.



"Stay in School" Posters Available for Your School!

1.2 million students each year drop out of school. Eight out of 10 students who drop out of school end up in prison. These staggering facts opened the door for the "[Stay in School Campaign](#)", created by the Mattie C. Stewart Foundation.

The Alabama State Department of Education has the above posters available for display in your school! If you would like to make arrangements for the delivery of these posters, [email ALSDE Communications](#) and you will receive a reply.

Alabama State Department of Education Receives New State Personnel Development Grant Award

The Division of Teaching and Learning, Office of Learning Support, Special Education Services Section, is pleased to announce that the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), has funded the Alabama State Personnel Development Grant's (SPDG) new grant application *Project Closing the Gap (CTG)* as part of the 2012 competition announced August 4, 2012. A total of twenty-two states were awarded SPDGs ranging from \$539,000 to \$2.2 million.

Project CTG will receive \$1,215,400 annually for a five-year funding period beginning October 1, 2012, to work with local education agencies, Parent and Information Centers, and institutes of higher education to provide professional development to general and special education teachers and staff who work with students with disabilities. *Project CTG* will work closely with other Alabama State Department of Education initiatives as the grant staff work to implement evidence-based programs and services to achieve the project's goals and improve results for all students. The funding for the SPDG Program is authorized by the *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* and is awarded through a competitive grant process.

For additional information, contact Susan Williamson, SPDG Grant Director, at 334-242-8114 or e-mail [HERE](#).

Alabama State Department of Education and State Troopers Remind Motorists of School Bus Safety



It is a priority year round, but school bus safety is particularly important during the school year when motorists come into contact with school buses on a daily basis.

This year, School Bus Safety Week is **October 22 to 26**, and the Alabama Department of Public Safety is partnering with the Alabama State Department of Education to spread the word and to remind motorists of the law and what is required.

Motorists may be aware that the law requires all traffic from both directions on a two-lane roadway to stop when school buses stop for passengers, but there are also rules to ensure safety in other situations.

Traffic from both directions must also stop for school buses on:

- Roadways with two lanes and a center turning lane
- Roadways with four or more lanes and a center turning lane
- Roadways with four lanes and no median separation

The rule, however, differs for traffic on roadways with four or more lanes that have a median separation. On such highways, only traffic following a school bus must stop. Traffic traveling in the opposite direction should continue moving.

According to the Alabama State Department of Education, most student fatalities occur outside the bus during loading/unloading, and the younger the child is, the more vulnerable he or she is to be killed outside the school bus. It is also important to note that the afternoon school bus trip is twice as dangerous as the morning school bus trip.

For more about school bus safety, visit www.alsde.edu. To speak with an Alabama State Trooper, call 334-242-4445.



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



Judson College Partners with Alabama Schools to Increase Use of Technology for Teaching and Learning

Approximately 100 teachers representing five counties in Alabama attended a technology conference at Judson College recently called *Effective Use of Technology for Teaching and Learning*. Attendees left the conference with optimism and renewed commitment to using technologies to support instructional goals. In EducateAlabama continuum documents, teachers had expressed interest in learning how to integrate technology appropriately and meaningfully in classroom instruction, and this conference was designed to meet this need. Mr. John Heard, Superintendent of Perry County Schools, and Dr. Gwenyth J. McCorquodale, Chair of the Department of Education, collaborated to plan the conference based on teachers' instructional needs.



Presenters from the Alabama State Department of Education, Saraland City Schools, Hoover City Schools, and Perry County Schools focused on using computers as tools of learning for teachers and students. Presentations also offered ways to enrich student learning with various technologies and addressed legal and ethical issues associated with technology.

Dr. McCorquodale stated, "The title of our conference was named by Superintendent Heard of Perry County Schools because he recognized the importance of supporting teachers in this area of instruction." In the closing session, Superintendent Heard challenged the educators to "focus on ways to actively engage children in learning. Technology is a powerful tool to build student engagement, and engagement leads to learning. We must use all the tools we can to ensure student success."

In addition to the conference, Judson College has created a dynamic learning community with its partnerships with several schools in Alabama. The goal is to continue to foster learning communities consisting of P-12 educators, clinical education faculty, and teacher candidates working together to combine course work in P-12 school-embedded practices through direct contact time with all in the learning community.

Local schools in current partnerships are rural schools in the Black Belt of Alabama, among some of the poorest school districts in our state and nation. New technologies present financial burdens to school districts that struggle with funding. There is an ever-increasing demand for 21st century teachers to incorporate technology and media into best practices, and our present partnerships often lack funds to purchase new technologies. Judson College teacher candidates through this new partnership will be prepared to teach in all economic areas.

Mountain Brook Schools are among the best funded in our state and

telecommunications resources in the schools are well financed. P-12 teachers and students have access to the latest technologies and resource personnel—technology coordinators, school media specialists, and parents who are committed to providing financial support to purchase new and innovative materials—to complement and support the use of learning with technology.

Brookwood Forest Elementary School administrators, media specialists, technology director for the school system, and P-6 educators, along with Dr. McCorquodale and clinical faculty member, Dr. Lesley Sheek, designed learning experiences that offer multiple opportunities to complete required course content of EDU 311 Instruction Media, EDU 406 Evaluation of Learning, and EDU 403 Curriculum Design in P-6 clinical experience settings with the new educational community during and after school hours. The interweaving of standards, content learning objectives, materials, teacher



candidate projects, practice teaching experiences, integrated unit planning, and learning-based outcomes are featured and exemplified in this design.

Brookwood Forest Elementary

and the school district of Mountain Brook graciously offered resources, staff, and materials for Judson College teacher candidates. A donation will be made to the school to purchase materials. The partnerships benefitted five partnership school districts – Perry County, Bibb County, Hale County, Dallas County, Saraland City Schools – and Judson College teacher candidates.

Need ACLD PLUs? Start today!

Professional Development Your Way (PDYW) @ EDVANTIA

To register and participate in the EDVANTIA professional studies, participants must have an active STI PD account to login (<https://pdweb.alsde.edu>). If you need an STI PD account, contact your school system's STI PD Manager. If you are not employed in an Alabama public school, you must contact Lori Newton, State Department of Education, at 334-353-1118 or send an [email](#). Edvantia cannot create an STI PD account for you. If you are interested in other professional study opportunities approved by the ACLD, go to www.leadershipalsde.com.

Reculturing for Student Success STI PD Title Number: PLUACLD045

This **16-week** online professional study provides participants with the knowledge and ability to promote and monitor a high-performance learning culture that promotes success for all students.

Registration Dates

Start – End Dates

10/8/2012 – 10/29/2012
11/5/2012 – 3/01/2013
12/17/2012 – 1/07/2013
1/14/2013 – 5/10/2013
4/1/2013 – 4/15/2013
4/22/2013 – 8/16/2013

October is Parent Visitation Month

[Visit the site](#) for tons of information on how to get parents involved (also available in Spanish)!

Click [HERE](#) for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month Guide.

Librarian Fosters Award-Winning, Reading-Friendly Ideas in Priceville

Nineteen kindergarten students sat on the carpeted floor in a room off the library at Priceville Elementary School on Wednesday morning. October is National Fire Prevention Month, so librarian Kathy Craig showed the students a video about fire safety. "I think you're going to like Sparky," she said, and their eyes widened. They became enthralled with tips from Sparky the Fire Dog.



The lesson over, Craig led the students onto the library's bustling main floor as they selected books to read. At three tables nearby, senior residents of The Terrace at Priceville taught another group of kindergartners the alphabet. Across the way at another table, fifth-grade students chatted quietly as they researched early explorers.

"I love books, and I love kids," Craig said as she surveyed her domain. "Put them together, and you've got a library, and I know how to manage it because of my business background. I don't have to wonder why I wanted to be a librarian."

On Sept. 27 as the Alabama Library Expo ended its 2012 state tour at Calhoun Community College, ALE President David Burrow of Pell City presented Craig a Herman Moore LAMP Award. The award goes annually to Library and Media Professionals for exceptional service to state schools.

"Kathy's a workhorse," Priceville Elementary School Principal Anne Knowlton said. "She has great ideas, and she loves bringing in parents to help and including them in the activities. She's on our literacy team and offers valuable input. I can always count on her to be a team player. She will do whatever she needs to do." Debra Freeman, in her 16th year as a kindergarten teacher at the school, lauds Craig for her energy and enthusiasm. "The library is a very welcome place for teachers and for students," Freeman said. "I feel Kathy has given our library a makeover, or a facelift, since she has been here."

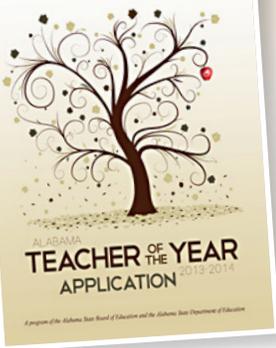
"It's more user-friendly, and she has updated the use of technology in our book collection." Cindy Weaver of Danville, in her fifth year as Craig's aide, walked along a line of plastic tubs sorting books. "Kathy pulls books and gets them ready for all the classes and works closely with kindergartners and first-grade students every week," Weaver said. "And since I'm a veteran, I love what she does to support veterans by inviting them to the library to tell their stories."

The often soft hum heard in the library isn't lost on Craig. "But the noise isn't deafening or disturbing," she said. "It's a happy chatter as students go about their work." Craig is in her seventh year as a librarian, her fourth as librarian at Priceville Elementary. During a rare moment when all the students had left, she spoke about the twists and turns that led her to a life among books.

"The library is like the best of all my worlds together," she said. "I deal with vendors here, and I don't just manage the patrons of the library. But I manage the assets, the budgets and schedules." Fourth-grader John Mason, 10, gave his thoughts about Craig after he checked out a book and prepared to leave. "She's a good librarian," he said. "That's all she does. And that's all I come in here for."

Story courtesy of the Decatur Daily





Teacher of the Year Applications Available Now!

The Alabama Teacher of the Year Program seeks annually to honor and recognize excellence in the teaching profession by identifying outstanding Alabama classroom teachers at local, district, and state levels. [CLICK HERE](#) for the application.

Increasing Safety on the School Bus – Physical Examinations for Drivers

On May 14, 2012, Governor Robert Bentley signed Alabama Act 2012-372 (Act), the *Lieutenant Dexter Holcomb Act* (16-27-4.1 of the Code of Alabama), which requires any person employed as a school bus driver to, at his/her own expense, successfully complete a physical examination by a licensed physician.

More specifically, the Act mandates that a person must be “physically qualified” to operate a school bus “transporting students to and from school or school-related events” and defines the physical qualifications required. With the passage of this Act, Alabama joins 48 other states in requiring physicals for school bus drivers. Many states require annual physicals. Mississippi and North Carolina do not.

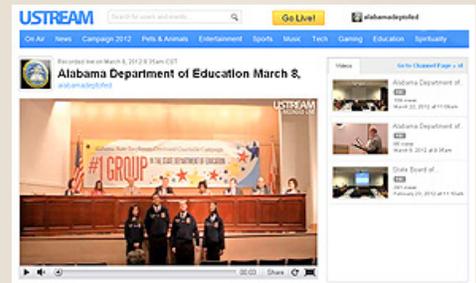
The Act became effective immediately following its passage and approval by the Governor and required that all school bus drivers be in compliance by August 14, 2012. The general provisions of the Act and the emergency rule are as follows:



1. A person may not be allowed to drive a school bus transporting students unless he/she is physically qualified.
2. The physical qualifications “mirror” those required for a Department of Transportation (DOT) Medical Card. The Act applies to new, current and future school bus drivers, including substitute drivers.
3. The results of the physical examination must be documented on form(s) prescribed by the ALSDE and maintained in the school system’s office.
4. Drivers may be “grandfathered” for any condition if the doctor states that the condition will not adversely affect his or her ability to control and safely operate a school bus. A signed waiver is also required.
5. Drivers who fail to comply with the Act will lose their Alabama School Bus Driver Certificate.

On September 13, 2012, the Alabama State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted *Alabama Administrative Code Rule 290-2-4-.08* to assist Alabama school systems in complying with this new regulation. The emergency rule provides that no person may be allowed to operate a school bus transporting students to or from school or school-related events unless the person is physically qualified in accordance with the 16-27-4.1 of the Code of Alabama.

State Board of Education Meetings Now on Ustream.tv!



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

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