



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Thomas R. Bice
 State Superintendent of Education

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CONTACT: Communication
334-242-9950
comm@alsde.edu

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**ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MOVES TOWARD A
 COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF LEARNING SUPPORTS**

*Department Releases New Learning Supports Design Plan and First Districts to
 Participate in Roll-Out*

Montgomery, Ala. — As part of a steadfast commitment to ensure a world-class education for *all* students, the Alabama State Department of Education is releasing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports design document and district roll-out plan.

ALSDE officials, area superintendents and representatives from Scholastic will discuss the new design at 9:30 a.m., Aug. 2, 2013, in Room P104 of the Gordon Persons Building, 50 N. Ripley St., Montgomery, AL.

“We are so optimistic about the power of this new design that builds on previous efforts to address the barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students,” said Dr. Linda Felton-Smith, Director, Office of Learning Support. “It unifies and moves student supports away from reacting to problems toward system development with a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention.”

The intent is to fully integrate the learning support system as a primary component of our school improvement policy and practice and focus on:

- Reframing current student/learning supports programs.
- Re-deploying resources.
- Developing in-classroom and school-wide approaches, including learning supports found effective in the state’s high-poverty/high-achieving schools.
- Developing the capacity to implement learning supports through leadership training.
- Revamping infrastructures at the school, district, and state levels.
- Developing and implementing accountability indicators directly related to the learning support system and fully integrating them into school improvement accountability.

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Ten districts including Bessemer City, Chickasaw City, Etowah County, Butler County, Decatur City, Perry County, Calhoun County, Dothan City, Shelby County, and Lauderdale County will implement the design starting this fall. Other districts will be phased in over the coming years.

“This new direction will help advance Alabama’s PLAN 2020, which outlines four priorities, including the learners, the support systems, the school systems, and the professionals,” explains Dr. Tommy Bice, State Superintendent of Education. “Each of these four components of the plan has to function together like an ‘eco-system’ so that we can meet our objectives of improving student growth and achievement, closing the achievement gap, increasing the graduation rate, and increasing the number of students that are college- and career-ready. Student support is a vital part of that total system.”

Our work in Alabama to design and implement this exciting body of work is being supported by Scholastic Consultant Dr. Rhonda Neal-Waltman, former Assistant Superintendent with Mobile County Schools, and Drs. Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor from the UCLA Center for Mental Health.

The news conference will be available for LIVE viewing on the Alabama State Department of Education’s Ustream Channel at <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/alabama-department-of-education>. After the meeting, the archived video is available on the site. If you have comments or questions, please call Communications at 334-242-9950 or send an e-mail to comm@alsde.edu.

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