



ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

JANUARY 2007



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IMPACT THE WORLD... TEACH!

Teaching is a revered profession, respected for the influence it has on the lives of children and, ultimately, on the future. Even so, the forecast for teachers in the coming years have some concerned about possible teacher shortages, not only in areas traditionally harder to fill (science and math), but in all areas of instruction. With this in mind, Alabama education stakeholders are promoting the importance of teaching as a career – especially to high school students soon to embark on their careers as young adults. The goal is to get young people involved with hands-on experience in the classroom as the

educators of tomorrow.

JUDY BROWN, Education Specialist with the Alabama Department of Education, said students who show interest in a career in education are a solid commodity, both to institutions of higher learning and to the schools across the state that will employ them in the future. “Colleges benefit from having a core of students who knows exactly *(continued on page 2)*

■ **“Teachers need to have a passion for teaching ... a good teacher must have a strong work ethic.”** ■

(continued from front)

what they want to do coming into college, in addition to some hands-on experience in an instructional role in the classroom,” Brown said. “We have a shortage across the nation in many of fields. We are trying to recruit students to become teachers and to stay in the state.”

To better address this issue, the Alabama Department of Education, along with the Alabama Education Association (AEA), have developed TEACH ALABAMA, an innovative approach to attracting talented young people to the field of education and keeping them in Alabama once they are prepared to teach. The TEACH ALABAMA program lets high school students earn credits for spending quality time in Alabama classrooms grading papers, reading with

students, assisting with class projects, and obtaining the experience necessary to make a personal commitment to pursuing a career in teaching. Brown said in many Alabama high schools there are programs that teach ‘teacher education’ programs where the students come in from the high school level and learn about the professionalism of teaching, the administrative roles, the guidance aspect, and how to make lesson plans and use the latest technology in classroom instruction.

This preparation is vital to sustaining a well-trained and qualified education workforce as the nation braces for employment trends that could adversely affect the field of education. A high percentage of teachers approaching retirement and competition from other career path options are creating demands for teachers in Alabama as well as nationally. By the year 2008, there is expected to be a nationwide demand for more than 2.5 million new teachers. Anticipating this trend, **GOV. BOB RILEY** recently established

■ **Teacher retention is a “real school staffing problem” that contributes to the national concern of teacher shortages.**

the Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching (GCQT) to recommend ways to continually increase the number and caliber of educators in Alabama public schools. Some of the initial recommendations by the commission include Teacher Incentive Pay Pilot Programs, Teacher Preparation and Recruitment Pilot Programs, Statewide Mentoring Programs, and the adoption and implementation of Alabama Quality Teaching Standards. The report from the Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching in its entirety can be found by [clicking here](#).

DR. TONY THACKER, project administrator for the GCQT report, pointed to teacher retention as a “real school staffing problem” that contributes to the national concern of teacher shortages. Thacker said research findings relate quality mentoring programs and the creation of opportunities for professional and financial development to increased teacher retention.

According to the GCQT report, nationally, the cumulative percentage of new teachers leaving teaching each year is a growing concern.



These retention figures, coupled with a shortage of students enrolled in teacher education at the university level, show the importance of Alabama cultivating its own students



and preparing them for leadership roles in public education. Brown said project-based learning and Web-based activities are some of the ways high school juniors and seniors are being positioned for teaching careers. To further encourage the development of teaching skills, the Future Teachers of Alabama Club and the Family and Consumer Sciences students are conducting two statewide contests in January 2007. One is where teams of students compete to show their ability to prepare a lesson plan and teach, and the other is a bulletin board contest complete with photos and a write up about the education field. The deadline for the contests is **January 16, 2007**. The students have to write about what their objectives were, what they accomplished, and who their audience was in some arena of education.

■ **TEACH ALABAMA is an innovative approach to attracting talented young people to the field of education and keeping them in Alabama.**

For more information on the contest, contact Judy Brown [here](#). The winners will be recognized at the State Board of Education meeting on February 8, 2007.

Although teacher compensation in Alabama is comparable to many other states, Brown said teachers have to enter the profession because of feelings, not finances.

“You have to have a passion for teaching. When you see how hard teachers work, the after hours, the taking work home to grade ... a good teacher must have a strong work ethic,” Brown said. She said most students get into education because they feel so good about themselves because they have helped a child read, do math, or do some other skill. “This leads young people into the teaching field – when they feel that passion and pride of helping someone.” 🍎

ACCOUNTABILITY ROUNDTABLE

INCREASES EFFICIENCY AND STRENGTHENS COMMUNICATION



In an effort to streamline communications between the Alabama Department of Education and local schools, the department formed the **ACCOUNTABILITY ROUNDTABLE** two years ago. This group of administrators and educators was developed to minimize duplication of efforts and reduce confusion about state and federal requirements. **DR. RUTH ASH**, Deputy State Superintendent, said the Accountability Roundtable has made planning more seamless and provided more effective help for schools and school systems in School Improvement .

“We plan together now rather than within individual sections,” Ash said. “When the right hand knows what the left hand is doing, things work much more smoothly, and the Roundtable provides us with the knowledge to spearhead Classroom Improvement, which is our ultimate goal.”

For example, school systems must complete a number of reports, including High Hopes, At-Risk and Children First. These three reports are very similar, so the roundtable is working on a single version to save time and duplication of work. After the combination of reports is completed, the Roundtable will tackle other required reports.

Ash formed the Roundtable to bring together section leaders so they could share what they are doing with each other and work together on a regular and systematic basis. The Roundtable has been such a success at the state department level that local school systems have begun to form Roundtables. **DEANN STONE**, Accountability Roundtable team leader, said both Hale and Henry Counties have formed their own roundtables this year.

The Roundtable meets four days a month and includes leaders from the Alabama Reading Initiative, Student Assessment, Career/Technical Education, Prevention and Support Services, Alabama Reading First Initiative, Technology Initiatives, Special Education, Classroom Improvement, Regional In-service Centers, Alabama Math Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI), and Federal Programs.

ACTOR DANNY GLOVER INSPIRES CARVER HIGH STUDENTS



Actor **DANNY GLOVER** visited Carver High School (Montgomery County) recently to speak to students about his experiences in Hollywood and the importance of getting a good education. Glover, who is best known for his film roles in the *Lethal Weapon* series and *The Color Purple*, took time from his busy filming schedule to motivate Carver's junior class to

prepare themselves to take and pass the Alabama High School Exit Exam. "An education is the most valuable thing you can own. It's something that can't be taken from you," Glover told the students. "If you plan to be a change agent in this world, you have to be informed about the conditions that exist in it."

Carver principal **GARY HALL** said Glover, who is currently filming "*The Honey Dippers*" in Greenville, Alabama, inspired his students. He said Glover has a genuine concern that young people do well in life. "Sure, he's a Hollywood star, but more importantly, he's a sincere man who is known for his work with the United Negro College Fund, UNICEF, hunger organizations, and other charitable groups," Hall said. "The students were impressed that he used his day off to come to Montgomery and speak with them. That says volumes about his commitment to young people."

*State Board of Education Member: Ella B. Bell – District 5
Superintendent – Linda Robinson
Principal – Mr. Gary Hall*

SOUTHSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL WINS ROBOTICS TROPHIES



The Southside Middle School (Tallassee City) Robotics Team brought home the first-place robotics trophy at the Alabama BEST (Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology) Robotics Competition last year. In addition, they also won first place for having the "Most Robust Robot" and "Most Elegant Robot." The team also won the "Top Gun" award, scoring the most points in a single round. Southside's team



includes students **TECUMSEH HUITZIL, DAVIS KNAPP, CODY JINNETTE, TYLER DICKS, STEPHANIE PEREZ, MATTHEW VINES, ABBY BURCH, STELLA BURAK, SARAH DAVIS, CARLY**

GARNETT, LAKEN PITCHFORD, and JOSH PATE.

*State Board of Education Member: Betty Peters – District 2
Superintendent – Dr. James T. Jeffers
Principal – Mr. Roy McDaniels*



MICHAEL IVY

FIVE STUDENTS MARCH WITH THE MACY'S GREAT AMERICAN MARCHING BAND



Five band students participated in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. They are

TABITHA and **DANIELLE ROBINSON**, sisters who attend Hueytown High School (Jefferson County) and **CHANDLER CALDWELL**, **MICHAEL IVY**, and **ELIZABETH LANHAM** of

Pinson Valley School (Jefferson County). It is an honor to be selected for this audition-based band. The Macy's Great American Marching Band is comprised of outstanding high school musicians from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This prestigious band marched in the 80th Thanksgiving Day Parade cheered by 2.5 million spectators who lined the parade route.

From Central Park, the band arrived at Macy's Herald Square to perform for celebrity hosts, a grandstand audience, and more than 50 million television viewers who watched live on NBC. It is recognized as the official start of the holiday season and the world famous icon is a unique American entertainment extravaganza.

*State Board of Education Member: Dr. Ethel Hall – District 4 Superintendent – Dr. Phillip B. Hammonds
Principal – Mrs. June Houge*

NORTHRIDGE HIGH STUDENTS RANK IN NATIONAL JOURNALISM COMPETITION



The Northridge Reporter (Tuscaloosa City) was awarded 9th place in the nation in the National Scholastic Press Association's Best of Show contest for its September issue at the national convention on November 11. Several journalism students placed in write-off competitions at the convention. **JODI LEE** won a superior rating in yearbook copy and caption writing. **MAGGIE BELL** won honorable mention in news writing, **LILLIAN KOPASKA-MERKEL** won honorable mention for her editorial cartoon, and **ADELAIDE ONEAL** won honorable mention for copy editing and headline and caption writing. **SAM MARTONE** and **HAYLEY STRONG** are editors of the paper.



Students who attended the national convention in Nashville, TN, met with professional journalists, competed in contests, received critiques of their publication, learned page design software, and heard nationally acclaimed speakers. Both *The Northridge Reporter* newspaper and the *Blueprints* yearbook were recently notified of a gold medalist rating (the highest rating) with Columbia Scholastic Press Association for their publications published last school year. **ELIZABETH WILKES** was editor of the *Blueprints* yearbook.

*State Board of Education Member: Sandra Ray – District 7 Superintendent – Dr. Joyce Levey
Principal – Ms. Jennifer Box*

MORTON VISITS CALCEDEAVER ELEMENTARY DURING "CULTUREFEST"

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION DR. JOE MORTON visited Calcedeaever Elementary School (Mobile County) as it celebrated the 5th Annual Native American Culture Festival and Pow-Wow. Morton was also on hand to congratulate Calcedeaever principal **MS. AIMEE RAINEY** and her staff for being named a 2006 *No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School*, the highest honor a school can receive in the United States of America. Mary B. Austin Elementary School was also a 2006 Blue Ribbon School. Out of 120,000 schools in the Nation, only 259 were chosen as Blue Ribbon Schools. Of the 259 schools, 130 were elementary schools.



*State Board of Education Member: Randy McKinney – District 1 Superintendent – Dr. Harold Dodge
Principal – Ms. Aimee Rainey*



ALABAMA Celebrates BLACK HISTORY MONTH

BLACK HISTORY MONTH is celebrated annually in the United States in the month of February. The origins of this particular time of the year came from Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a prolific African American educator, who chose the second week of February for Negro History Week in 1926 because it marks the birthdays of two men who greatly influenced the black American population, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, as the nation reached its bicentennial, the week was expanded into an entire month. Now, the many significant contributions of African Americans to American history are taught year round, with particular emphasis in February. Alabama, rich with the history, struggle, and accomplishments of African Americans, has several events and places where students can experience and learn more about black history – American history.

■ GEE'S BEND

Montgomery – Alabama Shakespeare Festival
January 19 – February 11

This epic, but intimate tale spanning 50 years of the 20th century follows the lives of Sadie Pettway and the women of Gee's Bend, Alabama, who create magnificent quilts and, while doing so, sing hauntingly beautiful gospel melodies.

www.asf.net. 334-271-5300.

■ BLACK HISTORY MONTH FILM SERIES

Montgomery – Alabama State University
John L. Buskey Health Science Center
February 17, 2007 | 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sponsored by the National Center for the Study of Civil Rights and African-American Culture at ASU www.lib.alasu.edu.

■ AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Troy – Troy University Trojan Center
February 2, 2007 | 6 p.m. - until

February 3, 2007 | 8:30 a.m. - until
Celebrate Black History Month with various local and national speakers, breakout sessions for students and adults, and more. For more information, call 334-607-2283.

■ BLACK HISTORY MONTH DISPLAY

Hartselle Depot
February 19 – 23, 2007 | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
A display supplied by local schools of famous Black Americans. 256-773-4370.

■ ROSA PARKS MUSEUM

Montgomery
Monday - Friday | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday | 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

<http://montgomery.troy.edu/museum>.
334-241-8661.

■ HERITAGE

Huntsville
February 1 – March 9, 2007
Monday-Friday | 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Saturday | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Reflections of life through the eyes of African American artists. www.meridianarts.net.
256-534-7475.

■ CAPTIVE PASSIVE: SLAVE TRADE AND THE MAKING OF AMERICANS

Museum of Mobile
February 7 – September 3, 2007
This exhibit has been featured at the Smithsonian Institute and tells of artisans, farmers, religious leaders, and families whose forced crossing of the Atlantic Ocean helped to build and shape the Americas. 251-208-7569.
www.museumofmobile.com

■ 27TH ANNUAL BLACK HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Anniston
Anniston Museum of Natural History
February 17, 2007 | 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Celebrate African American heritage during one of this area's longest running heritage celebrations. Watch dramatic orations by area students as they recite prose, poetry, and literature. 256-237-6766.
www.annistonmuseum.org.

■ ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY PROGRAM

Monroeville – Old Courthouse Museum
February 17, 2007

Coordinator and sponsor Denise Ware presents a program of unparalleled singing, dancing, and dramatizations by various groups and individuals. 1 p.m. until. 251-575-7433. www.tokillamockingbird.com.

■ ASC KIDS' CLUB PRESENTS UMDABU SOUTH AFRICAN DANCE COMPANY

Birmingham – Alys Stephens Center
February 17, 2007 | 10 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.
In this lively performance, kids will learn various aspects of the Zulu culture through dance and may have a chance to participate with the company. 205-975-ARTS.
www.AlysStephens.org.

■ ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY'S ROLE IN THE STUDENT SIT-IN MOVEMENT

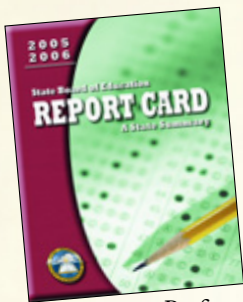
Montgomery – Alabama State University
John L. Buskey Health Science Center
February 22, 2007 | 11 a.m.
Ralph D. Abernathy Lecture Series. 334-229-4876. www.lib.alasu.edu.

■ BLACK HISTORY MONTH WEB RESOURCES

www.teachervision.com – Just type "black history month" in the search field to bring up printable worksheets, quizzes, tests, crossword puzzles, books, trivia, and timelines concerning Black History Month.
<http://k6educators.about.com/cs/blackhistorymont/a/blackhistorymon.htm> – offers links to a variety of sources on African American History.

ALABAMA EDUCATION – HOLDING OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE

As the State Department of Education continues to open the lines of communication between schools, parents,



and the community, the 2005-2006 edition of the School Accountability Report Card will be released this month. This summary, which is released annually, gives the general public information about collective public school performance in the areas of General School Information, State Accountability, Academic

Performance, and a Taxpayer's Report. At the same time as the state summary is released, individualized reports on each school and its performance levels are also made available to the public.

The reporting of this information began almost a decade ago – before the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Since then, Alabama has led the nation in individual school performance reporting by requiring schools to make the easy-to-read Accountability Report Card information available to all parents by sending their school report cards home. Report cards are also available by [clicking here](#). Just look under “School Info.”

BOARD BRIEFS

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

November

- Resolution to Adopt Fiscal Year 2008 Budget
- Adopt Amended Alabama Administrative Code Rule 290-4-1-.01 Pertaining to Education Accountability as a Permanent Rule
- Resolution Proclaiming November 12-18, 2006, as American Education Week in Alabama
- Passed Resolutions in Recognition of Neal K. Ranganath and Verena C. Knoedler, 2006 Advanced Placement State Scholars

December

- Resolution in recognition of Dr. Wayne Ray, Superintendent of the Year
- Passed Resolutions in recognition of Dr. Shannon Brandt and Lynn McCain, 2006 Milken Educators
- Passed Resolution in recognition of Dr. Melinda Maddox, State Educational Technology Directors Association's (SETDA) Leader of the Year
- Passed Resolution in recognition of Dr. Mabry Whetstone, President-Elect of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education
- Resolution in recognition of Loxley Elementary and Crestline Elementary as 2005-06 President's Challenge State Champions
- Approval of four-year contract for Dr. Joseph B. Morton

■ For a complete list of agenda items, visit the Alabama Department of Education's Web site [here](#) under Board of Education.

Awards, Opportunities, and Professional Development

Google for Educators – Google has unveiled a variety of online interactive tools, curriculum resources, and lesson plans for teachers that are available by [clicking here](#) and [clicking here](#).

Toyota Tapestry Grants Program Offers Funding for K-12 Science Teachers – Apply online for a **\$2,500 or \$10,000 Toyota TAPESTRY Grant** by [clicking here](#). A partnership between Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., and the National Science Teachers Association, the Toyota Tapestry Grants for Science Teachers program offers grants to K-12 science teachers for innovative projects that enhance science education in a school and/or school district. **Deadline: January 18, 2007**

Statue of Liberty Picture Contest for K-5 Students – The Statue of Liberty celebrates her 120th birthday this year. To celebrate, the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation invites students in Grades K-5 to enter the first-ever Statue of Liberty Picture contest. Each entry must be created on a standard 8.5-inch by 11-inch sheet of paper (either landscape or portrait orientation). The drawing must be an original artwork and not a copy of another person's photograph, poster, drawing, or other image. Students may use pencil, pen, marker, crayon, or any other drawing medium. Only one entry per child permitted. For complete details, rules, and entry forms, [click here](#). **Deadline: January 31, 2007**

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History – The 2007 Summer Seminars for Teachers afford educators a **tuition-free** opportunity to study an important topic in American history with an eminent scholar in the field at major institutions including Johns Hopkins, Yale, Columbia, Stanford, NYU, Oxford, Cambridge, the University of Virginia, National Constitution Center, and Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library. Limited to 30 participants per seminar by competitive application, these week-long seminars provide educators with intellectual stimulation and a collaborative context for developing practical resources and strategies to take back to the classroom. From the Colonial Era to the Cold War, 24 seminars including six new topics are available this year. Apply online by [clicking here](#). **Deadline: February 15, 2007**

Students in Grades 4-12 Eligible to Win Scholarships, Art Supplies & Fishing Gear – Students across the United States have the opportunity to win recognition and prizes while learning about state fish species and aquatic habitats. The State Fish Art Contest uses art to spark the imagination of youth while providing lessons about fisheries conservation. A talented artist in Grades 10-12 will be selected as the national “Best of Show” winner and will receive a \$2,500 tuition scholarship to attend The Art Institutes International Minnesota (Ai Minnesota). The first-runner up nationally in Grades 10-12 will receive a \$1,000 tuition scholarship. Winners will be announced May 1, 2007. The contest is open to all students in Grades 4 through 12. [Click here](#) for complete details and to download the free lesson plan. **Deadline: March 31, 2007**

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Copies available in Braille or other forms upon request.

JANUARY		1	2	3	4	5	6	
		2-New Year's Day (observed)		10	11	12	13	
		11-Alabama State Board of Education Meeting						
		NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MONTH			18	19	20	
		14-20-Special Education Week		24	25			
	16-King/Lee Holiday (State)							
	25-Alabama State Board of Education Work Session							
FEBRUARY					1	2	3	
		8-Alabama State Board of Education Meeting						
		CAREER/TECH MONTH			14	15	16	17
		19-President's Day (State Holiday)		21	22	23	24	
		22-Alabama State Board of Education Work Session						
	28-Mardi Gras (Baldwin & Mobile Counties)							

TEACHERS OF THE MONTH



High expectations, consistency, and positive relationships form the core of a teaching philosophy that has earned **ANGELA KENNEDY** the recognition of Alfa Teacher of the Month for December. As this month's winner, Kennedy will receive \$1,000 from Alfa Insurance, and her school, Phillips Preparatory School in Mobile, will receive a matching award from the Alabama Farmer's Federation.

Kennedy, a French teacher, graduated from the University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree, and later earned a master's degree from the University of South Alabama. Her philosophy of high

expectations applies not only to her students but also to herself, which is the reason Kennedy is currently pursuing a doctorate degree.

Kennedy makes an effort to establish positive relationships both inside and outside of the classroom. "I learn about my students' interest, and whenever possible, I attend activities in which they are involved," she says. "Additionally, I strive to help students establish a positive relationship with the material." The students in her classroom have the opportunity to visit with native French speakers, eat French food, and celebrate French holidays.

Kennedy has received numerous teaching awards, but it is not these honors that she values the most. "Teaching is one of the few professions that allow one to truly touch the life of another, and for me, seeing the positive impact I have made on my students' lives is the greatest award imaginable," says Kennedy.

Brenda Hartzog, principal of Phillips Preparatory School in Mobile, recalls how Kennedy, knowing she would be absent, once prepared a PowerPoint lesson for her substitute.

During the 2007 school year, Alfa Insurance and the Alabama Farmers Federation will honor one outstanding teacher from each of Alabama's eight state school board districts, as well as two principals and two private school teachers.

TEACHERS OF THE MONTH