

ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

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THERE'S A NEW CHALLENGE FOR ALABAMA SCHOOLS:

BATTLING BULLYING



BULLYING IS DEFINED as continuous patterns of intentional behavior that places a student in a reasonable fear of harm; interferes with educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or has the effect of a disrupting, hostile, intimidating, threatening influence on the student.** It can happen anywhere inside or outside of school. It often occurs in physical education, recess, hallways, bathrooms, on school buses and waiting for buses, classes that require group work, and after-school activities.

Bullying and harassment are widespread problems with significant, adverse consequences, and they directly interfere with student learning and achievement. They threaten the safety and well-being of millions of students each year.† One recent national study demonstrates that bullying affects nearly one in every three American schoolchildren in Grades six through ten. Over 160,000 children stay home from school because of bullying.†

The effects of bullying are serious and can even be fatal. Victims of bullying can suffer from long-term emotional and behavioral problems. Bullying can cause loneliness, depression, anxiety, and can lead to low self-esteem and increased susceptibility to illness. Bullying can lead to suicide.

Alabama has taken strides to decrease bullying in schools and to address incidents in several ways. Beginning more than eight years ago, Prevention and Support Services, a

9 OUT OF 10 CASES OF BULLYING ARE NOT REPORTED.*

continued on next page ...

TYPES OF BULLYING

- 1) Physical: hitting, kicking, pinching, punching, scratching, spitting or any other form of physical attack. Damage to or taking someone else's belongings may also constitute as physical bullying.
- 2) Verbal: name-calling; insulting; making racist, sexist or homophobic jokes, remarks or teasing; using sexually suggestive or abusive language, offensive remarks. The most common form of bullying.
- 3) Cyber: any type of bullying that is carried out by electronic medium such as through a text message, picture/video clip via mobile phone cameras, phone call via mobile phones, e-mail, chat room, Instant Messaging (IM), or on websites. Cyberbullying can be 24/7 and can involve sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information and/or lies about another; pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad; or intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- 4) Emotional: spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups, or being made the subject of malicious rumors.

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administrators, and students

continued from front ... section within the Alabama Department of Education, began offering training and resources to staff and faculty in schools. Manuals and materials have long been a part of a counselor's or teacher's arsenal to tackle bullying and its effects on students.

80-90% OF ADOLESCENTS REPORTED BEING BULLIED DURING THEIR SCHOOL YEARS.*

On October 1, 2009, the Student Harassment Prevention Act 571 became effective, protecting students from harassment on school grounds or at school events. Based on the state law, the Alabama Department of Education designed a model policy for local districts to use in developing their own. All local districts were to establish policies on or before July 1, 2010. In addition to the policies, local districts are using innovative events and informative professional development to put the policy into action. In Baldwin County, the staff, including **PATRICE HARRIS**, Intervention Supervisor, has offered extensive learning to help students feel confident and comfortable at school. "For so long we've looked the other way or didn't know when or where to look. Some have thought, 'Oh, its just horseplay', but the incidents and effects were much more serious than that. We need to address it now," said Harris.

After the Baldwin County policy was developed and implemented, all principals had extensive professional development meetings and were given detailed instructions on the responsibility they had in putting the new policy into action. Anti-bullying Powerpoint presentations were shared in every school and addressed different types and how to look for bullying. The district also has conducted a survey of teachers and students to try to pinpoint the areas in which harassment is taking place and to get more feedback on the subject.

71% OF TEACHERS SURVEYED MAINTAINED THAT THEY ALWAYS INTERVENE DURING SUCH SITUATIONS. HOWEVER, 71% OF STUDENTS DIDN'T REPORT BULLYING BECAUSE THEY DON'T THINK TEACHERS CARE.*

Baldwin County has also focused on the possibility of the very worst reaction to bullying by offering resources and training on suicide prevention to their guidance counselors and social workers. The warning signs and symptoms, causes, preventions, and how to communicate with students, parents, and other loved ones were reviewed at an in-service training this fall.

Helping teachers and staff to understand and act when bullying incidents occur was also a part of the Chilton County school district's plan. **PAM HARRIS**, Testing Coordinator, and **KAREN MITCHELL**, School Improvement Specialist, were integral in the training of the entire staff and faculty. The teachers, counselors, and even bus drivers received professional development in the days before school started on the new policy and its implementation, but Superintendent **KEITH MOORE** wanted to have more instruction and hands-on learning. To add to the professional development, Moore invited **JAY BANKS**, who created the STAMP OUT Bullying program, to the district.

The STAMP OUT Bullying program provides a mixture of education and entertainment geared towards making students feel comfortable and less hesitant to reporting bullying.

Banks trained teachers and staff in "marathon style" professional development meetings for more than a week and then went to all 11 schools to hold assemblies with the students. Pam Harris said of Jay Banks' style that he "really had the attention of the students and used humor to relate the issues to the students." The students were very engaged, and positive feedback was offered by those who attended the assemblies.

Since the professional development and interactive assemblies, Chilton County has seen more students reporting incidents, showing a more aware and alert student

population. The faculty and staff now intend to build on the training they received with follow-up meetings that will focus on a consequence plan for dealing with bullies, development of specific interventions, and a principals' group work session.

So what more can be done to prevent bullying in Alabama schools? It is essential for administrators, counselors, teachers, students, and parents to work together to ensure program success. Teachers across the state are receiving detailed professional development, and students are engaging in presentations and assemblies that allow them to learn more and teach them how to speak out. Parents are the next

15-30% OF STUDENTS REPORT BEING VICTIMS OF BULLYING REGULARLY.*

group that school officials and teachers are working with to get more involved in preventing bullying. If bullying occurs, it can best be tackled by parents and teachers working together.

Resources are available to help parents who are worried about bullying in schools. Guidance counselors and teachers are open to hearing and helping with the concerns of parents. Baldwin County has reached out to its parents with two brochures that are available online at www.bcbe.org. Guidance counselors also have specialized resources for parents and can offer these during parent-counselor meetings.

The challenge of ending harassment and bullying at schools is one that educators and parents are embracing. With knowledge, support, and understanding, we can help to ensure all students feel safe in Alabama schools. ●

SOURCES:

*U.S. Dept. of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007.

**Student Harassment Prevention Act 571.

† Bridging the Gap in Federal Law: Promoting Safe Schools and Improved Student Achievement by Preventing Bullying and Harassment in Our Schools, June 2007.

One School's Solution

Foley Middle School (Baldwin County) Achieves Certified Peer Program Status

Foley Middle School's Peer Helper Program trains students to help their peers resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner.



PROGRAM GOALS ARE:

1. To improve our school environment by decreasing tension and hostility; and
2. To resolve peer disputes which interfere with academic achievement/the education process.

Rationale: Our rationale is that students can learn from other students how to solve their conflicts responsibly and constructively.

"Students are trained to mediate, intervene, work together to solve problems and to help one another during aftermaths of tragedies like fatal student car wrecks," explained **TERRY WILHITE**, Director of Communications for the Baldwin County Schools. "We have Peer Helpers in our high schools, and we're working to eventually cover all middle schools, too.

Foley students have shown great commitment to this effort. Peer Helpers meet three days a week. They help other students to resolve their conflicts peacefully and act as "buddies" to new students, assisting in a smooth transition to their new school environment. The curriculum for the Peer Helper Program at Foley Middle is *Mediation: Getting to Win Win*. The Peer Helper Coordinator meets monthly with the peer helpers to discuss any issues and to review mediation procedures.

"Peer Helpers have accepted the responsibility of performing a very important service for our school. They have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of their classmates," said **KATHRYN DOYLE**, coordinator of the peer helper program.

The Jennifer Claire Moore Foundation sponsors Foley Middle School's Peer Helpers, which include eight 8th graders trained in peer mediation. Referrals are made to peer mediation by an administrator, teacher, counselor or the disputants themselves. Types of conflicts include: teasing, threats, name calling, rumors, friendship, property and disruptive arguing. Peer pressure and bullying can occur over parental divorce, weight issues, sickness, death, depression, race or sex.

"We use the school website to inform parents and the community about our peer helper program. The Foundation holds an annual Rodeo to raise money and promote awareness of peer helper programs," according to Mrs. Doyle.

The Peer Helper Program was designed as a part of the Jennifer Claire Moore Foundation Inc. to provide a support group among high

school students. The program began at Foley High School and is now active at five other Baldwin County high schools: Gulf Shores High School, Robertsdale High School, Daphne High School, Baldwin County High School and Bayside Academy (private school). In addition to Foley Middle School, there are Peer Helper Programs at four other Baldwin County middle schools: Bay Minette Middle School, Elberta Middle School, Fairhope Middle School and Summerdale School.

NATIONAL PEER HELPERS CONFERENCE:

Opportunities for Establishing or Expanding a Peer Program

Feb. 20-22, 2010, Perdido Beach Resort

Sponsored by [Jennifer Claire Moore Foundation](#) and [National Association of Peer Program Professionals](#)

MEDIATION PROCESS

■ INTRODUCTIONS & GROUND RULES

1

- Be willing to solve the problem
- Tell the truth
- Listen without interrupting
- Show respect. No fouls!
- Carry out your agreement

■ HAVE DISPUTANTS

2

- Tell what happened and how they feel (Mediators paraphrase)
- Brainstorm for solutions
- Choose the best solution(s)
- Discuss what they would do differently in the future

■ CLOSURE

3

- Congratulate disputants
- Remind them that mediation is confidential and to tell friends that the conflict has been resolved



Foley Middle School Principal: Mr. Branton V. Bailey
Baldwin County Superintendent: Dr. Alan Lee
State Board Member, District 1: Randy McKinney

Jefferson County Teacher Wins "Education Oscar"

Whatever you want to do in life, I want you to seek it, believe it and pursue it. – Jennifer Edwards

A SENSE OF HUMILITY AND PASSION for her students earned JENNIFER EDWARDS the Milken National Educator Award and \$25,000! The Jefferson County teacher received the "Education Oscar" at a surprise schoolwide assembly at Hillview Elementary School. The entire school gathered in the gymnasium to hear the extraordinary news that one of its own would receive an unrestricted \$25,000 financial reward and an all-expense-paid trip to the annual Milken National Education Conference next year.

Senior Vice President of the Milken Educator Awards DR. JANE FOLEY, along with STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOSEPH B. MORTON, presented the prestigious Milken National Educator Award and \$25,000 to the very surprised third grade teacher. The announcement came during the Milken Foundation's 24th annual coast-to-coast tour to reward the nation's top educators with more than \$1.3 million in cash awards.

The "Education Oscar" recognizes teacher-leaders in the early to middle part of their careers who are innovative and effective. There is a rigorous and confidential selection process. Teachers cannot apply for the award. Educators are recommended without their knowledge to the Milken Family Foundation. "You don't find us," explained Dr. Foley. "We find you."

The award honors the exceptional work of educators as a model for the state and nation. The Milken Family Foundation's 24th annual National Notifications Tour honored 55 outstanding educators and is the nation's largest teacher recognition program.

Dr. Morton praised Alabama's 2010 Milken Educator: "Mrs. Edwards is a dedicated professional educator.

She is a National Board Certified Teacher and was Jefferson County's

Elementary Teacher of the Year for 2009-2010. She inspires her young students to want to learn and to be successful. She is respected by her peers who describe her as the type of teacher you would want for your own child. It is a privilege to honor Jennifer Edwards - another exemplary Alabama teacher - as Alabama's 2010 Milken Educator."

Described by her colleagues as "one of the best teachers in the district," Jennifer Edwards mentors new teachers every school year and volunteers to ride the school bus every morning - beginning at 6:40 a.m. - to tutor students who cannot stay for after-school tutoring. She also gave every student a multiplication rap CD to take home.

Edwards earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Elementary Education and certification in Education Leadership from Auburn University Montgomery. She also earned an associate's degree in Elementary Education from Alabama Southern Union Community College. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood. Edwards has taught third grade at Hillview Elementary in the Jefferson County School System since 2006.

Since Alabama joined the Milken Educator Awards program in 1998, 28 Alabama educators have received the "Education Oscar" and a total of \$700,000. Awards alternate yearly between elementary and secondary educators. In recognizing these



Jennifer Edwards

outstanding teachers with \$25,000, the Foundation hopes to raise public awareness that high-quality teachers are essential to student achievement. The award was developed to reward, retain, and attract the highest quality K-12 teachers.

Edwards joins the Milken Educator Network, a nationwide coalition of more than 2,500 top educators who have access to a variety of professional resources to help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools, and districts.

For more information on the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards, visit www.mff.org or the Alabama Department of Education's website at www.alsde.edu.



The Milken Award says in a very public way that greatness in education should be recognized.

– Dr. Jane Foley, Senior Vice President, Milken Educator Awards



Students Represent America at World Team Competition in London

Strong K-12, Postsecondary, Higher Education Partnership Continues to Benefit Students

Three of Alabama's top postsecondary education students – Raychel Bland, Joseph King, and Bradley Wright – have been selected to represent the United States at the 2011 WorldSkills Competition in London, England, on October 5-8. Each of these students joined SkillsUSA while in high school, and is now considered to be some of America's top collegiate students.

“This is a great example of how students are benefiting from the strong partnership that exists between our state's K-12, Postsecondary, and Higher Education systems,” says Alabama Career and Technical Education Director Sherry Key. “We must continue to work together in the future to ensure students continue to realize their full potential and have an opportunity to experience a lifetime of success.”

SkillsUSA is a national student organization that is devoted to preparing high school students for academic achievement, postsecondary learning, and for careers in technical-related occupations. More than 300,000 students and top business professionals nationwide are members of SkillsUSA. Currently, Alabama has almost 10,000 SkillsUSA members.

“I started as a cosmetology student at sixteen. I attended the Dothan Technology Center, and it was there I found my niche as a makeup artist,” says Lurleen B. Wallace Community College Beauty Therapy Student Raychel Bland. “I graduated in 2008 with honors and an advanced technical diploma, and earned a scholarship. Now as a board certified esthetician, I am working and furthering my education to reach my ultimate goal of becoming a premier makeup artist. SkillsUSA continues to provide opportunities for me to show my talent in something I'm most passionate about. It's

truly an honor to represent the U.S. in the WorldSkills Competition.”

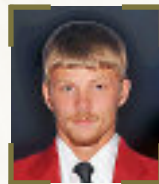
“I joined SkillsUSA in 2005 when I was in the tenth grade and placed second in the state,” says Wallace Community College Masonry Student Bradley Wright. “My high school instructor, Mr. Charles West (Earnest Pruett Center for Technology), introduced me to SkillsUSA. He played an instrumental part in me becoming a mason. After my first competition, I was hooked on becoming the world's best bricklayer and during the next few years, I won first-place in the state and national competitions. Since joining SkillsUSA and learning about the WorldSkills competitions, it has been my dream to be selected to represent the U.S. in the bricklaying competition. I am willing to devote the time for training and



Raychel Bland
Beauty Therapy



Joseph King
CNC Milling



Bradley Wright
Masonry/Bricklaying

preparation, and will do my best in London.”

Teaching focused and determined students like Bradley Wright has continued to inspire Wallace Community College Instructor Kenny Allen throughout his teaching career.

“Bradley is a unique student – he is most certainly one of a kind,” says Allen. “When Bradley came here, he traveled four hours one way. I did not know where he was living until one day while we were talking, and he told me he was living in a RV by himself. He was only eighteen-years-old, and I could not believe it. He lived this way the entire time that he was here, cooking his own food and washing his own clothing. As I said, he is certainly a special student who knows what he wants and is willing to work for it.”

SkillsUSA also emphasizes the importance of having high ethical standards, a dedication to community service, and the motto “pride in the dignity of work.”

Calhoun Community College Student Joseph King first joined SkillsUSA in 2003 while attending the Limestone Career Tech Center. “I participated in local and state competitions during high school,” says King. “When I started machining classes in college, Calhoun was not a member of SkillsUSA yet. Shortly after they got a new Dean of Technologies – Mrs. Bethany Clem – and she brought SkillsUSA to Calhoun Community College. When I started my CNC (computer numeric controlled) classes my instructor pushed me to participate in the CNC Milling competition, so I did. I placed 1st in the state, and then went on to nationals and placed 1st also. Not only did I become Calhoun's first national competitor; but also, its first Gold medalist.”

SkillsUSA is a member of the WorldSkills organization, which sponsors this biennial event. This organization was founded in 1950 and is currently headquartered in Amsterdam. In 1973, President Richard M. Nixon recognized SkillsUSA as America's official WorldSkills representative.

To learn more about SkillsUSA or any of the other opportunities offered by Alabama's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, contact SkillsUSA State Director, Myron Laurent, at (334) 353-4522 or visit www.skillsusa.org.



Meet Your Newly Elected State Board Members!

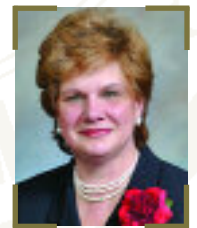
The nine-member State Board of Education has five newly elected members. They will serve a four-year term from January 2011 to January 2015.



GOVERNOR-ELECT ROBERT BENTLEY (*by virtue of the office, the governor serves as board president*) Bentley's parents, neither of whom completed school past junior high, impressed upon him that "education and learning were the keys to future success." The retired Tuscaloosa dermatologist earned his B.S. from The University of Alabama and his M.D. from The University of Alabama School of Medicine. Bentley was commissioned as a Captain in the Air Force and served as a Medical Officer stationed at Pope Air Force Base (Fort Bragg, NC) during Vietnam. As a member of the Alabama State House, 2002-2010, Bentley sponsored legislation to improve educational benefits for disabled veterans and provide scholarships dedicated to training more nurses in Alabama.

DISTRICT 2 - BETTY PETERS (*Clay, Randolph, Tallapoosa, Chambers, Lee, Russell, Barbour, Henry, Houston, Geneva, Dale, Coffee, Covington and part of Talladega counties*)

Betty Peters was elected to her third term on the State Board of Education. "As a state school board member, I pledge to continue to strive for rigorous standards, stronger curriculum and textbooks, better teacher preparation programs, stronger and more consistent classroom discipline, and a fair and rigorous assessment system to improve achievement of our elementary and secondary school students." Peters is an accountant with Peters Municipal Associates in Dothan. She is a summa cum laude graduate of Troy State University-Dothan, with a B.S. in Accounting.



DISTRICT 4 - YVETTE M. RICHARDSON (*Bibb, Hale, and part of Jefferson Counties*)

In her first run for state office, Richardson promised to work for "a fair and equal education for all students." The Fairfield resident holds a B.S. from Miles College, M.S. from Samford University, and Ed.D from The University of Alabama. Richardson is associate dean of Virginia College's Birmingham campus. Her previous experience includes 31 years - 29 of them in the Fairfield City School System - in public education as a teacher, principal, and superintendent. She served nearly two years as Russell County School Superintendent.



DISTRICT 6 - DR. CHARLES ELLIOTT (*Morgan, Marshall, Cullman, Blount, and parts of St. Clair, Jefferson and Shelby Counties*)

In his first run for state office, one of Elliott's top issues was parents and families. "Families need to be strengthened and parents must be involved in the education of their children." Elliott, an anesthesiologist with Anesthesia Services of Decatur since 1985, graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. from The University of Alabama and M.D. from The University of Alabama School of Medicine. Elliott served three terms on the Decatur City Board of Education, 1996-2008, and as a director of the Alabama Association of School Boards, 2004-2008.



DISTRICT 8 - MARY SCOTT HUNTER (*Limestone, Madison, Jackson, DeKalb and Etowah Counties*)

"I hope to make a difference on the Alabama State Board of Education." Hunter's top priorities include "traditional, rigorous education standards for K-12 and the two-year colleges." An associate with Siniard, Timberlake & League, P.C., the Huntsville attorney graduated cum laude from The University of Alabama and the University of Alabama School of Law. She served 10 years as an Air Force Judge Advocate General in the Air Force, the Reserves, and the Alabama Air National Guard.



RANDY MCKINNEY, District 1; STEPHANIE BELL, District 3; ELLA BELL, District 5; and GARY WARREN, District 7, round out the board. Their four-year term expires in 2013. DR. ETHEL HALL, District 4; DAVID BYERS JR., District 6; and DR. MARY JANE CAYLOR, District 8, did not seek re-election.

FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION

By Cathy Bennett, Alabama Elementary
Teacher of the Year 2010-2011



In the twenty-first century classroom, teachers must manage classrooms so that failure does not destabilize students' progress. When students fail, teachers must help them learn to move

forward. Studies have shown that students develop, evolve, and adapt through frequent success experiences. The more students attain success, the more their academic fitness is enhanced, and therefore their chances of survival in school and beyond are greater. We all know that there is a very high correlation between prior attainment and subsequent attainment. Failure today risks failure tomorrow, next week, and next term. Many educators would intuitively agree that failure is not an option for today's students.

Although students may fail, and indeed many do, the consequences are too dire to allow for such an option. Students who don't make it through high school earn substantially less in wages and have far greater rates for incarceration and drug abuse than do those who stay in school. According to a recent study by *Education Week*, every school day, more than 7,200 students fall through the cracks of America's public high schools. Three out of every ten members of this year's graduating class, 1.3 million students in all, will fail to graduate with a diploma. Becoming the Alabama Alternate Teacher of the Year has given me a tremendous opportunity to advocate for students who are not learning in traditional classroom settings. I hope to inspire my colleagues to pull together as a professional learning community and respond with a pyramid of interventions to help struggling learners reach academic success. As educators, we must eliminate fear and failure and promote success, which is crucial to students' achievement and their ability to succeed well beyond their school years.

Following is a list of qualities that will enhance teacher-student relationships and yield greater student success in the classroom.

1. **Good interpersonal connectedness** - Take time to know your students - listen to them, respect their views, and do not demean them.
2. **Strike a balance between authority and a relaxed classroom atmosphere** - Keep the class under control but not too strict. Teachers must have a sense of humor. Good teachers like to laugh and maintain cheerful classrooms where students feel comfortable and have fun.
3. **Make schoolwork interesting and fun when possible and appropriate** - Try to motivate your students, varying your teaching approach.
4. **Provide students with choices** - Choices give students some ownership of what they are studying and also provides them with a sense that their opinion is important.
5. **Be youthful and dynamic in your teaching** - Remember that you were a student once; don't be a "fossil" as a teacher.
6. **Explain work clearly and effectively; aiming for mastery by all students** - In many cases this may require individualized attention. Explain the work to the students before they do it. Go beyond the lesson in the textbook in order to maintain student interest. Show that you love and understand the subject, welcome student questions, and simplify concepts that students find difficult.
7. **Use broad assessment practices** - This will allow the students a chance to be assessed in the areas of their strengths.
8. **Vary the teaching materials and the teacher methods** - When students are more personally connected with the teaching and learning context, they are more engaged and motivated to work and achieve to their potential.

Teacher-student relationships are the key to building success in the classroom. In the absence of good relationships, classroom success is limited. In environments where negative relationships prevail, so do fear and failure. Where teacher-students relationships flourish, so does student success.

In addition to individual teacher-student relationships, a committed, unified school faculty can also do a great deal to ensure the success of every child. At my school, Geneva High, the STARS (Saving Today's At Risk Students) mentoring program is utilized to help at-risk students become high school graduates and improve the graduation rate. Each fall, a list of students who are critically at risk for pursuing a high school diploma is compiled and distributed to the faculty. After each teacher has selected a student, he/she periodically checks on the student's grades, attendance, and

Educators must eliminate fear and failure and promote success – which is crucial to students' ability to succeed well beyond their school years.

discipline. Teachers mentor their students by helping them locate and secure various resources they may need such as tutoring, remediation opportunities, and job prospects. Through this program, we, as a faculty, are helping to ensure that "Failure Is Not an Option" by improving our graduation rate.

As educators, we need to ensure that no student slips through the cracks by identifying at-risk students as early as possible and implementing a schoolwide system of support when they experience difficulty. Working together as a professional learning community and implementing a pyramid of interventions will build the strong foundation necessary for student success. With the proper groundwork laid, we can truly mean it when we say "Failure Is Not an Option." ●

2011 Superintendent of the Year



DR. JAMIE BLAIR, Superintendent of Vestavia Hills City Schools for 10 years, is Alabama's 2011 Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Blair holds a Doctorate of Education Administration from The University of Alabama, a Master of Education from Auburn University, and a Bachelor of Science from Troy State University. He served as Superintendent for Cullman City Schools and Assistant Superintendent for Muscle Shoals City Schools, and was a principal and teacher in the Opelika City School System.

The other state finalists were:

- DR. WAYNE VICKERS**, Saraland City Schools
- MR. JOHN HEARD III**, Perry County Schools
- DR. LINDA FELTON-SMITH**, Troy City Schools
- MR. KEITH STEWART**, Bullock County Schools
- DR. BOBBY HATHCOCK**, Pell City Schools
- DR. ORMAN BRIDGES**, Athens City Schools
- DR. TERRY DAVIS**, Madison County Schools

Dr. Blair will represent Alabama for National Superintendent of the Year during the National Conference on Education in February 2011 in Denver.

SBE District 6: David Byers, Jr.

Principal is Going the Distance

What gets kids moving, sparks school pride, and raises money for a good cause? The Ironman Jr. Youth Triathlon.

Spanish Fort Middle School (www.spanishfortmiddle.com) Principal **CRAIG ROSS**, who completed his first triathlon in 2007, conceived the triathlon for 8- to 15-year-olds to encourage fitness and to raise money and awareness for Baldwin County's middle school special-needs children. Ross always saw a facilities need for special-needs students, but constructing a multi-handicapped playground can cost \$60,000.

Motivated by Principal Ross, Spanish Fort students organized, trained, and collected pledges for the junior version of the triple-event competition. Sixty-one middle and elementary school students competed in Ironman Jr. and raised almost \$5,000. Students also raised \$2,000 with pledges from the community for running laps during P.E. classes.

"I am so proud to be a principal in a community that supports education and more importantly celebrates all children," said Ross.



SBE District 1: Randy McKinney

Baldwin County Superintendent: Dr. Alan Lee

Spanish Fort Middle School Principal: Craig Ross



Alabama Celebrates Healthy Schools and Healthy Students

USDA honors 52 Alabama public schools with HealthierUS Schools Challenge Awards

Apples and carrots and beets - oh my! Only 60 schools nationwide received the highest designation - the Gold Award of Distinction - from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - and 39 of those schools are in Alabama!

A state celebration last month in Pelham, Alabama, honored Alabama's award-winning schools for promoting a healthy school environment. In all, 52 Alabama public schools received 2010 USDA HealthierUS Schools Challenge Awards in Gold, Silver and Bronze levels for; offering students healthy food choices, providing physical activity, and promoting healthy lifestyles

Schools also receive monetary awards: Gold Award of Distinction - \$2,000 Gold - \$1,500 Silver - \$1,000 Bronze - \$500

The HealthierUS School Challenge was established in 2004 to recognize schools that are creating healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. It is a key component of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* Campaign to end childhood obesity within a generation.

The celebrations continue at the local level. Please contact your local school or school system for schedule.

For more information, contact Steve Watson, USDA Food and Nutrition Service Office of Public Affairs, 404-562-1812.

Awards, Opportunities, and Professional Development

For a complete listing of awards and professional development opportunities, [CLICK HERE](#).

**Come experience what HUNDREDS
of educators have experienced!**



Consider our State-accredited Grand Slam School Day events!

Grand Slam



School Days



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ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

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No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age or genetics. Ref. Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C., Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8165.



**EUFAULA HIGH SCHOOL MATH TEACHER
CHOSEN ALFA TEACHER OF MONTH**

It didn't take AMY RASBERRY a quadratic equation to realize that her career as a staff accountant wasn't adding up to her idea of a dream job. But it's certainly her experience in the corporate world that has helped prepare her for a life of teaching math to high school students.

"Since I did not follow the traditional route to becoming a teacher, I think it is often easier for me to think outside of the box," said Rasberry. "I see when I differentiate my instruction and incorporate many strategies that I have added to my bag of tricks ... I am able to better serve my students and engage all different types of learners."

During 2010, Alfa Insurance and the Alabama Farmers Federation are honoring one outstanding teacher from each of Alabama's eight state board districts, two principals and two private teachers. Application information is available in the Agricultural Resources section of AlfaFarmers.org under Ag Links.

October State Board of Education Meeting Agenda Items

- Resolution Commending Dwight Moon as the *Barbara Fannin Memorial Employee of the Quarter*, October - December 2010
- Resolution in Recognition of Rebecca Macon Bidwell, E. B. Erwin High School, Jefferson County School System, as Alabama's Preserve America History Teacher of the Year (School Board District VI)
- Resolution Proclaiming School Bus Safety Week, October 18-22, 2010
- Resolution Proclaiming October 22-31, 2010, as "Red Ribbon Week" in Alabama
- Resolution Proclaiming October as Statewide Parent Visitation Month in Alabama

Future State Board of Education Meetings:

November 18 and December 9, 2010, 9:30 a.m. · Gordon Persons Building Auditorium · Montgomery

For a complete list of agenda items, to hear podcasts, or to see photos from Alabama State Board of Education meetings, visit www.alsde.edu and click "Board of Ed."