

ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

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RAISING EXPECTATIONS

COMMON CORE STANDARDS IN ALABAMA

ON NOVEMBER 18, 2010, Alabama joined 40 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in adopting the COMMON CORE STANDARDS in Math and English Language Arts. The adoption by the State Board of Education incorporates Alabama's current standards with those in the Common Core to create a set of internationally benchmarked college readiness standards that will prepare students for a future in the ever-expanding global environment.

The COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Some of the best practices in education are happening right now in individual states in the nation. Taken from those best practices, the standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare students for college and the workforce.

Alabama's incorporation of the COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS into our already highly regarded content standards brings a new level of rigor and perceptual understanding to teaching and learning.

— Dr. Tommy Bice, Deputy State Superintendent

In Alabama, after convening a task force of mostly Alabama teachers to evaluate and discuss the proposed standards for Math and English Language Arts the Alabama Department of Education (SDE) performed a detailed review of the correlation between the existing Alabama Course of Study (COS) for Math and English Language Arts, using a highly structured comparison tool. Review of the correlation found that Alabama's COS for Math matched the standards at a rate of 96 percent and matched the English Language Art standards at 92 percent.

continued on next page ...



Common Core State Standards:

- Are state-led and initiated and are not written or required by the U.S. Department of Education or the federal government
- Are aligned with college and work expectations
- Are clear, understandable, and consistent
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards
- Are evidence-based

Source: www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards

3 What's Cooking?

Alabama culinary arts students compete for a spot in a national competition

4 February is ...

"College Application and Financial Aid Month" for the first time in Alabama

5 Torchbearer Schools

Eleven high-poverty Alabama schools prove that every child can learn

6 Dropout rate decreases

Alabama ranks high in the nation on decreasing the dropout rate

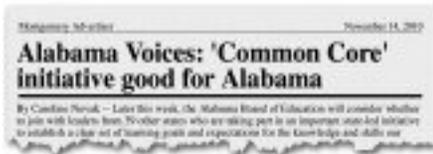
7 Awards/Opportunities

Professional development opportunities for educators, administrators, and students

continued from front ...

After months of detailed review and revision, the first draft was created and discussed by staff, with a final draft later placed on the SDE website for public review and submitted to the State Superintendent for recommendation. Public presentations were held all over the state and a public hearing was held on the day of the State Board of Education meeting, ending with a vote to adopt.

Adoption of the standards will lead to the development of cutting-edge professional development, materials, and resources that will be developed collaboratively with fellow states, universities, and business partners. Curriculum and teaching guides will be developed by teachers and administrators in Alabama schools and will be included in all university pre-service teacher preparation programs.



The standards help to create cohesive and rigorous academic standards for the nation, allowing for the students of Alabama and the United States to be more competitive around the globe. Consistent standards will provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live, and allow states to more effectively help all students to succeed. With students, parents, and teachers all on the same page and working together toward shared goals, students can be assured to make progress each year and graduate from school prepared to succeed and build a strong future for themselves and the country.

The standards are designed to be relevant, reflecting the knowledge and skills that young people need for success in both college and the workforce. When Alabama and all American students

STATES THAT HAVE ADOPTED COMMON STANDARDS



have the skills and knowledge needed in today's jobs, communities will be positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. The standards will incorporate the best and highest of current Alabama standards and the best understanding of what works in the classroom. Alabama students will benefit from the consistent, rigorous approach to learning that the standards offer.

MYTH VS. FACT

Myth: These standards amount to a national curriculum for our schools.

Fact: The standards are not a curriculum. They are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed – a framework. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of their students.

Myth: The standards signify a takeover by the federal government and would be a required part of a renewal of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Fact: The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort that is not part of *No Child Left Behind*, and adoption of the standards was in no way mandatory. States began the work to create clear, consistent standards before the *American*



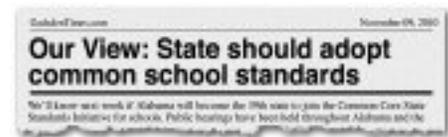
Recovery and Reinvestment Act or the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* blueprint was released because this work is

being driven by the needs of the states, not the federal government.

Myth: Standards for learning are “new.”

Fact: Alabama has incorporated standards into all subjects for many years. These standards were known as the Alabama Courses of Study. Educational

standards help teachers ensure that their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning.



Myth: The standards tell teachers what to teach.

Fact: The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them. These standards will establish what students need to learn, but will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards.

Myth: Adopting common standards will bring all states' standards down to the lowest common denominator, which means states with high standards will be taking a step backward if they adopt the standards.

Fact: The standards are designed to build upon the most advanced current thinking about preparing all students for success in college and their careers. This will result in moving even the best state standards to the next level.

Myth: No teachers were involved in writing the standards.

Fact: The drafting process for the standards relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. There were many state experts that came together to create the most thoughtful and transparent process of standard setting. This was only made possible by many states working together.

Students Combine Personal Creativity, Flare, and Skills to Create the Nation's Best Culinary Dishes

OVER THE PAST DECADE, the culinary, hospitality, and tourism industries have become some of our nation's "hottest" employment areas. Just turn on your television, look at any trendy magazine, or even just surf the World Wide Web for a little while and you will discover exactly how popular these career areas have become. Successful television programs like *Iron Chef*, *Emeril Live*, and *Cake Boss*, along with well-known professional chefs such as Paula Deen, Gordon Ramsey, and husband and wife team Pat and Gina Neely, have all helped to spark a new sense of excitement for cooking in America.

According to the National Restaurant Association, food service sales in the U.S. were projected to reach a record high in 2010, despite the challenging economy. Last year, U.S. restaurant sales reached \$580 billion (up more than 2.4 percent). Alabama's Career and Technical Education programs have already been preparing students for successful careers in this growing segment of the workforce. Current data shows that the average salary for an "Executive Chef" exceeds more than \$75,000 annually.

This February, Alabama's top high school culinary arts students will be competing in Birmingham at the Culinar - the culinary institute of Virginia College - to earn top state awards and a possible spot to represent Alabama at the upcoming 2011 Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California.

Students selected for this national contest will be competing in FCCLA's exciting Students Taking Action with Recognition (STAR) Event competitions. FCCLA is devoted to preparing family and consumer sciences students for leadership and career success. It has approximately 220,000 members nationwide (Alabama has over 8,000 members).

This year, every student team participating in Alabama's competition will have to successfully prepare one of the menus at right (from scratch) to advance to the national competition in California.

THE STATE COMPETITION - STAR EVENT 2011.

As shown in the hit television show *Iron Chef*, there is an action-packed contest, which is very similar to Alabama's Star Event competition. Teams are made up of three students - each enrolled in a culinary arts program at their high school. The contest focuses on each student's ability to use internationally accepted food preparation standards, techniques,



and equipment to produce a quality product. Every team must develop a detailed food preparation plan, and must also have all dishes ready within a one-hour timeframe.

At the beginning of the contest, all teams receive the menu and ingredients to complete their meals. Each team has exactly 30 minutes to organize their work areas, supplies, and time management plans, and only 60 minutes to prepare their dishes, which include a full appetizer, main course, and a dessert.

There is a great potential for Alabama's students to have successful and high-paying careers in culinary arts fields. The restaurant industry's 12.7 million employees represent more than 9 percent of America's total workforce. This industry is expected to expand by 1.3 million during this decade. ●

Menu 1
Parisian Watermelon Salad
Pork Medallions w/ Deglazed Sauce
Warm Asian Salad

Menu 2
Papaya & Blueberry Salad
Chicken Scampi
Lemon Basil Pasta

Menu 3
Beef Tenderloin Kebobs
Chipotle Mashed Potatoes
Cappuccino Mousse in Chocolate Cups

ASCA 2010 Conference February 11, 2011

THE ALABAMA SCHOOL COMMUNICATORS ASSOCIATION (ASCA) is offering a great opportunity for professional development and training on the two big issues in today's schools - Cyberbulling and Social Media - presented by Nora Carr, award winning and nationally recognized public relations leader.

The ASCA 2010 Conference will be held February 11, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., and will also feature a Media Roundtable and presentation of ASCA awards. The roundtable will host several newspaper and television reporters who will give insight into school communication's best practices.

ASCA encourages teachers, principals, superintendents and public information officers to attend the conference. Registration is open until January 28, 2011. For more information on registration and the ASCA Awards, [CLICK HERE](#).



Explore Alabama's Natural Beauty with Educational and Conservation Programs



THE STATE OF ALABAMA offers so many outdoor possibilities for recreation and also for learning! Breathe in the fresh air and experience the beauty and wonder of our state by taking your class outside this spring through educational programs offered by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources provides a menu of resource materials and adventure workshops that promote the conservation ethic. Teachers can select from formal educational programs (K-12 curricula) and field experiences that reconnect participants with Alabama's natural resources. Conservation has many web resources for students that can be worked into traditional classrooms or used outdoors. Programs for conservation education include Project Wild, Aquatic Wild, Project Wet, Growing Up Wild, Creek Kids, Hunter Education, angler education, programs at state parks, teacher workshops and more. Opportunities also include art contests for students.

Discover all that the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has to offer at [HERE](#).

Life on the Farm ... Brought to Your School

AN EXCITING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, the Mobile Dairy Classroom, is available to come to your school!

The Mobile Dairy Classroom holds a live cow, which is presented to students. The presentation includes a live milking demonstration using modern equipment and the old-fashioned way! The importance of dairy for nutrition and health is explained along with stories of life on a farm.

The Mobile Dairy Classroom visited 59,935 students at 101 schools in Alabama in 2010. The program is fully funded by local dairy producers and is offered at no cost to the schools. Booking is available now for the spring. To book a visit [CLICK HERE](#) or email **AMANDA GRIFFITH**, MCD Instructor, at agriffith@southwestdairyfarmers.com.



February is "College Application and Financial Aid Month"

EVERY STUDENT must have a real chance to reach his or her lifelong aspirations – to be competitive in tomorrow's fast-paced and expanding global economy. Throughout America, over the past decade, there has been a growing movement among educators, national employers, and top business professionals to further focus the nation's high school curriculum on college preparation and career development.

This February, for the first time, our state will celebrate *Alabama College Application and Financial Aid Month* – a new annual event developed by the Alabama Department of Education's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Section, to celebrate the importance of "lifelong student achievement." This celebration will also highlight the importance of the "college and career readiness" concept, which focuses on creating a seamless transition between students leaving high school, entering college, and moving into the workforce.

According to current research, the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that approximately 90 percent of the nation's upcoming 21st Century careers will require employees to have postsecondary education experience. Ultimately, being college and career ready means that high school graduates have the English, science, and mathematics skills needed to succeed in postsecondary learning and the real world of work.

To celebrate *Alabama College Application and Financial Aid Month*, special activities, official resolution and proclamation ceremonies, and other events have been planned statewide. Attending college today means much more than just pursuing a traditional four-year degree. Being college-ready means students are prepared for the entire postsecondary experience – ready to earn all types of postsecondary credentials, including associates' and bachelor's degrees, professional licenses, special certificates, and, ultimately, a master's and doctoral degrees. ●

Having a quality education has really become much more valuable:

Thirty five years ago, only **12%** of U.S. jobs required some postsecondary training

8 out of every **10** job openings in America (in the next decade) will require postsecondary education experience.

To learn more about the College Application and Financial Aid celebration, [CLICK HERE](#) or contact CTE Administrator Meg Smith at 334-353-4346.

Torchbearer Schools Prove Every Child Can Learn

ELEVEN ALABAMA SCHOOLS have been chosen as TORCHBEARER SCHOOLS – schools that light the way as examples of places of learning that exhibit exemplary leadership and overcome adversity in student achievement. The students at these schools outpace not only their socio-economic counterparts, but other students from all walks of life.



“The kind of structure and learning taking place in these eleven schools underscores the pedagogical philosophy that, given the appropriate environment, every child can learn,” said STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON. “These schools exemplify what can be achieved when schools are committed to excellence for all students.”

For more information, [CLICK HERE](#) or contact Dr. Angela Mangum, 334-242-9962 or [CLICK HERE](#).

ALABAMA'S 2010-2011 TORCHBEARER SCHOOLS

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>SYSTEM</u>	<u>PRINCIPAL</u>
Wilkerson Middle School ⁽³⁾	Birmingham City	Ms. Constance Burnes
Huxford Elementary School ⁽³⁾	Escambia County	Mrs. Donna Silcox
Harlan Elementary School ⁽²⁾	Florence City	Ms. Shirley Coker
Anna F. Booth Elementary School ⁽⁶⁾	Mobile County	Mrs. Lisa Michelle Williams
Calcedaever Elementary School ⁽⁶⁾	Mobile County	Ms. Susan Dickinson
George Hall Elementary School ⁽⁴⁾	Mobile County	Mrs. Agnes Therese Tomlinson
Holloway Elementary School ⁽²⁾	Mobile County	Mrs. Iesha Williams
Morningside Elementary School ⁽¹⁾	Mobile County	Ms. Marva Carter
Spencer Elementary School ⁽¹⁾	Mobile County	Ms. Dianne Reynolds
T. S. Morris Elementary School ⁽²⁾	Montgomery County	Mrs. Tamara Winston
E.D. Nixon Elementary School ⁽²⁾	Montgomery County	Mr. Anthony Lewis

⁽¹⁾ First Year Torchbearer Status ⁽²⁾ Second Year ⁽³⁾ Third Year ⁽⁴⁾ Fourth Year ⁽⁵⁾ Fifth Year ⁽⁶⁾ Sixth Year

Get Ready for the Second Annual Distance Learning Week February 7-11

The Alabama Department of Education is pleased to host the **Second Annual Distance Learning Week**, showcasing all that Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators & Students Statewide (ACCESS) Distance Learning has to offer! Over 90 high schools across the state participated in more than 30 sessions for last year's inaugural Distance Learning Week. This year's event is on track to be even bigger and better.



Sign up now! We have limited spaces for participation in each event, so make plans and register early.

For more details [CLICK HERE](#).



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You can find links to both social media sites on our webpage (www.alsde.edu). Check out our new Facebook, Twitter, and web pages and share the information with your friends!

Dr. Ethel H. Hall Featured in 2011 Calendar

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY CALENDAR was recently unveiled at a celebration to honor great leaders of the state.

The calendar, which includes DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.; REVEREND FRED SHUTTLESWORTH; JOE LOUIS; and former Alabama State Board Member, DR. ETHEL HALL, among others, will be distributed to all public schools for the students of Alabama to learn from the stories of determination and inspiration. Additional curriculum will



accompany the calendars so students can delve further into the lives of these 12 leaders and African American history in the state. The calendar and its accompanying curriculum can be a great addition to educational opportunities during February, which is Black History Month.

Dr. Ethel Hall, upon receiving the honor of inclusion into the calendar, said, "To be selected is one of the highest honors. I would

have never thought I would be sharing any kind of mention with Dr. King or Rev. Shuttlesworth." Dr. Hall also told a short story of how hearing the bells of Rev. Shuttlesworth's church in Birmingham ring on Sunday



Each time you help a child, you are helping this state and our nation to be stronger and better.

– Dr. Ethel H. Hall

morning would inspire her to wake up and get moving for her Sunday school. "And now, to be on stage with Rev. Shuttlesworth, is a great honor."

Hall also thanked her supporters, friends, and family who helped her through the six terms on the Alabama State Board of Education and urged others to continue to support education in the state. ●

Alabama Ranks High in Nation on Decreasing Dropout Rate

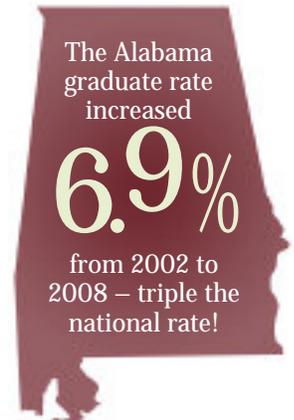
IN A RECENT REPORT, *Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic*, big gains in increasing the graduation rate in Alabama are applauded as a success. The report from America's Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprises, and Johns Hopkins University's Everyone Graduates Center shows the nation and Alabama improving graduation rates and decreasing the number of schools with higher dropout rates.

Alabama ranked 4th from the top in gains to statewide graduation rates between 2002 and 2008. The Alabama graduation rate increased from 62.1 percent in 2002 to 69.0 percent in 2008, a 6.9 percent increase – triple the nationwide increase. The U.S. graduation rate increased from 72.6 percent in 2002 to 74.9 percent in 2008, a 2.3 percent increase.

Also in the state, the number of schools with higher dropout rates decreased by 26 – down from 71 in 2002 to 45 in 2008. This was the third largest decrease nationwide. Nationwide, the number of schools with higher dropout rates fell by 261 – from 2,007 in 2002 to 1,746 in 2008. Experts say targeting these high schools for improvement is a critical part of turning around the nation's dropout rate. Most of the decline in schools with higher dropout rates – 216 of the 261 – occurred in the South.

"This report illustrates Alabama as a top example in the nation in combating the dropout crisis. Progress like this is only possible by providing the right kind of programs, training, resources, and people to work with students and help them to succeed," said STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON. "Programs like FIRST CHOICE; Credit Recovery; Graduation Coaches; the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI); the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI); and Alabama Connecting Classrooms Students Statewide (ACCESS) are catalysts for change in Alabama and will continue to help decrease the dropout rate."

For the complete report, [CLICK HERE](#). The report was released by Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), founding chair, America's Promise Alliance (the Alliance), and Alma J. Powell, the Alliance's current chair. For more information on Alabama's efforts to decrease the dropout rate, FIRST CHOICE, ARI, AMSTI, or ACCESS, [CLICK HERE](#) or call 334-242-9700. ●



SDE, ALFA, AISA Promotes Safe Driving Among Teen Drivers



ALFA, along with the Alabama Department of Education and the Alabama Independent Schools Association (AISA), has kicked off an exciting new contest to promote safe driving among teens.

The Alfa Drive Smart initiative offers Alabama high school students an opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns about distracted driving, particularly texting and driving, to help fellow teens “drive smart.”

Through an online video contest that began January 1 and ends March 31, 2011, ALFA will award prizes to the student or student group that produces the best video discouraging distracted driving. “I have one primary concern that ranks above all others – the safety and well-being of Alabama’s young people,” said STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON. “I hope this contest challenges students to use their creativity to develop a message of safety that resonates across the state and the country.”

FIRST-PLACE: Winner receives one iPad plus \$1,500 in cash (the school of the first-place winner or group will receive \$1,500).

SECOND-PLACE: Winner receives one iPod Touch plus \$1,000 in cash (the school of the second-place winner or group will receive \$1,000).

THIRD-PLACE: Winner receives one iPod Nano plus \$750 in cash (the school of the third-place winner or group will be awarded \$750).

“Automobile accidents are the leading cause of death among teenagers,” ALFA PRESIDENT JERRY NEWBY said. “Through this project, we hope to prove to all drivers, and especially teenagers, that their safety is far more important than any phone call or text message.”

[CLICK HERE](#) for complete details.

18th Annual School Board Member Recognition Month



YOU ARE INVITED to join the Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) in celebrating Alabama’s 18th annual School Board Member Recognition Month in January. This observance, which also is being celebrated nationally, offers you a chance to strengthen your relationship with your school board members. The theme, “Making a World of Difference,” reaffirms the goal we all share: preparing tomorrow’s leaders for productive citizenship.

To make this project a success, AASB provides a variety of suggestions and easily customizable promotional materials. These can be downloaded [HERE](#). A certificate template can also be downloaded and customized for each board member to be presented by your board president at a January board meeting.

Recognizing board members for their dedication and sacrifice takes a concerted effort by staff, parents, students, and community. But such recognition can encourage veteran board members to continue making the commitment board service requires. We urge you to take this opportunity to acknowledge them.

If yours is a medium to large school system, you may want to consider having clusters of schools work together to stage a single recognition event or even pair one school with each board member for recognition. This will help ensure neither your schools nor the board members will be overwhelmed with activities in January.

Thank you for celebrating these education leaders.

Great Central U.S. Shake Out on April 28, 2011

EARTHQUAKES ARE NOT UNCOMMON IN ALABAMA, in the past they have ranged from 1.0-5.9 on the Richter Scale. Many people are not aware earthquakes occur annually in Alabama. Do you know what to do in case of an earthquake? Find out by participating in the the **Great Central U.S. Shake Out on April 28, 2011**.

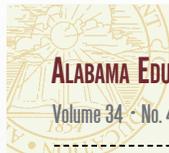
The Alabama Emergency Management Agency is helping to make citizens aware by hosting activities and learning opportunities during the Great Central U.S. Shake Out.

Alabama is one of 10 states participating, and they want as many people as possible to participate, including your school and your students. The more you educate yourself about disasters, the more you will know how to respond.

By participating in the Great Shake Out, students and staff can learn the right steps in case a major earthquake occurs. For information on how to register [CLICK HERE](#).

Awards, Opportunities, and Professional Development

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



ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

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ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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HAZEL GREEN'S PARKER NAMED ALFA TEACHER OF MONTH

What do contraction bugs, highlighted newspapers and applesauce have in common? Students at Hazel Green Elementary know the answer to this – Veronica Parker.

“Children should use all of their senses to learn, so teachers should provide many different learning styles,” explains Parker, who has taught second grade at Hazel Green since 1997.

For her second-grade reading classes today, Parker utilizes PowerPoint presentations, newspaper scavenger hunts and lots of creativity to ensure that her message gets across to the students in whatever way they need to receive it.

Though her instruction includes core curriculum, the lessons she teaches surpass the four walls of her classroom. When teaching young children rules, norms and proper behavior, parents and teachers alike frequently utilize a special tool in their vocabulary – the word ‘no.’ For Parker, however, ‘no’ is ideal to use in certain instances . . . but certainly not when it pertains to her students’ ability to excel.

Parker’s love of education and people, as well as her academic preparedness and willingness to serve her community, helped her earn her designation as Alfa’s Teacher of the Month for January. As January’s honoree, she will receive \$1,000 from Alfa Insurance. Her school, a division of Madison City Schools, will receive a matching award from the Alabama Farmers Federation. Though she’s humbled by this designation, Parker’s day is made each time she steps into a classroom.

A graduate of Alabama State University, Parker received her Bachelor of Science degree in early childhood education in 1990. She also received her masters and education and educational specialist degrees in early childhood education from Alabama A&M University in 1995 and 2003, respectively. A member of the Madison County Education Association and Alabama Education Association, she also serves in her church, PTA and Girl Scouts.

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 school teachers. Application information is available under Ag Links in the Agricultural Resources section of AlfaFarmers.org under Ag Links.

January State Board of Education Meeting Agenda Items

- Resolution Commending Joseph Reynolds, “Barbara Fannin Memorial Employee of the Quarter,” for January - March 2011
- Resolution Proclaiming February 19-26, 2011, as “Alabama Entrepreneurship Week”
- Resolution Proclaiming February 1-28, 2011, as “Alabama Career and Technical Education Month”
- Resolution Proclaiming February 7-11, 2011, as “Alabama Distance Learning Week”
- Resolution in Recognition of February 7-11, 2011, as “National School Counseling Week”
- Resolutions to Authorize Review of Teacher Education Programs, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama; University of Montevallo, Montevallo, Alabama; Huntingdon College, Montgomery, Alabama; Troy University, Troy, Alabama; and University of West Alabama, Livingston, Alabama

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.”