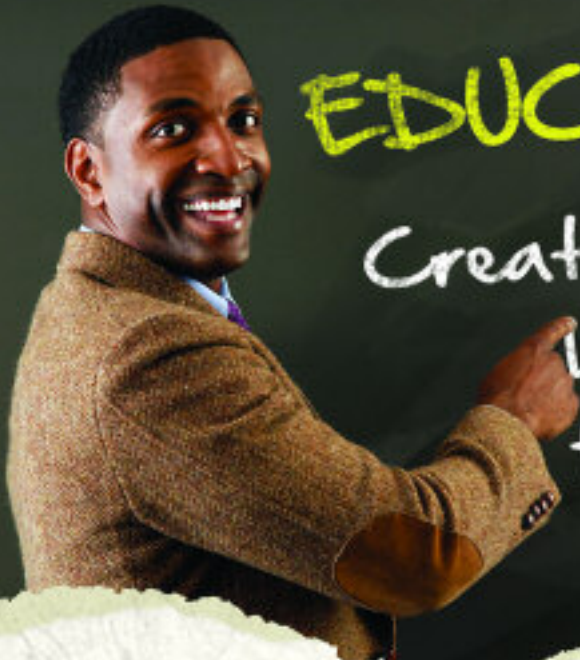




ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

MAY 2009



EDUCATE Alabama Creating a Professional Learning Collaborative for Alabama Educators

The Alabama State Board of Education recently adopted Educate Alabama, a new educator evaluation process that replaces Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) with a more concise, effective, teacher-oriented process.

DEPUTY STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION DR. TOMMY BICE said the key component to EDUCATE ALABAMA is the fact that it is a collaborative process between the principal and the teacher. From beginning to end, he said, the effort is two-way with the sole purpose of improving the effectiveness of instruction in the classroom and the skill level of the teacher. Bice said PEPE was a very viable, useful process at the time it was developed and over the time that it has been used, but the population and the profession has changed. The implementation of EDUCATE ALABAMA dramatically reduces the amount of time it takes to perform an effective evaluation (by approximately 6 hours per teacher) and increases the effectiveness of individual teacher development.

One of the most time consuming aspects of PEPE was scripting. This is a process by which an evaluator would go into a teacher's class to observe and write down, word for word,

everything the teacher and the student said while the observation was being conducted. The purpose of scripting was to ensure transparency in the evaluation process. Should a score be questioned, the exact reason in which the score was assigned could be traced back and identified to defend the score. Bice said, from a practitioner's perspective, the excessive nature of scripting was a diversion from actually watching the interactions and nuances to instruction that occur which are so important to the instructional process.

Another cumbersome component to PEPE was a structured interview that could be conducted orally or in writing. Teachers would respond to a set of predetermined questions, but once the initial interview was performed the questions would remain the same for all subsequent interviews. Bice said, the redundancy of this exercise caused the procedure itself to lack purpose.

So much so, written responses could simply be copied from a previous interview and used over again. He said, this resulted in enormous amounts of

“EDUCATE ALABAMA is based on the quality teaching standards that were developed and adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education.”

— DR. TOMMY BICE, DEPUTY STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

continued on next page ...

continued from front ...

time being usurped with very little effectiveness as a result of the structured interview.

Another significant change in the evaluation process is the elimination of numerical scores. EDUCATE ALABAMA replaces numbers with qualifiers that communicate potential growth.

The qualifiers are:

- EMERGING
- APPLYING
- INTEGRATING
- INNOVATING

With EDUCATE ALABAMA, the evaluation is based on the continuum that matches the state standard for teachers. Bice said the optimum teacher would be a teacher who is **Innovating**, but that is not to say that a first year teacher whose score is **Emerging** isn't doing a good job. He said the new qualifier terms are used to communicate potential for growth.

Although the time consumption of the PEPE process was taken into consideration, Bice said

dialogues with the teacher and determined their level of attainment of those standards based on a continuum. The standards guide the process and the process supports the standards." Bice said the EDUCATE ALABAMA process will begin immediately, with training beginning as early as May, 2009. For teachers, the first noticeable change will be that the pre-observation conference is no longer part of the process. The observation occurs first, then, the teacher and observer have a conversation after the fact and discuss what was observed.



No more scripting?

One of the most time consuming aspects of PEPE is scripting. Evaluators are required to write down – word for word – everything teachers and students say while an observation is being conducted.

KIMBERLY HOBBS, a teacher at West Madison Elementary School in Madison (Madison City Schools) said the new EDUCATE ALABAMA process saves time and is a lot more flexible in terms of being used in a formative fashion. "This will help with the issue of time consumption and it also reduces the paper trail of the former process," Hobbs said. "This helps everyone – teachers and administrators. It is a much more concise, streamlined, and consistent process."

For evaluators, the training regimen has also been totally revised. Under PEPE, Bice said training for evaluators was a concentrated five-day session with testing involved. With EDUCATE ALABAMA, the training will be very different. Training will be conducted over a year's period of time, mirroring the professional development standards we have in place now. "It is going to require a paradigm shift in the thinking of people who have used PEPE for a long time. This is a new process with a very clear focus on formative growth and development of the teachers," Bice said.

Even though the qualifiers are intended to be encouraging to teachers, Bice is clear to point out that ineffectiveness in the classroom is unacceptable. He said teachers who do not progress through the qualifiers at an acceptable rate may question whether they are in the right profession or not. Bice said EDUCATE ALABAMA is a formative process, designed to grow the skill set and ability of educators and not to determine whether a teacher should remain employed.

"There's a very clear set of reasons why a teacher is released from his or her position found in Code." 🍎



"It is going to require a paradigm shift in the thinking of people who have used PEPE for a long time. EDUCATE ALABAMA is a new process with a very clear focus on formative growth and development of teachers."

– DR. TOMMY BICE, DEPUTY STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



what was more of a motivating factor to restructure the evaluation process was value lent to the final product. He said EDUCATE ALABAMA is concise and is based on the quality teaching standards that were developed and adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education in 2007.

"There is no question about the standards that all teachers in the state of Alabama are expected to work toward. That alone is a major step," Bice said. "We took those standards and based an evaluation process which is a combination of observations,

Teacher of the Year Finalists Announced

On May 13th, a statewide “live” broadcast event will honor those who help build a better community for all. The **2009 Alabama Stars in Education Awards**, held at the Renaissance

Hotel and Convention Center in Montgomery, will award the Alabama Teacher of the Year Award and showcase Alabama Public Television’s Young Heroes.

The Alabama Teacher of the Year Award is given to a remarkable educator who has gone above and beyond, teaching students at the highest level. Sixteen teachers are selected from the state to be finalists in the competition. All 16 finalists bring unique past experiences that have influenced their philosophy on teaching, show an immense amount of community involvement, and exhibit a real dedication to teaching and to their students. The competition is narrowed to the final four and the winner of Alabama Teacher of the Year will be announced at the 2009 Alabama Stars in Education event on May 13. The use of a 2009 Chevrolet Impala, SMART Board 600i interactive whiteboard system, and many other exciting prizes will be awarded to the recipient.

The Teacher of the Year is also a candidate for National Teacher of the Year. The National Teacher of the Year Program, presented by the ING Foundation, is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Alabama Public Television celebrates the great achievements of Alabama's future leaders with the 2009 Alabama Young Heroes Awards. This award is given to five outstanding young people who have demonstrated courage, determination, volunteerism, and academic excellence. These students have overcome adversities, only to inspire others with their actions. Scholarships, laptops, and other prizes will be given to the winners. The Young Heroes will be presented at the event.

THE 2009 YOUNG HEROES:

- Caitlin Campbell - Hoover High School, Hoover
- Carrie Parrish - Waterloo High School, Waterloo
- Maranda Rikard - Florence High School, Florence
- Tiffany Sauls - Asbury High School, Albertville
- Pablo Zuniga - Collinsville High School, Collinsville

Visit www.apr.org and www.alsde.edu for more information on the **2009 Alabama Stars in Education**, a live, statewide broadcast and event on May 13. ●

ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



Kim Bowen
Rainbow Elem.



Nancy Crutchfield
Ogletree Elem.



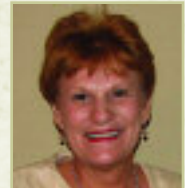
Shannon Finley
Alexandria Elem.



Ann Marie Corgill
Riverchase Elem.



Lisa Ann Hargett
Hayden Elem.



Kathy Hays
Cherokee High



Debra Howell
Elsie Collier Elem.



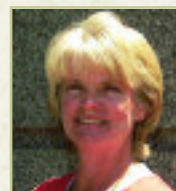
Yung Thi Bui-Kincer
BTW Magnet High



Madelene Marcus
Liberty Middle School



Dr. Holly Morgan
Memorial Park Elem.



Cheryl Morrow
Spain Park High



Glen Mutchick
Clark School of
Mathematics, Science,
and Technology



Jennifer Rodopoulos
Forest Avenue Elem.



Revonda Sutton
South Girard School



Stephanie Tidwell
Ramsay High



Virginia Vilardi
Wetumpka High School



See Alabama's Teacher of the Year announced LIVE on APT May 13. (check your local listings)

First Education Stimulus Aid Flows to States

Alabama's total allocation from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA) is a little more than \$3 billion. More than one third (\$1.1 billion) is earmarked for education. In early April, the first economic stimulus aid for education – the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) – began flowing out to states.

“These investments will save and create jobs in the short term, while raising achievement in the long term. We will need a strong commitment on the front end and even stronger proof on the back end that states are making progress,” said U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ARNE DUNCAN.

New guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) (www.ed.gov/programs/statestabilization/guidance.pdf) spells out in more detail how states and school districts will receive money under the SFSF and how they may use it. SFSF monies go directly to the governors of each state.

Alabama's total share of the SFSF is \$729,041,407. ARRA requires states to distribute 81.8 percent – or \$596,355,870 in Alabama – to education, kindergarten through higher education. In Alabama, GOV. BOB RILEY has committed these funds to teacher salaries – to save jobs. Despite education budget proration cuts – including textbooks, transportation, assessments, Advanced Placement, and Report Cards – the ARRA and the Governor's commitment of the SFSF monies will allow Alabama to fill 3,790 education positions for two years.

Other ARRA funds for Alabama include Title I, special education, and technology. [Preliminary Allocation Estimates by School System](#) are posted on the Alabama Department of Education (SDE) Web site.

SPENDING PRIORITIES

The U.S. Department of Education has outlined ways school districts should use their share of the federal stimulus package, which could provide up to \$100 billion for K-12 education over two years. The main allotment of money flowing to districts comes from several pots, and many of the suggestions below can be funded through multiple sources.

State Fiscal Stabilization Fund

- Create new, fair, reliable teacher-evaluation systems based on objective measures of student progress and multiple classroom observations.
- Train educators to use data to improve instruction.
- Purchase instructional software, digital whiteboards, and other interactive technologies and train teachers how to use them.

Title I


- Identify and use effective teachers as coaches and mentors.
- Create summer programs for algebra and other college-prep courses.
- Partner with colleges and nonprofit groups to create early-college programs.
- Close low-performing schools and reopen them with new staffs, new programs, and additional learning time.

Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act

- Offer training and dual certification for teachers of English-language learners and students in special education.
- Implement online individualized education programs (IEPs) aligned with state academic standards.
- Hire transition coaches to help graduating high school seniors find employment or get postsecondary training.

Source: USDE



How will the ARRA stimulus package help K-12 education in Alabama over the next two years?

• Title I, Part A	\$163,217,215
• Title I, Part D, Subpart 2	\$1,746,956
• Title I, School Improvement	\$45,744,000
• Impact Aid	\$326,152
• McKinney Vento	\$1,111,000
• EETT Title II-D	\$10,489,941
• School Lunch Equipment Assistance	\$1,726,943
• Special Education, IDEA, Part B	\$181,864,783
• Special Education, IDEA, Preschool	\$5,969,828

New information and instructions from the USDE will be shared with LEAs and posted on the SDE Web site. Department staff also have developed and posted a Q&A document. ARRA education information is also posted online at these Web sites:

www.recovery.gov • www.ed.gov/recovery • www.stimulus.alabama.gov

e-GAP: Financial Accountability and Transparency in Government



The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA) requires transparency, reporting, and accountability in the use of federal education stimulus funds.

These requirements are nothing new for K-12 school systems in the state of Alabama. Through the use of a Web-based grants management program, Alabama school systems have been required to complete programmatic, as well as financial reporting requirements prior to receiving federal entitlement and competitive funds. This Web-based grants management program ensures transparency and accountability of all federal dollars in the K-12 school systems. It provides an immediate link between the local school system and Alabama Department of Education (SDE) administrators who are available to provide technical assistance in the development, management, and oversight of federal grants.

All of this information is available for public review at any time through the use of e-GAP, Electronic Grant Application. e-GAP will guarantee the required transparency and reporting obligations for the ARRA with only slight modifications from

its original operating platform.

e-GAP went “live” on the [SDE Web site](#) in the Fall of 2006. “Since then, local school system personnel have been able to use e-GAP to submit federal entitlement and competitive grant applications and request financial reimbursement for approved expenditures,” said **KIMI RIGGINS**, Statistician Supervisor, Administrative and Financial Services.

In addition, the public can use the search tool and view any approved grant and how the school system plans to use the grant funds. Another e-GAP feature is the online Document Library, which includes e-GAP Users Guide, Federal Programs checklist, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) School Choice guidance, and links to parental involvement resources.

Now, LEAs will be able to apply on e-GAP for stimulus funds, including Title I, Part A and D; Title I School Improvement 1003a and 1003g; and Special Education IDEA-B and Pre-School. ●

Virtual AETC Goes Digital With New Technologies

Alabama’s current budgetary woes have brought about some fiscally minded changes this year to the Alabama Educators Technology Conference.

The conference will now be held in a virtual format. The very first Virtual AETC will be held **JUNE 8-12, 2009**. Presenting the conference virtually eliminates the travel, hotel, and food costs involved with a traditional conference. There is also no cost for registration for the conference this year. “Even though we are disappointed that there was a need to cancel AETC in Birmingham, we are using the opportunity to ‘try out’ some of the newer technologies. Although virtual AETC will be offering only limited choices from the original face-to-face sessions, the virtual sessions will be modeling ‘futuristic uses of technology,” said **DR. MELINDA MADDOX**, Director of Technology Initiatives at the Department of Education.

All sessions will be free and electronically presented through Elluminate and videoconferencing, along with some hybrid sessions in which groups will meet, watch the digital sessions together, and then discuss the presentations. “We are excited to present this conference in a virtual format,” said **CHERI HAYES**, Education Administrator for Technology Initiatives. “Business provides training through virtual environments and we are beginning to do the same for our educators.”

While a virtual conference is not as effective as face-to-face interaction, there are many opportunities for professional development that will be delivered through the use of webinars (Elluminate), Interactive Videoconferences (IVC),

Podcasts, Video-Podcasts, and SecondLife. SecondLife is an online virtual environment in which participants create an avatar (online persona) and participate in a presentation or activity.

Announcements for the Virtual AETC will be shown on the STI-PD Web site and registration will begin soon. [CLICK HERE](#) for more details. For more information, contact [Technology in Motion Specialists](#).

E-mail [Don Marchant](#) for details about registration and [Cheri Hayes](#) for information on hands-on sessions. ●



Alabama Recognized For Rising Above National Dropout Crisis

Alabama is one of a dozen states that significantly improved their high school graduation rates between 2002 and 2006, while the rest of the nation lagged behind. This is according to a report by researchers at the new Everyone Graduates Center at the Johns Hopkins University. Tennessee led the way with an 11 percentage point increase in its graduation rate, while Alabama came in sixth overall with a 4.1 percent increase.

This progress report comes on the heels of a major education address by **PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA** in which he cited the work of Johns Hopkins education researchers in identifying the 2,000 high schools that produce half of the nation's dropouts, and issued a challenge to all Americans to turn around these low-performing schools. **STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON** recently presented these findings to the Alabama State Board of Education.

The report, "Progress Toward Increasing National and State Graduation Rates," is available online [HERE](#).

STATES THAT IMPROVED THEIR GRADUATION RATES AND THEIR PERCENTAGE POINT INCREASES:

1. Tennessee11.0
2. Delaware6.8
3. Kentucky6.8
4. S. Dakota5.3
5. Arkansas5.2
6. **Alabama.....4.1**
7. N. Carolina3.6
8. New York3.5
9. Hawaii3.4
10. Missouri3.4
11. Nebraska3.1
12. New Hampshire3.0

It Takes a Big Heart to Build a Big Heart

Although it's not 20,000 leagues, teachers and students at **Meadowlane Elementary School in Phenix City, AL**, are virtually going 'under the sea' to learn more about Blue Whales and other marine life.

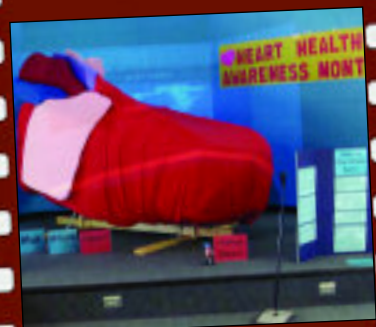
Kathy Maggart, a teacher at Meadowlane and project manager of the Blue Whale Museum, said reading a book to her class about the size of a Blue Whale's heart inspired her to create a life-sized model that would allow students to experience a marine life museum right in their own school. Maggart said her father spent a week building the whale heart, which is the size of a Volkswagen bug.

Kim Wiggins, a first-grade teacher, said the project "brings science to life" for the students. The Blue Whale heart is interactive and allows students to simulate the whale's heartbeat by pumping colored water through a turkey-baster to simulate the flow of blood through the heart's arteries, and shows how veins carry blood without oxygen back to the heart.

There's even a red play tunnel that serves as the Blue Whale aorta that children can walk through. Maggart and other teachers also constructed a simulated 11-foot long mouth of a Blue Whale, along with sea shells, starfish, and other underwater inhabitants that many children at the school have never seen.

There are many other learning apparatus available as well at the Blue Whale museum. WTVM-TV came to the museum's opening to showcase all of the activities.

State Board Member: Mrs. Betty Peters, District 2
Superintendent: Dr. Larry E. DiChiara
Principal: Mr. Marcus Lamont Dubose



Selma Students Win Competition

Three students from Selma Middle Chat Academy were recently named 2nd place winners in the nationwide C-SPAN 2009 Student Cam Competition. **ALLISON MOORE**, **MICHELLE HARRIS**, and **WHITNEY STRONG**, all eighth graders, were the recipients of the honor with the theme “A Message to the new President: What is the most urgent issue to address after taking office and why?”

The three students teamed up and submitted their video taped message entitled “Today’s Special: No Money, Low Self-Esteem, with a Side of Poor Education.” The video’s message was about poverty and its effect on students. The girls followed the completion guidelines by analyzing an issue of national significance that included C-SPAN programming and offered different points of view.

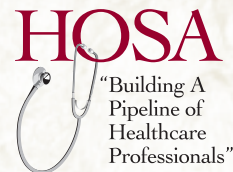


The Selma students will share a \$1,500 cash prize and their broadcasting teacher, **CLAIRE COMPTON**, receives \$125 for digital video equipment. The documentary aired on Friday, April 24, on C-SPAN. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

State Board Member: Mrs. Ella Bell, District 5
Superintendent: Dr. Austin Obasohan
Principal: Mr. Bertram Pickney

Franklin County Students Advance

Twenty-seven high school Health Occupational students (HOSA) from Franklin County competed for the state awards recently in Gadsden, Alabama and now will have the opportunity to compete on the national level. The winners are from Red Bay High School, Tharptown High School, Phil Campbell High School, and Belgreen High School and take Health Science classes at the Franklin County Career Tech Center. Students from across the state competed in various healthcare events.



The students competed in the following events: Biomedical Debate, Health Education, Health Career Display, CERT, EMT, Medical Skills, Pathophysiology, Nutrition, and Problem-Solving events. **KAY HARGETT**, MSN, RN, who is the instructor for the class, said, “Our students did an exceptional job and the weeks of practicing and studying of skills paid off.” The students will be representing Alabama at the National HOSA Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, in June.

State Board Member: Gary Warren, District 7
Superintendent: Mr. Bill Moss
Health Science Teacher- Kay Hargett, MSN, RN
Career Technical Director: Mrs. Orval Seay

Awards, Opportunities, and Professional Development

[7th Annual Jenice Riley Memorial Scholarship](#)

DEADLINE: MAY 29

[K-12 Physical Education Teachers Grant Opportunity](#)

All K-12 schools are eligible to receive grants for their physical education program from the Alabama Sports Festival. For more information, contact 1-800-467-0422.

DEADLINES VARY BY SPORT: MAY 14 - JUNE 12

[2009 Imaginative Learning Workshop for Educators and Arts Day Camp](#) for children entering Grades 1-6, July 6-8, Embassy Suites, Montgomery

[2009 National High School Journalism Teacher Awards](#)

[Program](#) The winning teacher receives a plaque, a pin, and an expense-paid travel, and delivers keynote addresses to scholastic and collegiate journalism educators and professional journalists.
DEADLINE: JULY 1, 2009.

The Alabama Council of Leadership Development (ACLD) is currently reviewing professional study applications submitted for approval to earn Professional Learning Unit (PLU) status. For a current listing of ACLD-approved professional studies in Alabama, [CLICK HERE](#) . Select: “ACLD Approved Professional Studies 2009 -2010.”



AEN STAFF

Managing Editor: Mitch Edwards
Editor: Michael O. Sibley
Contributing Editors: Ed Crenshaw, Anne P. Graham,
and Malissa Valdes
Graphic Artists: Mary Nell Shaw and Charles V. Creel

EDITORIAL OFFICE: 334-242-9950
E-mail comments and story ideas to: aen@alsde.edu

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

President | Governor Bob Riley
District 1 | Randy McKinney, Vice President, Gulf Shores
District 2 | Betty Peters, Dothan
District 3 | Stephanie W. Bell, Montgomery
District 4 | Ethel H. Hall, Vice President Emerita, Fairfield
District 5 | Ella B. Bell, Montgomery
District 6 | David F. Byers Jr., Birmingham
District 7 | Gary Warren, Haleyville
District 8 | Mary Jane Caylor, President Pro Tem, Huntsville
State Superintendent of Education and Secretary and Executive Officer of the Alabama Board of Education | Joseph B. Morton

APRIL BOARD BRIEFS

- ⚡ Board Recommendations from the Alabama School of Fine Arts
- ⚡ State Board Representation on the Alabama Teacher of the Year Selection Committee
- ⚡ Resolution Commending Robert Davis, "Barbara Fannin Memorial Employee of the Quarter," April - June 2009
- ⚡ State Department of Education Employee Recognition Week
- ⚡ Resolution Proclaiming School Nurse Day in Alabama, May 6, 2009
- ⚡ Approve Resolution to Receive the Mathematics State Course of Study

For a complete list of agenda items, visit the Alabama Department of Education's Web site www.alsde.edu under "Board of Ed."

ABOUT ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

Alabama Education News (USPS #387-290) is published monthly except for June, July, and December by the Alabama Department of Education, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101. Periodicals postage paid at Montgomery, AL and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **Alabama Education News**, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101.
Alabama Education News is composed by the Alabama Department of Education's Communication Section and printed by EBSCO Media of Birmingham. This publication, authorized by Section 16-2-4 of the Code of Alabama, as recompiled in 1975, is a public service of the Alabama Department of Education designed to inform citizens and educators about programs and goals of public education in Alabama.
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, sex, race, religion, national origin, color, or age. 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; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8444.
Copies available in Braille or other forms upon request.

EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS	
<u>MAY</u>	
<i>Teacher Appreciation Month • National Play, Fitness, and Sports Month</i>	
May 4-8	Teacher Appreciation/State Employees Appreciation Week
May 6	Teacher Appreciation Day/ School Nurse Day
May 14	State Board of Education Meeting
May 25	National Memorial Day (state holiday)
May 28	State Board of Education Work Session
<u>JUNE</u>	
June 1	Jefferson Davis' Birthday
June 11	Alabama State Board of Education Meeting
June 14	Flag Day
June 25	Alabama State Board of Education Work Session
<u>JULY</u>	
July 3	(Independence Day Observed)
July 4	Independence Day
July 14	Alabama State Board of Education Meeting
<u>AUGUST</u>	
August 3	Alabama State Board of Education Meeting
August 27	Alabama State Board of Education Work Session
EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS UPCOMING EVENTS	

