

# FOR YOUR *information*

A MONTHLY UPDATE ON  
STATE BOARD PROCEEDINGS,  
ASSOCIATION NEWS & K-12 TOPICS

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## New State BOE Leadership Elected, Updates on ARI, AMSTI & More

The State Board of Education held its annual meeting Tuesday, unanimously electing Jeff Newman (District 7) as vice president and Jackie Ziegler (District 1) as president pro tem.

In other action, the board adopted new Alabama Administrative Code rules related to student health services. State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey said the rule changes come as a result of legislation enacted in 2018 to address palliative care for students.

The board also approved the intent to adopt rules discussed in the June work session regarding new pathways for teacher certification. The first rule would create three pathways for educators to be certified as computer science instructors, a process Mackey said already is underway. The second rule would codify the process for community college instructors to transition to teach in high schools.

ALSDE staff presented detailed updates on four initiatives during Tuesday's work session: the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and literacy; the Alabama Math, Science & Technology Initiative (AMSTI); the Office of School Improvement and the department's annual Mega Conference; and PowerSchool, the new student information platform.

### ARI

ARI Coordinator Karen Porter said the program is refocusing efforts to its original mission to ensure all students in grades K-3 read at grade-level. Responding to a question from Gov. Kay Ivey about the definition of "reading at grade level," Porter explained there is no single definition nationally; however, Alabama has its standards by which students can be assessed for proficiency. As the SDE moves forward to provide guidance for ARI. The task force will hold its first meeting August 27. Ivey requested the work be put on the front burner with a timetable and goals to be developed soon. Porter also provided details about plans to coach and support teachers in the science of reading, spurring lively discussion from the board.

The training modules created in 1997 are being revamped with new components. ARI will provide coaching support for K-3 to train pre-service, novice and veteran teachers and reinstate support for instructional leadership. The effort includes training in the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) program to identify and provide services for students with dyslexia and other reading challenges. The first cohort trained 282 Alabama educators in LETRS and an additional 1,500 educators are on a wait list. Mackey said the department has worked to identify some \$3 million to train the waitlisted educators and noted the legislature did not fund a \$10 million ALSDE budget request for this training. [View the ARI PowerPoint presentation for additional details.](#)

### AMSTI

State AMSTI Director Dr. Sandy Ledwell provided an update on the program's enhanced efforts in early math professional learning. Mackey noted the Southern Regional Education Board's [recently released study](#) on early math, adding that Alabama had already begun much of the work described in the study more than a year ago.

Ledwell said the early math professional development is being offered for all educators -- not just those participating in the AMSTI program. The training will be differentiated based on specific school system needs and will be rolled out in tiered phases, with the first three of eight modules available next summer. She also explained facilitator training is a multi-year process, and AMSTI is partnering with colleges of education to prepare pre-service teachers. Mackey added that the ALSDE plans to request funding to lower K-3 divisors now that the legislature has made progress in lowering divisors for middle school grades. [View the AMSTI PowerPoint presentation for additional details.](#)

### Office of School Improvement

Deputy State Superintendent of Education Dr. Daniel Boyd updated the board about the ongoing work of the Office of School Improvement,

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### It's a Date!

**July 11 (1 hour)**

[Breaking Barriers to Student Learning Webinar](#)

**July 19 (8 hours)**

[Roles & Responsibilities Orientation](#)  
Montgomery, Ala.

**July 20 (6 hours)**

[Effective Boards & Relationships Orientation](#)  
Montgomery, Ala.

**August 22**

[Policy Pipeline](#)  
Subscribers-only Maintenance Webinar

**Aug. 29-Sept. 19 (1.5 hrs)**

District Meetings

**Oct. 6 & 7 (6 hours)**

Fall Academy Core Conference  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Oct. 7 (2 hours)**

Post-Conference Workshop  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Sept. 5 (1 hour)**

Webinar: Cyber Bullying & Online Threats to Children

**Nov. 7 (1 hour)**

Webinar

**Dec. 5-7 (8 hours)**

Annual AASB Convention



outlining the various supports provided to schools identified as having the greatest needs based on state criteria for poor academic performance. He said ALSDE staff work with school system staff, using a cohort model to develop transformation academies. Boyd highlighted common trends found in the 61 schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), including high staff turnover, high numbers of uncertified teachers, low rigor, chronic absenteeism and more. He also explained the process for instructional transformation, which begins with a 90-day jumpstart followed by the development of long-term supports and routines focused on improvement and sustained growth. Boyd said school improvement is the focus of the ALSDE Mega Conference July 15-19 in Mobile. He shared a preview of the Mega Conference sessions, adding that very little state funding is used for the conference. Federal programs and special education provide the bulk of funding, with local school systems covering remaining costs. [See Boyd's full presentation for additional information.](#)

### PowerSchool

Assistant State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Thacker previewed the new state-hosted student information system, PowerSchool, slated to launch next fall. The platform combines a student information system, learning management system, centralized data, professional development tracking and a data analysis tool in one source. Thacker said the platform will be user friendly and will feature a single entry point for all of the components. Educators will be able to enter data once, eliminating duplication as well as have access to critical student data available in one dashboard. The portal will allow teachers, students and parents access to course listings, homework assignments, grades and other activities. In addition, teachers will have easy access to student demographics, attendance, course listings, historical grades, lunch status and more. Another bonus will be the ease for students to move from one system to another and have all records follow them, including secure special education data. Statewide training and supports for the new system will begin in October. [View the PowerSchool presentation for additional information.](#)

### Next State Board Meeting

The next scheduled board meeting is August 8 at 10 a.m. in Montgomery, followed by a work session.

### Subscribe to *The Policy Pipeline*



Looking for a timely, convenient and cost-effective way to keep your policies current? AASB's [Policy Pipeline](#) is your solution. This subscription service includes informational updates and draft policies that can be easily adapted to local needs. Each edition of the *Pipeline* reflects the latest legal, court and administrative developments. Subscriptions also include an update webinar, which is scheduled this year for Aug. 22.

### All-State School Board Nominations Now Open

AASB is accepting nominations for its annual All-State School Board Member recognition program. This is a great opportunity to honor the commitment and achievement of an outstanding board member. The award, one of AASB's highest honors, celebrates the work of up to five past or present Alabama school board members who have exhibited exemplary boardmanship.

[Eligibility and selection criteria](#) has been mailed to board presidents and superintendents. [Nominations](#) are due **Sept. 6**. For more information, email [training@alabamaschoolboards.org](mailto:training@alabamaschoolboards.org) or call 334/277-9700.

### 2019 District Meetings Special Ed 101: Crash Course for Board Members

Have you ever felt lost when special education is discussed? Staying on top of the various legal terms, acronyms and changing laws can seem intimidating. AASB's 2019 Fall District Meetings will be led by education attorneys and experts who will walk you through the special education basics board members need to know. This is also the perfect opportunity for you to network with your peers.

#### The meetings dates will be:

- District 1 (Mobile) - Sept. 12
- District 2 (Selma) - Aug. 29
- District 3 (Ozark) - Sept. 10
- District 4 (Montgomery) - Sept. 19
- District 5 (Birmingham)- Sept. 3
- District 6 (Anniston)- Sept. 5
- District 7 (Tuscaloosa) - Sept. 9
- District 8 (Moulton)- Sept. 17
- District 9 (Huntsville) - Sept. 16

The \$25 cost includes dinner. Registration opens soon.

### New Whole Board Training Catalog & Courses



The 2019-20 AASB training year has now begun. There are multiple new courses and workshops this year to help school board members govern more effectively. Our exemplary training team consists of staff members and consultants whose decades of combined experience in education allow them to successfully help school boards improve their performance.

The state requires two hours of interactive whole board training per year for school boards. Check out our new [whole board training catalog](#) to learn more about the 41 engaging trainings AASB has to offer. You can also check out the [2019-20 training calendar](#).

### New ACSBA Officers and ATBE Leadership

The Alabama Council of School Board Attorneys (ACSBA) recently announced its officers for the 2019-2020 membership year. Melissa B. McKie of Bishop, Colvin, Johnson & Kent in Birmingham was elected president, and Dana B. Hill of Hill, Hill, Carter, Franco, Cole & Black in Birmingham was elected vice president. McKie and Hill were chosen by their peers at the ACSBA Summer Conference June 15 and 16 in Orange Beach, Ala.

New leadership was also announced for ATBE (Alabama Trust for Boards of Education). AASB District 6 Director Marie Manning of the St. Clair County School Board is a newly-seated trustee, and Mike Almaroad of the Calhoun County Board of Education is the new chair.

### Could You be AASB's Next Leader?

Nominations are being accepted for AASB president and president-elect for 2019-20. Both the president and president-elect will serve a one-year term. A new bylaws provision calls for president and president-elect candidates to have served on the AASB Board of Directors; however, such service need not be consecutive to the individual's candidacy for or term of elective office.

[Self-nomination forms are available](#) online and must be sent to AASB on or before **August 1**. Questions may be directed to Nominating Committee Chair and AASB Immediate Past President Pam Doyle (256/762-8868) or Tammy Wright, (334/277-9700).