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Deadline April 12 to Enter Video Contest!

Just a few weeks remain to enter the Alabama Association of School Boards' 8th annual contest. We're accepting entries from public school students (grades 6-12), and the contest allows up to two entries from each Alabama school system. Winners will share in prizes totaling \$3,250. Entries must be postmarked by April 12. [Learn more.](#)

It's a Date!

April 2 (2 hours)
[Advocacy Day: Districts 4-6](#)

April 16 (2 hours)
[Advocacy Day: Districts 1-3](#)
Montgomery, Ala.

April 18 (1.5 hours)
[Webinar: Student Protests & Teacher Walkouts](#)

April 30 (2 hours)
[Advocacy Day: Districts 7-9](#)
Montgomery, Ala.

May 21 (2 hours)
[Advocacy Day: All Districts](#)

June 14-16 (7 hours)
[AASB Summer Conference](#)
Orange Beach, Ala.

June 14 (3.5 hours)
[Safety Summit](#)
Orange Beach, Ala.

June 15 & 16 (6 CLE hours)
[ACSBA Summer Conference](#)
Orange Beach, Ala.

June 17-19
[AAAA Summer Conference](#)
Orange Beach, Ala.

State Board Votes on Health & P.E. Courses of Study, Receives Update on Special Education Grad Rate Error

The State Board of Education met Thursday for its regular board meeting during which resolutions were passed recognizing Alabama's five 2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools: Mountain Brook Elementary School (Mountain Brook City), Rock Quarry Elementary School (Tuscaloosa City), Arab Elementary School (Arab City), Liberty Park Middle School (Vestavia Hills City) and Athens Elementary School (Athens City).

The Health and Physical Education courses of study also were adopted, but only the Physical Education course of study received a unanimous vote. Stephanie Bell (District 3) and Dr. Wayne Reynolds (District 8) abstained from voting on the Health course of study due to concerns expressed by constituents and psychologists. State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey said adoption of the Health course of study was particularly timely because the health and well-being of students will be an integral part of his proposed strategic plan.

Referencing the math course of study tabled last month, Mackey indicated there would not be a vote in April as previously discussed. He referred to a letter sent to him by Gov. Ivey asking for the course of study committee to reconvene to examine "correlations between the proposed curriculum and that of the top six performers on the NAEP." Those six include Massachusetts, Minnesota, the Department of Defense Education Activity, Virginia, New Jersey and Wyoming.

A resolution certifying referendum results to change the Gadsden City Schools system from an appointed to an elected board was officially presented to the board as required by law. The election is scheduled for April 9, and a run-off, if needed, is scheduled for May 21.

The board work session following the meeting included a presentation by Assistant State Superintendent Tommy Glasscock and Education Administrator Jennifer Burt on the Perkins V Transition Year and Technical Education Workforce/Development Division.

The following were key areas to be included

in changes to Perkins V:

- Local comprehensive needs assessment
- Alignment of programs/programs of study with business and industry needs
- Inclusion of program quality indicators (number of credentials attained by students, number of students who have attained dual enrollment/articulated credit, and number of students participating in work-based learning)
- Addition of foster youth and students with active duty military parent(s) to special populations definition
- Middle school career exploration programs

Burt pointed to the alignment of three federal laws: The Every Student Succeeds Act - ESSA), the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Mackey explained alignment of these laws will be combined into one state plan, adding that the board must approve the transition plan at its April board meeting so it can be received by the U.S. Department of Education in May. Glasscock said the state expects to double its current investment of federal dollars from \$20 million to \$40 million.

Assistant State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Thacker gave an update on the special education graduation rate, explaining a "glitch" in the data portal was responsible for an error in reporting. After reviewing thousands of student data, it was discovered that the misplacement of one word and one column caused all graduates receiving special education at any time during their K-12 education to be pulled and applied to the special education graduation rate. Thacker told the board the rate should only have included active special education students. Once the error was corrected, 3,600 students no longer in special education were removed from the special education graduation rate. Mackey said the new student information system should prevent a similar issue from occurring in the future.

Next State Board Meeting

The next State Board of Education meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2019, at 10: a.m., to be immediately followed by the work session at 11 a.m. in Montgomery.



Retreat: New Strategic Plan Concept Unveiled

The State Board of Education began its two-day board retreat held at the AASB office March 14 and 15 with a discussion about a new state strategic plan for education. The plan would replace Plan 2020, which was implemented under former State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Tommy Bice.

Mackey led the discussion with a presentation that provided a brief review of past plans before introducing the framework for what will become Alabama's education roadmap for the next decade, "Stars Rising on Alabama: Every Child. Every Chance. Every Day." The concept is tied to the state's upcoming bicentennial celebration and is inspired by the song and modern state slogan, "Stars Fell on Alabama." Mackey said his goal is to build a new paradigm for public education in the state, driven by a simple question that all stakeholders should play a part in answering: "What do we want for our students?"

The plan is based on three core prongs: literacy; numeracy; and healthy productive, life-long learners. The literacy element would focus not only on reading, but also heavily emphasize writing, public speaking and listening skills. Numeracy would address problem-solving skills that extend beyond mathematics and are transferable to other areas of life. And finally, the focus on healthy, productive, life-long learners would be to produce graduates who are engaged, informed and civic minded.

Mackey emphasized the importance of metrics to gauge the success of each of the plan's three prongs, providing the board with a list of possible measurements. Several board members stressed the important role professional development will play in fulfilling the plan's goals. Tracie West (District 2) asked how the effectiveness of professional development would be evaluated, adding that the availability of meaningful professional development must be consistent across all regions of the state. Cynthia McCarty (District 6) said suggested that a reduction in college remediation rates be considered as one of the ways to measure the plan's literacy and numeracy goals.

As part of the discussion related to healthy, productive, life-long learners, Mackey explained the need for a new tool to measure school climate and culture. That tool, if used consistently across the state, also could become part of the state ESSA Plan and would provide a non-academic indicator for schools that do not have a 12th grade. Mackey said that the plan outline is still a draft and in the conceptual stage. Next steps will include a cabinet retreat, finalization of metrics, and the establishment of benchmarks and targets before bringing the fully formed plan back to the board in August or September and launching the plan in the 2019-20 school year.

The retreat also included:

- An overview on item development for the summative state assessment by representatives of the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program. Several classroom teachers across the state have been part of the process to develop the assessment, receiving training to help write questions. The assessment, which will test students in mathematics, reading and science, will be piloted with approximately 150,000 students in May, and those results will be used for accountability indicators in 2020.
- A presentation by Mental Health Commissioner Lynn Beshear on the department's joint program with the ALSDE to provide mental health services at school sites, including program expansion made possible by additional state funds and grants. The presentation sparked discussion about professional development opportunities the department could provide through its Mental Health First Aid Program to educators and staff at schools without school-based services.
- An overview of the changes to the state ESSA plan the ALSDE submitted to the U.S. Department of Education this spring, including adjustments to the accountability system. The ALSDE expects to learn whether the USDOE will approve the changes this summer so the accountability system can be updated for 2019-20. Among changes submitted were increasing the defini-

tion of chronic absences from 15 days to 18 and adjustments on measuring achievement of English Language Learners (ELL).

- A preview of a new video training program for educators developed by the ALSDE, Alabama District Attorneys Association and the Jacksonville State University College of Education. The three-part program focuses on helping educators avoid inappropriate relationships with students and covers actions which could lead to inappropriate relationships, engaging with students through social media and the responsibility of educators to address inappropriate behavior by their colleagues. The program will be available to school systems by this summer.

Vote 2019 Summer Conference T-shirt Design Contest on Facebook!

AASB is once again holding a contest for members to vote on their favorite design for this year's Summer Conference T-shirt. Head on over to the [AASB Facebook page](#) and look for our Summer Conference T-shirt post. Vote for your favorite design by commenting "A" or "B" on the post. The shirt design with the most votes will be selected as our 2019 Summer Conference T-shirt! Voting ends April 15!



Still Time to Register for Summer Conference

Earn 7 hours at [AASB's Annual Summer Conference](#) at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Ala., June 14-16. This year's conference theme is "Be Relentless" and will feature speakers who will share thought-provoking and timely information on what it takes to boost your system's achievement. Don't miss this year's early bird workshop, the [School Safety Summit](#), where you'll hear key advice and timely information from education leaders and school safety experts about keeping Alabama's students safe.

District 7-9 Advocacy Day Rescheduled

The District 7-9 Advocacy Day has been rescheduled to April 30. Don't miss out on your chance to earn two training hours while joining your peers and AASB staff in Montgomery for an up-close view of the legislative process and an opportunity to meet your lawmakers. Registration is \$25, and lunch is included. [Register or learn more.](#)

REMINDER: Ethics Forms Due April 30

It's time for school board members and superintendents to file annual financial disclosure forms with the state Ethics Commission. The forms can be downloaded from the Ethics Commission's website at www.ethics.alabama.gov.

Orientation Courses Available Online

If you were unable to attend your state-mandated orientation courses in-person this year, you still have a chance to take them online before the training year ends on June 30. Visit School Board U to sign up for Roles & Responsibilities Orientation (8 hours) or Effective Boards & Relationships Orientation (6 hours). Both orientations will be offered live at AASB's Office in Montgomery on July 19 and 20. To request a waiver allowing you to attend the in-person sessions in July, contact us at training@AlabamaSchoolBoards.org.

Share Your Policy Links

AASB's free online Policy Links provide direct access to school systems' online policy manuals. Curious about what other boards have in policy? Want to know what format other school systems are using to share their policies with the community? [Browse AASB's online Policy Link list](#). You can help us keep the Policy Links service up to date by using our [online policy link submission form](#).

To learn more about AASB's Policy services, [visit the Policy section of our website](#), call us at 334/277-9700 or email policy@AlabamaSchoolBoards.org.