



April 11, 2025



State Board Extends Mackey's Contract, Discusses Federal Funding Concerns

The Alabama State Board of Education voted 7-1 to approve a revised contract for State Superintendent Eric Mackey, extending his tenure through 2029 with a \$35,000 raise. The approved salary of \$325,000 represents a reduction from the initially proposed \$90,000 increase that had drawn public scrutiny. Following the vote, Board Vice President Dr. Tonya Chestnut called for establishing comprehensive written guidelines for future contract processes to improve consistency and transparency.

Mackey detailed challenges with recently canceled federal ESSER funds affecting Selma's tornado-delayed school construction and the state's reading initiatives for struggling students. He also reported on U.S. Department of Education correspondence regarding Title VI civil rights assurances that warns schools implementing certain Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs could risk losing federal funding.

Other meeting highlights included:

- Recognition of Jefferson County Schools Superintendent Dr. Walter Gonsoulin as the 2025 National Superintendent of the Year—the first Alabama superintendent to receive this honor
- Honoring Mary Travis, a fifth-grade math teacher from Mobile County Schools, as Alabama's sole recipient of the prestigious 2024-2025 Milken Educator Award
- Approval of Praxis assessment cut scores for teacher certification and textbook committees for Arts and Social Studies
- Celebration of Alabama's Purple Star Schools supporting military-connected students
- Discussion of educator preparation programs from Auburn University Montgomery (visual impairment) and Huntington College (rural education)

initiatives)

[Read Full Story](#)



April 17 Webinar: Supporting Military Students

In recognition of April as Military Student Month, AASB invites you to sign up for an insightful webinar focused on how your school system can meet the unique needs of students from military families. With most military students experiencing six to nine school transitions during their K-12 years, creating supportive learning environments is essential. **1 training hour**

When: Wednesday, April 17 | Noon -1 p.m.

Speaker: Military Child Education Coalition Community Coordinator Rachel Surles.

What You'll Learn:

- Effective policies and strategies that create welcoming environments for military students
- How to advocate and allocate resources to support military-connected families
- Information about implementing "Student 2 Student" programs that foster peer support
- Ways school boards can collaborate with military installations to improve communication and service

Registration: \$55 individual | \$210 group (includes link to share with school and central office staff).

[Contact Your Board Secretary or AASB to Register](#)



Summer Pre-Conference to Cover Key Legal Topics

Excitement is building for AASB's annual Summer Conference at the Lodge at Gulf State Park, **Friday, June 20 to Sunday, June 22!** Get ready to "Rock Your Leadership" with fellow school board leaders from Alabama. **Up to 7 training hours** [Learn more.](#)

Dynamic General Session Speakers

- **Hamish Brewer**, the "relentless principal" who has transformed some of America's toughest schools, presents *One More Round: Leadership Unplugged*
- **Dr. Jim Johnson**, UNC's renowned demographer whose insights on population shifts help education leaders prepare for tomorrow, will share *Education Alert: Chart-breaking Trends Ahead*

Pre-Conference Session: School Law Clinic

Get a head start on your Summer Conference experience with AASB's School Law Clinic on Friday, June 20. This informative pre-conference session brings together expert school board attorneys and legal experts to provide critical guidance on the most pressing legal and policy issues facing Alabama's school boards. **3.5 training hours**

When: Friday, June 20 | 9 a.m. to 2 p.m

Session Topics:

- *Mandatory Reporting Obligations*
- *Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) Regulations for Student Athletes*
- *Title IX Requirements for Sexual Harassment Investigations*
- *The Evolving Landscape of Schools & Religion*
- *Hot Topics in Education Law*

Law Clinic Registration: \$159 (includes lunch); requires separate registration from main conference

Contact Your Board Secretary or AASB to Register



New Board Member Orientation Registration Opens April 22

Registration opens Tuesday, April 22 for AASB's two-part orientation, which will be next offered July 11 & 12 at our office in Montgomery. This training provides a wealth of information to get new board members up to speed and off to a strong start.

Roles & Responsibilities | Friday, July 11 | 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Part I of AASB's school board member orientation, Roles & Responsibilities covers the role of the board and the superintendent, the Open Meetings Act, the ethics law, and much more.

Effective Boards & Relationships - Saturday, July 12 | 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Part II of AASB's school board member orientation, Effective Boards & Relationships takes an in-depth look at effective school board leadership, stakeholder engagement, how your board should work with its superintendent and board attorney, and the art of advocacy.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Incoming Board Members:** Even if they have not yet taken office, your incoming board members are already eligible to participate in board member training at board expense. (See AG Opinion).
- **Superintendent Discount:** Superintendents attending orientation with their new board members receive a \$20 discount off the price of registration.

The School Board Governance Improvement Act requires all new board members to take an Orientation covering mandated topics within one year of the July 1 after taking office.



Limited Space Remaining for April 30 Advocacy Day

As numerous bills impacting public education work their way through the Legislature, limited spots remain for AASB's third and final Advocacy Day, which will be held April 30.

This year's Advocacy Days are being held on legislative committee days, offering an insider's glimpse of this key phase of the legislative process. This all-day event (8 a.m. to 3 p.m.) is open to board members, superintendents and CSFOs from all districts. Lunch will be provided.

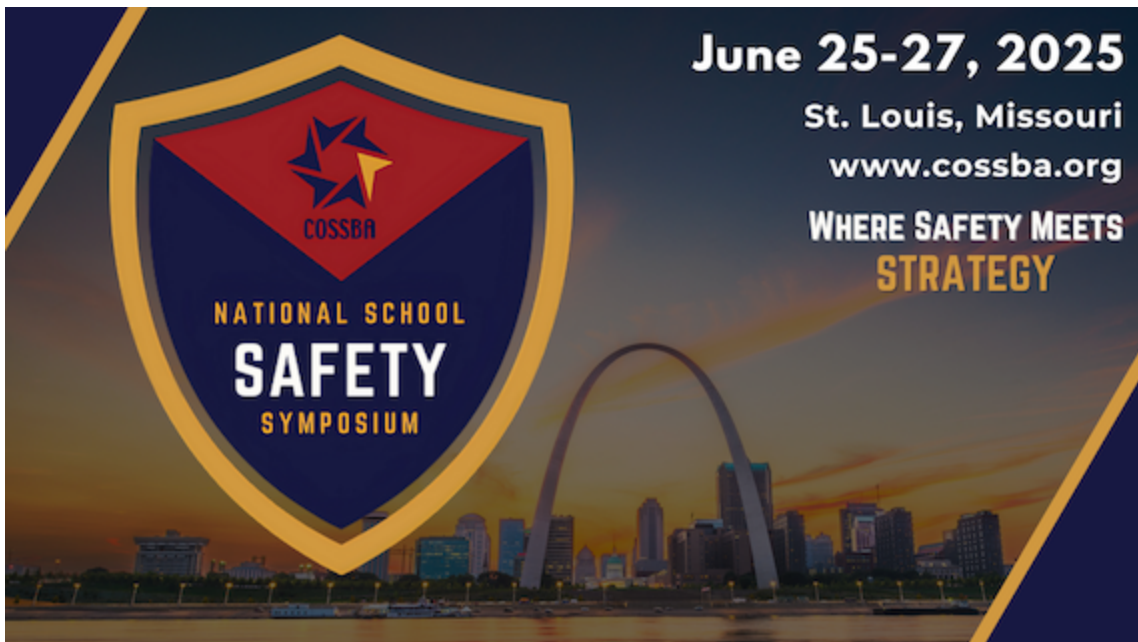
Secure your spot today; registration will close once capacity is reached!

Cancellations

- All cancellation requests must be submitted in writing to AASB Governmental Relations Coordinator Tracey Meyer by email at tmeyer@alabamaschoolboards.org, or call 334-277-9700.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** A \$25 fee will be charged for event no-shows who have not cancelled their registration.

Participation fulfills the Advocacy Day requirement for the Master Honor Roll designation.

[Register Now](#)



Join COSSBA at National School Safety Symposium

Join the premier gathering for school system safety teams including school board members, superintendents, communications directors and safety directors at the Consortium of State School Boards Association's (COSSBA) National School Safety Symposium June 25-27 in St. Louis, Mo. [Watch Event Video](#)

Why you should attend:

- Learn cutting-edge safety strategies from nationally recognized leaders
- Engage in interactive sessions to strengthen district safety plans
- Receive hands-on guidance to update existing protocols with the latest procedures
- Bring your current safety plans for dedicated review and enhancement sessions designed to address today's evolving security challenges.

Don't miss this opportunity to gain the knowledge, tools, and connections needed to better protect your students, staff, and community!

[Learn More/Register](#)



COSSBA Webinar: Fostering Comprehensive Mental Health Support Services

Join COSSBA April 16 from noon to 1 p.m. for an impactful webinar for school board members to learn how to enhance the well-being of students, families and school staff by building a comprehensive student support program that focuses on mental health issues.

[Register Now](#)



Plan Ahead: Add Fall District Meeting Dates to Your Calendar

AASB's 2025 Fall District Meetings dates are set. This year's district meetings will provide important statewide updates on critical education and policy issues. We'll also celebrate board member achievements in the School Board Member Academy, honor Team Training Achievement Award winners and recognize district superintendents of the year.

Save the date now for your district's meeting. All meeting times will be 6 to 8:30 p.m. More information and registration details to come, including meeting venues.

- **District 1:** Tuesday, Sept. 16 | [Add to Calendar](#)
- **District 2:** Tuesday, Aug. 26 | [Add to Calendar](#)
- **District 3: Stay tuned; meeting date and additional details to come**
- **District 4:** Monday, Aug. 18 | [Add to Calendar](#)
- **District 5:** Thursday, Sept. 11 | [Add to Calendar](#)
- **District 6:** Monday, Sept. 15 | [Add to Calendar](#)
- **District 7:** Thursday, Aug. 21 | [Add to Calendar](#)
- **District 8:** Thursday, Sept. 4 | [Add to Calendar](#)
- **District 9:** Monday, Sept. 22 | [Add to Calendar](#)



Spotlight: DeKalb County Earns National Attention

NPR recently spotlighted Alabama's own DeKalb County Schools (DCS) for its impressive improvements in elementary math education. Since launching the system's math initiative in 2018, DCS has implemented instructional coaching, the Marzano High Reliability Schools framework and targeted professional development—all while cultivating a culture where math success is accessible to every student.

Learn more about how the Dekalb County Board of Education is proving early investment in math education delivers meaningful results.

[Read More](#)



Earn Your Hours Anytime, Anywhere!

Need to complete your required hours before the June 30 training deadline? School Board U, AASB's self-paced, online leadership development portal provides access to board training materials, courses and resources to grow skills and improve school board effectiveness. All core courses within AASB's School Board Member Academy are available in School Board U, as well as a host of electives and archived webinars. Courses range from 30 minutes to 8 hours, and several options are free!

Questions about registering for online courses? [Email Ava Cranmore](#), AASB Assistant Director of Leadership Development, or call 800-562-0601. [Learn more.](#)



REMINDER: Ethics Forms Due April 30

Don't forget **April 30, 2025**, is the deadline for school board members and superintendents to file annual financial disclosure forms with the state Ethics Commission for 2024.

The forms are available on the State of Alabama Ethics Commission's website. [Learn more.](#)



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