



# FOR YOUR *information*

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

**August 11, 2023**



## **State Board Votes to Intervene in Sumter County Schools**

The Alabama State Board of Education voted unanimously to intervene in Sumter County Schools to address myriad issues plaguing the system. This intervention comes on the heels of troubling reports the Alabama Department of Education received about the school system. A subsequent site visit in June further revealed the depth of challenges facing the Sumter County Board of Education (SCBOE), particularly regarding facilities, personnel and finances.

State board members expressed dissatisfaction with the local board's inability to come together and hire staff needed to start school.

The SBOE has appointed former Perry County Schools Superintendent John Heard as chief administrative officer (CAO) to oversee the intervention. Heard will possess full authority but will work under the guidance of the state superintendent.

The intervention will continue until the SCBOE successfully addresses cited concerns and demonstrates full compliance.

Other SBOE news included a discussion

of the proposed ACAP reading cut scores, a collaborative effort between a committee of 2nd and 3rd grade teachers and the Technical Advisory Committee.

[Read Full Story](#)

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## Fall District Meetings Focus on Key Student Discipline Issues Boards Need to Know



**Join** fellow board members in your district for dinner and an important training on "Navigating Student Discipline," led by experienced school law experts.

School boards play a key role in navigating discipline policies that support safe schools and positive learning environments for all students. From handling student hearings to ensuring fair discipline practices to addressing on-campus vs. off-campus conduct, properly addressing student discipline is among a school board's most important responsibilities.

You don't want to miss this informative session featuring legal guidance and best practices regarding a range of student discipline issues.

Registration is \$39 which includes dinner. All meeting times are 6 to 8:30 p.m., and attendees will earn 1.5 hours.

### View dates, locations and registration links:

- **District 1:** Monday, Sept. 11 | Saraland Early Education Center [REGISTER](#)
- **District 2:** Thursday, Sept. 7 | Wallace Community College (Selma) [REGISTER](#)
- **District 3:** Thursday, Aug. 31 | Hoppergrass Restaurant (Ozark) [REGISTER](#)
- **District 4:** Tuesday, Aug. 29 | AASB Office (Montgomery) [REGISTER](#)
- **District 5:** Thursday, Sept. 14 | Homewood High School [REGISTER](#)
- **District 6:** Monday, Sept. 18 | Classic on Noble (Anniston) [REGISTER](#)

- **District 7:** Thursday, Sept. 21 | Hotel Capstone (Tuscaloosa) [REGISTER](#)
- **District 8:** Tuesday, Sept. 5 | The Magnolia Room (Decatur) [REGISTER](#)
- **District 9:** Monday, Sept. 12 | The Jackson Center (Huntsville) [REGISTER](#)



## More than 300 Members Registered for Fall Conference; Have You?

AASB has planned an information-packed 2023 Fall Academy Core Conference, Leadership for Community Engagement, that you don't want to miss! The event will be held Sunday, Oct. 1 and Monday, Oct. 2 at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa.

Earn up to six training hours and hear from dynamic speakers who will explore how local school boards can cultivate and sustain meaningful relationships with stakeholders in ways that boost community support and improve student achievement. [View Schedule-At-A-Glance.](#)

Featured general sessions include:

- **"Beyond Grades: Engaging Parents in Student Achievement,"** Dr. Eyal Bergman, senior vice president of Learning Heroes
- **"More than Branding: Transparency & Accountability with Stakeholders,"** Montgomery Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Melvin Brown and Senior Communication Officer Jade Jones
- **"Strategic School Communications: What Parents Want,"** Dr. Julie Evans, chief executive officer of Project Tomorrow
- **"Superintendent Panel: When the Crisis Hits the Fan,"** Jefferson County Schools Superintendent Dr. Walter Gonsoulin, Selma City Schools Superintendent Dr. Zickeyous Byrd and Tallapoosa County Schools Superintendent Raymond Porter
- **"Managing Misinformation & Disgruntled Constituents on Social Media,"** Baldwin County Schools General Counsel Sarah Young and Communications Coordinator Chasity Riddick

**Breakout Sessions:** In addition, rotating breakout sessions will cover practical topics such as media training, engaging ELL families and community outreach initiatives.

[Register for Fall Conference \(\\$209\)](#)

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## Post-Conference Workshop: The New Generation of Drugs Impacting Students\*

(\*separate registration required)

Extend your learning even further Monday, Oct. 2 from 12:15 to 2:15 p.m. by attending the Post-Conference Workshop, "**The New Generation of Drugs Impacting Students.**" This eye-opening session will provide current information local school boards should know about the dangers of vaping and street drugs such as fentanyl and "Tranq." Experts will share proactive measures schools can take to keep students safe. Earn two training hours.

[Register for Post-Conference Workshop \(\\$109\)](#)



## Whole Board Training: Exciting Promotions for Early Birds!

AASB's exemplary training team is prepared to help you improve your skills via [32 interactive courses](#) created to meet your board's needs and fulfill the state-mandated two-hour whole board training requirement.

And it pays to book early! [Browse this year's Whole Board Training brochure](#) for several exciting promotions!

For more information, contact AASB Executive Assistant **Stephanie B. Bell** at [sbell@alabamaschoolboards.org](mailto:sbell@alabamaschoolboards.org) or call 800-562-0601.

[Request Your Training](#)

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## Nominate a Candidate for All-State School Board at Your Next Meeting!



**The deadline is Sept. 1** to nominate a school board member for the 2023 All-State School Board Member Award. Remember, nominations require a majority board vote, so be sure to get this item on your next meeting agenda.

All school board presidents and superintendents have received [eligibility and selection guidelines](#) for this prestigious recognition program that celebrates exemplary boardmanship.



[View Nomination Form](#)



## Let's Talk About the Literacy Act!

**WHEN: Thursday, Sept. 7 | Noon to 1 p.m. | COST: \$55 individual, \$210 group | EARN: 1 hour**

The 2023-2024 school year marks the first time the retention component of the Alabama Literacy Act, passed in 2019, will be implemented. As part of the Act, third grade students who do not demonstrate grade-level reading proficiency could be retained. While the Literacy Act includes many other components and supports, the retention piece has perhaps sparked the most discussion and concern among families and stakeholders.

Join us **Thursday, Sept. 7 from noon to 1 p.m.** for our next webinar on "What Boards Need to Know About the Literacy Act & Communicating With Constituents."

**Dr. Regina Thompson**, Fairfield City Schools Superintendent, and **Dr. James Pope**, Tuscaloosa City Schools Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, will answer questions about the key points school boards need to understand about the Literacy Act, as well as address how their school systems effectively communicate with families not only about the Literacy Act, but also the importance of reading and

literacy development in their schools.

[Register Now](#)



## Still Time to Register for These COSSBA Events

Network with school board peers from across the nation during the Consortium of State School Boards Associations upcoming events.

- **Urban Boards Alliance (UBA) Symposium**  
Aug. 24 & 25, Chicago, IL
- **Federal Advocacy Conference**  
Sept. 25 - 27, Washington, D.C.

[Learn More](#)

## SAVE THE DATE: Don't Miss These Upcoming Deadlines to Shine the Spotlight on Your Schools



### Convention Clinic Proposals Due Sept. 8

Do you have a governance best practice or innovative program you'd like to share with your peers? [Submit a proposal to present a breakout clinic session](#) during the annual AASB Convention at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 2023.

Topics may cover a variety of areas, including effective board leadership and governance practices, navigating legal issues, technology that engages students, programs proven to boost



### Student Entertainment Applications Due Sept. 8

Showcase your school system's talented students by [submitting a student entertainment application](#) for AASB's Annual Convention at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 2023. We're accepting submissions from vocal, instrumental, performing arts and JROTC groups!

Finalists selected from the pool of submitted applications will be featured in a social media contest this fall, and your schools and communities will be able to

achievement and more. The deadline to submit a proposal is **Friday, Sept. 8.**

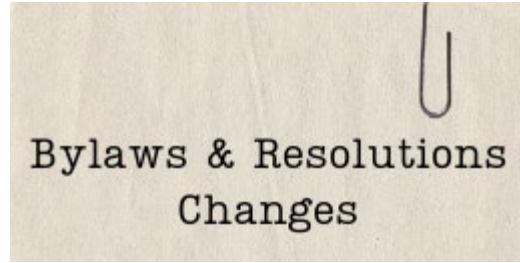
vote for their favorite group. The deadline to apply is **Friday, Sept. 8.**



## President-Elect, District Director Nominations

Self-nominations are being accepted for AASB president-elect for 2024. Both the president and president-elect serve a one-year term. AASB bylaws call for president-elect candidates to have served on AASB's Board of Directors; however, such service need not be consecutive to the individual's candidacy for or term of elective office. [Nomination forms](#) must be postmarked or received by Sept. 1.

AASB also is holding director elections for Districts 2, 4, 6 and 8. [Nominations](#) must be made in writing and postmarked or received by Sept. 1. District directors serve two-year terms and can serve two, complete terms. [Learn more.](#)



## Submit Proposed Bylaws & Resolutions by Sept. 1

School board members are asked to submit proposed resolutions or changes to AASB bylaws by Sept. 1.

Proposals, which must be submitted in writing, will be considered by AASB's Delegate Assembly during the association's annual convention in December. Visit our website to review current [Bylaws](#) & [Resolutions](#).

Send submissions via:

**EMAIL:** [twright@AlabamaSchoolBoards.org](mailto:twright@AlabamaSchoolBoards.org)

**MAIL:**  
P.O. Box 4980  
Montgomery, AL 36103-4980



**BOARD MEMBER Spotlight**

**Meet Ethan Taylor**  
Pike Road City Board of Education

**Q:** What's one thing you've learned since becoming a board member?

**A:** — “ —  
It takes a team to make it work. Work together to make the best decisions for our school system and rely on each other's strengths.  
— ” —

ALABAMA  
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## Board Member Spotlight: Ethan Taylor

Pike Road school board member **Ethan Taylor** has a wealth of education budget experience thanks to his role as director of LEA Budgets and Supports for the Alabama Department of Education. A desire to share his knowledge and skillset for the benefit of Pike Road's schools was a key driver of his decision to serve on the board.

He believes one of the biggest lessons from his work on the school board is the importance of team work and relying on each member's unique strengths.

Ethan enjoys keeping the Pike Road community informed about important policies and decisions as well as seeing those policies work for the benefit of students.

[Read More](#)



## Just Ask Jayne

### Are Schools Required to Close for All Federal Holidays?

Dear Jayne:

During school calendar discussions, we had an employee claim that we were violating the law by not being closed on all federal holidays, e.g. Columbus Day and Presidents Day. Is that true?

[View Answer](#)



### Alabama GOP Prohibits AEA, NEA Donations for School Board Candidates

The Alabama Republican Party overwhelmingly approved a resolution Saturday preventing its school board candidates from accepting donations from the Alabama Education Association (AEA).

[Alabama Daily News](#) reported that out of 297 party voters, over 200 backed the measure prohibiting candidates running for seats on the Alabama State Board of Education, county school boards, or for county superintendent from seeking or accepting donations from both the National Education Association or AEA.

The decision will impact state school board candidates running in the next election who have previously received AEA contributions. Although discussed, the Republican Party did not act on prohibiting legislators from receiving AEA contributions.



**Republican candidates** who breach this rule will be automatically excluded from the ballot. If any candidate unintentionally receives funds from these associations, they are required to return them within seven days.

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