



FOR YOUR *information*

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

July 17, 2026

SBOE Releases 2026 ACAP Data; Alabama Students Show Strong Academic Growth with Science Leading the Way



Alabama's eighth graders showed significant gains in science proficiency on the 2026 Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP), with improvements in every grade level tested.

The 2025-26 school year was the first in which both the state's new science course of study and corresponding textbooks were implemented statewide.

At the State Board of Education's work session on Tuesday, State Superintendent of Education Eric Mackey presented state-level ACAP data showing that more students in all grades tested achieved level 4, the highest proficiency level, compared to last year. The percentage of students achieving level 4 proficiency increased in all grades in English language arts (ELA) and math. The state's greatest proficiency gains were seen in eighth grade among all subjects tested - ELA, math, and science. Mackey attributed gains in 4th and 5th grade ELA proficiency to investments made by the legislature for struggling readers beyond third grade, in addition to RAISE Act funds targeted for specific student groups.

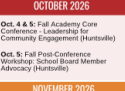
The board will review system-level data at next month's work session.

[Read Full Story](#)

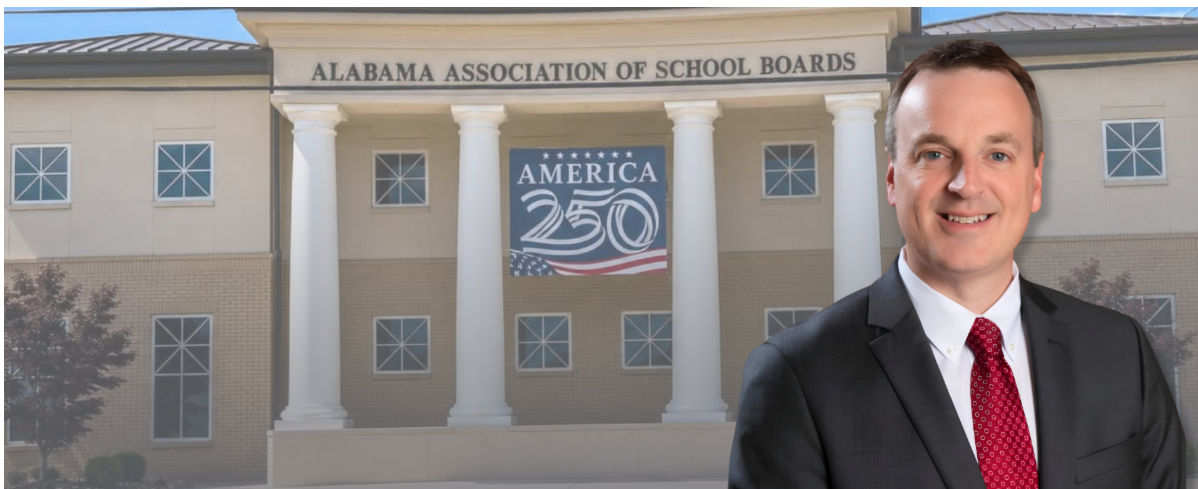
2026-2027 Training Year Underway: Plan Your Calendar Now!

AASB's new calendar is packed with professional development opportunities designed to build stronger school board teams, foster effective governance and sharpen leadership skills. From district meetings to timely webinars and information-packed workshops and conferences, you can rely on AASB to keep your board performing at peak efficiency.

[Download Calendar Here](#)

2026-2027 CALENDAR	
JULY 2026	OCTOBER 2026
 July 28: AASB Webinar - Financial Fraud in School Districts: Red Flags & Board Safeguards July 27: Roles & Responsibilities Orientation (AASB Office) July 28: Effective Boards & Presidential Orientation (AASB Office)	 Oct. 4 & 5: Fall Academy Core Conference - Leadership for Community Engagement (Huntsville) Oct. 5: Fall Post-Conference Workshop: School Board Member Advocacy (Huntsville)
AUGUST 2026	NOVEMBER 2026
 Aug. 15: All-State School Board Award Nominations Due Aug. 20: District 7 Meeting (Montgomery) Aug. 26: District 2 Meeting (Selma) Aug. 27: District 3 Meeting (Cizark)	 Nov. 5: AASB Webinar - Personal Skill Building
SEPTEMBER 2026	DECEMBER 2026
 Sept. 1: District 8 Meeting (Decatur) Sept. 8: District 9 Meeting (Madison) Sept. 10: District 5 Meeting (Fultondale) Sept. 14: District 1 Meeting (Birmingham) Sept. 17: AASB Webinar - All Eyes on Schematics	 Dec. 3: Pre-Conference Workshop - Screen Time Balance (Montgomery) Dec. 3 - 5: AASB Winter Convention & Delegate Assembly (Montgomery)
WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES State law requires annually 6 hours of total training includes 2 whole board training hours for all board members. The law also requires orientation courses for new school board members. AASB's two-part orientation fulfills the state's orientation requirement as well as the state ethics course requirement for public officials. Orientation hours count toward fulfilling 6 hours of the state's 6-hour annual training requirement.	

Dr. Holden Takes Helm as Executive Director



As a lifelong advocate for Alabama's public schools, Dr. Chad Holden began serving as AASB's new Executive Director on July 1, following the retirement of long-time Executive Director Sally Smith. He brings more than two decades of experience as an educator, administrator, superintendent and former school board member to the statewide organization.

Raised in Green Hill and a graduate of the Lauderdale County School System, Holden's connection to public education is deeply personal. He and his wife, both first-generation college graduates, credit Alabama's public schools with creating opportunities that shaped their family's future. His wife serves as a teacher in Russellville City Schools, while their two children attend a neighboring district.

"Strong organizations are built on strong foundations," said Holden. "AASB has earned the trust of school boards across Alabama through decades of dedicated service, advocacy and leadership. I am honored to build upon that foundation as we work strategically to strengthen local school boards, support student success and shape the future of public education together. As both a superintendent and former board member, I've experienced firsthand the importance of strong governance, trusted relationships and local leadership."

As Executive Director, Holden will focus on advancing AASB's strategic priorities by strengthening board governance, increasing member engagement, preserving local

[Read Full Media Release](#)



Make Your Mark with WBT Options: Industry Leading Training at Your Fingertips

AASB's 2026-2027 Whole Board Training features a robust catalog of workshops, retreats, book studies and more, designed to enhance your board's effectiveness!

New workshops include "Dealing with Difficult People" and "School Safety: Tips & Guidelines."

This year's free workshops are "Boomers to Zoomers: Generational Insights" and "Effective Board Meetings." Take advantage of these beginning October 1, 2026.

[See Full List of WBT Topics](#)

AASB Hires New Membership Coordinator

Join us in welcoming Melissa Allen as our new Membership Coordinator! Melissa plays a crucial role in keeping our community connected and thriving. From maintaining accurate membership data and providing leadership with key insights, to managing registrations for our conferences and events, she ensures everything runs smoothly. Melissa also helps track school board members' training attendance, ensuring compliance with state requirements, and coordinates the School Board Member Academy awards. As a liaison for board secretaries, she builds strong relationships and offers invaluable support.





Leadership Lens: The Water Bottle Lesson

I know a gentleman who owns a water bottling plant in central Alabama. Watching artesian water move from the source to a finished product is fascinating. One of the most interesting parts of the process wasn't the water at all—it was a large bin filled with small, light blue pieces of plastic. They were only about three inches tall, looked nothing like a water bottle, and already had threaded tops for the caps.

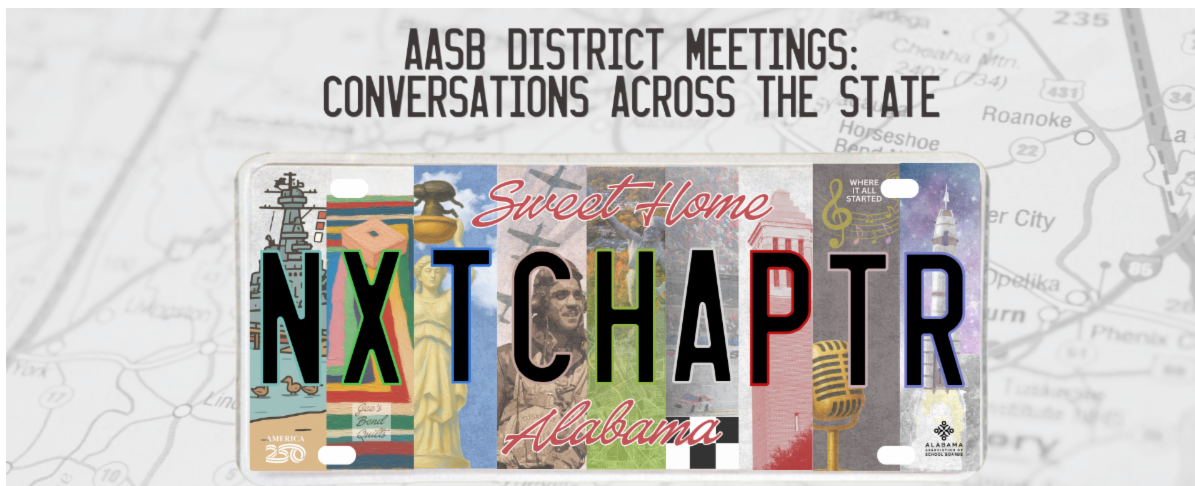
With a wrinkled forehead, I asked what they were.

"They're called preforms," he explained. "They are the water bottles."

That answer surprised me. He went on to explain how heat, air pressure, and a precisely designed mold transform each preform into the familiar bottle we hold in our hands. As he described the process, I couldn't help but think about the work of school board members.

A preform eventually becomes a bottle, but it doesn't start out looking like the finished product. The same is true for governance. Many of your decisions, including strategic planning, policy development, budget priorities, and setting expectations, don't produce immediate, visible results. They are laying the foundation for what is yet to come. Stay the course.

[Read Full Article](#)



2026 District Meetings: Conversations Across the State

Join us for AASB's 2026 District Meetings beginning next month! We're hitting the road to introduce you to AASB's new Executive Director, Dr. Chad Holden, share statewide updates about education and policy matters and most importantly, hear from you on the educational topics that matter most to you.

AASB's District Meetings also give us the chance to celebrate you! During each district meeting, we'll recognize board member achievements in the School Board Member Academy, honor the 2026-27 Team Training Achievement Award winners and spotlight district Superintendents of the Year.

Cost: \$39 (includes dinner)

Earn: 1.5 training hours

Time: 6 to 8:30 p.m. Dinner buffet service begins at 5:45 p.m.

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District 1 | Monday, Sept. 14

Saraland High School - 1115 Industrial Parkway, Saraland, AL

Boards: ACCEL Day/Evening Academy, Alabama School of Math & Science, Baldwin County, Brewton, Chickasaw, Clarke County, Conecuh County, Escambia County, Gulf Shores, Mobile County, Monroe County, Orange Beach, Saraland, Satsuma, Thomasville and Washington County

District 2 | Tuesday, Aug. 25

Wallace Community College - 3000 Earl Goodwin Parkway, Selma, AL

Boards: Autauga County, Bibb County, Butler County, Chilton County, Choctaw County, Dallas County, Demopolis, Linden, Lowndes County, Marengo County, Perry County, Selma and Wilcox County

District 3 | Thursday, Aug. 27

Carroll High School - 141 Eagle Way, Ozark, AL

Boards: Andalusia, Barbour County, Coffee County, Covington County, Crenshaw County, Dale County, Daleville, Dothan, Elba, Enterprise, Eufaula, Geneva, Geneva County, Henry County, Houston County, Opp, Ozark, Pike County and Troy

District 4 | Monday, Aug. 17

AASB Office - 43 S. Jackson St., Montgomery, AL

Boards: Alexander City, Auburn, Bullock County, Chambers County, Clay County, Coosa County, Dept. of Youth Services, Elmore County, Lanett, LEAD Academy, Lee County, Macon County, Montgomery County, Opelika, Phenix City, Pike Road, Randolph County, Roanoke, Russell County, Tallapoosa County and Tallasse

District 5 | Thursday, Sept. 10

Pelham Park Middle School - 2016 Pelham Park Blvd., Pelham, AL

Alabama School of Fine Arts, Alabaster, Bessemer, Birmingham, Fairfield, Homewood, Hoover, i3 Academy, Jefferson County, Leeds, Legacy Prep, Midfield, Mountain Brook, Pelham, Shelby County, Tarrant, Trussville and Vestavia Hills

District 6 | Thursday, Sept. 3

Jacksonville State University (Merrill Hall) - 700 Pelham Road N., Jacksonville, AL

Boards: Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind, Anniston, Attalla, Calhoun County, Cherokee County, Cleburne County, Dekalb County, Etowah County, Fort Payne, Gadsden, Jacksonville, Oxford, Pell City,

District 7 | Thursday, Aug. 20

Hotel Capstone - 320 Paul Bryant Drive, Tuscaloosa, AL

Boards: Fayette County, Greene County, Hale County, Jasper, Lamar County, Marion County, Pickens County, Sumter County, Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, University Charter School, Walker County and Winfield

District 8 | Tuesday, Sept. 1

Cook Museum - 133 4th Ave. NE, Decatur, AL

Boards: Athens, Colbert County, Cullman, Cullman County, Decatur, Florence, Franklin County, Haleyville, Hartselle, Lauderdale County, Lawrence County, Limestone County, Morgan County, Muscle Shoals, Russellville, Sheffield, Tuscumbia and Winston County

District 9 | Tuesday, Sept. 8

Boaz High School - 907 Brown St., Boaz, AL

Boards: Alabama School of Cyber Technology & Engineering, Albertville, Arab, Blount County, Boaz, Guntersville, Huntsville, Jackson County, Madison, Madison County, Marshall County, Oneonta and Scottsboro

Contact Your Board Secretary or AASB to Register



Public Records Requests

Q

Dear AASB: What is a public records request? What kinds of records are generally considered public and which can be kept private?

A

Alabama law defines public records as all written, typed, or printed books, papers, letters, documents, and maps that are made or received by public officials in the course of conducting public business. Common public records include payroll and salary information, employment applications, resumes, employee evaluations, disciplinary records and hearing transcripts, board meeting minutes, board packets (once acted upon), contracts, bid documents, computer records and work emails, employee timesheets, settlement documents, and internal audits.

There are four categories of records that do not have to be disclosed, including:

- Information received in confidence by a public officer;
- Sensitive personnel records;

- Records related to pending criminal investigations; and
- Records whose release would clearly harm the public interest.

Courts require these exceptions to be applied narrowly and the board bears the burden of proving a record falls into one of these categories. Generally, student records are kept private under federal law.

2026 All-State School Board Award

*Nominations Due
August 15*

*Announcement emails were sent to board secretaries, superintendents
and board presidents. A hard copy will arrive by June 30.*



Alabama Achieves

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

2026-2027 ALSDE Grant Funding Opportunities

ALSDE has announced six new funding opportunities from the FY26 supplemental appropriations available to public K-12 schools. Fleet Renewal, School Safety, and Summer & Afterschool Programs funds are automatically disbursed based on FY26 ADM (or Fleet Renewal allocation, respectively), prior to the start of the school year, with no application required. These funds must be expended by September 30, 2027. Systems that are current on regular route bus purchases may also apply to flex Fleet Renewal dollars for other educational uses.

Struggling Readers Beyond 3rd Grade funding, which supports universal screening for 4th and 5th graders, is likewise automatically distributed based on ADM, with no deadline specified.

Applications are required for school systems seeking funding from two supplemental appropriations. College & Career Readiness (CCR) funds, up to \$80,000 per eligible school, based on CCR and graduation-rate metrics are due August 3.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Equipment funds (Tier 1 up to \$75,000; Tier 2 up to \$100,000, depending on system criteria) are due September 11, with virtual technical assistance webinars offered July 23 at 1 p.m. and August 19 at 10 a.m.

[View the full allocation amounts and allowable expenditures for each available supplemental appropriation here.](#)

There are also five CTE grants available for systems to improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of CTE programs, due September 11.

[View the available FY27 CTE grants here.](#)



Share Your Success. Shape Our Training.

Outstanding work is happening in school systems across Alabama, and AASB wants to help share those successes!

This brief survey is designed to identify innovative programs, effective governance practices, and successful initiatives that can be featured in future AASB conferences, training sessions, and publications. By highlighting practical ideas from school systems across the state, we can provide valuable learning opportunities for school boards and educational leaders.

Your success could become someone else's solution.

[Share Your Success Here](#)



ALABAMA
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL BOARDS

School System Spotlight

July
2026

Read to Succeed: How Tuscaloosa City Schools Inspires Lifelong Readers

For Tuscaloosa City Schools (TCS), helping every child become a confident reader by the end of third grade is more than a benchmark. It's a commitment that shapes the district's approach to teaching and learning. Through strategic instruction, community partnerships and innovative literacy initiatives, TCS has raised its third grade reading sufficiency rate to 90 percent, giving more students the foundation they need for long-term academic success.

Grounded in the Alabama Literacy Act, the school system's comprehensive approach ensures students receive the right support at the right time while fostering a community-wide culture that celebrates reading.

At the heart of TCS's literacy work is Reading Before Third Grade (Rb3), an initiative designed to ensure every student makes the critical transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" by the end of third grade.

Instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach, TCS uses student assessment data to identify learning gaps early and develop individualized learning plans tailored to each student's needs. Teachers regularly monitor progress and adjust instruction to provide targeted interventions, ensuring struggling readers receive support before they fall behind.

[Read Full Spotlight](#)



Alabama Association of School Boards | 43 South Jackson Street | Montgomery, AL 36104 US



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