



Dec. 12, 2025



SBOE Adopts Digital Literacy Standards, Gets Update on Teacher Paperwork Reduction Efforts

The State Board of Education approved Alabama's new Digital Literacy and Computer Science Course of Study and heard progress reports from the Teacher Paperwork Reduction Committee, which surveyed more than 600 educators statewide on streamlining redundant documentation. Teachers repeatedly cited the burden of entering the same data into multiple platforms. The law requires the ALSDE to create a unified digital platform and data-sharing system to reduce repetitive input.

Board members also previewed a new online dashboard tracking educator preparation program data across all 24 Alabama institutions, revealing that fewer than one-third of students admitted to EPPs completed the program in 2023-2024. On the Foundations of Reading exam, just 56% of teachers passed on their first attempt overall, though Alabama State University, Spring Hill College, and Tuskegee University achieved 100% first-attempt pass rates.

Also at this month's meeting:

- The SBOE approved a new Auburn University at Montgomery program to prepare teachers for students with visual impairments, with a federal grant funding 50 teachers over five years.
- State Superintendent Eric Mackey said a vote on social studies and arts education textbooks will likely come after February,.
- Resolutions recognized Meek Elementary (Winston County) and New Bethel Elementary (Colbert County) as National ESEA Distinguished Schools.
- January 2026 was designated as Gifted Education Month in Alabama schools.

[Read Full Story](#)



Ask Angel: Your Go-To for Legal Help

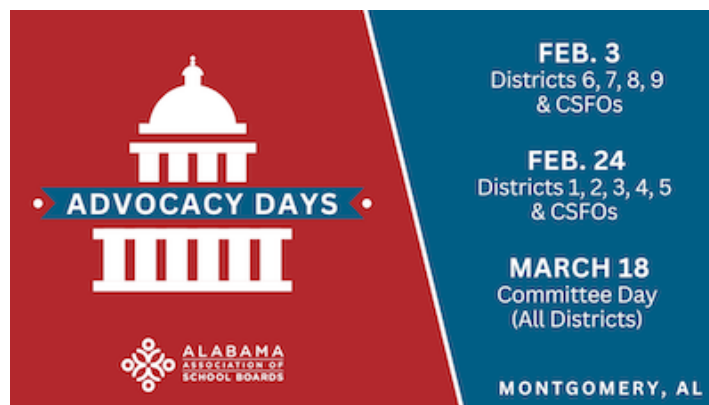
We're excited to share that **Angel Moreno** has been named Legal Services Officer. In this expanded role, Angel is your first point of contact for all legal questions and guidance. Angel already has worked with many of you since joining the staff and is the author of AASB's recently released Social Media FAQs.

And to further strengthen our legal support, AASB has partnered with **Dana Hill** of Hill, Hill, Carter for additional expertise and support on special projects.

We also want to let you know that Reed Wainwright has returned to private practice. We thank him for his service and wish him well.

ANGEL'S CONTACT INFO: Got a question? Angel is just a call away. Reach him by phone at 334-277-1570 or by email: [\[email protected\]](#).

2026 AASB Legislative Advocacy Days: Register Now



You're invited to join us in Montgomery for AASB's 2026 Advocacy Days. Don't miss this opportunity to meet with your local legislators to discuss key issues impacting public education. You'll also learn how to sharpen your advocacy skills and have the opportunity to share information and network with colleagues from across the state.

Bring your CSFO! Advocacy Days also provide an excellent opportunity for chief school financial officers (CSFOs) to learn more about the legislative process and dive deeper into the Education Trust Fund Budget as well as AASB's School System Snapshots.

Tuesday, Feb. 3

Districts 6, 7, 8, 9* and CSFOs | [REGISTER NOW](#)

Tuesday, Feb. 24

Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5* and CSFOs | [REGISTER NOW](#)

Wednesday, March 18

Committee Day (All Districts) | [REGISTER NOW](#)

[*View map of AASB Districts](#)

Advocacy Days are a free, member benefit. Attendees can earn up to two training hours for participating. Completion of at least one Advocacy Day fulfills one of the criteria for Master Honor Roll.

Celebrating Alabama's School Board Members: Champions for Students



In preparation for Alabama's annual observance of School Board Member Recognition Month in January, AASB is providing a toolkit with promotional materials for superintendents, school principals, chambers of commerce and other education supporters to use, complete with downloadable and customizable templates.

The 2026 theme is "School Board MVPs: Champions for Students." A link to the online toolkit will be sent via email to all superintendents and board secretaries next week. Also, be sure to follow AASB on Facebook for posts and graphics you can share!

For more information, [email AASB Public Relations Coordinator Tamia Heard.](#)



Jump Start Your Journey to Excellent Boardmanship!

Ready to conquer your path through the complex new world of school board service? AASB's New Board Member Orientation is your map to success, with two essential stops along the route:

Stop #1: Roles & Responsibilities | Friday, Jan. 9 | 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. | AASB Office, Montgomery

- Navigate your way through the twists and turns of education law, school finance, ethics and effective board meetings. School Board Members \$99, Superintendents \$79 (8 training hours)

Stop #2: Effective Boards & Relationships | Saturday, Jan. 10 | 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. | AASB Office, Montgomery

- Master the intricate pathways of board relationships, community connections and productive partnerships with stakeholders and policymakers. School Board Members \$79, Superintendents \$59 (6 training hours)

NOTE: The state of Alabama requires all local school board members to complete orientation. By taking both parts of AASB's orientation, members not only meet the orientation requirement, but also the state ethics training requirement.

CONTACT YOUR BOARD SECRETARY OR AASB TO REGISTER

Mark Your Calendar: Leadership for Developing a Highly Effective Staff Conference Opens Jan. 6!



NEW LOCATION FOR MARCH 2026 CONFERENCE: Auburn!

Registration opens Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026, for AASB's Spring Academy Core Conference, Leadership for Developing a Highly Effective Staff, which will be held Friday, March 6 and Saturday, March 7 at The Hotel at Auburn University & Dixon Conference Center in Auburn, Ala.

Earn up to 6 training hours while going beyond the basics to better understand how to use student achievement data to make effective staffing decisions and explore innovative best practices in recruiting, hiring, training and retaining staff. COST: \$209

You'll also have an opportunity to extend your learning and earn additional hours with these excellent pre-conference sessions:

- **Pre-Conference Poverty Simulation | Friday, March 6 | 9 to 11:30 a.m.**
Get a sobering glimpse into the day-to-day realities of students and families living in poverty by participating in this interactive simulation. (Earn 2.5 training hours) COST: \$59
- **Early Bird Workshop: Communicating with the Media | Friday, March 6 | 1 to 3 p.m.**
This workshop will explore essential do's and don'ts for engaging with reporters and feature hands-on practice with interview strategies that help you communicate your school system's message with confidence and clarity. (Earn 2 hours) COST: \$79

STAY TUNED FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & REGISTRATION DETAILS

AASB Convention News & Highlights

Officers, New and Returning Directors Installed



L-R: Mike Story, Randy Smalley, Rhonda Smith, Donna Jones, Clarence Squires, Dr. Chanté Ruffin, Tara Singley and Scott Suttle

St. Clair County school board member **Scott Suttle** was installed as the association's new president during the closing session of the 2025 AASB Annual Convention in Montgomery, Dec. 6.

Tuscaloosa County school board member **Randy Smalley** was installed as the association's new president-elect. Additionally, several new and returning directors were sworn in to begin two-year terms on AASB's 14-member Board of Directors. [Learn more.](#)

All-State, A-Team Award Recipients Honored



2025 All-State School Board

AASB recognized recipients of its highest honor, the All-State School Board Member Award Dec. 5 during the annual convention awards luncheon.

Honorees included: **Clinton C. Boyd, Jr.**, of the Macon County school board; **Travis Cummings** of the Madison school board; **Yolaunda Daniel** of the Phenix City school board; **Shelia Dortch** of the Wilcox County school board; and **Wendell Saxon** of the Elmore County school board.

The award recognizes up to five of Alabama's most outstanding past or present school board members. [Learn more.](#)



2025 Advocacy A-Team

AASB celebrated recipients of its A-Team Advocacy Award during a special recognition luncheon Dec. 5 as part of the annual AASB convention.

Honorees included **Michael Webb** of the Calhoun County school board and **Scott Newberry** of the Madison school board.

Launched in 2023, the A-Team award honors local school board members who demonstrate outstanding leadership in legislative and policy advocacy throughout their school board service. [Learn more.](#)

Master Honor Roll, AASB Legacy Award Presented



2024-2025 Master Honor Roll Inductees

Nine school board members from across Alabama achieved the coveted Master Honor Roll recognition for 2024-2025, the highest distinction available through AASB's School Boards' School Board Member Academy.

To earn this status, board members must complete all four academy levels (requiring 100+ training hours), earn the Master School Board Member distinction five consecutive years, participate in an advocacy day and complete the association's poverty simulation training. [Learn more.](#)



AASB Posthumously Bestows Legacy Award

AASB posthumously honored Attorney Carl Johnson with its prestigious Legacy Award, recognizing his extraordinary contributions to public education in Alabama over a distinguished 44-year legal career.

The award highlighted Johnson's steadfast commitment to supporting school boards, educational institutions and local governmental entities throughout his career. Johnson's widow Ann and colleagues from the law firm of Bishop Brooks attended the award ceremony. [Learn more.](#)



DELEGATE ASSEMBLY REPORT

AASB held its Delegate Assembly at The Renaissance Hotel in Montgomery, with 141 certified delegates in attendance. Delegates elected **Randy Smalley** of Tuscaloosa County as AASB's 2026 President-Elect, following a report from the Nominating Committee chaired by Brad Ingle. Smalley previously served as AASB's District 7 Director.

The Assembly also approved revisions to the Bylaws recommended by the Bylaws Committee, chaired by Derek Henderson, including clarifying appointment timelines and removing the annual audit requirement to provide flexibility for smaller affiliates.

In addition, delegates adopted a resolution opposing the legislature's earmarking of supplemental funding in the ETF among other recommendations presented by the Resolutions Committee.

The Assembly is AASB's annual business meeting.



NEW FEATURE: Tips & Insight from AASB's Leadership Development Team

We're excited to launch a new feature, "Leadership Lens," delivering insights and inspiration to support you in your vital role as a school board member. Our Leadership Development team will share practical wisdom, fresh perspectives and motivation to help you lead with confidence and purpose. We hope these nuggets encourage and energize you as you serve your schools and communities.

[Read More](#)

Board Member Spotlight: Daxton Maze (Hartselle City Board of Education)



BOARD MEMBER *Spotlight*

Meet Daxton Maze
Hartselle City Board of Education

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

A: — “ —
I have found that it really takes every person doing their role to ensure that the district is meeting the needs of every child. I have also become more aware of just how important high-quality public education is to a community. — ”

HARTSELLE CITY SCHOOLS

ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

A proud product of Hartselle City Schools, **Daxton Maze** has dedicated nearly a decade to giving back to the school system that shaped him. Now serving his third term on the board, this local business owner and father of three brings a unique blend of construction expertise and public service passion to his role.

Find out what drives his commitment to students, the capital project he's most proud of and the inspirational words that guide his approach to making every day count.

[Read More](#)

AASB Members & Staff Give From the Heart



AASB Food Drive Provides More than 2,200 Meals

Thanks to your incredible generosity, our food drive supporting the Heart of Alabama Food Bank was a tremendous success, with more than \$403 raised and 225 pounds of food donated. Your donations will make a meaningful difference for Alabama children and families facing food insecurity, providing more than 2,200 meals.

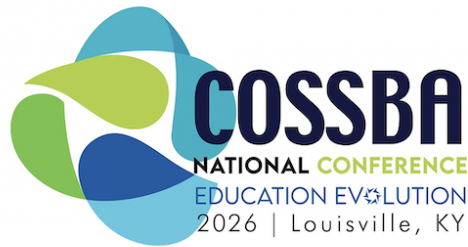
Thank you to everyone who contributed or helped spread the word—your commitment to community is what makes Alabama's public education family so special.



Convention Toy Drive Helps Spread Holiday Magic

The spirit of giving was on full display at AASB's Annual Convention Dec. 4-6 at the Montgomery Renaissance Hotel & Spa. Convention attendees filled our toy drive table with gifts for the Montgomery Salvation Army — from bicycles and dolls to games and stuffed animals.

Thanks to your generosity, dozens of children will find something special under the tree this Christmas morning!



Network with School Board Peers from Across the Nation

Registration for COSSBA's 2026 National Conference, Education Evolution – Transformative Leadership in Changing Times, is now open. This event, slated for March 13-16, in Louisville, Ky., will bring together visionary school board members, superintendents, administrators and education partners from across the country for an unforgettable experience focused on impact and innovation.

[Register Now](#)



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