



# ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12 FEBRUARY 2007



## HEALTHIER BODIES MAKE HEALTHIER MINDS

In Alabama, 42 percent of students participate in insufficient vigorous physical activity and 81 percent participate in insufficient moderate activity. Sixty-three percent of Alabama adults are considered overweight. Of that number, 26 percent are categorized as obese. Overweight children have a 70 percent chance of being overweight or obese adults. With this in mind, Alabama educators are encouraging students to shape up and get fit. Showing young people how to begin and maintain a healthy lifestyle is a primary goal. As a result, several initiatives and campaigns are underway to make proper nutrition and physical fitness a way of life in Alabama.

Realizing that eating patterns developed as a child can influence the long-term nutritional status of a person, the Alabama State Board of Education enacted a policy in the spring of 2006 to help give students more nutritious choices in cafeterias and vending machines while in school. The state Board was given high marks (*one of only five in the nation to receive a B+ or higher*) in a national report by the Center for Science in the Public Interest for their school nutrition policies and initiatives in battling the bulge and creating an environment conducive to healthy eating.

Now, more strategies targeting children at very young ages are being employed. Other state organizations are joining the fight to make better decisions about fitness and nutrition second nature to Alabama's children. To reach every student in Alabama in Kindergarten through Grade 5, **RON SPARKS**, Alabama's Commissioner



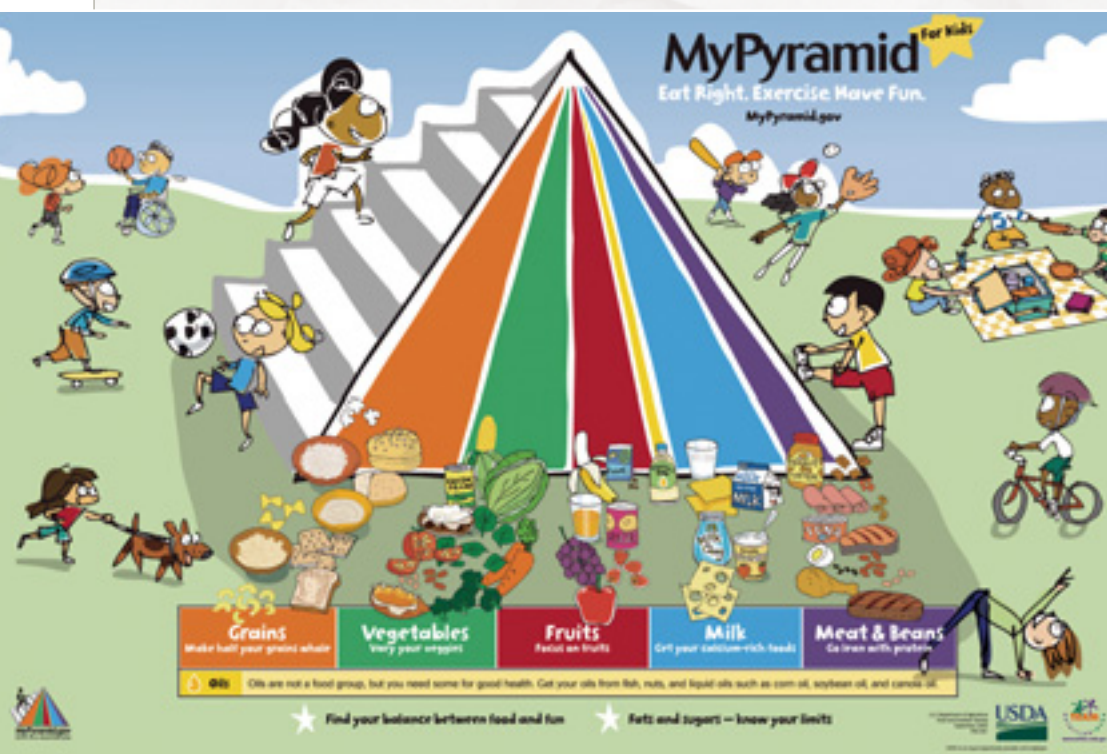
of Agriculture and Industries, along with the Alabama Department of Education, are

introducing the **KidFit Program** statewide.

KidFit is a 30-minute DVD designed to educate young children about the importance of being fit before it becomes a problem. KidFit, which is sponsored by the Alabama Power Company and the Alabama Power Foundation, is an age appropriate show that uses animation and child-friendly humor to steer kids away from unhealthy habits and move them toward active, vigorous lifestyles. The KidFit program will also air on television in Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile on two consecutive Saturdays (*check your local listing for channels and times*). Along with Commissioner Sparks, the show features Alabama students, country music superstar **RANDY OWEN**, and **DR. STEVEN HEFTER**, an Alabama physician.

In addition to KidFit, the **Alabama Action for Healthy Kids** organization in partnership with **Steps to a Healthier AL** will present the first annual **Alabama Healthy Schools Summit** at the state Department of Education in  
(continued on page 2)





youth with particular emphasis on Alabama's youth. In this committee's report it was determined that, unless changes are made in lifestyles and behaviors, today's generation of youth could be the first generation in history to not outlive their parents.

**MARTHA HOLLOWAY**, State School Nurse Consultant for the Alabama Department of Education, said the need for a change of lifestyle for many of Alabama's children is critical. Beyond being an important lesson to learn, Holloway said it is imperative that the issue be taken seriously for the very survival of the next generation.

"With conditions like diabetes and heart disease being prevalent among those who are overweight, we have to look at the problem long-term, and how it will affect generations to come," Holloway said. "We have the responsibility to educate our young people about their personal choices when it comes to health and wellness, and make sure they understand the consequences of their lifestyle choices." 🍏

*(continued from front)*

Montgomery on **Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2007**. The Summit will examine the progress Alabama schools are making in their attempts to tackle childhood obesity as well as review healthy school environments, school wellness policies, and school-based programs that are working in Alabama. School administrators, teachers, health and physical education teachers, school nurses, child nutrition staff, health professionals, parents, and community leaders will all benefit from this Health Summit.

**TONI LEO**, Health and Physical Education Specialist with the Alabama Department of Education, said the manner in which KidFit and other early intervention methods reach children is most effective.



"When a behavior starts early in a child's life and is encouraged and supported by parents, teachers, and schools, chances are it will become an integral part in a child's life and the formation of a habit," Leo said. "Physical fitness and good nutrition are learned behaviors which can impact a child in every aspect of their life."

The age-old adage "Do as I say, not as I do," is another deterrent for children who learn by what is modeled to them. Parents are encouraged to lead by example and set healthy patterns that children can begin to follow well before they fully understand the concepts of why these habits are important.

"Parents are the key to engaging their children in healthful habits of physical activity, proper nutrition, and overall wellness. Involve children in activities such as community sports, which helps build physical fitness and teaches sportsmanship and working with others," Leo said. "Allow children to help in the selection of food for the family. This offers parents many opportunities to explain what foods are nutritious and why they are important for growth and body repair. Parents need to find ways during their "home" time to involve themselves and their children in physical activity as this will allow important quality time together as well as improve fitness for the whole family."

The Alabama State Board of Education established a committee to review the state of health of America's



## Low Fat Pita Pizza

- 1 pkg whole wheat pita bread
- 1 jar pizza sauce
- 1 pkg turkey pepperoni
- 1 small pkg. Mozzarella Cheese (low fat)

Put pita bread on a cookie sheet, add pizza sauce, turkey pepperoni, and low fat cheese. Cook at 375 degrees until cheese is melted.





## Things are Cooking this February for Career/Technical Education Month!

Across the state in recognition of Career/Technical Education Month, many programs are gearing up to promote the benefits of their curriculums and encouraging more students to enroll this spring. One such program is Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS). FACS consists of curriculums that focus on Art and Design, Clothing, Family, Foods, Housing, and Resource Management that provide the knowledge-base for the program. Interior Design, Fashion Design, Early Childhood Education, Culinary Arts and Hospitality, Nutrition and Dietetics, Teaching, Consumer Services, and Older Adults are the career majors addressed in the program. The Culinary Arts program is cooking up delicious food and focusing on healthier food these days.

FACS programs in Alabama have embraced the Child Nutrition Program's Task Force recommendations and State Superintendent's Guidelines that impact the health of Alabama's children. "All of our FACS programs, especially Culinary Arts, focus on healthy foods in our programs," said **JUDY BROWN**, Education Specialist with the Alabama Department of Education.

Besides cooking, FACS teachers and students help analyze school lunch menus for healthier meals. They use food labs to increase the number of

fruits, vegetables, and whole wheat products in the diet and procedures for cooking these products. The program also focuses on nutritional content and portion control and alternatives for frying food in the classroom.

"Teachers and students are role models and invite elementary students to learn about good nutrition choices. They design games and coloring books emphasizing good nutrition," said Brown.

Currently there are 26 Culinary Arts programs across the state and 29 instructors. Mainstream media brought attention to cooking and is having a positive effect on FACS as the program has increased enrollment over recent years. "Television shows like *Iron Chef* and *Top Chef* that showcase cooking have sparked interest in today's

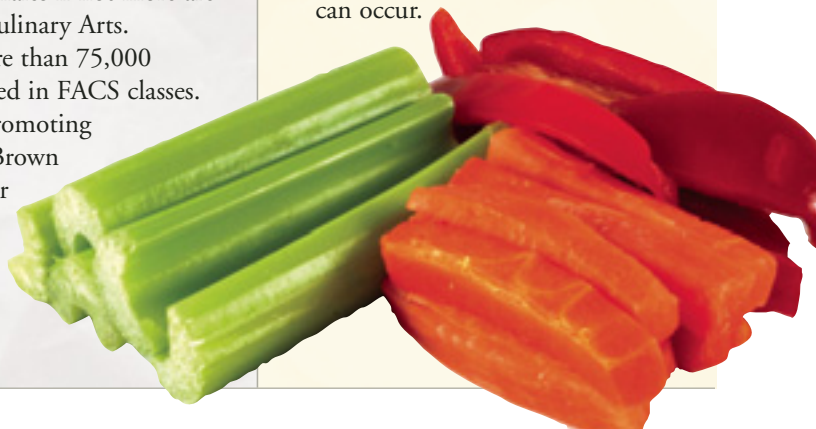
students wanting to take culinary classes," said Brown. Enrollment is increasing among both genders. Brown says just as many males if not more are taking classes in Culinary Arts.

Currently more than 75,000 students are enrolled in FACS classes. With interest in promoting healthy lifestyles, Brown expects the number of programs as well as students to increase in the future. 🍏



### HERE ARE SOME TIPS FROM FACS TO MAKE YOUR MEALS A BIT HEALTHIER AT HOME:

- Substitute sugar with a sugar substitute.
- Learn how to read labels on food products and make healthier choices.
- Lemon juice rubbed on fish before cooking will enhance flavor and help maintain a good color so that less fat when cooking is needed.
- Egg whites or egg substitutes for whole eggs are healthier.
- Select skinless chicken or turkey, or fish and seafood instead of fatty meats.
- Applesauce for oil works with most cakes and is healthier.
- Fat-free sour cream or plain yogurt for regular sour cream works well.
- Cut back on salt intake as much as possible. When you sit down at the table do not grab the salt shaker; instead use fresh spices on your food.
- Use skim or 1%-2% milk when cooking instead of whole milk.
- Spray your pans for baking with spray oils instead of using shortening to grease your pans. Less Fat!
- When serving food use smaller portions. (Some restaurants are beginning to do this too!)
- Cook vegetables in small batches rather than in large quantities to alleviate the overcooking that can occur.







## Harper Lee Honors Students



Pulitzer Prize-winning author **HARPER LEE** met privately with drama students from Fairfield High Preparatory School (Fairfield City Schools) and Mountain Brook High School (Mountain Brook City Schools) after their encore performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The performance took place in Montgomery at the **Davis Theatre for the Performing Arts – Troy University** January 10, 2007.

The performance for legislators as well as other dignitaries is an example of how arts education can unify students. The **Alabama Black Belt Arts in Education Initiative** received funding this year for arts in education for 12 schools. Plans are to expand arts in education funding to other schools across the state when funding is available.

The day after the performance, Ms. Lee attended the Alabama State Board of Education meeting and was honored with a resolution. The very private Lee made great efforts to honor the students and continues to inspire another generation with her work. Many called her January 10 & 11 visits “magical” and all present still seem awestruck.



Photo by Kevin Gladenberger

*State Board Member: Dr. Ethel H. Hall – District 4*  
*State Board Member: Ella B. Bell – District 5*  
*State Board Member: Davis F. Byers, Jr. – District 6*  
*Superintendent: Dr. Anthony C. Greene (Fairfield City Schools)*  
*Superintendent: Dr. Charles G. Mason (Mountain Brook City Schools)*  
*Principal: Dr. Gordon R. Fears (Fairfield High Preparatory School)*  
*Principal: Mr. Richard Barlow (Mountain Brook High School)*

## Fitzpatrick Students Honor Fallen Alabama Soldier



Students at Fitzpatrick Elementary paid tribute to the life of fallen Alabama Marine, 24-year-old **CPL. BRADFORD HOWARD PAYNE**, during a special memorial service.

Payne’s parents **HOWARD** and **CAROL PAYNE**, a first-grade teacher at Fitzpatrick, attended the event that featured poems, a flag salute by Fitzpatrick’s Safety Patrol, and stirring musical selections.

Students released yellow balloons to symbolize Payne’s courage and the lasting effects of his sacrifice. Mrs. Payne’s first-grade class offered a special tribute to her son, and at the conclusion of the program, each student hugged the Paynes and expressed their condolences.

“My family and I have been so moved by the outpouring of support that we’ve received from the community. I’m proud of my students. The program was truly touching and we deeply appreciated it,” said Mrs. Payne.

Cpl. Payne’s distinguished service to his country garnered him multiple medals of honor including the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, Iraq Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal, among others.

**PRINCIPAL VERA THOMPSON** said her students understood Payne’s sacrifice and have developed a deeper understanding of patriotism.

*State Board Member: Ella B. Bell – District 5*  
*Superintendent: Linda Robinson*  
*Principal: Mrs. Vera Thompson*



## Floyd Middle Student Wins Poster Contest



Seventh-grade Floyd Middle School student **SOHEE MIN** was named the overall winner in the 20th annual River Region United Way “Thank You” poster contest. Her artwork will be used as the design for the poster, and will be placed on T-shirts for her classmates.

Min’s entry was selected from among 253 entries submitted by public schools. A panel of United Way volunteers and local graphic artists made their final selection based on the entry that best said “thank you” to the hundreds of businesses whose employees donated to the United Way during the 2006 campaign.



The runners up were **ALEX IVANSTOV** (Floyd Middle Magnet), **LEE RICHARDSON** (Vaughn Road Elementary), **MICHAEL BELL** (Capitol Heights Jr. High), and **NICK DROLLETTE** (Brewbaker Technology Magnet High).

*State Board Member: Ella B. Bell – District 5*

*Superintendent: Linda Robinson*

*Principal: Mr. Robert Hunter*

## Gulf Guardian Award Winner



**MS. PAM T. HENSON**, Director of Instructional Support for the Baldwin County Board of Education, received a **first-place Gulf Guardian Award** for 2006 in the “Individual” Category.

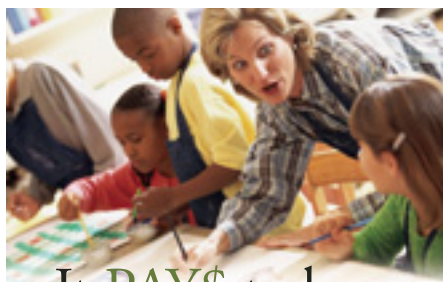
This award was presented to Ms. Henson during the 3rd National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration on December 13, 2006 at the Hilton Riverside Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Ms. Henson began teaching environmental science in 1984 and continued until 1997, when she left the classroom and became an administrator. Her work in environmental education spans the last 22 years. The Gulf of Mexico Program initiated the Gulf Guardian awards in 2000 as a way to recognize and honor the businesses, community groups, individuals, and agencies that are taking positive steps to keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful, and productive.

The Gulf of Mexico Program began in 1988 to protect, restore, and maintain the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem in economically sustainable ways. A first-, second-, and third-place award is given each year in seven categories.

*State Board Member: Randy McKinney – District 1*

*Superintendent: Dr. Faron Hollinger*



## It **PAY\$** to be a Nationally Board Certified Teacher

**T**he Alabama Department of Education recently announced that 168 teachers have joined the ranks of being awarded a National Board Certificate, the teaching profession’s highest standards.

**TYRA EDWARDS-SMITH**, now Assistant Principal at Baldwin County High School, said the application process improved her proficiency. “I had to videotape my classroom and I was able to observe my teaching methods from a different point of view and improve my skills,” said Edwards-Smith. The introduction of the camera to her special education students was a positive experience.

**JAMES GATLING**, a social studies teacher at Floyd Middle School in Montgomery, was elated when he learned of his certification. “I’m on cloud nine. I was so happy I got it on my first try,” said Gatling. “I ran down the hall to tell our principal.” The good news came after a long wait. Gatling worked on his application for more than a year and then had to wait nine months.

The department offers a \$2,500 scholarship for teachers to apply for National Board Certification. “I want to thank the department for offering me the scholarship to apply otherwise I wouldn’t have been able to do it,” Gatling said. “It was a challenge but well worth it and I encourage other teachers to take advantage of this opportunity.”

With the addition of the 2006 class, the total number of Alabama teachers who are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards stands at 1,097. Teachers who earn certification receive an additional \$5,000 annually for 10 years and are also given a one-time \$5,000 bonus for use in their classroom. For more information visit [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org) or contact **DR. EDDIE JOHNSON, DEPUTY STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION** at (334) 242-9960. 🍎





## SUCCESS IS NOT AN OPTION; IT IS AN IMPERATIVE

By Stoney M. Beavers – 2006-07 Alabama Alternate Teacher of the Year

As Alabama's 2006-2007 Secondary Teacher of the Year, 2005 Milken Award winner, and 2006 Jacksonville State Teacher Hall of Fame Secondary inductee, I have been given many opportunities to travel around the state and meet numbers of wonderful teachers and administrators who are working tirelessly to help all children at all levels. One thing that concerns me, however, is the discussion that I have had recently with many educators about why we are doing what we are doing. Almost on a daily basis, I hear conversations about the Alabama Reading Initiative, *No Child Left Behind*, and Adequate Yearly Progress. Like everyone else, I appreciate the importance and impact these three things have on the work of schools. What concerns me, though, is when teachers or administrators use these concepts as the rationale for what they are doing with children. We are not teaching all students to read because "it is the law" or because "it's a new requirement of the state of Alabama," or because "if all students can't read

*"As exceptional educators, each of you has the power to accomplish extraordinary deeds to shape lives, and sometimes, even to save lives." – Lowell Milken*

and do math, we'll go into school improvement." We are teaching students everything that we can about reading, math, all other content areas, and simply surviving in the world to come because we love kids, we want them to be successful, and we want to improve the world we live in and ensure the best future possible for tomorrow's generation. If we are to truly face this calling, then we must consider three important factors that influence our work with students: 1) why students fail, 2) how schools let students fail, and 3) what we can do to help all students succeed.

Even the most idealistic and dedicated among us can be sidetracked by loads of paperwork, discipline problems, and unmotivated students. What we must keep in mind, however, is the complex makeup of our classrooms and schools. In *Classroom Management That Works*, Robert J. Marzano and his colleagues cite several alarming statistics that are important reminders for anyone working with kids. In order to create more meaningful numbers for the teachers I work with, I have loosely translated some of these statistics into actual classroom

figures. While most of the information provided here applies directly to students between the ages of nine and 17, many of these numbers do cut across age levels, race, and socioeconomic status. Based on Marzano's numbers, in your "average" classroom of thirty students ...

3 are suffering from depression,  
2 or 3 are struggling with thoughts of suicide,  
1 or 2 are homeless on any given night,  
15 boys have been physically assaulted at school,  
7 girls have been physically assaulted at school,  
2 or 3 manifest symptoms of bulimia or anorexia,  
6 are growing up in an alcoholic family,  
2 have ADHD, one of which has another learning disability,  
2 or 3 are struggling with issues of sexual orientation,  
15 have learning, behavioral, and emotional problems,  
15 are living in poverty,  
10 will never receive a high school diploma, and  
1 has a parent in jail.

These are only some of the reasons kids fail in our schools. Other factors include negative influences from society, less than adequate learning at earlier school levels, and inappropriate peer and media influences.

While so many uncontrollable factors determine whether a student will succeed at school or not, one thing that can be addressed is the role of individual teachers, counselors, and administrators in dealing with struggling students. We must re-examine the very important part these key figures play in keeping students in school and helping them succeed, and we must ask ourselves how and why schools let students fail. It is crucial that immediate intervention is planned and put into action the moment teachers realize that students are falling behind. Specific interventions must be planned for students in all content areas at all levels, and everything possible must be done so that students can be promoted with their age group and not retained to further the cycle of failure. Teachers must do as much as possible to keep from allowing students to just take a zero on classwork, and we must find ways to hold all students and parents more accountable for real learning. If we truly want to help kids succeed, then we must rethink how we let them fail.



## Teachers must have high expectations of all students, and we must help them reach these expectations.

In doing this, it is important that we think of each student as deserving the same education that we would want for our own children. We must master the sometimes difficult task of treating other people's children the way we hope all adults will treat our own children. We must not forget the natural, inherent value of all children no matter what we see on the outside or how they act upon first impressions, for children are not perfect yet, and we often forget that they are learning through their mistakes. Educators must be advocates for children, and must convince them that all of our prodding and correcting is out of love and not stemmed from other motives. On those days when certain students are really trying our patience, we need to reflect upon the statistics cited earlier, and we must ask ourselves what exactly could be going on with this particular student on this particular day; we may also want to ask ourselves what is going on with us on this day. Are we handling this student like we would on our very best day? Are we doing our best to restore hope in this child and humanize the situation or conflict?

Educators have so much potential for influence in the lives of young people, and we want to do our best to make sure that this influence is as positive as it can be. In order to succeed with our students, we must work diligently to create classrooms where students are actively engaged in real learning. We can help all students succeed if we work to do several things every

day. Teachers must strive to develop a rigorous and relevant curriculum from the content standards. We must have high expectations of all students, and we must help them reach these expectations. For students who struggle, we must have the appropriate pyramid of intervention in place so that they can succeed at their own level while they move toward ever-increasing levels of expectations. As educators, we must remember the lives of our students outside of school, and we must present ourselves as loving, caring, and patient adults who truly expect them to succeed. Our lessons must be motivational and not just test preparation activities. We must teach students about character and integrity and use our words and actions to motivate students to learn. Finally, we must consider the skills necessary for success, and we must do everything within our power to help our students acquire these skills. It is only when we look at success as an imperative and not as an option that we will all have the sense of urgency necessary to build professional learning communities where teachers and administrators are dedicated to success for all students.



### *About the author...*

**STONE M. BEAVERS** is the 2006-2007 Alabama Alternate Teacher of the Year and Secondary Teacher of the Year. He teaches at Cleveland High School in the Blount County School System.

## Awards, Opportunities, and Professional Development

**The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.** The 2007 Summer Seminars for Teachers afford educators a tuition-free opportunity to study an important topic in American history with an eminent scholar in the field at major institutions including Johns Hopkins, Yale, Columbia, Stanford, NYU, Oxford, Cambridge, the University of Virginia, National Constitution Center, and Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library. Limited to 30 participants per seminar by competitive application. Apply online at [by clicking here](#). **Deadline: February 15, 2007**

**The Gilder Lehrman Institute Teaching American History Grants.** Your school district can partner with The Gilder Lehrman Institute in a Teaching American History Grant. Currently, Teaching American History Grants provide teacher training and materials to 36 school districts in 20 states across the country, including three in Alabama. To find out more, just [click here](#). For application forms, [click here](#). **Deadline: March 9, 2007**

**2007 AWF Ireland Youth Wildlife Art Contest and 2007 Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest.** The Alabama Wildlife Federation, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge invite all K-12 students to participate in both contests. For more information, [click here](#) and [click here](#). **Deadline for BOTH contests: March 15, 2007.**

**Foundations for Life National Essay Contest.** Foundations for Life offers a national recognition program to further encourage students to write essays. Essays are judged primarily on compelling content that truly reflect students' experiences in life and their understanding of character. Opportunities for National Scholarship awards are available. To enter, [click here](#). **Deadline: March 16, 2007**

**State Fish Art Contest.** Students in Grades 4-12 are eligible to win scholarships, art supplies, and fishing gear in the State Fish Art Contest. A talented artist in Grades 10-12 will be selected as the national "Best of Show" winner and will receive a \$2,500 tuition scholarship to attend The Art Institutes International Minnesota (Ai Minnesota). The first runner-up nationally in Grades 10-12 will receive a \$1,000 tuition scholarship. Winners will be announced May 1, 2007. The contest is open to all students in Grades 4-12. [Click here](#) for complete details. **Deadline: March 31, 2007**

**ING Unsung Heroes Program Seeks to Reward Excellence in America's Schools.** Financial services company ING seeks to help K-12 educators and their schools fund innovative classroom projects through its annual Unsung Heroes awards program. For complete program information, application materials, and details about previous award recipients and their winning projects, visit the [ING Unsung Heroes Web site](#). **Deadline: April 30, 2007**

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	CAREER/TECH MONTH	11	12	13	14	15	16
	19-President's Day (State Holiday)	20	21	22	23	24	25
	22-Alabama State Board of Education Work Session	26	27	28	29	30	
MARCH	28-Mardi Gras (Baldwin & Mobile Counties)						
			1	2	3		
	8-Alabama State Board of Education Meeting	5	6	7	8	9	10
	NATIONAL READING MONTH	11	12	13	14	15	16
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## TEACHER OF THE MONTH



**MARY LEE**, a fifth-grade teacher at Central School in the Madison County School System, believes teachers have to look beyond the walls of their classroom to know their students' needs and help them reach their fullest potential. She says teachers help bridge the gap between children of varied socioeconomic, ethnic, and developmental backgrounds.

"People need safety, love, and their physiological needs met; the human spirit longs for a sense of worthiness," Lee said. "All children come to school with different schemata based on their culture and

influences beyond the gates of institutionalized education that affect their success or failure in the world."

Activities in Lee's classroom and her interaction with students and their parents help her understand the needs of her students and are among the reasons she was chosen as Alfa's Teacher of the Month for January.

As this month's winner, Lee will receive \$1,000 from Alfa Insurance, and her school will receive a matching award from the Alabama Farmers Federation.

Lee holds a master's degree in elementary education from the University of Alabama and a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Athens State College. She was named Alabama's American History Teacher of the Year in November 2006 and earlier that year was named Madison County Teacher of the Year. She also was named Central School Teacher of the Year for 2005-2006 and has written and received numerous grants for her school.

A parent of a former student said many children consider Lee their favorite teacher. "Every student who has had the fortune of having Mrs. Lee as their teacher learned something in that classroom that they will carry with them forever," the parent said.

During 2007, Alfa Insurance and the Alabama Farmers Federation will honor one outstanding teacher from each of Alabama's eight state school board districts, as well as two principals and two private school teachers.

# ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

VOL 30 • NO 5

FEBRUARY 2007

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## BOARD BRIEFS

J A N U A R Y

- Resolution in Honor of Nelle Harper Lee
- Resolution Commending Fairfield High Preparatory School
- Resolution Commending Mountain Brook High School
- Resolution Commending Alabama Black Belt Arts Education Initiative Pilot Schools
- Employee of the Quarter – January - March 2007
- Resolution in Recognition of February 5-9, 2007, as National School Counseling Week
- Approve Issuance of Alabama Alternative Baccalaureate-Level Teacher's Certificate
- Approval of Teacher Education Program – The University of Alabama

For a complete list of agenda items, visit the Alabama Department of Education's Web site [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu) under Board of Education.

The Alabama Department of Education publishes *Alabama Education News* (USPS 387-290) monthly except for June, July, and December. Editorial offices are located in the Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery 36130-2101. *Alabama Education News* is composed by the Department of Education's Communication Section and printed by Walker Printing of Montgomery. Periodicals are postage paid in Montgomery and at an additional mailing office.

This publication, authorized by Section 16-2-4 of the *Code of Alabama*, as recompiled in 1975, is a public service of the Alabama Department of Education designed to inform citizens and educators about programs and goals of public education in Alabama.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Alabama Education News*, Alabama Department of Education, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101.

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