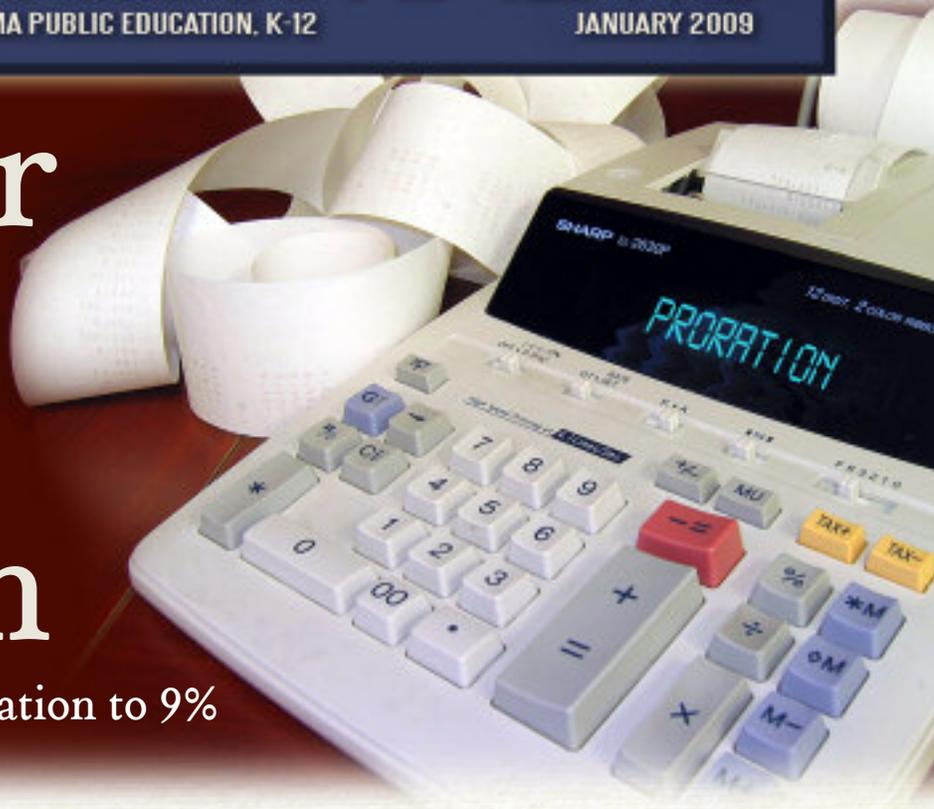




Governor Declares 12.5% Proration

Rainy Day Fund Reduces Proration to 9%



BOTH NATIONALLY AND STATEWIDE, the economy has been the topic of choice from television coverage to office water coolers.

In December, ALABAMA GOV. BOB RILEY spoke about the impact the overall national economy is taking in Alabama's education budget as well as the general fund.

In times that have been defined by some as the "worst financial crisis in a generation," America is faced with what has 'officially' been designated as a recession, staggering job losses, lagging consumer confidence, foreclosures, decreases in available credit, the list goes on. These issues are national as well as statewide with the education budget taking a direct blow as a result. This forced Riley to declare 12.5 percent proration for the Alabama education budget, dip into half of the available funds from the Rainy Day reserve immediately, and withhold the release of the other half until later in the fiscal year which will reduce proration to 5.59 percent.

In Alabama, money to sustain the obligations and operations of school systems come from two primary sources - sales tax and income tax. As a result of the

This is the **16th** time the Education Trust Fund has entered a proration period since 1950. The last time was 2003.

unstable economy, Alabama has experienced waning tax revenues and income tax loss due to job loss, which brought about the need for the declaration of the dreaded "P" word (proration). As early as October school systems were feeling the direct effect

continued on next page ...

K-12 PRORATION

State law mandates that all sections are cut across the board, but there are some exemptions.

90% of a school system's budget is difficult to prorate.

This includes an average of 80-85% of the budget in salaries and benefits. Budget items such as bond debt payments, utilities, gasoline, and insurance cannot be prorated.

10% of a school system's budget is left to absorb proration.

Cutbacks in maintenance, travel, some classroom instructional supplies, field trips (to save gasoline), and resetting thermostats (to save on utility costs) must be made.

continued from front ...

as their Education Trust Fund (ETF) payments were only enough to support 75% of the costs, with the remainder coming early in the following month. The same occurrence with ETF payments in November was further evidence that the state's revenue is not going to be able to meet the projected budget. ALABAMA SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON said the lack of financial cushion between fiscal years caused the abrupt hiccup in the fall of 2008.

"In most budget year cycles, when you close out a budget year and start a new year, there's normally a little carry over money - sometimes a lot. That makes October and November flow much more smoothly. This year, however, it was "virtually zero," Morton said. "Historically, October tax receipts aren't the best of the year anyway. We couldn't wait until the end of October to see if we had enough money. We have to voucher the tax

All systems are encouraged to operate the remainder of the year as if they are under 9% proration.

receipts and then get the comptroller to wire the money to schools, which takes a few days to process. So, we had to make a determination to break payments in two."

Morton said because of Amendment I being passed, the Education Budget can be supplemented with up to \$437 million. This allows these types of scenarios to be eased. The Governor's declaration has made it possible to borrow funds from the Alabama Oil and Gas Fund to fill in the gaps when financial ends don't meet rather than make life-altering cuts in one year. (The Rainy Day Amendment allows for the state to borrow 6.5% of the previous year's adopted Education Trust Fund Budget. In today's terms that means 6.5% of the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget totaling \$6.7 billion - \$437 million.)

Holiday shopping in the months of November and December usually creates a spike in sales tax revenues, further helping



What Exactly Does The Rainy Day Fund Amendment Do?

It expands the cap on the state's education Rainy Day Fund from \$248 million to 6.5 percent of the previous year's education budget:

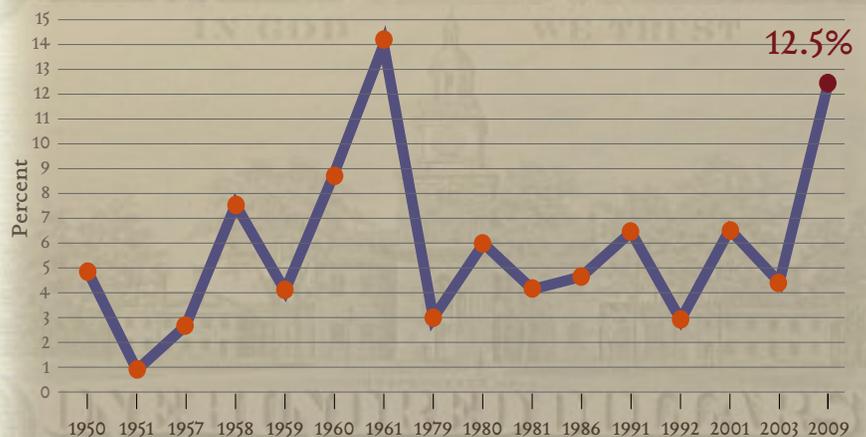
\$437 million in FY 2009

schools get back on track financially. Despite the bleak beginning to this fiscal year, Morton said all schools have and will meet payroll, and most systems have developed Rainy Day accounts of their own to sustain them through turbulent financial times. In addition, systems have creative financing methods to ensure teachers always get paid and the essentials are covered. Morton said all systems are encouraged to operate the remainder of the year as if they are under 9 percent proration with "no additional help." During the months before proration was announced systems managed to borrow internally from one fund to another, perhaps withholding taxes that they take out of payroll. They have until the 10th of the month to make those payments. There are also other funds due vendors that may be adjusted by a few days.

Fortunately, the Rainy Day Fund will help the state fill the void and diminish cuts to some of its most effective educational programs that are beginning to yield great returns from the investments made. As Alabama moves into the new year, teachers, administrators, parents, and students can continue making their strides without the looming fear of split payments or programs having to be slashed in order to meet the bills. Alabama is making its way through a tough financial ordeal, "but this too shall pass."

"This is Alabama's 16th time having to declare proration and, as in times past, the state will emerge and continue to improve and press toward the mark of its educational goals," Morton said. ●

Proration History of the Education Trust Fund



Alabama Heroes in Education Awards: An Evening To Honor Outstanding Teachers and Students

IN CELEBRATION OF THE BEST IN QUALITY EDUCATION IN OUR STATE, the Alabama Teacher of the Year (TOY)



Program and Alabama Public Television (APT) Young Heroes™ Awards will join in sponsoring the first “Alabama Heroes In Education Awards: An Evening To Honor Outstanding Teachers and Students.”

The awards gala will recognize the five winners of the 2009 Alabama Public Television Young Heroes™ Awards as well as announce the 2009-2010 Alabama Teacher of the Year and Alternate Teacher of the Year. The Montgomery Renaissance Hotel will serve as host for this year’s ceremonies.

This first-ever statewide broadcast honoring Alabama’s finest educators and students will air live on Alabama



Public Television **May 13, 2009**

Download the 2009-2010 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application Package and Program Guide [HERE](#) . Teacher of the Year applications for school systems’ nominees should be hand- delivered or postmarked by January 26, 2009, to:

Ann Starks, State Coordinator
Alabama Teacher of the Year Program
Alabama Department of Education
5114 Gordon Persons Building
Montgomery, AL 36104-3833



CALL FOR ENTRIES



ALABAMA PUBLIC TELEVISION’S 2009 YOUNG HEROES AWARDS

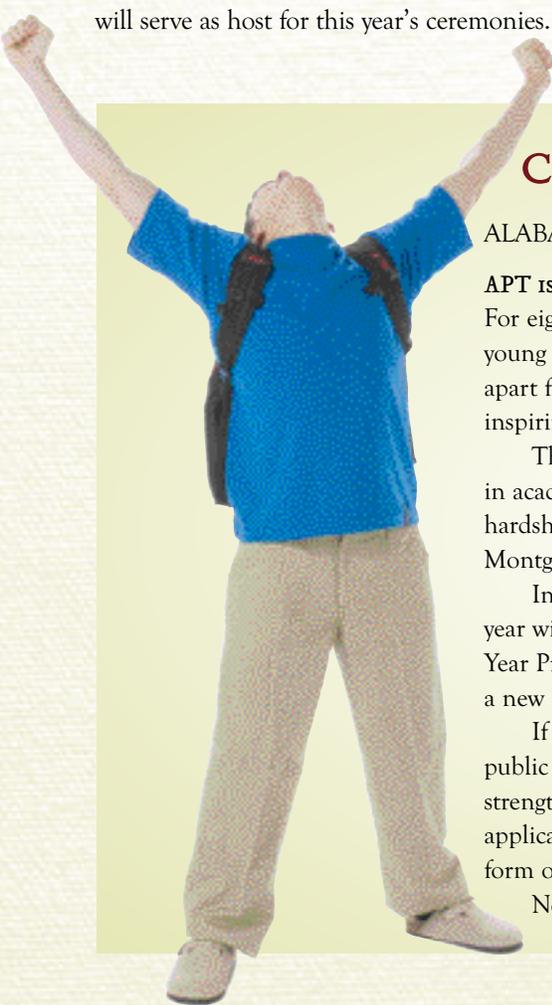
APT IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE the 2009 Alabama Public Television Young Heroes™ Awards. For eight years, this annual competition has recognized the great achievements of Alabama’s young people – students whose academic work and contributions to the community set them apart from their peers. These are students who serve as positive role models in their community, inspiring us all.

The 2009 Young Heroes Awards will honor five students in Grades 9-12 who have excelled in academics; who have served their community; and who have, in some way, overcome hardships in their lives. The winners will be recognized in a live, statewide broadcast from the Montgomery Renaissance Hotel on May 13, 2009.

In celebration of the best in quality education in our state, the Young Heroes Awards this year will be held in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Education’s Teacher of the Year Program. Each Young Hero will receive scholarship money to the college of his/her choice, a new laptop computer, and other prizes.

If you know a student in Grades 9-12 who excels in academics, gives of him/herself through public service, has overcome adversity, and who inspires others through his/her deeds and strength of character, please consider nominating the student as a Young Hero. To receive the application form, call Alabama Public Television at 800-239-5233, ext. 152, or download the form online [HERE](#).

Nominations should be postmarked no later than January 25, 2009.



Alabama Schools Eye Fall Implementation of First Choice

IN THE SPRING OF 2008, the Alabama State Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt the *First Choice* graduation option for all Alabama high schools. Implementation of *First Choice* was mandated for fall of 2009, although some school systems chose to start the policy last fall. Now, the first scheduling of *First Choice* will begin in January for fall classes.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON conceptualized *First Choice* in an effort to help all students reach their fullest potential. His intention is to better prepare students to compete with the demands and expectations of an increasingly competitive college population and American workforce. Even before the implementation of *First Choice*, Alabama was already pushing the envelope of academic expectations by being the first state in America to require four years of both math and science in high school. Now that infrastructure is in place to better execute the delivery of needed curriculum to every corner of the state, Morton believes *First Choice* is necessary and Alabama is perfectly poised to seize the opportunity.

"*First Choice* was introduced in 2008 because Alabama now has the ability to enact it. It needed to be done much earlier, but we had some obstacles we had to overcome first. We had to concentrate on and raise our reading level, especially at the early elementary stages. Also, we had to put in a math and science initiative for all grades because we had fallen behind in those areas. Third, we had to create a way to deliver instruction at the high school level to schools that did not have staff members that are specialists in math or science," Morton said. He said the state accomplished these goals through

initiatives such as the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI); the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI); and ACCESS Distance Learning. By August of 2009, every high school in Alabama will have on-line access for coursework as well as interactive video-conferencing capability. Students having an on-line education experience is an essential part of the new *First Choice* plan. "When we start the fall 2009 school year there will literally be no course that can't be taught in any high school in Alabama. With ACCESS in place, it was time to look at getting more students involved in greater depth in math and science," Morton said. "That was essential in the idea of placing students in the coursework leading to an Advanced Endorsement on their diploma rather than letting them volunteer."

DEPUTY STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION TOMMY BICE said it is important to remember that for fulfillment of the *First Choice* plan, an on-line course is not the only option, but rather an on-line 'experience' is an option as well. "Students can also have an on-line experience, which is taking the same set of on-line learning skills and

embedding them in existing courses," Bice said.

"Students can use virtual skills and be connected with another class in the same building. It's not just a course – it's a set of skills. The ability to do SharePoint between two groups of people, for example, doesn't require a separate course. Students can take an English Literature course and embed those skills within the instruction of that course." He said information obtained by administrators is making a clear case that knowledge of this 21st Century technology is necessary to meet the expectations of a competitive world. "When our students graduate from high school and go into college or the workplace they are expected to have these skill sets to function," Bice said.

Bice has been instrumental in getting administrators prepared for the transition to *First Choice* – a transition that he believes will not immediately make too many waves, but admits will become more challenging in the coming years. He said the most significant pieces of *First Choice* are Algebra II with Trigonometry, two years of foreign language, and an on-line course or experience. These are courses that are not typically taken by freshmen. "In this first year of implementation there are not going to be as many challenges as there will be in the second and third years as those course expectations become a reality. It's the third and fourth years of mathematics where we'll face the most challenges," Bice said.

Because the *First Choice* program begins with the incoming freshmen class, Bice said the truest reflection of how many students successfully completed the *First Choice* transition really won't be evident for four years when 2009's freshmen graduate from high school.

Morton said the core philosophy of expecting more of students by placing them into the *First Choice* program and allowing them to opt out (with parental consent) is consistent with his vision of fair yet aggressive leadership that helps level the playing field for all Alabama students. "The volunteer method works great in highly affluent and well-educated school districts, but it's an atrocity in rural, poor, and inner city school districts where parents may not generally be as well educated and the income level is not there to support other initiatives at the local level," Morton said. "We have evidence that shows in those kinds of high schools the volunteer approach for students to take more rigorous coursework is in the single digits. That is simply unacceptable." ●



District 7 Elects New State Board of Education Member



Gary Warren
Alabama State Board of Education – District 7

GARY WARREN stresses the need to improve education to provide a competent workforce for the future. “I will use my experience as a classroom teacher and a school administrator. I have also been involved in the residential construction business for 35 years. I know the benefits that industry can provide education and what our schools can do to provide a competent workforce for our future,” said Warren, who was sworn in to represent District 7 on January 22.

Warren said he ran for the Alabama State Board of Education to continue serving his community by helping the children of this state and improving the education process. “I believe this board seat is the way to do it. I’ve spent 36 years helping kids every day, and I’m glad to work with this board helping kids, helping students, and helping education,” said Warren. Warren’s 36 years in education include 22 years as an agriscience teacher in building construction and maintenance, 20 years as a Winston County school bus driver, and 14 years as a school administrator.

“My goal as a state board member will be to convey the importance of work-readiness and work-based learning in education today. Students require hands-on learning that is relevant to career preparation. There must be multiple pathways, so that all students may be successful,” said Warren. Warren advocates a rigorous, relevant, and progressive education for every student. His priorities on the State Board of Education include technology-rich classrooms; academic and career/technical proficiency; counselors working with every student to develop a meaningful career pathway; developing character, citizenship, and civic pride; and connecting education to economic growth opportunities.

State Board District 7 includes Lauderdale, Colbert, Franklin, Lawrence, Marion, Winston, Lamar, Fayette, Walker, and Tuscaloosa Counties. ●

Alabama Teachers Earn National Board Certification

Teaching quality in Alabama classrooms took another leap forward with the addition of the 2008 class of 214 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), which brings Alabama’s total number of NBCTs to 1,543.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards® announced the newest NBCTs in December. The 2008 class pushes the total number of NBCTs to more than 73,000 nationwide.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards improves teaching and student learning. National Board Certification is a voluntary assessment program designed to develop, recognize, and retain accomplished teachers.

In a congressionally mandated study, the National Research Council recently recognized National Board Certification as having a positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention, and professional development. NBCTs are



highly accomplished educators who meet high and rigorous standards.

“Achieving National Board Certification demonstrates a true dedication to the profession of teaching and most importantly dedication to students,” said **DEPUTY STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION DR. EDDIE R. JOHNSON**. “These teachers are making positive changes in the classroom, which result in better students that improve our school systems and education communities.”

Alabama’s financial commitment to the program provides money to pay the \$2,500 application fee for some candidates (through a competitive grant process) and a \$5,000 annual salary supplement. First-year NBCTs also receive a one-time \$5,000 classroom bonus. For a complete list of Alabama’s NBCTs, [CLICK HERE](#). ●

GOOD NEWS

in Alabama Schools

Alabama Science Teacher Appointed to National Teacher Advisory Council

FOR THE FIRST TIME since its inception in November of 2002, the Teacher Advisory Council has appointed an Alabama teacher. CHARLENE DINDO, a science enrichment teacher at Fairhope K-1 Center (Baldwin County) and an Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow during 2002-2003, accepted the appointment. Dindo said she looks forward to making a valuable contribution to the council.

"I am honored with this opportunity to advise the National Academy of Science from an elementary perspective from our state of Alabama," Dindo said. "The most effective ideas and changes in science education for our nation come from classroom teachers!"

This council was formed to enable classroom teachers to bring the wisdom of their practice into the Academies' work in education. The opportunity brought outstanding teachers together, empowering them as a community to "make a difference." The current members include teachers of science, mathematics, technology, reading, and English as a second language across the elementary, middle, and secondary grades. They teach in inner city, rural, and suburban schools.



The teachers on the council design workshops focusing on different aspects of professional development.

Teachers too often have experienced a "one-size-fits-all" professional development model, in which someone else decides what they need to learn. And too often experiences with professional development focus primarily on improvement (i.e., remediation) rather than professional growth and exploration of new ideas, cutting-edge developments in a teacher's field of expertise, or promising new pedagogies. At least one member from each educational level (elementary, middle, secondary) is certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. A primary criterion for serving on the council is that each member must spend at least 50 percent of her or his time in the classroom working directly with students.



Cullman County Student Wins National School Bus Safety Week Poster Contest

TJ GRAVES, a student at the Cullman County Area Career Center, recently won a nationwide contest to conceptualize school bus safety in the category of Computer Aided Drawing. The contest was a part of the nation's efforts to support and promote National School Bus Safety Week last October 20-24.

Contestants from across the country submitted their artwork bearing the theme, "Avoid Harm, Obey the Stop Arm." The contest was held on a state level and winners were advanced to the national level of competition. Graves' winning poster has been published and distributed nationally as the National School Bus Safety Poster for 2009. ALABAMA SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON said Graves' artwork being selected not only showcases the talent and creativity that Graves possesses, but also relays a very important message about drivers being careful around school buses.

"I am very proud of your accomplishment and congratulate you on the superior effort you put into your poster," Morton said. "I am also confident that your teacher, MR. RICK GARRISON; your career technical center coordinator, MRS. EASON; your parents; and your classmates are equally proud of your accomplishment. The Alabama Department of Education is certainly proud to have you represent our state."

In addition to having his artwork published nationally, Graves received a \$1,000 savings bond.

*Principal – Mrs. Rebecca Eason
Superintendent – Mr. L. Hank Allen
State Board Member – David F. Byers, Jr.*

State Superintendent of Education Wins National Technology Award



Dr. Morton receives his award from Dr. Melinda Maddox, Director of Technology Initiatives for the Alabama Department of Education

EDUCATORS ACROSS THE COUNTRY are looking at Alabama as a leader in using technology to help disseminate the curriculum and enhance education throughout the state. The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) recently acknowledged ALABAMA SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON as leader in promoting innovation by selecting him as the 2008 State Policy Maker's Award recipient.

"SETDA is proud to honor Dr. Morton for his vision for and support of educational technology in Alabama," said Mary Ann Wolf, SETDA Executive Director. "SETDA has continued to see Alabama as a national leader in maximizing the potential of

educational technology for improving teaching and learning."

Under Dr. Morton's leadership as Deputy State Superintendent of Education and now as State Superintendent of Education, he has guided the creation and implementation of AMSTI - [Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative](#); ARI - the [Alabama Reading Initiative](#); ACCESS - [Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide](#); and ALEX - [Alabama Learning Exchange](#), which recently received a national "Best of the Web" award. Morton also guided the expansion of Advanced Placement courses to every high school in the state through technology.

"I am deeply humbled and grateful for this recognition to come to the state of Alabama," said Dr. Morton. "This award really honors the Alabama Department of Education and its incredibly dedicated and talented staff who envision and 'make happen' these innovative instructional programs for all of Alabama's students and teachers. We believe in doing everything we can and tapping into every available resource to provide educational excellence and equity for our students, regardless of a school's location or resources.

"None of this would be possible without funding from the Alabama Legislature and the Governor's vision and commitment to providing 21st Century education for all students regardless of their family's income or where they live," continued Morton.

Awards, Opportunities, and Professional Development

J. Craig and Page T. Smith Scholarship Foundation supports first-generation students at Alabama colleges and universities. For complete information, [CLICK HERE](#) . **DEADLINE: January 15, 2009**

The 2009-2010 Alabama Teacher of the Year - Contact Ann Starks at 334-242-9700 or astarks@alsde.edu. [CLICK HERE](#) to download application. **DEADLINE: January 26, 2009**

Sign up your school for National Green Week, February 2-8, 2009. Participation is free and will provide schools with environmental curriculum for green assignments, activities, and projects that can be seamlessly integrated into science, math, language arts, social studies, and creative arts curricula. For complete information, [CLICK HERE](#).

President Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809. The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (ALBC) is offering a free teaching resource poster to teachers nationwide to increase awareness of the Bicentennial. To request posters, contact Lauren Maxwell at (202) 707-6998 or lmax@loc.gov. For complete information, [CLICK HERE](#).

New America Foundation Essay Contest for high school seniors urges students to provide solutions to the following prompt: "You have just been elected President of the United States. What is the most important thing you will do to improve the lives of America's children?" The winner will be announced in June 2009. [CLICK HERE](#) for details. **DEADLINE: February 20, 2009**

Panasonic National School Change Awards recognize schools across America that have "significantly changed." National awards ceremony will honor 25 finalists and six schools will receive \$5,000. **DEADLINE: March 3, 2009**

U P C O M I N G E V E N T S



J A N U A R Y

National School Board Month

January 1 - New Year's Day

January 8 - Alabama State Board of Education Meeting

January 19 - Martin Luther King, Jr. / Robert E. Lee Birthday

January 22 - Alabama State Board of Education Work Session

F E B R U A R Y

Black History Month

Career and Technical Education Month

February 16 - George Washington / Thomas Jefferson Birthday

February 12 - Alabama State Board of Education Meeting

February 26 - Alabama State Board of Education Work Session



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District 7 | Gary Warren, Haleyville
District 8 | Mary Jane Caylor, President Pro Tem, Huntsville
State Superintendent of Education and Secretary and Executive Officer of the Alabama Board of Education | Joseph B. Morton

DECEMBER BOARD BRIEFS

- Resolution to Adopt Alabama FIRST CHOICE Implementation Guide
- Resolution in Honor of the Alabama SuperComputer Authority and Randy Fulmer, Chief Executive Officer
- Resolution in Recognition of Stephanie B. Glover, Thelma Smiley Morris Elementary School, Montgomery County School System, 2008 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award
- Resolution of Welcome to Russian Delegation of Distinguished Visiting Scholars to Alabama
- Resolution in Honor of Dr. Suzanne Freeman, Superintendent, Trussville City School System, Alabama/Classworks 2009 Superintendent of the Year

For a complete list of agenda items, visit the Alabama Department of Education's Web site www.alsde.edu under "Board of Ed."

ABOUT ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

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