



# ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

MARCH 2010

## Initiative Helps Alabama Students Get Jobs

THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES (DHR) AND THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (SDE) ARE PARTNERING TO OFFER STUDENTS A GLIMMER OF HOPE IN A CHALLENGING ECONOMY



NANCY T. BUCKNER, *Commissioner*  
Alabama Department of Human Resources



JOSEPH B. MORTON, *Superintendent*  
Alabama Department of Education

THE NATION'S ECONOMY is starting to show some positive signs that it is rebounding. Last month, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that America's unemployment rate fell from 10 to 9.7 percent. However, if you begin to compare this data to information from even just three years ago (2007), you discover that we still have some real work ahead.

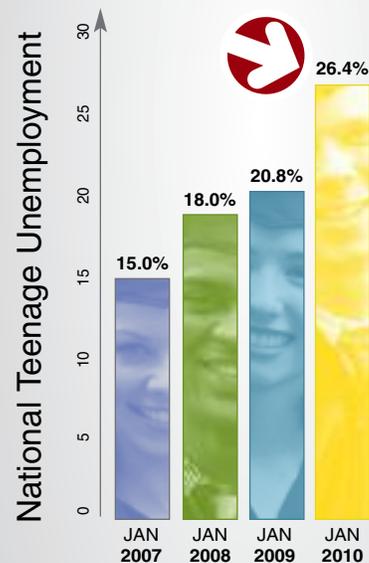
In January 2007, the unemployment rate for adults and teens was significantly lower - exactly 4.1 percent for men, 4 percent for women, and only 15 percent among American teens.

No matter how you analyze the data or try to rationalize the current statistics, one fact seems to hold true - Americans want to work and are creating some really innovative ways to jumpstart our economy. A new initiative started in Alabama last month gives our students another resource to utilize in their efforts to graduate from high school and find great jobs.

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Alabama Department of Education (SDE) have partnered and started the Student

*Inside this AEN*

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SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



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 Subsidized Employment Program (SSEP). This new program was created to assist students with finding employment opportunities in their communities. Its primary goal is to bring employers together with job-seeking high school students who need work experience to fulfill their graduation requirements. Businesses and employers participating in SSEP will be reimbursed 100 percent of the hired student's gross wages – including the student's mandatory withholdings, such as FICA and applicable taxes.

“This is really a great opportunity – a win-win situation – for Alabama’s students, teachers, and businesses, and it indicates DHR’s Commissioner, **NANCY BUCKNER** is a strong leader and valuable partner,” said **STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON**. “To ensure that our students are prepared for their futures, we must remain resourceful, become more innovative, and be more willing to create new partnerships. In my opinion, the Student Subsidized Employment Program demonstrates exactly what we can accomplish when everyone works together to create additional opportunities for our students to achieve their academic and career goals.”

All students that participate in a Cooperative Education (co-op) program (statewide), and who also meet SSEP’s other requirements, are eligible. The only costs that employers will have to pay are their

organization’s regular taxes and FICA obligations. Federal stimulus funds, provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, are being used to pay for this program.

More than 13,000 students statewide participated in a co-op program last year. In our state, cooperative education is a part of Alabama’s Career and Technical Education curriculum. It combines classroom instruction with supervised work experience to help students develop their overall career skills and academic knowledge. Content is planned for students through a cooperative

**September 30, 2010** the last day of SSEP

**500** number of SSEP student salary reimbursements available



**16-20** the age of students participating in SSEP



arrangement between their schools and employers. Approximately 500 student salary reimbursements will be available for participating employers. This program will end on September 30, 2010.

To learn more about Alabama’s new SSEP Initiative, contact Alabama Department of Human Resources Public Information Officer Barry Spear at 334-242-1310, or Alabama Department of Education CTE Specialist Gerry Moses at 334-242-9109. ●

**To qualify for SSEP students must be between the ages of 16 and 20 and be:**

- Enrolled in an Alabama high school
- Living with a parent or caretaker relative
- Participating in a school co-op program
- Living in a family whose total income is less than or equal to 300 percent of the federal poverty level

## Alabama Still Gaining in Advanced Placement®

ALABAMA PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS are gaining and making steady academic progress in Advanced Placement (AP), according to the 6th Annual AP Report to the Nation released by the College Board. AP is a rigorous academic program that offers high school students the chance for college-level study in a wide variety of subject areas.

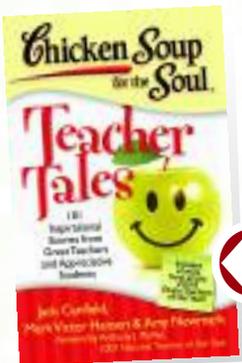
Student participation in AP courses and exams and AP exam scores continue to rise in Alabama. Success on an AP exam is defined as a grade of 3 or higher – a score research shows is indicative of college success and graduation. More Alabama students earned qualifying scores (3 or higher) than ever before, and more students are prepared to succeed in – not just attend – college.

“Through the National Governors Association, Alabama was one of six states to receive funding to expand AP courses to more minority and low-income students. Alabama was one of seven states to be awarded a National Math and Science Initiative grant to strengthen AP programs,” said STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON. “A+ College Ready, the Alabama AP Initiative, ACCESS (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, & Students Statewide), and our state funding enable us to offer more AP classes to more students, including in the rural areas of the state, but this is just the beginning. We must continue to expand AP access for all students, including traditionally underserved students.”

Find AP course information [HERE](#). For more information, contact College Board Public Affairs at 212-713-8052. ●

## Since 2004 in Alabama Public Schools:

- The number of test takers has almost doubled.
- The number of African American test takers has more than quadrupled.
- Qualifying exam scores (3 or higher) of African American students have more than doubled. (*Over 90 percent of colleges and universities give credit for qualifying scores.*)
- Five times more low-income students are taking AP exams and three times more are scoring 3 or higher on an AP exam.



## 2009 Teacher of the Year Featured in New Book

CHICKEN SOUP has been a longstanding tradition in American culture for nourishment and comfort. So when internationally known speakers MARK VICTOR HANSEN, JACK CANFIELD, and AMY NEWMARK started the wildly successful book series *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, audiences could relate to the healing, almost medicinal, aspects provided by

the book's calming stories. Now, one of Alabama's premier educators is contributing to the book series offering words of wisdom from some of America's most distinguished teachers. ROY HUDSON, theatre instructor at Shades Valley High School (Jefferson County) and 2009 Alabama Teacher of the Year, will join with other Teachers of the Year across the country and beyond to publish in the newest Chicken Soup installment, *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Teacher Tales*.

In an unprecedented move, all 55 of the 2009 State Teachers of the Year have come together in this project, joined by several dozen



*“I know what a kind word can do when I get the postcard or e-mail from a student who I can barely remember that says, “You may not remember me, but I became a teacher because of your class,” or “You may not remember me, but the things I learned in your program have made me the person I am today.” What an incredible and terrifying responsibility.”*

– Roy Hudson: *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Teacher Tales*

other teachers and appreciative students, to write their stories. Hudson decided to submit his contribution to the collection of educational antidotes in the form of a real-life situation that he experienced. A sample from Hudson's story (below) exemplifies the sheer power a teacher can have on the life of a student.

Hudson said he hopes his story is inspirational to teachers and future teachers alike. “It has been such an honor to represent all Alabama's teachers as the 2009

Teacher of the Year, and it has been overwhelming to be able to include one of my stories in *Chicken Soup for the Soul* with my fellow state teachers,” Hudson said. “I hope that this edition of *Teacher Tales* will inspire and motivate a new generation of teachers and help to remind veteran teachers why they chose education as their calling in life.”

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON said Hudson's contributions to the book are enlightening and entertaining. He said Hudson represented Alabama well as Teacher of the Year, and he continues to do so as one of Alabama's most notable educators.

“From the work that he has done in theatre and the arts with his students, to the exemplary way he represented, and still represents, Alabama as the 2009 Teacher of the Year, he's a class act,” Morton said. ●

# Teacher Testing Lawsuit Dismissed After Nearly 30 Years of Litigation

Closure of *Allen v. Board of Education* Case Ensures Subject-Matter Teacher Testing

ON DECEMBER 15, 1981, the *Allen v. Alabama Board of Education* lawsuit was filed contesting that the Alabama Initial Teacher Certification Testing program was racially biased. Since that time, numerous attempts have been made to make sure all teacher testing in the state of Alabama is valid, job-related, and unbiased. After decades of litigation, consent decrees, court orders, monitoring, and redeveloping of the teacher certification testing program, an order has been issued terminating the *Allen v. Alabama Board of Education* litigation, allowing fair and equitable testing that makes sure all teachers demonstrate knowledge of the subject they teach.

“It’s a monumental day in our state’s history,” said STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON. “I want the Alabama public to understand the milestone of this event and to know that every person who wants to teach in Alabama classrooms will have to pass a subject-matter test in what they plan to teach. A math teacher must pass a written math test, a physics teacher must pass a physics test, and so on. It’s been a long journey, but it was the right thing to do.”

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE MYRON THOMPSON signed the final order for dismissal on January 27, 2010. The dismissal came after the Alabama Department of Education submitted extensive evidence that teacher testing in Alabama met all stipulations required by

**1981-2010**  
LENGTH OF THE ALLEN VS. ALABAMA  
BOARD OF EDUCATION LAWSUIT

law. The final tests were validated through local bias studies and content validation studies that confirmed the importance and job relevance of all test content. Alignment studies were performed to make sure test specifications lined up with teachers and students, and other statistical tests that authenticate the tests’ validity were performed. ●

## March is Youth Art Month!

IT CAN GIVE a student a deeper understanding of life, values, and beliefs. It can sharpen critical thinking abilities and build creativity. It reinforces and brings to life what students learn in other subjects.

What is this wonderful thing that expresses beauty and shows the world to students? It is Art.

March is Youth Art Month and it is an opportunity to showcase the creative and imaginative ways that Alabama students express themselves and the world around them. Schools all over the state will have learning opportunities for students in the area of painting, sculpture, graphic design, and more.

The Alabama State Council on the Arts, the Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts, the Alabama Music Educators Association, the Alabama Art Education Association, the Alabama Alliance for

Arts Education, the Alabama Chapter of Educational Theatre Association, and the Alabama Dance Council have all voiced their support for Youth Art Month and will help to showcase art in Alabama’s schools this month.

Youth Art Month also celebrates the educators that work hard every day to open the door to creativity for students. Art teachers work hard to show the vital and enriching nature of art as an essential part of education.

For more information on art activities in your area, [CLICK HERE](#). ●

## Superintendent’s Visual Arts Exhibit

MORE THAN 400 STUDENT ARTISTS statewide entered the 2010 State Superintendent’s Visual Arts Exhibit, an annual event to showcase the artistic talents of Alabama’s public school students in Grades K-12. The exhibit was on display from February 8-20 in the Old Supreme Court Library in the State Capitol. On February 11, the Alabama State Board of Education honored the student winners and their teachers at the K-12 board meeting.



One winner, SARAH GRACE MOODY (Scottsboro City), was “honored and excited” to be part of the event. Her teacher, ANGEL CHANEY, submitted the hand-colored black and white photograph Moody took of a friend near a dilapidated structure in a rural area. Also attending was student NOAH PETERSEN (Shelby County). His Calera High School art teacher, KATHERINE STUART, submitted his photograph of a fellow classmate into Shelby County’s judging round, and Noah’s photograph was selected for the State Award.

Sponsors of the State Superintendent’s Visual Arts Exhibit include the Alabama Department of Education, Alabama Alliance for Arts in Education, Alabama Arts License Tag Grant, and Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts. ●

# Alabama State Board of Education To Extend Deadline for Professional Educator Certificates

THE ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION has announced intent that effective **SEPTEMBER 1, 2010**, the Alabama Department of Education (SDE) will no longer automatically accept applications for the Alabama Professional Educator Certificate in educational administration or instructional leadership based on completion of programs in other states.

A deadline of August 31, 2009, for the receipt of certificate applications from individuals who completed educational administration programs at out-of-state institutions was previously announced by STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON, who indicated that it was imperative that local superintendents share that information with their teachers.

Based on Dr. Morton's recommendation, the Board announced intent to extend that deadline until **August 31, 2010**. The Board will conduct a public hearing on the proposed change at its regular meeting on April 8, 2010.

*"Alabama is committed to improving the quality of instructional leadership in Alabama schools and school systems to ensure a focus on improving student performance. Alabama has been recognized by the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the Wallace Foundation for our statewide commitment to implement only programs focused on improving instruction."*

*– Dr. Joe Morton, State Superintendent of Education*

## August 31, 2010 THE NEW DEADLINE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR CERTIFICATES

Alabama will continue to process applications for an Alabama Professional Educator Certificate in educational administration or instructional leadership from applicants who:

1. Hold a valid certificate in educational administration or instructional leadership from the state where a state-approved program was completed.
2. Have at least three full years of acceptable administrative experience.
3. Document compliance with Alabama's testing and background clearance requirements.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) will work with SDE staff to monitor other states' efforts to redesign preparation programs. Alabama should be able to honor programs completed at out-of-state institutions when comparable statewide efforts are confirmed by the SREB.

Questions? Call 334-353-8567 or e-mail [tcert@alsde.edu](mailto:tcert@alsde.edu).



## Join Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) and iTunes U in the Podcast Revolution!

GALLERY360°, ALABAMA'S PODCAST TREASURY, offers **FREE** content from schools, universities, museums, science centers, and more! All

podcasts are aligned to Alabama Courses of Study Standards and are available to teachers, students, and parents around the world 24/7.

Join the revolution and create your own podcast! Some podcast ideas include video book reports, hands-on labs, and virtual field trips. Creating and sharing your own podcast is easy:

1. Create your enhanced video podcast using tools of your choice.
2. Save your video as a Quicktime Movie, Windows Media, or Mpeg4 file.
3. Upload your file through the ALEX Personal Workspace. Approved podcasts are included on gallery360°, and selected podcasts are included on the Alabama iTunes U site!

To find out more about gallery360°, iTunes U, and ALEX, [CLICK HERE](#).



### Enter the Governor's iChallenge Podcast Competition!

**DEADLINE: MAY 31, 2010**

## RAVE and RAMP Awards Recognized at the ALSCA Awards Luncheon



School Counselors (l to r) Judy Stoppelbein, Yolanda Williams, Stephanie Holcomb, Dianne Thompson-McDonald, Becky Murray, Leticia Varner, Jana Lee, Tammy Cauthen, and Mary Wilson Kearney proudly display their RAVE Awards presented at the annual ALSCA Awards Luncheon.

The Alabama School Counselor Association (ALSCA) recognized exemplary programs that demonstrated successful implementation of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model. At the state level, the Recognition of Accountability, Verification, and Excellence (RAVE) Awards were presented at the ALSCA Awards Luncheon in November 2009.

CELESTE NEIL, now retired counselor of Vestavia Hills Elementary-West, with her former principal BECKY PATTON received a certificate of recognition from ALSCA President NANCY WOLFE for national achievement by her Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) Award in 2008. [Visit the ALSCA website](#) under Divisions/Committees on for details on the RAVE Award.

## 2010 Junior/High School Student State Beef Cook-Off Winners



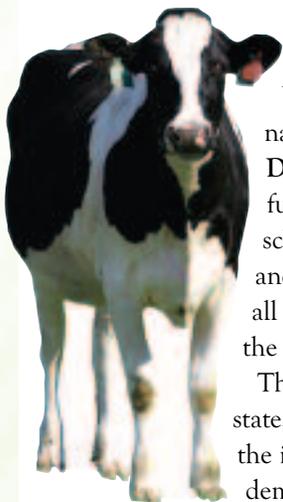
Congratulations to OANH NGUYEN (Samson High School, Geneva County) for winning First Place in the State Beef Cook-Off! The competition was held Saturday, January 16, and was sponsored by the Alabama Beef Producers. She received \$350 and won a microwave and \$100 for the Family and Consumer Sciences classroom at Samson High School.



Oanh Nguyen and her prize-winning recipe.

	STUDENT	SCHOOL SYSTEM	SCHOOL	RECIPE	
SOUTH REGION	1st Place	Oanh Nguyen	Geneva County	Samson High	Beef Sauté with Steamed Jasmine Rice
	2nd Place	Andrew Bass	Dallas County	William R. Martin Middle	Spinach & Mushroom Beef
	3rd Place	Ryan Barfoot	Elmore County	Holtville High	Cowboy Steak
NORTH REGION	1st Place	Kaitlin Snoddy	Winston County	Double Springs Middle	Hearty Beef Enchiladas
	2nd Place	Abigail Stapler	Limestone County	East Limestone High	Abby's Flat Iron Steak
	3rd Place	Summer Isbell	St. Clair County	Moody High	Thai Beef Wraps

## Mobile Dairy Classroom Program Brings Milk Cows to Students



THE SOUTHWEST DAIRY MUSEUM, INC., a local promotional and educational organization funded entirely by local dairy farmer producers in Alabama and through the national check-off program, is proud to sponsor the **Mobile Dairy Classroom**. This 32-foot traveling classroom features a fully operational milking parlor and carries a LIVE milk cow to school, fairs, and, festivals throughout the Southwestern states and also Alabama. The Mobile Dairy Classroom is enjoyed by all ages, but targeted toward elementary school students through the twelfth grade.

The Mobile Dairy Classroom is often a featured exhibitor in state, district, and county fairs. Trained instructors teach audiences the importance of wholesome dairy foods in a healthy diet as they demonstrate the modern milking process with an emphasis on

environmental practices, food safety, and animal care. This program includes an oral presentation by a trained instructor, printed material for teachers, an actual milking demonstration, and a question and answer period. Recognizing the importance of a proper diet and a desire to inform individuals of the vital role agriculture plays in their lives, the dairy farm families of the Southwest and here in Alabama sponsor this exhibit at **no charge** to schools.

For complete program information [CLICK HERE](#).

# AWARDS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE [ALABAMA EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE \(AETC\)](#) IS BACK IN BIRMINGHAM JUNE 8-11! This exciting technology-centered conference will feature guest speakers, hands-on workshops, an exhibit hall, and much more! For complete information, including requirements to present a one-hour concurrent session, [CLICK HERE](#) or e-mail [tatchison@alsde.edu](mailto:tatchison@alsde.edu).



[2010 AMERICA'S GREENEST SCHOOL CONTEST](#)<sup>SM</sup>: Submit an entry explaining what you'd do if you were in charge of making your school a greener, more eco-friendly place. Entry can be in the form of a photo collection, music, video, essay, or photos of a diorama, collage, or piece of artwork. **DEADLINE: MARCH 8, 2010**

[ALABAMA TRANSITION CONFERENCE XX](#): March 8-9, 2010; The Marriott at Grand National, Auburn-Opelika, AL

[\\$10,000 PRESERVE AMERICA HISTORY TEACHER OF THE YEAR](#): State winners each receive \$1,000 and an archive of books and other resources for their schools. The 2010 Award will honor a middle or high school teacher (Grades 7-12). [Nominate a history teacher online](#) or contact program coordinator at [htoy@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:htoy@gilderlehrman.org) or 646-366-9666, ext. 28. **DEADLINE: March 15, 2010**

[ALABAMA HISTORY EDUCATION INITIATIVE JUNE 21-25, 2010](#). Elementary (beginning with Grade 4) and secondary social studies teachers will create curriculum units for statewide distribution and publication. Teachers of gifted, ELL, and special education may also apply. Contact Susan R. DuBose, Alabama Department of Archives and History, [susan.dubose@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:susan.dubose@archives.alabama.gov) or 334-242-4364. **DEADLINE: March 15, 2010**

[FREE BE READY CAMPS](#) for 6th graders during National Preparedness Month: September 7-11, September 14-18, or September 21-25; U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Huntsville, AL. **DEADLINE: April 1, 2010**



[THE ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION](#): is accepting applications to the 2010-2011 Youth Advisory Board (ages 8-17). [Apply online](#) at or contact [empowerme@healthiergeneration.org](mailto:empowerme@healthiergeneration.org). **DEADLINE: APRIL 2, 2010**

[HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY](#) is **SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2010**, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has designated "Stories of Freedom: What You Do Matters" as the theme for the 2010 Days of Remembrance. For questions contact: [dordvd@ushmm.org](mailto:dordvd@ushmm.org).



[FREE ALABAMA AG IN THE CLASSROOM \(AITC\) SUMMER INSTITUTE 2010 JUNE 2-4, 2010](#) Mobile, AL. Roundtrip mileage, lodging, meals, classroom materials, stipend, and CEUs will be furnished to participants. **DEADLINE: APRIL 15, 2010**

## CALENDAR/UPCOMING EVENTS

### MARCH

ARTS EDUCATION MONTH  
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH  
NATIONAL READING MONTH  
TRANSITION AWARENESS MONTH

March 11 .....Alabama State Board of Education Meeting  
March 25.....Alabama State Board of Education Work Session

### APRIL

April 8 .....State Board of Education Meeting  
April 22 .....State Board of Education Work Session  
April 11-17 .....National Library Week  
April 26 .....Confederate Memorial Day

## MARCH AEN TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Initiative Helps Alabama Students Get Jobs .....1-2
- Alabama Gains in Advanced Placement/Roy Hudson in National Book ...3
- Youth Art Month/Superintendent's Visual Arts Exhibit .....4
- Professional Educator Certificate Deadline/ALEX and Podcasting .....5
- Good News in Alabama Schools .....6
- Awards, Opportunities, and Professional Development .....7

[Have a comment about Alabama Education News? Participate in the AEN Readers' Survey!](#)

## ALFA NAMES FEBRUARY TEACHER OF MONTH



Step inside STEPHANE SINGLETON's first-grade classroom at Harlan Elementary and you might find yourself too "at home" to leave. Why? Past the desks and overhead projector await the cozy, familiar finds of an average living room.



Though her ability to make a room feel inviting and safe helps her young students better adjust to life outside of their homes, it is

her passion for teaching and energetic spirit that helped earn her recognition as Alfa's Teacher of the Month. As February's honoree, Singleton will receive \$1,000 from Alfa Insurance and her school, a part of the Florence City School System, will receive a matching award from the Alabama Farmers Federation.

While this award will allow her to enhance her teaching methods, Singleton is fortunate enough to find frequent reminders of her talents on the faces of the children she instructs. "The rewards I find in teaching are immeasurable. Having the opportunity to touch lives every day is a precious gift," she explained.

During 2010, Alfa Insurance and the Alabama Farmers Federation will honor one outstanding teacher from each of Alabama's eight State Board districts, two principals, and two private school teachers. Application information is available under Alfa Teacher of the Month in the Ag Links section of [AlfaFarmers.org](http://AlfaFarmers.org).

Contributed by Melissa Martin

## ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION FEBRUARY BOARD BRIEFS

- Resolution in Recognition of Lily Patterson, Locust Fork Elementary School, Blount County School System, Winner of the 2010 "Bring Our Missing Children Home" Poster Contest (School Board District VI)
- Resolution Proclaiming February 1-28, 2010, as Alabama Career and Technical Education Month
- Resolution Proclaiming February 8-12, 2010, as "Growing Our Own Week" in Alabama - A Special Statewide Celebration for Alabama's Teachers
- Presentation Honoring Dr. Joseph B. Morton as Receiving an Honorary American FFA Degree from National FFA
- Resolution in Recognition of March 2010 as "Arts Education Month" in Alabama Schools
- Resolution in Recognition of the 2010 Annual State Superintendent's Visual Arts Exhibit

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 Ed."