



# ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

FEBRUARY 2010

## WHAT ARE CHARTER SCHOOLS?

Charter schools are public – NOT private – schools that are free to be more innovative, but are still held accountable for improved student achievement. Charter schools foster an environment in which parents can be more involved, teachers have the freedom to innovate, and students get the structure they need to learn.

# CHARTER SCHOOLS IN ALABAMA?

## WHY SHOULD ALABAMA HAVE CHARTER SCHOOLS?



*“Charter schools are public schools without the bureaucracy that limits their ability to succeed.”*  
– Gov. Bob Riley



*“A charter school’s primary goal is to provide improved academic and fiscal accountability.”*  
– State Superintendent of Education Joe Morton



*“Charter schools typically have more flexibility in curriculum, scheduling, staffing, how funds are used, etc. They have a performance contract and can be closed if they do not meet it.”*  
– Todd Ziebarth  
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

## 11 STATES THAT DO NOT HAVE CHARTER SCHOOLS:

- ALABAMA
- MAINE
- MONTANA
- NORTH DAKOTA
- SOUTH DAKOTA
- VERMONT
- WASHINGTON
- WEST VIRGINIA
- KENTUCKY
- MISSISSIPPI
- NEBRASKA



**In December,** GOV. BOB RILEY asked the State Board of Education to support his efforts to authorize charter schools in Alabama. Gov. Riley told the State Board of Education that authorizing charter schools would give Alabama a better chance to compete for as much as \$200 million in federal funds for states with innovative educational programs. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) Race to the Top application gives 40 points – out of 500 – to states with charter schools or laws allowing charter schools.

On January 14, the State Board of Education unanimously adopted “*Resolution in Support of Charter School Legislation in Alabama.*” “We have a responsibility to provide the students of Alabama with the best public education possible,” said STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON. “That responsibility challenges us to use every available resource effectively and efficiently, and to explore new and innovative means of providing quality education throughout the state of Alabama.”

MARK DIXON, the governor’s education policy adviser, stated Alabama is one of only eleven states without a charter schools law; therefore, Alabama can learn from

*continued on next page ...*

*Inside this AEN*

continued from front ...

best practices established in other states. The vast majority of southern states also have charter schools. Dixon further explained that charter schools can:

1. Be a tool for both local school boards and the State Board of Education to turn around low-performing schools.
2. Allow local boards to be more innovative in addressing the needs of their students.

Charter school funding would be just like other public schools: the money follows the child. According to TODD ZIEBARTH of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, charter schools often operate on 78 cents to the dollar compared to traditional public schools. Charter schools do not have the same administrative costs as other public schools and the same funding resources can be used differently (reallocated and unearmarked). “Rather than draining dollars, charter schools actually bring new resources into public education in the form of federal dollars and private grants,” explained Ziebarth. “Charter schools can have an immediate and long-term positive fiscal impact on communities.”

- More than 1.5 million students attend over 4,900 public charter schools in 39 states and the District of Columbia (2009-2010)
- 62% of public charter school students are non-white
- The student population has grown 11% and the number of schools has grown 8% since one year ago (2007-2008)
- 56% of students attend charter schools in large cities and 14% are enrolled in charter schools in rural areas
- Nationally, the average public charter school has been open 6.2 years

Source: [www.publiccharters.org](http://www.publiccharters.org)

Dr. Morton stated, “Charter schools are not private or religious-based schools. They cannot charge tuition or discriminate against any group of students. The fact that 39 other states, as well as Puerto Rico and D.C., have legislation enabling the establishment of charter schools is a testament that the idea has merit. However, there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ charter school. Alabama has the opportunity to fashion its charter school law by learning from the mistakes and successes of others. Charter schools should unite, not divide us.”

## CHARTER SCHOOLS: MYTH vs. FACT

**MYTH:** Charter schools take support and resources away from other public schools.

**FACT:** First and foremost, charter schools ARE public schools and they operate in the interest of public school students. Charter schools use funds and other resources intended and designated by the tax-paying public for educating public school students. Moving dollars from a public school to a public charter school is just like moving dollars from one public school to another. Plus, there are federal grants to give new charter schools start-up funding. The state and federal dollars will continue to follow the student.

**MYTH:** Charter schools attract all the best students and most involved parents and leave the rest of the public schools with the harder-to-educate students and parents who don't care.

**FACT:** Charter schools are public schools for ALL students. Charter schools don't attract just the “good” students. In fact, to the contrary; nationwide they serve a higher percentage of students traditionally considered to be low-achieving or otherwise “at-risk.”

**MYTH:** Charter schools exclude students with behavioral or academic problems, those from minority groups or low-income families, or those with other special needs.

**FACT:** Charter schools, just like all other public schools, are not permitted to discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability. Charter schools cannot charge tuition, and unlike some magnet schools, they cannot have selective admission requirements based on academics or any other criteria. Charter schools enroll any and all students who wish to attend, using a lottery to select students if the school is oversubscribed.

**MYTH:** Charter schools will operate without regard for accountability, business ethics, or educational integrity.

**FACT:** Nothing could be further from the truth. Like other public schools, charter schools must operate within the provisions of state and federal law. They must meet state standards for education, take state tests, and meet all accountability requirements. They must abide by health, safety, and civil rights laws, and cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin. Charter employees are subject to background checks to uncover any criminal activity or financial improprieties. Charter governance bodies are subject to various business regulations, such as ethical financial practices, and public body rules, such as open meeting laws. In fact, charter schools have higher accountability standards. If they do not meet the performance requirements laid out in their charter, they can be closed.

# AMSTI and ALEX Take Math To The Next Level

Thrilled to achieve “head of the class” status together, the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) and the Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) have unveiled a unique partnership in learning.



LAST SUMMER, 24 exemplary AMSTI teachers and seven AMSTI specialists from the Alabama Department of Education met in Pelham, Alabama, to create exciting ALEX lessons to help teachers creatively meet new Math Course of Study standards. These AMSTI-trained teachers and specialists worked diligently to create high-quality 21st Century lesson plans that incorporate the five E’s of learning (*Engage, Explore, Explain, Evaluate, and Extend*), technology, higher-order thinking skills, and best practices.

These lessons are all free, accessible through ALEX, and are all linked to Alabama Courses of Study by subject and grade level. To see the lesson plans, [CLICK HERE](#), click on “search,” and type in “AMSTI.” Commenting on this valuable partnership, **DR. TOMMY BICE**, Deputy State Superintendent of Education, stated, “The partnership between AMSTI and ALEX, both award-winning programs, illustrates how the Alabama Department of Education is working together to bring the very best 21st Century web resources to our students and teachers.”

AMSTI is the Alabama Department of Education’s initiative to improve math and science teaching statewide. Its mission is to provide all students in Grades K-12 with the knowledge and skills needed for success in the workforce and/or postsecondary studies. The premise behind AMSTI is that students learn math and science best by doing hands-on math and science, especially when they are able to relate it to their daily lives.

ALEX and AMSTI are a natural fit in that they both are vehicles to help teachers identify and use the best lessons possible to help students achieve academic excellence.

ALEX, a national “Best of the Web” award-winner for three years in a row, provides lessons in every subject and every grade level K-12.

ALEX and AMSTI also have plans to collaborate again in the future! ALEX will support AMSTI specialists in the use of 21st Century Skills by training them to use tools, such as podcasting, cameras, web 2.0 social networking tools, and interactive whiteboards that engage both the learner and teacher!

For complete information about this unique AMSTI/ALEX partnership, contact AMSTI Elementary Math Specialist [Diane Duncan](#) or ALEX State Program Administrator [Dr. Shannon Parks](#).

## Schools Statewide Celebrate Alabama Career and Technical Education

THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY is one of America’s best known times of year for special events and celebrations: Presidents’ Day, Black History Month, Valentine’s Day, and even Super Bowl Sunday. And since 2004, Alabama’s teachers, students, parents, and top business professionals statewide have celebrated what has become a new tradition in our state – February is Alabama Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month.

To celebrate CTE Month, local school systems throughout the state have planned some great activities. Many local career tech programs are sponsoring career fairs, college and business tours, Job Shadowing Days, and professional dress and etiquette workshops for students.



“We are one of the best resources to prepare students for postsecondary learning,” says **SHERRY KEY**, Director of Alabama Career and Technical Education. “We want all Alabamians to understand the level of career preparation and leadership development students receive in our programs. Our students explore career options in more than 300 courses offered statewide, earn advanced diplomas, and can receive college credit while still in high school.

CTE Month is just a great time for everyone to visit our programs to see all of the hands-on learning taking place in our classrooms.”

Additional statewide events that will be celebrated as part of Alabama CTE Month this year are:

- **Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda Week** – February 8-12
- **Growing Our Own Week (students interested in teaching professions)** – February 8-12
- **Alabama Entrepreneurship Week (students and business ownership)** – February 20-27

To learn more about Alabama CTE Month or any of the special celebration activities taking place in your community, contact your local Board of Education; visit [CLICK HERE](#); or contact Alabama CTE Information Specialist, **EDWARD CRENSHAW**, at 334-353-5220.

# High Schools That Work

*“High Schools That Work (HSTW) is an effort-based school improvement initiative founded on the conviction that most students can master rigorous academic and career/technical studies if school leaders and teachers create an environment that motivates students to make the effort to succeed.” (SREB publication)*



HSTW is the largest and oldest of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) school improvement initiatives for high school leaders and teachers. More than 1,200 HSTW sites in 31 states are using the framework of HSTW Goals and Key Practices to raise student achievement. There are 39 high schools and 8 technical centers actively involved in HSTW and Technology Centers That Work (TCTW) in Alabama and are similar in design and implementation to Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) but focuses on Grades 9-12.

“HSTW helps to take schools from good to great,” (*“Good to Great” is a concept by Jim Collins, author of the book “Good to Great: why some companies make the leap and others don’t”*) says DAWN MORRISON, Education Specialist and HSTW State Coordinator for the Alabama Department of Education. “The Key Practices that HSTW uses to improve schools make the difference. The Key Practices are customizable but provide the core for a new start for the school and the students in it.”

Schools that have not performed well for a consistent amount of time are chosen or volunteer for the HSTW framework. The improvements begin with a two-day professional development workshop, in which teachers and school leaders meet and are given an overview of the Key Practices vital to the framework. An action plan for the school is created after this workshop, and priorities for the next several years are named. It is strongly encouraged that 85% of the faculty and staff “buy in” to the new plan for reform and improvement in order to begin. The teachers begin to receive professional development and resources to

learn how to create the change they desire to see in the students’ achievement and behavior.

The transition from eighth to ninth grade is a tough time for many students, so there is a heavy focus on this time. HSTW concentrates on helping students to be ready for the classes that they will take once they arrive in high school. Four- to six-week summer programs help with the transition for students who need further study to succeed in high school. There is a heavy focus on the students once they enter the ninth grade because this is the year that students find most difficult – academically and socially.

Accelerating student achievement by requiring some key conditions such as having a mission statement, strong leadership and a commitment to goals among others is a way that HSTW promotes improvement among the faculty and students that subscribe the framework. Curriculum is focused on heavily, with more expected of the students. For example, students should complete at least four credits in mathematics that include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and a fourth higher-level math course prior to graduation. Four years of lab-based science and classes that focus on one area of concentration are required as well.

The *HSTW Assessment*, administered to seniors in even-numbered years, is used by *HSTW* and *TCTW* states, districts, and schools to document and inform school improvement efforts. The assessment includes three subject tests (reading, mathematics, and science), a student survey, and a teacher survey. This assessment provides comprehensive school-level data that disaggregate students’

achievement by their perceptions of school and classroom experiences. These results have given schools, districts, and states a unique opportunity to determine what is and what is not working to increase student achievement.

The *High Schools That Work Assessment* consistently shows the value of high-quality career and technical studies in raising the achievement of career-oriented high school students and contributing to their success in the workplace and further education.

During the 2008 administration period, a total of 71 Alabama high school seniors, from schools all across the state, have earned a prestigious national award, the *High Schools That Work (HSTW) Award of*

*Educational Achievement*. This award is given to high school seniors who complete a challenging and focused program of study, and demonstrate readiness for

... continued on page 7

## Framework for HSTW

1. High expectations
2. Program of study
3. Academic studies
4. Career/technical studies
5. Work-based learning
6. Teachers working together
7. Students actively engaged
8. Guidance
9. Extra help
10. Culture of continuous improvement

# ACCESS Distance Learning Gets International Attention

THE SUCCESS that ACCESS (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, & Students Statewide) Distance Learning has achieved through the formula of blended learning – a mix of synchronous (real time) and asynchronous (not coordinated in time) course delivery is undeniable. ACCESS has allowed high school students across the state to be part of a world of learning to which they would not normally have access, providing them with the opportunity to take core courses, electives, Advanced Placement courses, and courses that are not taught at their schools. ACCESS has also helped thousands of high school students to graduate by providing them with online remediation modules for the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam*.

ACCESS has also taken on another large role in the world of distance learning. Several international visitors have visited Alabama recently solely to study how ACCESS helps students to achieve more. In a recent visit from **Ms. STACEY KELLY**, the Collaborative Learning Technologies Officer for Rural and Distance Education in New South Wales (NSW), **Australia**, ACCESS employees showed Kelly the inner workings of Alabama's distance learning environment and gave campus tours of support centers and of some of the best examples of ACCESS in local high schools in the state.

ACCESS staff also recently hosted an educational technology specialist/consultant



working with a school in **South Africa** who was making a second visit to Alabama to obtain more information on the success of ACCESS. The consultant toured ACCESS sites in Hoover, Dothan, and Goshen and viewed videoconferencing and blended classes delivered to students in those schools. Topics such as infrastructure requirements and student reception to the technologies have been discussed in order for other groups to replicate some or all of the success ACCESS has achieved. A Web conference with **Alaskan** education officials was also held in December to allow them to ask questions and gain insight on the framework Alabama has put in place as Alaska moves forward to implement and utilize distance learning.

**MARTHA DONALDSON**, Program Administrator for ACCESS, notes that "ACCESS implemented a blended approach to course delivery that was not the 'norm' in most states, but that decision has brought ACCESS national attention and praise. Today, blended or hybrid learning is recognized internationally as a promising instructional delivery method that can address the individual learning styles of students," Donaldson continued. "As a result, the research and long-range planning conducted by Alabama has paid off for its students and made the state a leader in the field of distance learning. Based on the number of 2008-2009 course enrollments, the 2009 'Keeping Pace With K-12 Online Learning' report ranks ACCESS as the second largest state virtual school in the nation."

**DR. MELINDA MADDOX**, Director of Technology Initiatives, says "We are continually developing solutions for our varied student needs while maintaining high-quality instruction. Our students, teachers, counselors, and principals are stepping up to the challenge."

For more information about ACCESS Distance Learning, contact Technology Initiatives at 334-242-9594, **DR. MELINDA MADDOX**, or [CLICK HERE](#).



## CELEBRATE ACCESS DISTANCE LEARNING WEEK: FEBRUARY 1 - 5, 2010

ACCESS Distance Learning Week kicks off with an Open House at the three ACCESS Support Centers in **Madison**, **Tuscaloosa**, and **Troy**. Interactive activities will be offered throughout the week. A variety of educational videoconferencing and Web conferencing sessions from sites throughout our state, nation, and other countries will also be available. For a complete schedule of the week's activities, [CLICK HERE](#) or call 334-242-9594.



## Fifth Grade Student Wins \$10,000 Savings Bond

Congratulations to **RUPA PALANKI**, a fifth grader from Council Traditional School (*Mobile County Schools*) and the recipient of a \$10,000 savings bond. She won first place in the ninth annual HOAR Construction/GMAC Bowl Reading and Writing Awards Program. Rupa's entry beat out fifth-grade students from all over the state of Alabama and the gulf coast regions of Florida and Mississippi. The Hoar Construction and GMAC Bowl *Learning Through Reading* Contest required students to read a book and submit a written book report of 250 words or less. The judges narrowed it down to 10 finalists who then competed for first place. Fourth graders watched as savings bonds were given to the 10 finalists in amounts ranging from \$500 to Rupa's prize of \$10,000!

State Board Member: Randy McKinney, District 1 · Superintendent: Dr. Roy D. Nichols · Principal: Hattie Alexander



Council Traditional School  
Principal Ms. Hattie Alexander  
and Rupa Palanki

## Eufaula School Visited by the "FBI"

Eufaula Elementary School (EES) is receiving numerous visits from the "FBI" this year, but that's a good thing. Two new parent groups have formed at EES called Fathers Being Involved (FBI) and Mothers In Action (MIA). Principal **REEIVICE GIRTMAN** says that parental involvement is key to a child's development - both academically and socially. A presentation he made to several fathers this semester showed that kids whose parents aren't involved in their lives are twice as likely to drop out of school.

State Board Member: Betty Peters, District 2

Superintendent: Dr. Barry Sadler · Principal: Reevince Girtman



## "Pride of the South" Band Performs

The Daleville High School "Pride of the South" Marching Band recently performed at the 74th Annual AT&T Cotton Bowl in Dallas, Texas. The band was one out of 15 bands accepted to perform. While there, students participated in a nationally televised New Year's Day parade and won first place in two concert and marching competitions. Congratulations to Daleville Band Director **MARK NICHOLS** for earning such an honor.

State Board Member: Betty Peters, District 2

Superintendent: Andrew Kelley · Principal: Mike McDuffie

## Montgomery High School Wins

Jeff Davis High School won first place in the South Region Upper Division of the Alabama Stock Market Game, competing against 344 teams in the southeast region. In addition, the team submitted the largest (and best) stock portfolio and received additional first, second, and fourth place awards in the categories of virtual stock market and best portfolio. Also, Jeff Davis Career and Technical Education teacher **ROCHELLE SEALS** won a Career Technology Prize. The competition is sponsored by the Alabama Council on Economic Development.



State Board Member: Stephanie Bell, District 3

Superintendent: Barbara W. Thompson

Principal: Marie-France Renee Kostick

## Alabama High Schools Named Top Schools in the Nation



Three Montgomery Public Schools were named among the top schools in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. For the second year in a row, **Loveless Academic Magnet Program** was named the fourth best magnet school in the U.S. and was number 20 in ranking for the "Gold Medal" high schools in the nation. **Booker T. Washington Magnet** and **Brewbaker Technology Magnet** were both named Bronze winners.

State Board Member: Ella Bell, District 5

Superintendent: Barbara W. Thompson

Booker T. Washington Magnet School Principal: Quesha Starks

Brewbaker Technology Magnet School Principal: Robert Hunter

Loveless Academic Magnet Program Principal: Mary Elizabeth Norman

## High Schools That Work (continued from page 4)

employment and college studies. Students qualify for this award by completing a college-preparatory course of study in at least two of three different subject areas (English/language arts, mathematics, or science), while also completing a rigorous concentration in a career and technical education, math/science, or humanities program of study. Finally, students must also meet all readiness goals in at least three subject areas on a HSTW Assessment. Alabama students receive the *HSTW Award of Educational Achievement* as a result of their efforts performed on the HSTW Assessment, results of which should be available in April.

Students receiving the *HSTW Award of Educational Achievement* may be eligible to receive an *Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)* of \$750 for their first year of study and \$1,300 for their second year of study at a two-year or four-year postsecondary institution. ●

### High Schools That Work Testimonials

*"I think that the professional development offered to schools by SREB is excellent. The HSTW Model helps schools look inward through data to improve student learning."*  
– Dr. Diane Holman, Assistant Superintendent, Ozark City

*"The HSTW framework was a natural fit for Northview because it is not a "canned" program. It is a capacity building philosophy."* – Ron Snell, Principal, Northview High School, Dothan City

*"HSTW is a very good concept for improving the rigor and expectations in high schools."* – Sherlisa Barnes, Graduation Coach, Calhoun High School, Lowndes County

## Awards, Opportunities, and Professional Development

[FRIENDS OF THE ALABAMA ARCHIVES 2010 STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS](#) for college seniors and graduate students to conduct research or participate in a supervised internship at the Archives. **DEADLINE: February 19, 2010**

[ANNUAL ENGINEERGIRL ESSAY CONTEST](#). Every year the National Academy of Engineering sponsors an engineering essay contest on its EngineerGirl Web site for students across the nation. Students in Grades 3-12 can compete for cash prizes in this year's contest entitled "Survival Design Challenge." Guidelines and related information about the contest can be found on the [EngineerGirl Web site](#). **DEADLINE: March 1, 2010**

[SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE IN ARTS EDUCATION AWARD](#) highlights schools that have developed exemplary art education programs. Award winning schools will be recognized at a ceremony and have the opportunity for national recognition. **DEADLINE: March 2, 2010**

[GILDER LEHRMAN HISTORY SCHOLARS PROGRAM](#) in American history is open to college sophomores and juniors to attend programs in New York City. **DEADLINE: March 3, 2010**

[THE 2010 \\$10,000 PRESERVE AMERICA HISTORY TEACHER OF THE YEAR](#) will honor a middle or high school (Grades 7-12) history teacher this year. To nominate a teacher online, [CLICK HERE](#) or contact Gilder Lehrman History Teacher of the Year 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](#) () for elementary (beginning with Grade 4) and secondary social studies, gifted, ELL, and special education teachers. Contact [Susan R. DuBose](#), Alabama Department of Archives and History at 334-242-4364. **DEADLINE: March 15, 2010**

## Changes to Instructional Leadership Certificate Renewal

### FIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING UNITS NOW REQUIRED FOR RENEWAL

Individuals who hold certificates in areas of administration and/or supervision will now be required to earn five Professional Learning Units (PLU) before renewing the Instructional Leadership certificate. To continue a certificate you must update it without allowing it to lapse by meeting PLU requirements prior to September 1, 2010. The application to continue a certificate must be received in the Teacher Education and Certification Office between January 1, 2010, and December 31, 2010; otherwise, the certificate(s) must be reinstated. For more information on Instructional Leadership certificate renewal, please contact the Teacher Certification Office at 334-353-8567 or [CLICK HERE](#).

# CALENDAR *of events*

## FEBRUARY

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

### CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

Feb. 1-5 ....National School Counseling Week

Feb. 11 .....Alabama State Board of Education Meeting

Feb. 15 .....George Washington/Thomas Jefferson Birthday

Feb. 25 ....Alabama State Board of Education Work Session

## MARCH

### ARTS EDUCATION MONTH - WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

### NATIONAL READING MONTH

TRANSITION AWARENESS MONTH (Students with disabilities transitioning from high school into postsecondary)

Mar. 11 .....Alabama State Board of Education Meeting

Mar. 25 ....Alabama State Board of Education Work Session

## BOARD *briefs*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2010

- Resolution Commending Elisa Foster, “Barbara Fannin Memorial Employee of the Quarter”, January – March 2010
- Resolution Recognizing George Hall Elementary School in the Mobile County School System, Recipient of the Education Trust Dispelling the Myth Award (School Board District I)
- Resolution in Recognition of February 1-5, 2010, as National School Counseling Week
- Resolution in Support of Charter School Legislation

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.”

## ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

Volume 33 • No. 5 • February 2010

Managing Editor: Michael O. Sibley

Contributing Editors: Ed Crenshaw, Anne P. Graham, and Malissa Valdes

Graphic Artists: Mary Nell Shaw and Charles V. Creel

*Alabama Education News* (USPS #387-290) is published monthly except for June, July, and December by the Alabama Department of Education, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101. Periodicals postage paid at Montgomery, AL and additional mailing offices.

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

*Alabama Education News* is composed by the Alabama Department of Education's Communication Section and printed by EBSCO Media of Birmingham. 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.

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, sex, race, religion, national origin, color, or age. Ref. Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8444.

Copies available in Braille or other forms upon request.

Editorial Office: 334-242-9950

E-mail: [aen@alsde.edu](mailto:aen@alsde.edu) • On the Web: [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu)

PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE  
**PAID**

## HUNTSVILLE HIGH'S MEADE NAMED JANUARY ALFA TEACHER OF MONTH



While many people can attribute their personal philosophies to historical figures or best-selling books, Alfa's Teacher of the Month found hers in a more unique place – a fortune cookie. Its message? “Find a place to stand and change the world.”

“While I can't change the ‘world,’ I can change the world around me,” said Huntsville High School teacher **WHITNEY WAYNE MEADE**.

Though many teachers actively promote education, it's become a requirement for Meade, who teaches special needs children on a tight budget. In 2009, she faced budget and funding cuts, fewer textbooks, failing computers, and teenagers who struggled with confidence and self-reliance. Fortunately, Meade prevailed over every challenge.

“When textbooks or functioning computers were not available, I contacted local agencies, businesses, and friends to seek out and secure donations,” said Meade. In doing so, she really has changed the world around her.

It's for her dedication that she's been chosen Alfa's Teacher of the Month for January and she will receive \$1,000 from Alfa Insurance. Her school will receive a matching award from the Alabama Farmers Federation.

During 2009, Alfa Insurance and the Alabama Farmers Federation honored one outstanding teacher from eight state school board districts, as well as two principals and two private school teachers. Application information is available under Alfa Teacher of the Month in the Ag Links section of [www.AlfaFarmers.org](http://www.AlfaFarmers.org).