

ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

NEWS AND ISSUES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

MAY 2004

WHAT'S INSIDE ...

- AMSTI Plays A Starring Role
- What Do Parents Want?
- Good News In Alabama Schools
- APTPLUS
- Alabama's Teacher Of The Year Named



PLAYS A STARRING ROLE IN BOOSTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

A recent evaluation report, *Impact of AMSTI on Student Performance 2002-2003* for the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) confirms the program is making a major difference in the way math and science are being taught in some of the state's public schools. The external evaluation, conducted by the Institute for Communication Research at The University of Alabama, compared the performance of 20 AMSTI schools and 111 non-AMSTI schools in the nine school systems where AMSTI was implemented in the 2002-2003 school year. The report indicates test scores of students attending AMSTI schools were higher in most cases than scores of students enrolled in non-AMSTI schools. Strong reading and writing connections were also made by students who attend AMSTI schools. The evaluation's academic performance was

"The dramatic academic gains in math, science, and other related subjects made by students in AMSTI schools are outstanding. It shows that programs being implemented by the Alabama Department of Education are working. The sad part is that without additional funding, programs like AMSTI will stall and I fear gains made will be lost."

JOSEPH B. MORTON
INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT
OF EDUCATION

measured using data from the *Stanford Achievement Test-10th Edition*; *Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing* (ADAW); *Alabama Alternate Assessment* (AAA); and *Alabama High School Graduation Exam* (AHSGE).

Analysis was conducted separately for three levels, using appropriate scores for elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12).

The report indicates a positive impact was made by AMSTI school students in

(Continued on Page 4)

STRONG READING & WRITING CONNECTIONS

- Literature is included in many kits.
- Reading strategies advocated by the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) are included in AMSTI training.
- Math and science notebooks/journaling are included in AMSTI.



WHAT DO PARENTS WANT?



Education Qualities Parents Want

- ✓ Competitive academic test scores
- ✓ Accreditation
- ✓ Recognition for excellence by a national foundation or the U.S. Department of Education
- ✓ Competitive teacher salaries
- ✓ Above (national) average instructional expenditures
- ✓ Above (national) average expenditures for library/media services
- ✓ Smaller class sizes

When it comes to knowing what parents want from their children’s schools, at least 24 Alabama school systems have “hit the nail on the head” by being nationally recognized with the 13th Annual SchoolMatch *What Parents Want Awards*. Only 2,519 of the 15,573 public school systems in the United States were honored in 2004.

SchoolMatch, the nation’s largest school selection consulting firm, helps corporate employee families find schools matching the needs of their children.

A compilation of over 95,000 parent questionnaires completed by SchoolMatch clients reveals there are seven items/qualities parents most often look for in school systems. Since relocating parents often focus upon finding a school system that produces a certain quality of high school graduate, only school systems providing secondary school programs are eligible for the award. The systems were judged using auditable information gathered annually state by state from sources including county assessors, county auditors, state taxing authorities, and state departments of education.

The majority of Alabama’s recognized school systems have consistently received the *What Parents Want Award* for most of the last decade.

For more information about *SchoolMatch*, [CLICK HERE](#). 🍏

SCHOOL SYSTEM	TOTAL YEARS	YEARS RECOGNIZED
Arab City	9	1996-2004
Athens City	9	1996-2004
Auburn City	9	1996-2004
Baldwin County	5	1998 and 2001-2004
Daleville City	10	1995-2004
Decatur City	10	1995-2004
Dothan City	6	1998-2004
Enterprise City	10	1995-2004
Florence City	10	1995-2004
Hartselle City	9	1996-2004
Homewood City	11	1992 and 1995-2004
Hoover City	9	1996-2004
Huntsville City	11	1994-2004
Jacksonville City	1	2004
Jefferson County	8	1992 and 1998-2004
Madison City	1	2004
Madison County	7	1998-2004
Mobile County	7	1998-2004
Mountain Brook City	13	1992-2004
Muscle Shoals City	10	1995-2004
Ozark City	9	1996-2004
Shelby County	7	1998-2004
Tuscaloosa City	9	1996-2004
Vestavia Hills City	11	1992 and 1995-2004



In a perfect world, there would be no disease, no hunger, no poverty, no drugs, and no violence. But one group of Montgomery kindergartners is making the effort to improve the quality of life for patients suffering from kidney disease.

Highland Gardens Elementary kindergarten teacher **MICHELLE MCCORD** suffers from a form of kidney disease called IGG/IGA nephropathy, which weakens her resistance to streptococcus bacteria – the common bacteria that causes strep throat. Her students collected 16,193 pennies in a six-week span, totaling \$161.93 in the “Pennies for Kidneys” fundraiser benefiting the Kidney Foundation of Alabama. With the help of 25 other central Alabama schools, a total of \$8,000 was raised to help provide services to kidney disease patients and fund research for cures. 🍏

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 5 MEMBER: ELLA BELL
MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT: CLINTON CARTER
PRINCIPAL: CONNIE MIZELL



“PENNIES FOR KIDNEYS”

Michelle McCord provides one-on-one instruction to one of her Highland Gardens Elementary kindergarten students.



Jumping, dancing, toning, and stretching to the latest popular music are what physical education teacher **SHANNON PIKE** teaches students at Bob Jones High School. Pike’s aerobics classes promote health, nutrition, injury prevention, and general fitness to high school students who are at an age where they are ever so conscious of body image.

Pike’s aerobics program has been compared to aerobics classes offered in local gyms or fitness clubs. Over 30 girls participate in daily, one-hour classes consisting of step aerobics, jump rope, hand weights, workout routines, and cool-downs. Students concentrate on body sculpting, muscle toning, cardiovascular fitness, and eating healthy. Pike believes her program not only helps students stay fit, but also helps students’ concentration levels in other studies. 🍏

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 8 MEMBER: DR. MARY JANE CAYLOR
MADISON CITY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT: DR. HENRY CLARK
PRINCIPAL: SAM ROMBOKAS



STAYING FIT, LOOKING GOOD



Shannon Pike’s Bob Jones High School aerobics class students move and groove to stay in shape.



Knowledge of other cultures is an important part of education. Thanks to the grant writing of two eager teachers in Blountsville, six of their eighth-grade students will gain first-hand experience about the customs of other countries. The students from Susan Moore Elementary School will travel to Calgary, Canada, this month, becoming the first and only Alabama school to participate in the SMARTer Kids Foundation’s Connections Program.

TINA GOSS and **TERESA OWENS** secured the \$25,000 grant that provides students and teachers from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico the opportunities to explore, discover, and grow with other participating teachers and students. Only 8-10 schools participate in Connections each year. Connections requires a one-year commitment from participating schools.

The Susan Moore Elementary eighth-graders were selected to attend this year’s program for completing 100 hours of community service and maintaining or improving their grades. 🍏

For further information, [CLICK HERE](#).
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 6 MEMBER: DAVID BYERS
BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT: JAMES CARR
PRINCIPAL: CHELA STEPHENSON



LEARNING PROJECTS THAT TEACH STUDENTS

Susan Moore Elementary students prepare for their big trip to Calgary, Canada. Earlier in the school year, educators enjoyed the scenery in Calgary.

(Continued from Page 1)

various aspects of school activities including increased class participation, involvement, satisfaction, and teacher cooperation. Student discipline also improved in AMSTI schools.

Funding is crucial to maintain AMSTI. "To fully implement the program statewide, we need \$37 million, a far cry from the current \$237,600 we receive annually in state funding," INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOSEPH B. MORTON stressed to the state Board during its

monthly K-12 meeting on May 13. Board members agreed to lobby legislators to include more AMSTI funding in the fiscal year 2006 budget. "The funds must be provided to ensure our children receive a high quality education that prepares them for the future," said DISTRICT 8 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER DR. MARY JANE CAYLOR. "We know the bulk of our work force will require a much higher level of problem solving skills than is currently evident and programs such as AMSTI provide those skills." 🍏

WHAT IS AMSTI?



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- All math and science teachers and administrators in AMSTI schools attend two-week summer institutes for two consecutive summers. Instruction is grade- and subject-specific.
- Additional professional development is provided throughout the school year through school learning groups and inservice days.



SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT

- AMSTI provides equipment, supplies, and materials needed to deliver high-quality, activity-based instruction.
- The materials and equipment arrive prepackaged in "kits" ready for immediate use by the teacher and students.

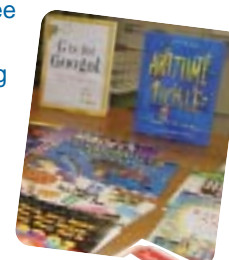


ON-SITE SUPPORT

- Teachers receive support and mentoring from the AMSTI site math and science specialists as they implement the training received during the summer.
- Resources are literally delivered to the classroom door, ready for use by the teacher and students.



In 1999, a 38-member committee, comprised of K-12 educators, university professors and administrators, and leaders from business and industry with strong ties to mathematics, science, and technology education was appointed by the state Board of Education to develop AMSTI. In reviewing research, the committee found that the classroom teacher is the most important factor in influencing student performance. The committee also identified five components that play a significant role in determining the effectiveness of teachers.

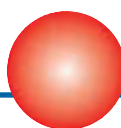


They are:

1. Curriculum
2. Instruction
3. Resources
4. Assessment
5. Professional development

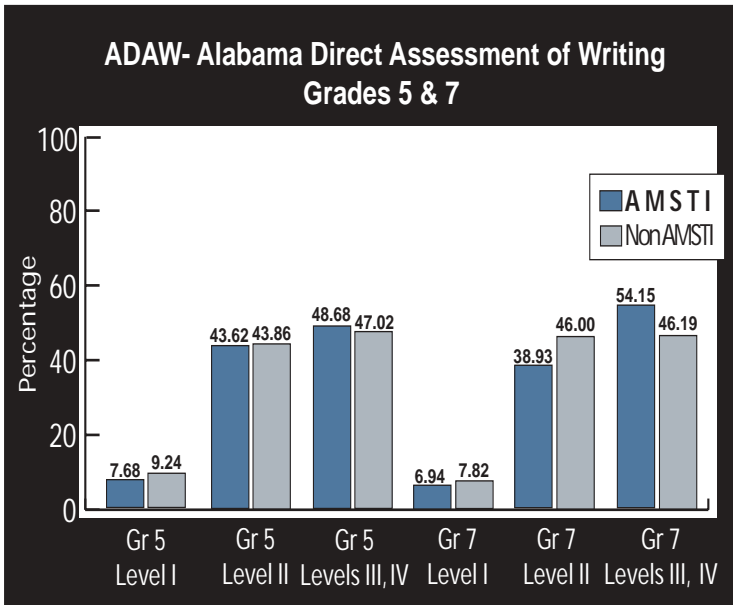
All are necessary to assure students receive the best education possible. AMSTI provides math and science teachers with three basic services – professional development, equipment and materials, and on-site support.

In December 2000, the state Board of Education approved a resolution endorsing the AMSTI recommendations and implementation plans. Through the assistance of U.S. REP. BUD CRAMER (D-5th District) with assistance from STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 8 MEMBER DR. MARY JANE CAYLOR, a \$3 million federal allocation through NASA was secured, launching the first AMSTI site at the University of Alabama in Huntsville in March 2002. Since then two more site's have been initiated, one at the University of North Alabama in Florence and the newest at the University of South Alabama in Mobile. 🍏

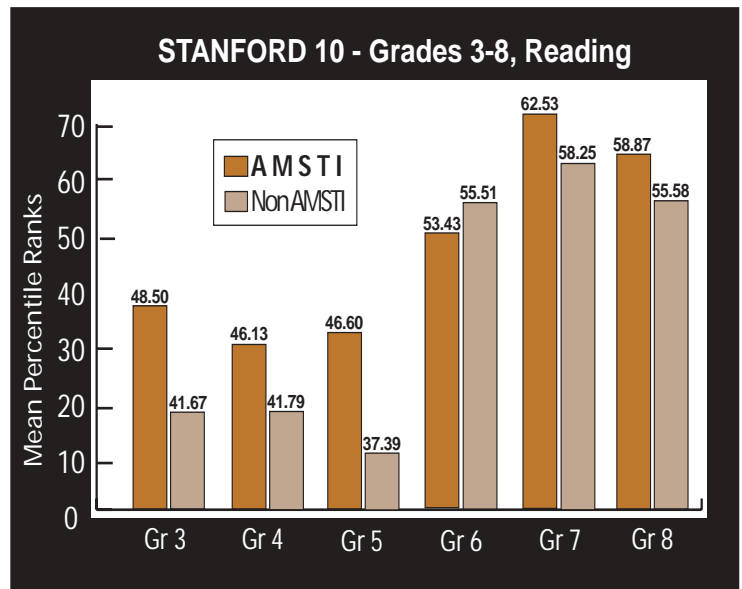
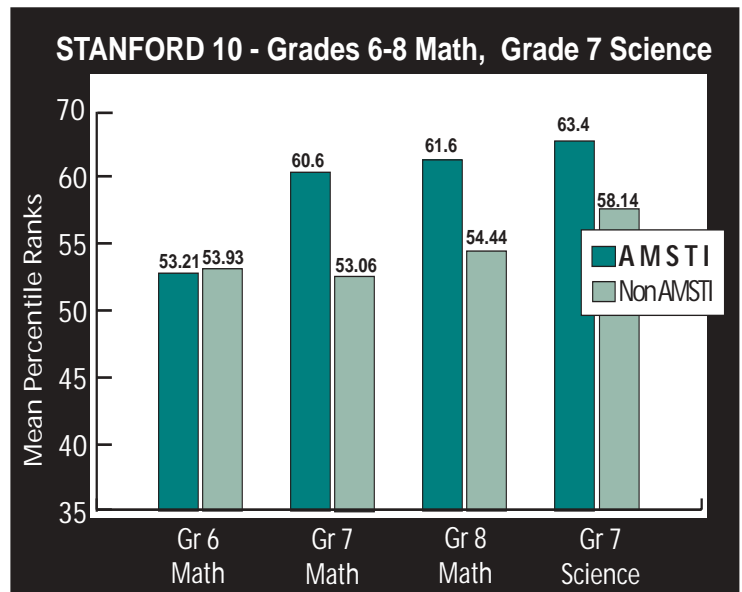
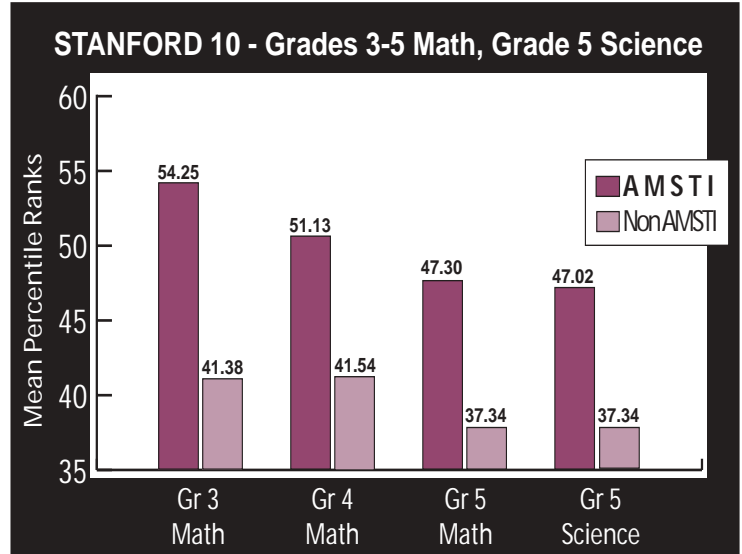
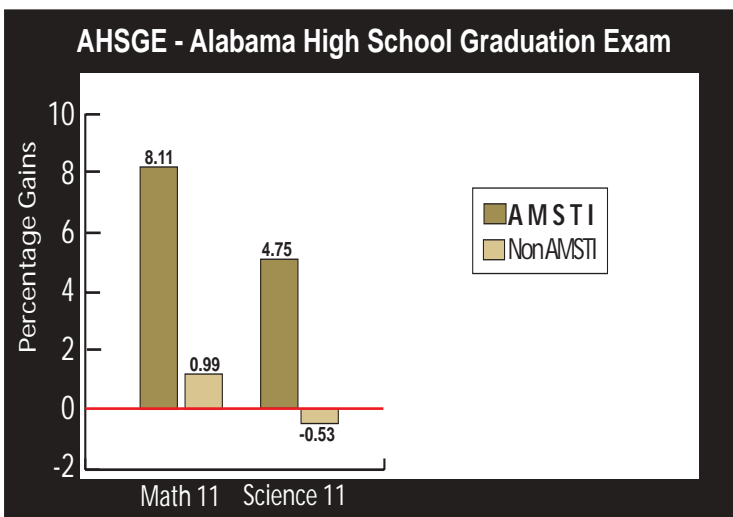




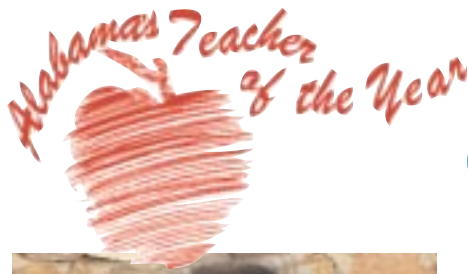
EVALUATION RESULTS



PROFICIENCY LEVEL KEY:
 Level I = Does not meet academic content standards.
 Level II = Partially meets academic content standards.
 Level III = Meets academic content standards.
 Level IV = Exceeds academic content standards.



Two problems were found in the statistical analysis of the report:
 1- The small number of AMSTI schools and 2
 - An imbalanced distribution between the three grade levels.



2004-2005 TEACHER OF THE YEAR NAMED



CYNDA FICKERT

A crowd of around 200 educators and family members gathered at the Retirement Systems of Alabama Plaza in Montgomery to celebrate the selection of Alabama's new Teacher of the Year, May 12.

The audience listened with anticipation as **INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION DR. JOSEPH B. MORTON** announced that **CYNDA FICKERT** was the 2004-2005 Alabama Teacher of the Year and Secondary Teacher of the Year.

Fickert is an eighth-grade math teacher at Auburn Junior High School

in the Auburn City School System. The Georgia native has been in education 12 years.

CHRISTINA OLLINGER NEELY, a first-grade teacher at Crestline Elementary School in the Mountain Brook City School System, was named Alabama's 2004-2005 Alternate Teacher of the Year and Elementary Teacher of the Year.

A State Committee selects the four finalists – two elementary and two secondary teachers – from the 16 district finalists. The State Committee is composed of a state Board of Education member, state Department of

Education representative, the 2003-2004 Alabama Teacher of the Year, 2003-2004 Alternate Teacher of the Year, and representatives from education-related organizations and the business community.

During the year of recognition, the state Teacher of the Year serves as a spokesperson for the teaching profession, addressing colleagues, the business community, government officials, parents, and students at forums and meetings across the state.

The Alabama Teacher of the Year Program, which is the oldest recognition program for teachers, is affiliated with the National Teacher of the Year Program. Alabama's honoree automatically becomes a nominee for National Teacher of the Year. 🍏

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES

The **Alabama Department of Education 2004 MEGA Conference** will be held July 13-16 at the Mobile Convention Center. [CLICK HERE](#) for conference information.

The **Leadership Academy for Math, Science, and Technology (LAMST)**, July 12-16, in Huntsville, will offer training to help schools improve math and science instruction in Grades K-5 in regions not served by the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI). School teams, each composed of a school principal, math teacher, and science teacher, can participate in the academy. For more information about LAMST, including an application form, [CLICK HERE](#) or call Cindy Hester at 334-353-9151.

AWARD AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The **Horace Mann Scholarships for Educators** provide funds to help teachers continue their education. Applicants must have a minimum of two years' teaching experience. [CLICK HERE](#) for program guidelines and an online application form or by calling 1-800-999-1030. **Deadline: May 15**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is offering several scholarships. The **Veterans Tribute Scholarship** is open to students ages 16-18 to compete for three scholarships of \$10,000, \$5,000 and \$3,000. The **Voice of Democracy Competition** allows high school students in Grades 9-12 to compete for more than \$2.5 million in scholarships and incentives by writing and recording a script on the theme "Celebrating Our Veterans' Service." The **Patriot's Pen Essay Contest** is for 6th-8th graders to compete for more than \$950,000 in U.S. Savings Bonds by writing an essay about "What Service to Our Country Means to Me." Additionally, the VFW will honor three K-12 teachers with the **National Citizenship Education Teacher Award**. Winners will receive a \$1,000 professional development award, \$1,000 for their school, and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. [CLICK HERE](#) to go to the VFW's Web site for entry forms, deadlines, and information or contact the VFW Programs Office at 816-756-3390.

BOARD BRIEFS

APRIL AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED:

- ✦ Passed Resolution Adopting the Social Studies State Course of Study
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commending Claire Roeder for the "Barbara Fannin Memorial Employee of the Quarter Award," April-June
- ✦ Passed Resolution in Honor of Ed Richardson
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Alabama Department of Education
- ✦ Passed Resolution in Honor of the Days of Remembrance
- ✦ Passed Resolution in Observance of the Week of the Classroom Teacher, May 2-4
- ✦ Passed Resolution Recognizing the 100-Year Anniversary of Leinkauf Elementary School, Mobile County School System
- ✦ Approved Ad Interim Appointment 2004-05 Alabama State Textbook Committee
- ✦ Approved Teacher Education Programs, Judson College, Marion
- ✦ Extended Approval of a Teacher Education Program, University of South Alabama, Mobile
- ✦ Announced Intent to Amend Alabama Administrative Code Rule Pertaining to Career/Technical Certificates
- ✦ Announced Intent to Amend Alabama Administrative Code Rule Pertaining to Certification/Licensure Forms
- ✦ Passed Resolution Proclaiming April 26-30, Alabama Public Education Week



POWER THE CLASSROOM WITH



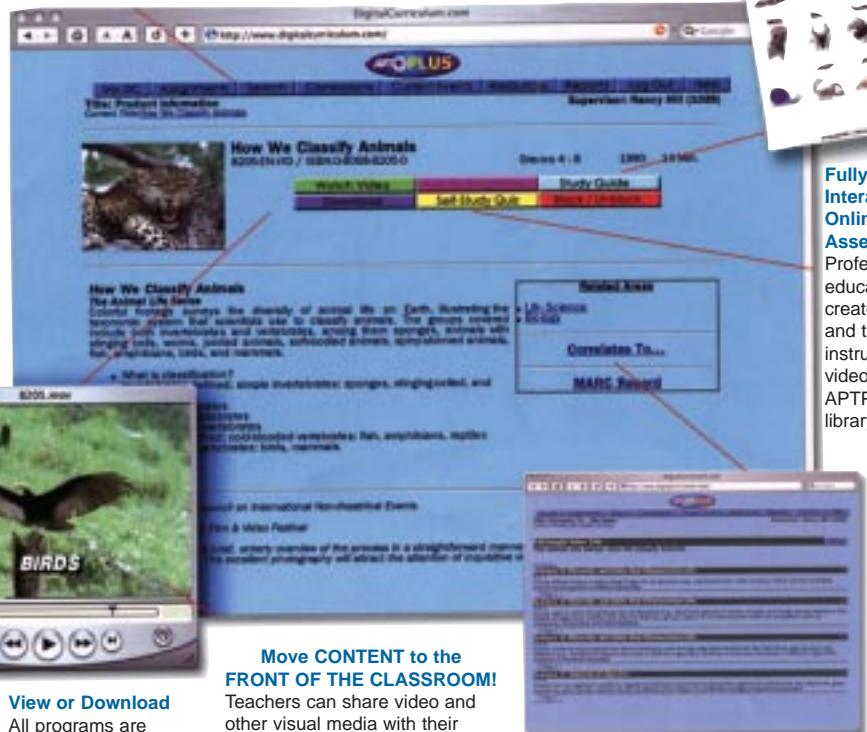
FREE Online Media-Rich Resources to Enhance Teaching!

APTPLUS is a digital storehouse of multimedia resources for classroom use and independent study. Video clips, teacher guides, sample tests, still images, and other printable materials offer educators the tools to present concepts in high-impact, engaging, and interactive ways. 🍏

Search all resources by grade and key concepts.

Lesson Plans

Most videos in the APTPLUS library come with lesson plans that contain tests and numerous other reproducible activities to use in the classroom as additional instruction for homework or extra credit.



Fully Interactive Online Assessment
Professional educators have created quizzes and tests for instructional videos in the APTPLUS library.



View or Download
All programs are broken down into clips on key concepts to provide teachers the most flexibility possible.

Move CONTENT to the FRONT OF THE CLASSROOM!

Teachers can share video and other visual media with their entire class by connecting the computer with a television monitor.

Correlated to State Standards

All resources in the APTPLUS library are correlated to Alabama curriculum standards to reinforce classroom instruction.

www.aptplus.org

WHAT'S JUICY AND SWEET AND FUN TO EAT? ALABAMA'S NEW OFFICIAL STATE FRUIT, THE BLACKBERRY



T As Bubba Gump might say, “Blackberry cobbler, blackberry jam, blackberry tea, blackberry wine, blackberry jelly, blackberry syrup, blackberry ice cream ...”

hanks to the diligent efforts of Fairhope Elementary School third-graders, the succulent berry, native to Alabama, has been declared by law as the state’s official fruit. State lawmakers passed legislation making the blackberry official after the students researched the fruit, drafted a bill, and acquired senate and house sponsors. The students’ efforts began in August 2002.

Prompted by teachers **SUSAN SIMS** and **AMY JONES**, students never gave up hope that their bill wouldn’t be passed. Their patience was rewarded when Governor Bob Riley signed the bill into law at the school on May 1. 🍓

The blackberry joins many other native Alabama plants, animals, and agriculture as official state symbols.

<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>OFFICIAL TITLE</u>	<u>DATE ADOPTED</u>
Yellowhammer	Bird	1927
Camellia	Flower	1959
Hematite	Mineral	1967
Marble	Rock	1969
Largemouth Bass	Fresh Water Fish	1975
Wild Turkey	Game Bird	1980
Pecan	Nut	1982
Insect	Monarch Butterfly	1989
Reptile	Alabama Red-Bellied Turtle	1990
Southern Longleaf Pine	Tree	1997
Oak-Leaf Hydrangea	Wildflower	1999
Red Hills Salamander	Amphibian	2000

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 1 MEMBER: RANDY MCKINNEY
BALDWIN COUNTY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT: DR. FARON HOLLINGER
FAIRHOPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: TERRY BEASLEY

TEACHER OF THE MONTH FOR MAY

W.J.Christian K-8 School, Birmingham City Schools
State Board of Education District 4

STEPHANIE TRUMER is May’s Teacher of the Month. Trumer and her school each receive \$1,000 from ALFA Insurance Co. and the Alabama Farmers Federation.

Trumer lives her personal philosophy of education: “I believe that the more I learn and grow, the better I am for my students.” She holds degrees in early childhood education from Birmingham-Southern and Samford, and is currently pursuing a doctorate in early childhood education and development from UAB. Trumer won a state grant to complete National

Board Certification and earned National Board Certification as an Early Childhood Generalist. She has been nominated for the Disney American Teacher Award and the Birmingham Post-Herald Distinguished Teacher Award, serves as a kindergarten lead teacher, and has mentored new teachers in the Birmingham City School System. Her highly anticipated weekly newsletter to parents, “The Trumer Times,” is just one example of her ability to work with all parents and families. 🍓



STEPHANIE TRUMER



MAY

						1
	NATIONAL SAFE KIDS MONTH					
2	NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS MONTH					8
9	4	National Teacher Day	12	13	14	15
	11	Powerful Conversations Meeting				
16	13	Alabama Board of Education Meeting	20	21	22	
	27	Alabama Board of Education Work Session				
23	24	State Future Farmers of America Convention Begins	26	27	28	29
30	31					

JUNE

		1	2	3	4	5
	10	Alabama Board of Education Meeting				
6	15	Powerful Conversations About Professional Development Summer Conference				
13	16-18	Alabama Educational Technology Conference				
20-26	24	National Skills USA-VICA Championships				
	28	Alabama Board of Education Work Session				
		30				

JULY

			1	2	3
13	Alabama Board of Education Meeting and Work Session				
4	13-16	MEGA Conference			
	19-20	Alabama Association of School Office Personnel Workshop			
11	19-21	Alabama Association for Career/Technical Education Summer Conference			
18	19-23	Alabama High School Graduation Exam Administration			
21-23	26-30	High School Basic Skills Exit Exam Administration			
					31



VOL 27 • NO 9

May 2004

ALABAMA EDUCATION NEWS

Alabama Board of Education Members

Gov. Bob Riley, President

- Dist. 1 - Randy McKinney, Gulf Shores
- Dist. 2 - Betty Peters, Dothan
- Dist. 3 - Stephanie W. Bell, Montgomery
- Dist. 4 - Ethel H. Hall, Vice Pres., Fairfield
- Dist. 5 - Ella B. Bell, Montgomery
- Dist. 6 - David F. Byers Jr., Birmingham
- Dist. 7 - Sandra Ray, Tuscaloosa
- Dist. 8 - Mary Jane Caylor, Huntsville

Joseph B. Morton,
Interim State Superintendent of Education
and Secretary and Executive Officer
of the Alabama Board of Education

Editorial Staff - (334) 242-9950

- Managing Editor - Mitch Edwards
- Editor - Rebecca Leigh White
- Contributing Editor - Anne Graham
- Graphic Artist - Mary Nell Shaw

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 EBSCO Media of Birmingham. 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.

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.