

ALABAMA SCHOOL JOURNAL

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LIFO bill bases teacher jobs on student test scores

With the legislative session surpassing the halfway mark and candidate qualifying for the 2014 election over, a controversial bill has surfaced at the Alabama State House. Sen. Del Marsh (R-Anniston), President Pro Tempore of the Senate, said earlier this year, "I want as little controversial legislation as possible," but he has nevertheless introduced Senate Bill 353, which proposes to make it illegal to consider seniority as a significant factor in the event of a Reduction-In-Force (RIF), and replaces seniority with employment decisions based on student test scores. Rep. Ed Henry has introduced a companion measure, House Bill 478, in the lower chamber.

This is another "solution" in search of a problem. Not one of the 135 school systems' RIF policies has seniority as the only, or even the most significant, criterion. Plus, this law applies to both teachers and support staff. How are custodians and lunchroom workers going to be scored?

What's more, how will non-core curriculum instructors be scored under this bill, since not every subject is tested? Will PE, driver's ed, and other elective teachers be exempt from RIFs because there is no data? Will these educators be the first to go?

Again we see that education is becoming less and less about critical, higher-level thinking and more about "teaching to the test" so that students know how to fill in the right bubble. This creates situations like the one recently reported out of Florida, with its similar legislation, where a blind, terminally-ill child with cerebral palsy and in hospice, was to be given a test, and his zero scores held against his teachers in their evaluations.

Other absurd situations have occurred in Florida where teachers lost their jobs

because, included in their evaluations were either test scores from students they never taught, or test scores in subjects they did not teach. In one case, a "Teacher of the Year" was deemed unsatisfactory, and in danger of losing her job based on test scores of students she never taught and who actually attended a different school.

Senate Bill 353 will also strip control from local school boards. Last year, this same legislature determined that local school boards are in the best position to

determine their own needs, not Montgomery. But if this proposal passes, a new state-wide mandate will be coming from Montgomery to preempt local control and put more mandates on local boards.

Not only does this measure have the potential to harm the teaching profession and create similar legal dilemmas for Alabama as it has in Florida, but it goes against the very fabric of the recent legislative rhetoric to maintain school decisions at the local level.

Tallapoosa County schools keep revenue stream; Auburn schools face cuts

A rejection by voters in Auburn last September of an increase in property taxes for city schools has led to the slashing of \$1.2 million from the school system's 2014 budget. And more cuts may be on the way.

Meanwhile, about 40 miles northeast of Auburn, citizens of Alexander City and Tallapoosa County supported keeping revenue measure for of their school systems.

Voters recently overwhelmingly renewed four crucial property taxes for schools that will remain in place for the next 30 years.

All four measures – a 1.5 mill countywide school tax, a 3-mill countywide school tax, a 3-mill district tax for the Alexander City School System and a 3-mill district tax for Tallapoosa County schools – were approved with around 92 percent of the vote.

Unfortunately, Auburn voters were not as supportive of their recent tax referendum to benefit Auburn City Schools. That referendum for new revenue was defeated by a margin of 54 percent to 46 percent.

The proposed tax increase was intended to finance construction of a new Auburn High School, for which property had already been purchased, and renovations of other schools.

The Auburn City system has been the fastest growing system in the state for six years running. In the past 10 years, the system has added 3,252 students, 2,153 of which have been added in the last five years.

That growth, according to school system administrators, leaves no viable or acceptable options other than construction of more classrooms for students.

"We had 456 more students than we did last year. When we have new students, we need to buy textbooks in all subject areas for the new students," said DeLano.

Projections show that in the next 10 years, Auburn High School will have 3,200 students enrolled in grades 10-12, making it the largest high school in the state of Alabama.

DeLano says Auburn residents should begin looking for portable classrooms to be brought in to make room for the growth in the near future.

Following the failed referendum, DeLano said the majority of Auburn residents "wanted us to live within our means and so I took that seriously and we started looking at the budget."

The school board has approved budget cuts that reduce extracurriculars, transportation, cut professional development funding for teachers, reduce summer school costs, and cut the textbook budget by \$400,000.

Local money will be used to buy portable classrooms. Roughly 65 teachers are paid out of local money, and most of the school's bus expenses and the high school's advanced programs are also funded locally.

The cuts could affect the Auburn city school system's ranking as one of the best in the state.

"The ranking we received recently -continued on page 3, "Auburn school and textbook budgets to be cut"

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Read Across Alabama March 3



See page 7 to celebrate with AEA

ALABAMA EDUCATION **OPINIONS***Do not vote
against yourself
in 2014*

Qualifying for the 2014 election has officially closed and the proverbial lines have been drawn in the sand. This election brings with it the promise of a new beginning. We will undoubtedly reflect on the decisions we made in the 2010 election and revisit the seemingly forgotten promises of far too many elected leaders who now seek to be re-elected.



**Anita Gibson,
AEA President**

We must focus on the opportunity to revitalize and reclaim the promise of a quality education for our children and what that will mean for our communities. Now is the time to focus on our commitment to this generation of students.

Over the past three years we have remained steadfast and focused on our priorities. We have never swayed from those priorities while weathering the constant attacks on our integrity and our profession. This will not change as we enter into this election.

As the campaigning begins we each have a responsibility to be an informed voter. It is imperative that we know the issues and where each candidate stands on our issues. As we cast our votes, we must be confident in the fact that we are electing pro-public education candidates.

In order to achieve our goals in the 2014 election, we must do more than “say” we support a particular candidate. Now is the time to take a personal stand by volunteering to work in a campaign, putting a sign in our yard, showing up at political events, and making financial contributions to pro-public education candidates. Our experiences as education employees set us apart as advocates for public education. Parents and friends in our communities will be looking to us for guidance on issues that impact the educational opportunities for their children. We must make sure we do not let them down.

It is the nature of the political climate currently gripping our state that forces us into this new role as public advocates for our profession and our students. For many of us, this is a new role that we may or may not be comfortable with. If you have not read the article at the bottom of page three in last week’s *Alabama School Journal*, “Teachers as political actors”, I strongly encourage you to do so now. After reading this article you will need to decide what type of political actor you are.

I encourage you to join your colleagues as we make changes during the 2014 election. Do not let your voices be silenced and do not vote against your own self-interest.

I remember as a child watching commercials in which Smokey the Bear would always say, “Only you can prevent forest fires.”

I would like to borrow from that line of thinking with a minor change: “Only you can prevent a repeat of the 2010 elections.”

Pay raise, PEEHIP, and primaries top priorities

The Alabama Legislature is only a little more than six weeks away from ending its 2014 regular session, yet we have seen nothing supportive of educators or retirees offered from the Republican leadership of the state regarding cost of living pay raises for fiscal year 2014-15.

It is true that Gov. Robert Bentley earlier proposed a two percent pay adjustment, but this would fail to address the hardships that teachers and support professionals have endured over the past several years.

“All elected officials should remember that retirees do vote and they do so in large numbers – and they do make their opinions known to family members and friends.”

Consider further that retired educators have not had a COLA in eight years. Retirees have been completely ignored by Gov. Bentley and Republican legislative leaders. All elected officials should remember that retirees do vote – and they do so in large numbers – and they do make their opinions known to family members and friends.

Rep. Marcel Black (D – Tusculumbia) is sponsoring a bill that we believe is fair. His legislation would provide a modest six percent raise for all K-14 education employees and all education retirees. We are not seeking more than six percent because we do not believe revenues can sustain a raise above six percent. Representative Black’s bill would be a good start toward making K-14 employees and our retirees whole. Legislators and our members should keep

in mind that the primary election for legislative seats is fast approaching and will take place in less than 100 days.

On June 3, Alabamians will, in essence, conduct a referendum on the performance of this legislature when they go to the polls to cast ballots. Many current members of this legislature will not be returning to Montgomery, and we hope voters among the education community are the reason why many will not return. Many

of these lawmakers should not return because of votes they have cast on various bills over the past four years that have been against the interests of their constituents.

Our members across the state must think about their future. Do our educators want a pay raise? Do our educators want legislators to treat educators with respect rather than disdain and with hatefulness?

If the answer is yes, call and e-mail home legislators regarding a raise. Support Republican or Democrat legislators in June who will support public education in Montgomery.

In these final days of the session, the legislature also has another important task to



**Dr. Henry C. Mabry,
AEA Executive
Secretary**

consider regarding educators. Fully funding the Public Education Employees’ Health Insurance Plan (PEEHIP) is critical. Educators cannot stomach more out of pocket costs and the legislature has the ability to help or hinder this situation.

The staff of PEEHIP told us back in October that the insurance plan faced a \$220 million shortfall for the fiscal year starting October 1 of this year.

The big question is, whether or not the legislature will address this need, which will impact the health insurance costs of roughly 300,000 active and retired Alabama educators.

The two most obvious answers are an increased appropriation from the legislature and use of PEEHIP reserve funds. There is no question that the PEEHIP Board should dip into its reserve funds to avoid punishing active and retired educators any further. We shall see if that board acts appropriately.

“There is no question the PEEHIP Board should dip into its reserve funds to avoid punishing active and retired educators any further.”

Tell your legislators to fully fund PEEHIP and tell PEEHIP Board members to quit increasing out of pocket costs.

The June primary election is important to public education. None of us can afford to sit on our hands and expect a different outcome for educators for the next four years. Educators took things for granted in 2010 and look what happened. We must have a change, and the start of that change is June 3.

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We encourage letters and opinion articles from members of AEA. All submissions must have your full name, mailing address, phone number, and local affiliation. Because of space limitations, we reserve the right to edit for length. Letters of less than 200 words are given preference for publication.

Letter to the Editor*Poland’s heroism should be a call to action*

On February 5, Dale County held a remembrance ceremony for Charles Poland Jr., who defended the children on his school bus at the cost of his life last year on January 29. The world remembers his courage and sacrifice, and the week long saga of little Ethan trapped in a bunker with a mad man. There were many moving speeches and memorials. The best homage to his courage was made by the Dale/Geneva County District Attorney Kirke Adams. He said that he, and we, can only hope that if we are ever faced with a similar challenge, we will be able to muster one tenth of the courage and bravery that Charles Poland demonstrated on that fateful day.

The most moving moment was when Alabama State Senator Harri Anne Smith and State Representative Steve Clouse presented the sign, purchased by the Alabama Education Association, for the Charles Poland Jr. Memorial Highway to Mrs. Poland, and she wept. Standing nearby, a squadron of people wearing yellow T-shirts with wings

were not a motorcycle club as I had first thought, but school bus drivers; and it was a school bus with angels wings on their shirts.

We heard last year, and again on February 5, about what a good man Poland was. Helping children with lunch money, teaching the young ones to climb up and down the bus steps, even reaching out to his assassin Jimmy Lee Dykes before the event; trying to calm a man angry about the school bus possibly driving across his lawn, a man who had reportedly shot at his neighbors and had beaten and killed a local dog. Poland was a kind, friendly, nice man, as the children testified in their memorials.

It was refreshing to see the Alabama Legislature move swiftly and in unison to declare a Bus Driver Appreciation Day in the wake of these tragic events. However, remembering the past without acting to help improve the future is not enough. What real changes could we make to prevent this kind of horrible incident from reoccurring? The suffering of

the family, mental scars left with the pupils and cost of mounting a multidisciplinary, multiagency response to rescue a kidnapped child all demand that we ask this question: What can we do to decrease the likelihood that any Alabama community must endure this type of evil again?

We believe now that Dykes had some serious mental health issues. Why not, then, the Charles Poland Jr. Memorial Bill for Full Funding for State Mental Health Programs? We agree that school bus drivers are far more than just vehicular operators. Why not, then, the Charles Poland Jr. Memorial pay increase for school bus drivers? We saw that when firearms remain in the possession of individuals who are not healthy enough to responsibly wield them, tragedy can follow. Why not, then, the Charles Poland Jr. Memorial supplemental funds for law enforcement officials to fully enforce gun laws currently on the books?

Ronald King, M.D.
U.S. Army Colonel, ret.
Newton, Alabama

No Life in LIFO

In December, I told you about Kim Cook, a Teacher of the Year from Florida who was rated as “unsatisfactory” by the state’s evaluation system based on test scores of students she didn’t even teach. That put her in line to lose her job if the school system had suffered a Reduction-In-Force (RIF). I warned you that Students First, the same group behind those laws in Florida, and the same group that the new tenure law is named after, was behind the scenes pushing the same thing in Alabama.

That effort is now front and center as Senate Majority Leader Del Marsh has introduced Senate Bill 353 and Representative Ed Henry has introduced House Bill 478. The proponents of these bills say their goal is to prevent good, young teachers from being let go in a RIF. They say they want to eliminate policies that provide for “last in first out,” also known as LIFO. You will hear these bills called the LIFO bills for that reason. However, as pure as their public motives are, you can be sure that, just as with the Un-Accountability Act last year, their true motives have nothing to do with improving public education.

If passed, this law will make it illegal for a school system to have seniority as the most significant factor during a reduction in force. Just like with much of the legislation that the leadership has passed over the last four years, this is a solution in search of a problem. AEA knows of no RIF policy in Alabama for which seniority is the overriding

factor. While it is and should be a factor, it is not the end all and be all that LIFO’s proponents are trying to make it out to be.

What the LIFO people want is for student test scores to be the most significant factor. They want a 20-year veteran teacher who takes on the children with difficult situations and circumstances to lose her job so that the 2nd-year teacher fresh out of college, who gets the best students, keeps her job. That’s not right, it’s not fair, and you shouldn’t stand for it.

“What this bill is about is the love affair, no, the fetish, that some have for standardized testing.”

Conventional wisdom says that when you are picking a surgeon for a procedure, you ask how many of the procedures in question the surgeon has successfully performed. Experience is a great teacher. In all other professions, it is valued and respected. And there’s the rub – Michelle Rhee, Students First, their financial backers, and the legislators who support them, don’t view you as professionals. Everything they have done in attacking you proves how little they value the services you provide. By now this is no longer a shock or surprise; yet, for them to bring these bills after



Dr. Gregory T. Graves, Associate Executive Secretary

what happened last month should be especially galling for those of you who spent the night with your students.

What this bill is about is the love affair, no, the fetish, that some have for standardized testing. Corporate billionaires, who haven’t set foot in a public school classroom for decades, if ever, have this belief that everything can be quantified and that once you have the data you can know how to proceed. In manufacturing, a company expects its raw materials to be consistent and of the same quality. If they aren’t, you fire that supplier and find a new one. Educated children are not a product capable of mass production. Educating a child is an art as

much as a science. In any particular classroom, you could have one gifted student who needs more challenges, a

student who has poor reading skills because of poor vision that has gone undiagnosed due to poverty, a child with undiagnosed dyslexia, a good child who is acting out because her parents are going through a divorce, etc. An educator’s raw material is a child. At a public school, unlike a private school or a charter school, you can’t reject the raw materials and fire the supplier. You do the best you can with what you get.

As is always the case, follow the money. Students First is backed by corporate billionaires and testing companies. Those companies get paid when students are tested. The

more students are tested, the more money they make. The concept of better profits, not better students, is why there has always been a push for student testing. This is and always has been about making money. However, like most situations manufactured out of hatred and greed, there are unintended consequences. This over-testing for profit leads to absurd situations like another one from Florida that was reported this month.

Ethan Rediske was an 11-year old boy who was blind, had significant brain damage, and suffered from cerebral palsy. As he lay dying in a hospice, a teacher came every day during state testing to bring him the state standardized test – the one that determines teacher evaluations. Everybody knew that he could not walk, or talk, or sit up, much less take a test, but the protocol said every student had to be tested, regardless of their disabilities unless they went through an extensive and invasive waiver process.

Ethan passed away earlier this month. However, his zero scores on his state test will live on, as they will factor into the evaluation of his teacher, who may end up losing her job because somebody had the bright idea that a dying boy in a coma, should be tested. I encourage you to go to education reformer Diane Ravitch’s website, dianeravitch.net, and read her article on this story and the heartbreaking words of Ethan’s mother about how the testing

protocol required extensive documentation if Ethan was to get a waiver and how comforting Ethan’s teacher was during this insane exercise.

If you want this in Alabama, then sit quiet and do nothing. Should that be your decision then please know that one of you reading this article may lose your job because the subject you teach isn’t on a standardized test, so the state makes up data. One of you reading this article may lose your job because a student isn’t physically able to take a test, so they get a zero, which is put into your evaluation score. One of you reading this article may lose your job because a first-year teacher outranked you by a few ten thousandths of a point, and one of your students scored poorly on a test due to his parents keeping him up all night before the test by fighting.

“If you want to be judged on your own merit, through direct observation of what you are doing, now is the time to stand up.”

If you want to be judged on your own merit, through direct observation of what you are doing, now is the time to stand up. Call the Alabama State House and tell your senator and your representative, “There should be no life in LIFO.” If we send the message as loud and as strong as we did with charter schools, we will win the day. If not, Alabama is going to have a lot more horror stories like these.

As always, together we stand.

Auburn school and textbook budgets to be cut

-continued from page 1, “Tallapoosa County schools keep revenue stream; Auburn schools face cuts”

as fourth in the state is really based on our Advanced Placement and our International Baccalaureate programs,” DeLano said before last September’s vote. “In order to maintain those kinds of programs, we need to maintain the funding we have now. If we were to have to use the funding that we’re using for those kinds of programs to build buildings, those programs would suffer.”

Opponents of the tax increase,

mostly large property owners in the City of Auburn who rent space to small businesses and apartments and condominiums to Auburn University students, sponsored the campaign that killed the referendum.

Calling themselves The Business & Property Owners Association, they worked hard to turn out the student vote in opposition to the referendum.

They launched an expensive all-out campaign blitz against the proposal, including television spots that warned Auburn students that their rents would increase

if the plan passed.

If the tax increase had been approved, the property tax in Auburn would have gone from 5 mills to 14 mills. Auburn currently ranks 24th among school systems in Alabama in millage.

The school board has scheduled public hearings for Monday, February 24, at 6 p.m. at Ogletree Elementary School, and Tuesday, February 25, at 6 p.m., at Pick Elementary School, to get public input on how to meet the absolute

necessity for additional facilities without weakening the programs and quality of all Auburn City schools.

DeLano said she and her staff and the school board would disclose to

the public more details about further budget cuts and hear whatever options the public might offer. She added that she hoped opponents of the tax plan would attend.



Actions during “Icemedgeddon” show why educators deserve a raise

Alabama has seen its share of weather disasters in recent years. From snow and ice storms to horrific tornados, we have all been impacted in one way or another. But these situations have also shown how we come together as a community and help one another in times of need.

Our recent snow storm was no different. From the good Samaritans who opened their homes or businesses to strangers so they could have some place warm to sleep and eat, to the educators and first responders who went above and beyond the call of duty to take care of our children and those who were stranded on the roads, we made it through “Icemedgeddon” and avoided most of the tragedies that could have happened.

Our first responders, most of whom are state employees,

sacrificed time with their own families so that they could take care of our most precious possessions: our children.

More than 11,000 children spent the first night of the storm sleeping in their schools because the roads were not safe enough to take them home. Even the next night there were still hundreds of children who had to sleep at school because the conditions had still not improved.

Through all of this, our teachers and support professionals stayed with them the whole time and made sure they were warm, safe, and did not miss a meal. In many cases, this meant that these teachers were not able to be with their



Rep. Craig Ford

own children during this crisis.

The same can be said for our first responders, who worked day and night to help those who could not make it home and had been stranded on the roads.

These educators and first responders deserve to be recognized for their hard work, sacrifice, and dedication. And it is good that the legislature chose to recognize them by passing resolutions thanking them for their service. But the truth is that a resolution is simply not enough.

We trust our educators with our most precious gift: our children. We trust our first responders with our safety - with our very lives. And we do so not just during crises like last week, but every day of the year. And yet, over the past three years our state legislature has cut their

pay, reduced their benefits, slashed their funding and cut them out of the decision making process when it comes to writing the budgets and developing the policies that govern how they do their jobs.

So a few words on a piece of paper that 99 percent of them will never see is simply not enough!

Our educators and state employees deserve a six percent cost-of-living pay increase. The last time they received a COLA raise was in 2007. The two percent pay increase they received last year was not even enough to replace the 2.5 percent that was taken out in 2011 and 2012.

The fact is, our educators, law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other state employees are making less money today than they did

in 2010, but they are being asked to do much more with fewer resources.

The Republican Supermajority in Montgomery has proposed a two percent raise for educators, and a possible four percent raise for state employees if they can find the money. So far they haven’t.

Our first responders and educators deserve better than what they have gotten over the past four years. Their actions during “Icemedgeddon” have shown that. The resolutions were a nice token gesture. But if we truly want to thank our educators and first responders, let’s give them the pay raise they deserve, and treat them like the professionals they are.

Representative Craig Ford is a Democrat from Gadsden. He has served as Minority Leader in the Alabama House of Representatives since 2010.



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2014 AEA Professional Rights & Responsibilities conference set

The AEA Professional Rights & Responsibilities (PR&R) Commission will hold its annual statewide conference on Friday and Saturday, April 4-5, 2014, at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel located at 201 Tallapoosa Street, Montgomery, Alabama. Registration will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the main lobby at the hotel, followed by dinner at 6:00 p.m., and a social event. The conference will continue on Saturday with workshops beginning at 8:30 a.m., and conclude with a luncheon.

Tentative workshop topics will include information on the Alabama Accountability Act, certification, payroll deductions, and other important issues.

Dr. Mabry will give an update during the Friday evening general session and the conference will conclude on Saturday with the traditional luncheon. Specific workshop topics and additional information will be provided in upcoming issues of the *Alabama School Journal*.

The Renaissance Hotel and Spa, Montgomery, Ala., is the host hotel. The AEA block rate for Single/Double Rooms is \$139, plus taxes. Reservations may be made by visiting <http://bit.ly/1dMxrya> or calling 877-545-0311.

Housing and travel are the responsibility of each participant. Please make reference to the Alabama Education Association PR&R Conference when making reservations and use the group code - AEA. The cut-off date for hotel reservations is March 4, 2014. Conference pre-registration is \$25 per person and on-site registration is \$35.

To pre-register for the conference, please return the registration form with the \$25 fee per participant, on or before March 21, 2014 to: AEA - Attn: PR&R Conference, P. O. Box 4177, Montgomery, AL 36103-4177. A \$10 late fee for each participant must be submitted with any pre-registration form received after March 21, 2014.

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM
 2014 PR&R CONFERENCE
 Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa
 at the Convention Center
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 April 4-5, 2014

Name of Local Association: _____

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(Attach an additional page if above space is inadequate)

Amount Enclosed for Registration Fee(s) \$ _____ (make check/money order payable to: AEA)

*** Pre-registration ends March 21, 2014.**

In order to pre-register, your check/money order of \$25 per person must accompany this form. A \$10 late fee for each participant must be submitted with any pre-registration form received after March 21, 2014. Mail to: **Attn: PR&R Conference** - Alabama Education Association, P. O. Box 4177, Montgomery, AL 36103-4177.

Person submitting this form: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ ; or _____

Email: _____

(Note: confirmation will be sent via listed email only)

(Please note that while we accommodate substitutes, when necessary, no refunds will be authorized.)

Future Teachers of Alabama prepare future classroom leaders

In the past five years, the Montevallo High School (MHS) chapter of the Future Teachers of Alabama (FTA) has grown from three to 31 members. This organization, designed to explore an interest in the education profession, gives students the opportunity to engage in events with younger children and test their teaching capabilities.

"FTA offers students an organization that challenges their leadership skills, encourages their compassion for others and helps them recognize their value to the community around them," said advisor Dawn Cabrera.

This school year, FTA members coordinated team-building games at the University of Montevallo's Future Falcon Day for eighth graders, sponsored a Parents' Night Out for the community, and participated in job shadowing with teachers at local schools.

"I have heard from college graduates who quit the teaching profession after their first year," Cabrera said. "I



FTA local and state president Emily Colley, senior at MHS, leads eighth graders in a team-building game called Ninja at the University of Montevallo's Future Falcon Day. (contributed)

believe one reason this takes place is because they are uncomfortable with the age of the children they chose to teach. Job shadowing from pre-school to middle school provides FTA members with a more specific direction of study they can take in college."

The MHS chapter has several FTA state officers as members. Senior Emily Colley serves as both the chapter and state president and senior Alexandria Buttgerit is the chapter vice-president and state secretary, while junior Dylan Sanders serves as a state board member.

"As FTA state president, I help plan the state conference, determine the speakers and activities, and organize the outreach-to-teach community service project to help a school near the conference site," Colley said. "Through my membership in FTA, I have decided that I want to be a middle school teacher. The seventh grade seems to be a pivotal time in a student's life, when decisions are made that determine one's future path. I would like to be a teacher for students of that age to provide a positive influence and encouraging voice."

Colley also credits FTA with improving her communication savvy, her ability to mediate discussion, and her public speaking skills since she has to address large audiences at state conferences.

Upcoming plans for the MHS chapter include an officers' conference in Montgomery.

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Honorably Serving All Members **VOTE TO RE-ELECT**

Dr. Susan C. Brown
Strong Leadership For Our Time

- 35 Year, Award Winning Educator, AAMU Professor
- Doctorate, The University of Alabama
- Postdoctoral Work, Yale & Oxford
- Active Member AEA/NEA
- NEA Director
- AEA District 5 Director
- Service: AAMU-EA (Parliamentarian), AEA State Budget Commission, Resolutions Commission, Legislative Commission, Legislative Contact Team, Emerging Leader Graduate.

- NEA Leadership Summit Design Team
- Huntsville/Madison County Leadership Graduate
- NEA **THOUGHT & ACTION** Editorial Board
- NEA MLT Advisory Group
- Honored for Activism at the NEA RA 2013
- Teaching Experience at High School, Postsecondary & University Levels

✓

NEA Director

"Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education."
 Martin Luther King, Jr.

Hartselle educator receives continuing education scholarship

Each year the Hartselle Education Association (HEA) provides a \$250.00 scholarship to one member who is working toward an advanced degree. Applicants submit their

request to the HEA executive board for review. This year's recipient is Johnny Berry, Guidance Counselor at Hartselle High School.



**Front Row: Diane Griffith, Amanda Key, Johnny Berry, Diedrah English
 Back Row: Myra Garrett and Randell Key**

THE AEA PROFESSIONAL

Don't miss these great events!

Conference Corner

FEBRUARY 27, 2014:
Guidance Counselor Conference, Judson College, Marion, Ala.

MARCH 3 - 4, 2014:
Alabama Transition Conference XXIV, Marriott at Grand National, Opelika, Ala.

MARCH 7 - 9, 2014:
SAEA/FTA Conference, Marriott Shoals Hotel, Florence, Ala.

MARCH 12 - 14, 2014:
ACEA Alabama Community Education Association Annual Conference, Renaissance Hotel at the Convention Center, Montgomery, Ala.

MARCH 13 - 14, 2014:
Alabama School Nutrition Association 36th Annual Conf., BJCC, Birmingham, Ala.

MARCH 21-23, 2014:
2014 AEA Divisional Professional Devp. Conf., Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, Birmingham, Ala.

APRIL 1, 2014:
AERA Annual Conference, Cahaba Grand Conference Center, Birmingham, Ala.

APRIL 4 - 5, 2014:
AEA Professional Rights and Responsibilities Conference, Renaissance Hotel at the Convention Center, Montgomery, Ala.

APRIL 10 - 12, 2014:
Alabama State Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Spring Conference, Phoenix VII, Orange Beach, Ala.

APRIL 12, 2014:
21st Century Literacies Conference: Connecting the Dots with Nonfiction across the Content Areas, UAB - Birmingham, Ala.

For additional conference information please visit:
www.myAEA.org.

AEA member Carolyn Daniels wins Solve for Tomorrow contest

McKee Middle School sixth-grade social studies teacher Carolyn Daniels was awarded a \$20,000 technology package for being the state winner of the 2014 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest.

Samsung started the contest to give schools across the country an opportunity to raise student interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) subjects by awarding schools a share of over \$2 million in technology.



Daniels showcases some of the technology being used at McKee.

“We certainly need the technology here at McKee,” Daniels said. “Oftentimes our students don’t have access to the same technology some of the other schools have. This award from Samsung will play a large role in getting our

students prepared to deal with STEM in an ever-changing technological world.”

Daniels was one of six Alabama finalists for the contest, including fellow AEA members Karla McInnis of Hankins Middle School in Mobile County, and Gina McCarley and BeLinda Cross of Lawrence County High School. All state finalists received two Samsung Galaxy Tablets for their schools. As the state winner, Daniels’ technology package included a video kit consisting of a Samsung laptop, Samsung camcorder, Adobe Element bundle (a combination of video and photo editing software) and a quick start guide provided by Adobe.

“I am humbled by this whole experience. When I took on this contest, it was an effort of joy because I really felt like I was doing something that would impact our entire student body,” said Daniels. She credits a large part of her success in winning the award to the support

she received from McKee Middle School administrators and her fellow teachers.

Competing against 50 other finalists for the national award, Daniels and her class were tasked with creating a short video addressing the contest challenge, “Show how STEM can be applied to help improve your local community.” Using scientific methods and math skills, students developed a video focusing on violence and its impact on the community.

Daniels will now represent Alabama as she competes to become one of 15 national finalists, who will each receive a \$35,000 technology package

and advance to the final phase.

In the final phase, five grand prize winners will be awarded an even larger technology package valued at \$140,000, and a trip to the April awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

To learn more about the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest visit www.samsung.com/solvefortomorrow.



Lt. Duckett of the Montgomery Police Department reviews data with Daniels.



Daniels explains an assignment to a student.

Time nears for 2014 Divisional Professional Development Conference

The 2014 AEA Divisional Professional Development conference will be held at the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC) Friday evening, March 21 through Sunday morning, March 23, 2014. The conference will merge two outstanding AEA conferences: the annual Divisional Conference and AEA/ACT Professional Development Conference. All parts of the conference will conclude on Sunday, March 23, and all sessions are open to AEA members.

An exciting weekend filled with a variety of activities is being planned, with engaging and interactive professional development sessions in which all education professionals will learn something new that can be used in any school setting. Attendees will be challenged and trained to think creatively as they prepare to take ownership in their professional association. Members interested in learning about effective Association capacity building, messaging, job protection, benefits, salary increases, and enhancing skills to become an even more effective employee, should attend.

Special emphasis is being placed on first time attendees to the Divisional Conference who are 35 years of age or younger. Each local is strongly encouraged to send one member who meets this criteria and who is seen as a potential leader.

AEA’s social media campaign can be followed throughout the weekend with #weareaea at the conference.

Registration for the conference is \$30 for each AEA member. The conference registration deadline is February 28, 2014. After this date, conference registration is \$60 for each

AEA member. On-site registration will be available for a fee of \$60 for each AEA member. Registration forms and fees should be sent to AEA, Attn: Darryl Sinkfield, P. O. Box 4177, Montgomery, Alabama, 36103-4177.

Except for extenuating circumstances, no registration fee will be refunded after February 28, 2014. All requests for refunds should be submitted in

writing to the attention of Darryl Sinkfield at AEA.

Housing reservations should be made directly with the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel by calling 205-324-5000 or 800-325-3535. Reservations can also be made online at: <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/aea2014>

The hotel reservation deadline is March 7, 2014, or until the room block is filled, whichever

comes first. Following this date, rooms and rates will be provided on space availability only. Room rates are listed below. Tax and fees are subject to change without notice.

Single/Double rooms cost \$129 plus 17.5% tax per night. Other room costs are as follows:
Triple: \$139 plus 17.5% tax per night
Quad: \$149 plus 17.5% tax per night



2014 DIVISIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

March 21 - 23, 2014 * Sheraton Birmingham Hotel * Birmingham, Alabama

Please print and use one form per person.

Name: _____

Local Association: _____

Please check one: Active: _____ ESP: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone include area code: _____

Cell Phone include area code: _____

Personal Email do not use school email: _____

Facebook Name: _____

Twitter Username: _____

Please select your Association Division:

____ Association of Classroom Teachers *OR* a K-12 Teacher

____ Education Support Professionals

____ Postsecondary

____ Administrator

Conference Registration all checks/money orders should be made payable to AEA:

____ Before February 28, 2014 - \$30.00/person

____ After February 28, 2014 - \$60.00/person

Mail form, along with check/money order, to:

**Alabama Education Association
Att.: Darryl R. Sinkfield
P. O. Box 4177
Montgomery, AL 36103-4177**

Housing reservations should be made directly with the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel. AEA rates are available until March 7, 2014 or until room block is filled, whichever comes first. After this date, rooms and rates will be provided on space availability only. Reservations can be made by calling 205-324-5000 or 1-800-325-3535 also be made online at:

<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/aea2014>

Free Green Boot Camp to be held in San Diego

The Honeywell Corporation's Green Sustainability Boot Camp for middle school teachers will be held June 22-27, 2014, in San Diego, Calif. The camp is free and the application deadline is March 14, 2014. Selected participants will be notified the week of April 14, 2014.

The Green Boot Camp is an intensive five-day, hands-on interactive educational experience to help middle school educators become familiar with the latest methods of instruction in teaching green and sustainable topics, methods, and concepts to middle school students.

Travel, hotel, and meal expenses will be reimbursed for selected participants. Teachers can also earn appropriate continuing education units or professional development hours.

Last year's Alabama recipient was Calera Middle School teacher Kevin Pughsley. AEA member and Locust Fork High School teacher Sherry Brewer will again serve as a facilitator.

Visit <http://www.honeywellinteract.com/greenbootcamp/> for more information or to apply.



2014 Divisional Professional Development Conference Workshops

Sheraton Birmingham Hotel ~ March 21-23, 2014

Getting It Right: Using Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems to Support The Teaching and Learning Process

In today's political and policy environment, what are the implications for teacher evaluation? How can or should evaluation systems support the teaching and learning process? How important is the alignment of teacher evaluations to comprehensive education systems? What do we need to know about validity, reliability, and comparability of multiple measures. This session will examine how to transform or leverage political realities into Association opportunities while enhancing our profession.

Time To Teach

Time To Teach highlights strategies that can reduce discipline by 70 percent or more, allowing classroom teachers more time to teach and the principal or educational leader more time to be a leader rather than a constant disciplinarian.

The Flipped Classroom

In this session, participants will explore ways in which students learn new content online by viewing course content, usually at home, and engage in practice, formerly known as homework, in class. Participants will learn how to offer more personalized guidance and interaction with students in class, instead of lecturing.

Professional Development with NEA Academy

NEA Academy is devoted to meeting the professional development needs of teachers and education support professionals. As an online education advocate, NEA allows educators to quickly find the highest quality, peer-reviewed and approved courses available from a wide-selection of developers, plus member-only discounted rates. Come to this session to learn about the high quality professional development available to AEA members.

Bully Brakers

This session is designed to explore the roles of the five types of bullies, two types of victims, and the four types of bystanders all of which are contributors to the violent tendencies noted in overly aggressive students.

Lessons Learned: A Conversation about the Florida Teacher Evaluation System

In this session, participants will engage in a conversation about the legal challenges faced in the development of the Florida teacher evaluation system and lessons learned from this process. Participants will also discuss ways in which the Florida evaluation system supports teaching and learning.

Seclusion and Restraint in Alabama Public Schools

In this session, participants will learn about the permissible use of seclusion and restraint in Alabama public schools. General information and guidance for seclusion and restraint of students will be shared.

eLearning Alabama

eLearning Alabama is an excellent way to earn professional development credit hours for continuing education units (CEUs) and professional learning units (PLUs) on your own schedule. Come to this session to obtain information about over 15 current and upcoming CEU and courses that members can use to earn PLUs.

What Everyone Needs to Know About Bullying

In this session, participants will gain an understanding of traditional bullying, and will develop specific skills to recognize and deal with bullying problems and deepen their knowledge by examining the importance of utilizing available data when developing plans of action to address bullying. This is the course required to begin the Bullying professional study to earn a PLU.

Ten Steps to Financial Success

In this session, participants will obtain free resources and learn strategies to help them in teaching their students about personal finance. This interactive and enlightening session will also provide participants with information needed to improve their own levels of financial literacy.

Feeling Good About Teaching

Why do we come to work "de-activated"? This workshop offers an open, honest forum for discussion of this important question. At the heart of the workshop are overwhelming reasons to "RE-ACTIVATE," including highlights of the positive trends in your state's educational system/schools! Interesting trivia, memorable stories, and updated education outlook reports give your teachers' morale a well-deserved boost for the demanding school year! Leave feeling encouraged and ready to continue making a difference in your students' lives.

The Inner City Blues

The purpose of this session is to look into the behaviors and attitudes that impede learning for the urban student. This workshop will give the audience an overview of community related factors, home/school interactions, student interest in academic development or lack thereof, teacher driven toxic cultures within classroom and overall school settings. In addition, this workshop will provide strategies for creating an environment conducive to improved overall student achievement.

Social Media in the School Setting

Social media is constantly changing and evolving. This session will cover a wide range of social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. You will get a brief overview of what each social media platform is best used for along with the ways to use them creatively in the classroom and other school settings. The do's and don'ts of social media will be discussed. This is not an instructional workshop on how social media operates, but an overview of social media, how it's changing the way we live and operate, and how to best integrate it to promote learning and connecting with all stakeholders in the education environment.

Professional Issues Organizing

Having trouble getting members and potential members to organize around professional issues? Attend this session to learn how to use the NEA Academy as a catalyst to start one-on-one conversations and leverage educator passion for education to enhance the profession. Participants will gain access to the NEA Academy's professional issues toolkit, take a guided look at several new resources, and discuss how to utilize these assets at the local level to engage existing and potential members. Find out more about how you can help educators get organized around professional issues with the support of the Association when you join our session!

Five Keys to Getting/Keeping Middle-High School Students' Attention

This session is "adolescent brain attention science 101"! It ends with five practical, research-based keys to getting students' attention—and keeping it longer. In addition, take back and share with your co-workers the "must see" video clips detailing perspectives on this topic from a few leading experts.

School Safety: The Starting Lineup

This workshop will discuss preventative strategies as it relates to every aspect of school safety, from the bus drivers to the superintendents.

Knowing Kids Behavior & Current Drug Trends

This workshop will enable the participant to gain knowledge of current drugs being used and the effects on adolescents. The attendee will learn the signs and symptoms of alcohol and drugs to be aware of. The signs and symptoms of children living in the home with an adult who suffers from alcohol or drug addiction will also be identified. The attendee will learn how to assist individuals in getting the proper help for these substance abuse problems.

Special Bus Driver Safety Forum

This workshop will provide an overview of issues relating to school bus safety with a particular focus on hostile and/or volatile encounters with known and/or unknown subjects.

Member Benefits: 26 Financial Mistakes You Do Not Want to Make

Join us for a discussion of common financial mistakes that you can avoid. Learn about Association resources that are designed to support you and your families as you make smarter financial decisions.

Getting Organized: What's Stopping You?

Have you ever wondered why you can't seem to get things done on time like other people? Are you always looking for your keys? Is your desk piled high with paper? Are you wheeling into the parking lot like a race car driver because you are late for an appointment? If so, this is the perfect workshop for you. Come and learn strategies that can improve your organizational and time management skills so your personal and professional life runs more smoothly.

Innovative Ideas for Effective Team Building

Have you ever been frustrated serving on a committee because nothing seems to get done? Have you been involved in a group where people can't get along or disagree about everything? If so, attend this session to learn how different personalities and skill sets can determine the effectiveness of a team. Learn how to harness these differences in order to enhance team building in your workplace or local association. We'll have some fun too with quick games and fun activities for building team spirit!

Campus Security

What would you do in the event a security crisis happened at your school or college? No one wants to think about this happening but unfortunately, we hear of tragedy striking educational facilities more and more often. This workshop will help you become more prepared as you seek to educate your students as well as maintain a safe environment for them, your colleagues and yourself.

Indoor Air Quality

Do you have "sick buildings"? Do you deal with complaints of mold, mildew, dust, or animal waste in your school buildings? Are these and other toxins contributing to illnesses of both your students and colleagues alike? This session will help you work to find a solution so that everyone has clean air in the classroom and the work environment.


Celebrate Read Across Alabama March 3

It's time to grab a book and celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday. The annual Read Across Alabama celebration will take place on Monday, March 3, and continue throughout the month. The Alabama Education Association will join the celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday by providing teacher resources for Read Across Alabama. Materials can be downloaded from the AEA website at www.myaea.org.

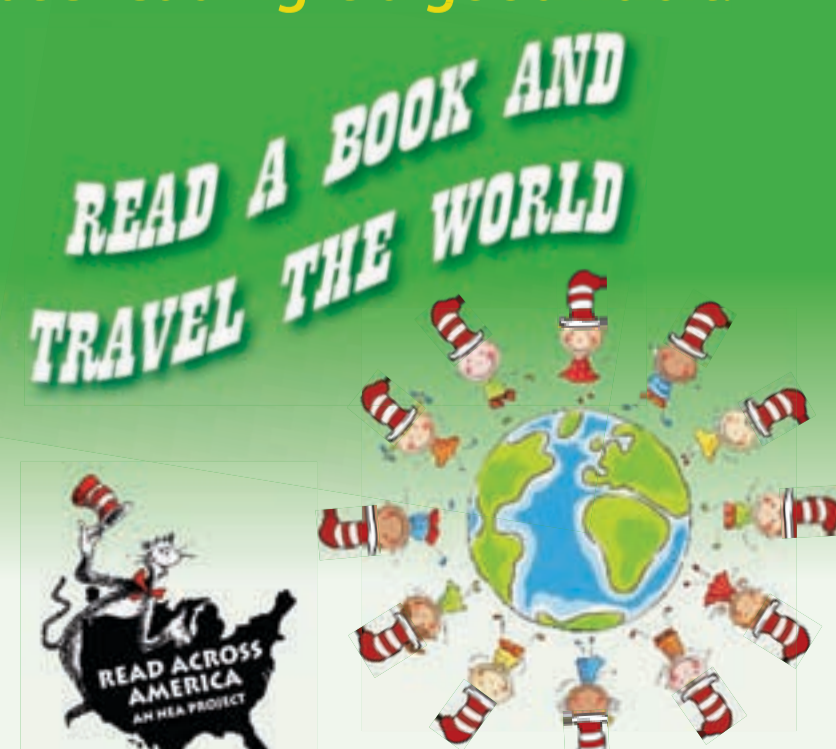
Again this year, AEA will feature photos in the *Alabama School Journal* showcasing Read Across Alabama events from schools throughout the state. Teachers should email their digital classroom celebration photos, including the name of the school and school staff included in the photo, to sandraj@alaedu.org.

The celebration photos will be published during the month of March as space permits.

Open a book, grab a tablet, or turn on the computer, because reading is a good habit.



READ A BOOK AND TRAVEL THE WORLD



READ ACROSS ALABAMA
March 3, 2014

Visit www.myaea.org for more information and to download materials.



Distinctive auto insurance—just because you belong.

Did you know that as a member of the AEA, you could **save up to \$427.96 or more** on Liberty Mutual Auto Insurance?¹ You could save even more if you also insure your home with us. Plus, you'll receive quality coverage from a partner you can trust, with features and options that can include Accident Forgiveness², New Car Replacement³, and Lifetime Repair Guarantee.⁴

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