ALABAMA INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK
May, 2016

Meeting the Requirements of Alabama Code Sections 16-1-38 and 16-13A-3

The University of Alabama Superintendents’ Academy is a collaborative effort of the Alabama State Department of Education and The University of Alabama College of Education

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## INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION AND ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This document is intended to serve as a desktop reference for superintendents charged with promoting student learning. The resource is needed because the increased diversity of student body, the information and knowledge explosion, and the press for high standards and accountability have altered the expectations for the 13,500+ superintendents in the nation's public school systems (Glass et al., 2000).

As educators debate, apply and interpret implications of the ESEA reauthorization, the language (educational leadership, instructional leadership) used to discuss the role of superintendents changes. For example, the “School Boards and Superintendents: Roles and Responsibilities,” a collaborative project by the Alabama Association of School Administrators and the Alabama Association of School boards (complete list in Chapter 7) calls for superintendents to serve as educational leaders. Yet, in identifying the work of today's superintendents, Peterson and Barnett (2003) maintain that superintendents must function as instructional leaders while performing a variety of roles:

1) Superintendent as educational statesman, politician, and democratic leader;
2) Superintendent as executive manager;
3) Superintendent as instructional leader;
4) Superintendent as social scientist and social activist; and
5) Superintendent as communicator in the information age.

Educational leadership and instructional leadership as applied to the superintendency are poorly defined constructs (Kowalski, 1999, 2003), and it is not yet clear whether superintendents will function as educational leaders (broader term) or instructional leaders (more specific term). Some superintendents become directly involved in curricular and instructional issues while others delegate these responsibilities to teachers, principals, and directors of instruction (Bredeson, 1995).

As the ESEA reauthorization (No Child Left Behind Act) heightened the superintendent's instructional role, those accustomed to delegating issues related to curriculum and instructional leadership may need to acquire a greater understanding of instructional strategies and the use of data to drive decision making. It is less likely that superintendents will be called upon to immerse themselves in the details of instructional planning and curriculum development. In any case, because system level personnel are responsible for developing curriculum guides, monitoring assessment results, and developing strategies for improving student performance, at the very least, superintendents need a working knowledge of the current language and ideas associated with instructional leadership and curriculum in order to exercise oversight in the performance of these roles and account to others for the decisions made.
1.1 A Summary of Current Approaches to Instructional Leadership

The Practice of Instructional Leadership (Glatthorn, 1990)
To be an effective instructional leader, one must engage in the following:

- The development of a long-term curriculum evaluation and renewal calendar
- Shared decision making and clear role expectations
- Development and alignment of curricular goals
- Written curriculum guides and scope and sequence charts
- The development of quality courses
- Integrating fields of study
- An alignment process ensuring congruence between what is intended and what actually occurs
- Staff development

Perennial Choices (Gardner, 1999)
Making curriculum decisions has oscillated between the following polarities:

- Between breadth and depth
- Between accumulation and construction of knowledge
- Between utilitarian outcomes and intellectual growth for its own sake
- Between uniform and individualized education
- Between education by private parties and as a public responsibility
- Between an education that fuses disciplines and or stresses disciplines
- Between an education that either minimizes or emphasizes assessment
- Between relative, nuanced standards and high universal standards
- Between an education that showcases either technology or the human dimension

Axioms Related to Curriculum Change (Oliva, 2001)
The following guidelines provide a framework for understanding the context of curriculum change:

1. Curriculum change is inevitable and desirable.
2. The curriculum is a product of its time.
3. Curriculum changes of earlier periods often coexist and overlap curriculum changes of later periods.
4. Curriculum change results only as people are changed.
5. Curriculum development is basically a process of making choices from among alternatives.
7. Curriculum development is more effective if it is a comprehensive, not piecemeal, process.
8. Curriculum development starts from where the curriculum is.
Emerging Trends (Glatthorn, 2000)
Glatthorn argues that the following developments are likely to characterize the curriculum during the first decade of the 21st century:

1. Increasing importance of national and state standards
2. Movement toward school-based curriculum development
3. Greater influence of professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English
4. Continuing interest in constructivist curriculum
5. Development of new approaches in vocational education
6. In addition to job-specific skills, an increased emphasis on generic skills that can be transferred to almost any career
7. Integrating academic and career education
8. Development of integrated curricula
9. Institutionalization of technology

Criteria for Curriculum Change (Glatthorn, 2000)
Educators should make curricular decisions using the following criteria reflecting the latest research on curriculum:

1. Structure the curriculum so that it results in greater depth and less superficial coverage.
2. Structure the curriculum so that it focuses on problem solving.
3. Structure and deliver the curriculum so that it facilitates the mastery of essential skills and knowledge of the subjects.
4. Structure the curriculum so that it is closely coordinated.
5. Organize the curriculum so that it provides for multiyear sequential study, not “stand-alone” courses.
6. Emphasize both the academic and the practical.
7. Develop effective integrated curricula.
8. Focus on the mastery of a limited number of essential curriculum objectives rather than trying to cover too many.

Collaboration: Hallmarks of Productive Groups (Oliva, 2001)
Curriculum decisions should be made in collaboration with a group of knowledgeable constituents. To create effective curriculum decision making groups, the following guidelines should be considered:

1. Leaders and members support each other.
2. Trust is apparent among members.
3. Goals are understood, mutually agreed upon, and accepted.
4. Opportunity exists for members to express feelings and perceptions.
5. Roles played by group members are essentially positive.
6. Hidden agendas of members do not disrupt the group.
7. Leadership is competent and appropriate to the group.
8. Members possess the necessary expertise.
9. Members have the necessary resources.
10. Members share in all decision making.
11. Communication is at a high level.
12. Leadership is encouraged from within the group.
13. Progress in accomplishing the task is noticeable and significant.
14. The group activity satisfies members’ personal needs.
15. Leaders seek to release potential of the members.
16. The group manages its time wisely.

School System Leadership that Works™: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2007)
Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) principal researchers conducted a meta-analysis or research on the effect of superintendent leadership on student achievement. For this study McREL researchers identified 27 research reports conducted since 1970 that examined, using quantitative, rigorous methods, the influence of school system leaders on student performance. Altogether, these studies involved 2,714 systems and the achievement scores of 3.4 million students. The study produced the following major findings.

Finding 1: System-level leadership matters. The McREL research team found a statistically significant relationship (positive correlation of .24) between system leadership and student achievement.

Finding 2: Effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented systems. McREL researchers also identified five system-level leadership responsibilities that have a statistically significant correlation with average student academic achievement. All five of these responsibilities relate to setting and keeping systems focused on teaching and learning goals.

Finding 3: Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement. McREL found two studies that looked specifically at the correlations between superintendent tenure and student achievement. The weighted average correlation in these two studies was a statistically significant .19, which suggests that length of superintendent tenure in a system positively correlates to student achievement. These positive effects appear to manifest themselves as early as two years into a superintendent’s tenure.

Changing Pedagogical Models (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003)
Curriculum decisions should be based on the most current research about best practices in teaching and learning. This chart provides a summary of these best practices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/Curriculum-centered</td>
<td>Learner-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Intelligent thinking and knowledge application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual task</td>
<td>Collaborative work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1.2 Definitions of Curriculum

The literature contains more than 120 definitions of curriculum. These definitions tend to vary in terms of scope, in their assumptions about whether the curriculum is politically charged or politically neutral, and in their assumptions about knowledge and learning. Nevertheless, all are useful in understanding some aspect of the superintendent’s role in curriculum. Following is a representative sample.

- Content subjects such as reading, math and so forth.
- Those subjects most useful for living in a contemporary society.
- All planned learning for which the school is responsible.
- All of the experiences learners have under the guidance of the school.
- All of the experiences that learners have in the course of living. (See Marsh & Willis, 1999 for the above definitions.)
- All curricula are composed of certain elements. A curriculum usually contains a statement of aims and of specific objectives, some selection and organization of content, implied or stated patterns of learning and teaching, and a program of evaluation of the outcomes (Taba, 1962).
- The American curriculum is an assemblage of competing doctrines and practices (Kliebard, 1998).

Over the course of time, the phrase “curriculum development” evolved into the shortened term “curriculum.” From this perspective, curriculum came to be synonymous with school materials.
1.3 Curriculum in Alabama Public Schools

In Alabama public schools, the curriculum is formed by the various Courses of Study developed and distributed by the Alabama State Department of Education. These guides identify the content to be introduced, taught, and mastered by subject and by grade level. Revised by committees in six year intervals, the Courses of Study represent the minimum content standards for public schools in Kindergarten through grade 12. Current and proposed Courses of Study for Alabama schools may be viewed or downloaded at http://www.alsde.edu/html/CoursesOfStudy.asp

School systems may develop content strands or course offerings, and schools within the system may develop studies, programs, or curriculum efforts with a specific focus. Local initiatives may arise as a result of input from the community through strategic planning efforts, community involvement projects, analysis of student achievement data and academic performance, input from local business and industry, and/or teacher or student interest surveys. Where the Alabama Courses of Study form the minimum content for Alabama public schools, local courses may go beyond these minimum standards.

1.4 Scheduling Curriculum Revisions

Local systems may consider curriculum revision activities following the State adoption of a new course of study and preceding the adoption of textbooks in the same content area. Such a schedule assists in familiarizing faculty and staff with the new course of study and serves as preparation for informed adoption of texts. Participation of local teachers and administrators on state course of study revision committees allows for local input and serves to inform the LEA of upcoming curriculum changes.

When the school year is established on a fall-spring semester calendar, curriculum revision activities should be completed by the end of the first term to allow for publication of proposed changes, secure teachers and materials, and allow adequate time for students to make course selections in the spring term. Addition or deletion of credit requirements, required courses, or substitution of courses must be made with the four-year cycle of a class of students in mind. Phasing in or phasing out courses over one or two years allows students to finish programs of study and/or to plan substitutions without undue penalty.

1.5 Evaluating Curriculum Implementation and Instructional Programs

Annual evaluation of standardized test data, student achievement reports, and local interests can provide valuable information on which to base decisions about needs for curriculum additions, deletions, and revisions.

Schools and school systems that participate in accreditation studies and that receive accredited status, must commit to develop and implement programs of continuous improvement. Such continuous improvement programs must address the standards for
systematically evaluating curriculum implementation, teaching, and the progression toward measurable performance goals for students (AdvancED Standards for Quality, 2011). These accreditation standards clearly place the responsibility for regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the instructional program on the system leadership. A sample of these standards and indicators focused on curriculum, instruction, and evaluation of teaching and learning include:

- Indicator 2.6: Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.

- Standard 3 Teaching and Assessing for Learning: The school’s curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

- Indicator 3.1: The school’s curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.

- Indicator 3.2: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.

- Indicator 3.4: School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.

1.6 Involving Stakeholders in Curriculum Revision

Establishing a system policy and set of procedures for teachers, parents, administrators, and community members to follow when suggesting changes to the local curriculum allows all stakeholders to contribute ideas and to understand the parameters for curriculum change. A major responsibility of a superintendent and his/her staff is skillful involvement of all stakeholders in decisions that impact student achievement. Anticipating and effectively managing and monitoring the instructional process and curriculum change are critical abilities for successful education leaders at every level.

1.7 Essential Considerations

The remainder of this manual builds on the essential ideas above to address the following:

- how the local school system curriculum is impacted by larger economic, political, and societal forces, federal legislation, state legislation, State Board of Education mandates, and local community priorities;
• the curriculum content, knowledge, skills, and processes taught within Alabama school systems;

• the skills needed to collaborate with others in the continuous evaluation, alignment, revision, and editing of the curriculum in ways that will serve an increasingly diverse body of students well;

• the need to communicate curriculum change to teachers, parents, community agencies, and students in ways that foster successful curriculum implementation; and,

• the superintendent’s leadership role and responsibilities in improving student achievement.

Particular attention is devoted to the need to address the achievement gap between and among groups of students by virtue of their race, class, or gender.

The manual’s primary purpose is to serve as a summary of research, resources, and standards related to leading instruction Alabama’s public school systems.
2. OVERVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

The system-level infrastructure supporting today’s public schools arose historically for pragmatic reasons. As cities and the number of schools within them grew, administering and supervising public schools became increasingly complex and labor intensive. The first appointed county officials and superintendents inspected schools, kept official records, selected, certified, and assigned teachers and arbitrated county and system boundary disputes (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybouts, 1996). Consistent with these early expectations, for much of this century superintendents spent most of their time managing the school system in an efficient manner.

Since the 1960’s, a growing concern for educational equity, higher levels of ethnic diversity, and the shift to an information-based society have challenged the traditional mission of education as well as the traditional role of the superintendent (Kowalski, 1999). Professional standards, professional organizations, and many school board members now call for today’s superintendents to do more than manage the school system. The following national, professional, and state standards provide direction for superintendents in performing their roles as instructional leaders.

2.1 Alabama Leadership Development Standards

October 19, 2006 marked the effective date for implementation of new standards for leadership development in Alabama public education. These new rules are found in the Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) §290-4-3-.01. The Code establishes the Office of Leadership Development to implement inservice education and professional development for instructional leaders. Members of the Alabama Council for Leadership Development (ACLD) are appointed by the State Superintendent of Education, using nominations received from State Board of Education members, education organizations, and other entities, and serve three-year staggered terms.

Members of the Alabama Council for Leadership Development (ACLD) include, but are not limited to, the following active practitioners: local superintendents, local education agency directors of instruction or equivalent position, elementary principals, middle school principals, high school principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, and aspiring principals who have distinguished themselves by leading sustained student achievement in their schools or local education agencies (LEAs). Membership of the Alabama Council for Leadership Development shall not exceed 15 members.

This group defines the criteria for the approval of all professional development activities and programs used to meet requirements of instructional leader certification renewal which shall be called Professional Learning Units (PLUs). Criteria aligns with the Alabama Standards for
Instructional Leaders and the Alabama Standards for Professional Development (Code of Alabama 1975, §§16-23-7, 16-23-8, and 16-23-12 through 13.1, and AAC Rule 290-3-3-.48.)

2.2 Alabama Standards for Professional Development

Approved professional development for educators in Alabama shall:

1. Organize adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school, the system, and the state.
2. Require knowledgeable and skillful school and system leaders who actively participate in and guide continuous instructional improvement.
3. Provide resources to support adult learning and collaboration.
4. Use disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
5. Use multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
6. Prepare educators to apply research to decision making.
7. Use learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
8. Apply knowledge about human learning and change.
9. Provide educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.
10. Prepare educators to understand and appreciate all students; create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments; and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.
11. Deepen educators' content knowledge, provide them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepare them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
12. Provide educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

Instructional Leader is defined in the legislation as

1. Superintendent
2. Local Education Agency (LEA) Central Office Instructional Administrators
3. Principal
4. Assistant Principal
5. Aspiring Principal
6. Teacher Leader

Approved professional development is defined as educational experiences meeting the requirements of the Office of Leadership Development standards and aligning the practice of instructional leaders with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders. Only the proposed activities and/or programs which meet the criteria prescribed in the ACC rules shall be approved for meeting the:

a. Renewal requirements for instructional leader certification which relate to professional development (AAC Rule 290-3-3-.04).
b. Professional development requirements which are a result of the administrative component of LEADAlabama, the formative, online, evaluation system for educational leaders in Alabama, consisting of self assessment, collaborative dialogue, a professional learning plan (PLP), and evidence collection.

The Office of Leadership Development works with LEAs to ensure that opportunities for professional development are equally available throughout the state. Both the Office of Leadership Development and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development collaborate with university schools of education to ensure that the Alabama Continuum of Leadership Development begins with content for pre-service education and is comprehensive enough to create the seamless system of professional development for instructional leaders supporting them throughout their careers.

### 2.3 Alabama Technology Standards for Administrators

Comprehensive technology standards for all school administrators were adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education in March 2002. These standards comprise the knowledge, skills, and abilities school leaders are to demonstrate in order to promote the integration of technology in all areas of the K-12 curriculum. The standards (listed below) are available from the ALSDE website (www.alsde.edu).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of:</th>
<th>Ability to:</th>
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<tr>
<td>(i) the skills required to develop a shared vision for the comprehensive integration of technology, communicate that vision, and facilitate a process for fostering and nurturing a culture to achieve the vision.</td>
<td>(i) describe mechanisms for creating a shared vision for the comprehensive integration of technology, communicating that vision, and facilitating a process that fosters and nurtures a culture to achieve the vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) technology plan development, resource alignment (e.g., funding, staff and time, hardware/software, total cost of ownership), and leadership skills necessary to integrate technology to support effective learning and administration.</td>
<td>(ii) develop a technology plan including resource alignment (e.g., funding, staff and time, hardware/software, total cost of ownership), and demonstrate leadership skills necessary to integrate technology to support effective learning and administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) technologies appropriate for curriculum areas, instructional strategies, and student-centered learning environments to maximize learning and teaching to meet the individual needs of all learners.</td>
<td>(iii) facilitate the selection and use of technologies appropriate for curriculum areas, instructional strategies, and student-centered learning environments to maximize learning and teaching to meet the individual needs of all learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) available technologies; existing Alabama and national technology standards for students, teachers, and administrators; related trends and issues; current research; and professional</td>
<td>(iv) apply and model technology applications and professional practices that demonstrate knowledge of available technologies; existing Alabama and national technology standards for</td>
</tr>
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</table>
students, teachers, and administrators; related trends and issues; current research; and professional development resources in order to enhance professional practices of educational leaders, increase job-related technology use, and improve the productivity of self and other school personnel.

(vi) prevalent technology-based managerial, financial, and operational systems used in Alabama schools.

(vi) use prevalent technology-based managerial, financial, and operational systems used in Alabama schools.

(vi) the use of technology to facilitate effective assessment and evaluation, including:
1. the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and communication of findings to improve instructional practice and student learning;
2. the use of assessment of staff knowledge, skills, and performance in using technology to facilitate quality professional development and guide personnel decisions;
3. the use of technology to assess and evaluate managerial and operational systems; and
4. assessment and evaluation of, using multiple methods, appropriate uses of technology resources for learning, communication, and productivity.

(vi) use technology to facilitate effective assessment and evaluation, including:
1. the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and communication of findings to improve instructional practice and student learning;
2. the use of assessment of staff knowledge, skills, and performance in using technology to facilitate quality professional development and guide personnel decisions;
3. the use of technology to assess and evaluate managerial and operational systems; and
4. assessment and evaluation of, using multiple methods, appropriate uses of technology resources for learning, communication, and productivity.

(vii) The social, legal, and ethical issues related to technology.

(vii) demonstrate responsible decision making that reflects understanding of social, legal, and ethical issues related to technology.

2.4 Alabama Educator Code of Ethics

Educators, including Superintendents, central office administrators, school leaders, and teachers, are subject to the standards of ethical conduct expressed in the Alabama Code of Ethics. Requirements for reporting violations of the Code of Ethics are included in this set of standards as published by the Alabama State Department of Education (www.alsde.edu).

The Alabama Educator Code of Ethics defines the professional behavior of educators in Alabama and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The code of ethics protects the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators; outlines objective standards of conduct for professional educators; and clearly defines actions of an unethical nature for which disciplinary sanctions are justified.
Alabama Educator Code of Ethics Standards

**Standard 1: Professional Conduct**
*An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.*

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Encouraging and supporting colleagues in the development and maintenance of high standards.
- Respecting fellow educators and participating in the development of a professional and supportive teaching environment.
- Engaging in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to developing professionally in order to promote student learning.

Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the certificate holder’s ability to function in his or her employment position or a pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Harassment of colleagues.
- Misuse or mismanagement of tests or test materials.
- Inappropriate language on school grounds.
- Physical altercations.
- Failure to provide appropriate supervision of students.

**Standard 2: Trustworthiness**
*An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.*

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Properly representing facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
- Advocating for fair and equitable opportunities for all children.
- Embodying for students the characteristics of intellectual honesty, diplomacy, tact, and fairness.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting professional qualifications, criminal record, or employment history when applying for employment or certification.
- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information submitted to federal, state, and/or other governmental agencies.
- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel.
• Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting reasons for absences or leaves.
• Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation.

**Standard 3: Unlawful Acts**

*An educator should abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes.*

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of *nolo contendere*, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought or a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted.

**Standard 4: Teacher/Student Relationship**

*An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.*

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fulfilling the roles of trusted confidante, mentor, and advocate for students’ growth.
- Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and civic potential of all students.
- Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Committing any act of child abuse, including physical or verbal abuse.
- Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment.
- Committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act.
- Engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion, or disability.
- Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, or physical relationship with a student.
- Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs.

**Standard 5: Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use or Possession**

*An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during the course of professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs.*

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
• Factually representing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use and abuse to students during the course of professional practice.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
• Being under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs.
• Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages or using tobacco. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity that is sponsored by a school or a school system or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum such as club trips, etc., where students are involved.

Standard 6: Public Funds and Property
An educator entrusted with public funds and property should honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
• Maximizing the positive effect of school funds through judicious use of said funds.
• Modeling for students and colleagues the responsible use of public property.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
• Misusing public or school-related funds.
• Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents.
• Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay.
• Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts.
• Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing body.

Standard 7: Remunerative Conduct
An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
• Insuring that institutional privileges are not used for personal gain.
• Insuring that school policies or procedures are not impacted by gifts or gratuities from any person or organization.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
• Soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local governing body.
• Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there appears to be a conflict of interest.
• Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education.

**Standard 8: Maintenance of Confidentiality**

*An educator should comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements.*

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Keeping in confidence information about students that has been obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
- Maintaining diligently the security of standardized test supplies and resources.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Sharing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status/income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law.
- Violating confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, and violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items.
- Violating other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

**Standard 9: Abandonment of Contract**

*An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or educational agency for the duration of the contract.*

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer;
- Refusing to perform services required by the contract.

**Reporting Ethics or Standards Violations**

Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics as soon as possible, but no later than sixty (60) days from the date the educator became aware of the alleged breach, unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of their local school board policies and procedures and/or chain of command for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the local or state school boards, or with the State Department of Education Teacher Certification Section, must be filed in writing and must include the original signature of the complainant.
Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-2-.05
(1)-5-c Each Superintendent shall submit to the State Superintendent of Education within ten (10) calendar days of the decision, the name and social security number of each employee holding an Alabama certificate or license who is terminated, or non-renewed, resigns, or is placed on administrative leave for cause, and shall indicate the reason for such action.

Disciplinary Action for Ethics Violations
Disciplinary action shall be defined as the issuance of a reprimand or warning, or the suspension, revocation, or denial of certificates. “Certificate” refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate issued by the authority of the Alabama State Department of Education.

Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-2-.05
(1) Authority of the State Superintendent of Education
   (a) The Superintendent shall have the authority under existing legal standards to:
      1. Revoke any certificate held by a person who has been proven guilty of immoral conduct or unbecoming or indecent behavior in Alabama or any other state or nation in accordance with Ala. Code §16–23–5 (1975).
      2. Refuse to issue a certificate to an applicant whose certificate has been subject to adverse action by another state until after the adverse action has been resolved by that state.
      3. Suspend or revoke an individual’s certificate issued by the Superintendent when a certificate or license issued by another state is subject to adverse action.
      4. Refuse to issue, suspend, or recall a certificate for just cause.

Any of the following grounds shall also be considered cause for disciplinary action:
• Unethical conduct as outlined in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics, Standards 1-9.
• Order from a court of competent jurisdiction.
• Violation of any other laws or rules applicable to the profession.
• Any other good and sufficient cause.

An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, or substitute teacher during the period of his or her revocation, suspension, or denial.

2.5 The Alabama Ethics Act

In addition to the proposed Alabama Educator Code of Ethics described above, all Alabama public educators as public employees are subject to the Alabama Ethics Act found in Code of Alabama (1975) Sections §36-25-1 through §36-25-30, amended in 2010, 2011 and 2012 and rules of the Alabama Ethics Commission. While most of these rules concern finances, exchanging things of value for official actions, conflicts of interest, and legislative
lobbying, as public employees school leaders must follow ethical behavior rules while carrying out their responsibilities. Portions of these rules address standards of confidentiality, the performance of one’s official duties, and requirements to make official decisions without consideration of personal gain and with impartiality. Although the most publicized and contested portions of the act’s revisions concerned the value of gifts educators may receive, the directives for school leaders to be honest, professional, and fair while performing their duties are underlying facets of the legislation. The recently amended (March 2012) Alabama Ethics Law may be found at the website of the Alabama Ethics Commission [http://ethics.alabama.gov/docs/Unofficial_Restated_Ethics_Act(Draft_7-18-2012).pdf](http://ethics.alabama.gov/docs/Unofficial_Restated_Ethics_Act(Draft_7-18-2012).pdf).

The methods for reporting ethics complaints or suspected violations of the Alabama Ethics Act are also found at the Alabama Ethics Commission website and in official publications of the Alabama Ethics Commission. Investigations of suspected violators may be conducted by the Ethics Commission and punishments upon conviction vary from fines and sanctions to removal from office or position or imprisonment. A beneficial publication for superintendents, school system financial officers, board of education members, and principals is the newly-revised Guidelines for Public Officials and Employees (2012) available from the Alabama Ethics Commission [State of Alabama - Ethics Commission](http://ethics.alabama.gov/docs/Unofficial_Restated_Ethics_Act(Draft_7-18-2012).pdf).

### 2.6 Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders

To realize the mission of enhancing school leadership among principals and administrators in Alabama resulting in improved academic achievement for all students, the following standards were recommended by the Alabama State Board of Education in a resolution adopted July 14, 2005.

**Standard 1: Planning for Continuous Improvement**
Engages the school community in developing and maintaining a shared vision; plans effectively; uses critical thinking and problem-solving techniques; collects, analyzes, and interprets data; allocates resources; and evaluates results for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

**Standard 1: Rationale**
This standard addresses the need to prepare instructional leaders who value and are committed to educating all students to become successful adults. Each instructional leader is responsible for creating and articulating a vision of high expectations for learning within the school or system that can be shared by all employees and is supported by the broader school-community of parents and citizens. This requires that instructional leaders be willing to examine their own assumptions, beliefs, and practices; understand and apply research; and foster a culture of continuous improvement among all members of the educational staff. Such instructional leaders will commit themselves to high levels of personal and organizational performance in order to ensure implementation of this vision of learning.
Standard 1: Key Indicators

1. Knowledge to lead the articulation, development, and implementation of a shared vision and strategic plan for the school that places student and faculty learning at the center
2. Ability to lead and motivate staff, students, and families to achieve the school’s vision
3. Knowledge to align instructional objectives and curricular goals with the shared vision
4. Knowledge to allocate and guard instruction time for the achievement of goals
5. Ability to work with faculty to identify instructional and curricular needs that align with vision and resources
6. Ability to interact with the community concerning the school’s vision, mission, and priorities
7. Ability to work with staff and others to establish and accomplish goals
8. Ability to relate the vision, mission, and goals to the instructional needs of students
9. Ability to use goals to manage activities
10. Ability to use a variety of problem-solving techniques and decision-making skills to resolve problems
11. Ability to delegate tasks clearly and appropriately to accomplish organizational goals
12. Ability to focus upon student learning as a driving force for curriculum, instruction, and institutional decision-making
13. Ability to use a process for gathering information to use when making decisions
14. Knowledge to create a school leadership team that is skillful in using data
15. Ability to use multiple sources of data to manage the accountability process
16. Ability to assess student progress using a variety of techniques and information
17. Ability to monitor and assess instructional programs, activities, and materials
18. Knowledge to use approved methods and principles of program evaluation in the school improvement process
19. Ability to use diagnostic tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement
20. Ability to use external resources as sources for ideas for improving student achievement

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning

Promotes and monitors the success of all students in the learning environment by collaboratively aligning the curriculum; by aligning the instruction and the assessment processes to ensure effective student achievement; and by using a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability.

Standard 2: Rationale

This standard addresses the need for instructional leaders to establish teaching and learning as the focal point of schools. It accepts the proposition that all students can learn given enough high-quality instruction, and that student learning is the fundamental purpose of schools. To this end, instructional leaders are responsible for ensuring that decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies (including instructional technology), assessment, and professional development are based on sound research, best practices, school and system data, and other contextual information and that observation and collaboration are used to
design meaningful and effective experiences that improve student achievement. Successful instructional leaders must be able to identify, clarify, and address barriers to student learning and communicate the importance of developing learning strategies for diverse populations. In addition, this standard requires that instructional leaders be learners who model and encourage life-long learning. They should establish a culture of high expectations for themselves, their students, and their staff.

**Standard 2: Key Indicators**

1. Knowledge to plan for the achievement of annual learning gains, school improvement goals, and other targets related to the shared vision
2. Ability to use multiple sources of data to plan and assess instructional improvement
3. Ability to engage staff in ongoing study and implementation of research-based practices
4. Ability to use the latest research, applied theory, and best practices to make curricular and instructional decisions
5. Ability to communicate high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of students
6. Ability to ensure that content and instruction are aligned with high standards resulting in improved student achievement
7. Ability to coach staff and teachers on the evaluation of student performance
8. Ability to identify differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of a variety of student populations
9. Ability to develop curriculum aligned to state standards
10. Knowledge to collaborate with community, staff, system, state, and university personnel to develop the instructional program
11. Knowledge to align curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments to system, state, and national standards
12. Ability to focus upon student learning as a driving force for curriculum, instruction, and instructional decision-making
13. Ability to use multiple sources of data to manage the accountability process
14. Ability to assess student progress using a variety of formal and informal assessments
15. Ability to monitor and assess instructional programs, activities, and materials
16. Ability to use the methods and principles of program evaluation in the school improvement process

**Standard 3: Human Resources Development**

Recruits, selects, organizes, evaluates, and mentors faculty and staff to accomplish school and system goals. Works collaboratively with the school faculty and staff to plan and implement effective professional development that is based upon student needs and that promotes both individual and organizational growth and leads to improved teaching and learning. Initiates and nurtures interpersonal relationships to facilitate teamwork and enhance student achievement.
Standard 3: Rationale
This standard addresses the need for instructional leaders to recognize quality professional development as the key strategy for supporting significant improvements. Instructional leaders are able to articulate the critical link between improved student learning and the professional learning of teachers. Skillful instructional leaders establish policies and organizational structures that support ongoing professional learning and continuous improvement. They ensure an equitable distribution of resources to accomplish school goals and continuously improve the school's work through the ongoing evaluation of staff development's effectiveness in achieving student learning goals. They make certain that employee annual calendars and daily schedules provide adequate time for learning and collaboration as part of the workday. Instructional leaders also distribute leadership responsibilities among teachers and other employees. Distributed leadership enables teachers to develop and use their talents as members or chairs of school improvement committees, trainers, coaches, mentors, and members of peer review panels. These leaders make certain that their colleagues have the necessary knowledge, skills, and other forms of support that ensure success in these new roles.

Standard 3: Key Indicators
1. Knowledge to set high expectations and standards for the performance of all teachers and staff
2. Ability to coach staff and teachers on the evaluation of student performances
3. Ability to work collaboratively with teachers to plan for individual professional development
4. Ability to use a variety of supervisory models to improve teaching and learning
5. Ability to apply adult learning strategies to professional development
6. Knowledge to use the accepted methods and principles of personnel evaluation
7. Knowledge to operate within the provisions of each contract as well as established enforcement and grievance procedures
8. Ability to establish mentor programs to orient new teachers and provide ongoing coaching and other forms of support for veteran staff
9. Ability to manage, monitor, and evaluate a program of continuous professional development tied to student learning and other school goals
10. Knowledge to hire and retain high-quality teachers and staff
11. Ability to provide high-quality professional development activities to ensure that teachers have skills to engage all students in active learning
12. Ability to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect, plan, and work collaboratively
13. Ability to create a community of learners among faculty and staff
14. Ability to create a personal professional development plan for his/her own continuous improvement
15. Ability to foster development of aspiring leaders, including teacher leaders
Standard 4: Diversity
Responds to and influences the larger personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context in the classroom, school, and the local community while addressing diverse student needs to ensure the success of all students.

Standard 4: Rationale
This standard addresses the need for instructional leaders to understand and be able to operate within the larger context of community and beyond, which affects opportunities for all students. Instructional leaders must respond to and influence this larger political, social, economic, and cultural context. Of vital importance is the ability to develop a continuing dialogue with economic and political decision-makers concerning the role of schools and to build collaborative relationships that support improved social and educational opportunities for all children. Instructional leaders must be able to participate actively in the political and policy-making context in the service of education, including proactive use of the legal system to protect students’ rights and improve opportunities for all students.

Standard 4: Key Indicators
1. Knowledge to involve school community in appropriate diversity policy implementations, program planning, and assessment efforts
2. Ability to conform to legal and ethical standards related to diversity
3. Ability to perceive the needs and concerns of others and is able to deal tactfully with them
4. Knowledge to handle crisis communications in both oral and written form
5. Ability to arrange for students and families whose home language is not English to engage in school activities and communication through oral and written translations
6. Knowledge to recruit, hire, develop, and retain a diverse staff
7. Knowledge to represent the school and the educational establishment in relations with various cultural, ethnic, racial, and special interest groups in the community
8. Knowledge to recognize and respond effectively to multicultural and ethnic needs in the organization and the community
9. Ability to interact effectively with diverse individuals and groups using a variety of interpersonal skills in any given situation
10. Ability to promote and monitor the delivery of instructional content that provides for diverse perspectives appropriate to the situation

Standard 5: Community and Stakeholder Relationships
Identifies the unique characteristics of the community to create and sustain mutually supportive family-school-community relations.

Standard 5: Rationale
This standard addresses the fact that cooperation among schools, the system, parents, and the larger community is essential to the success of instructional leaders and students. Instructional leaders must see schools as an integral part of the larger community. Collaboration and communication with families, businesses, governmental agencies, social
service organizations, the media, and higher education institutions are critical to effective schooling. Effective and appropriate communications, coupled with the involvement of families and other stakeholders in decisions, help to ensure continued community support for schools. Instructional leaders must see families as partners in the education of their youngsters and believe that families have the best interest of their children in mind. Instructional leaders must involve families in decisions at the school and system levels.

Family and student issues that negatively affect student learning must be addressed through collaboration with community agencies that can integrate health, social, and other services. Such collaboration relies on good relationships with community leaders and outreach to a wide array of business, religious, political, and service agencies. Providing leadership to programs serving all students, including those with special and exceptional needs, further communicates to internal and external audiences the importance of diversity. To work with all elements of the community, instructional leaders must recognize, value, and communicate effectively with various cultural, ethnic, racial, and special interest groups. Modeling community collaboration for staff and then offering opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills maximizes positive interactions between schools and the community.

**Standard 5: Key Indicators**

1. Ability to address student and family conditions affecting learning
2. Ability to identify community leaders and their relationships to school goals and programs
3. Ability to communicate the school’s vision, mission, and priorities to the community
4. Knowledge to serve as primary school spokesperson in the community
5. Ability to share leadership and decision-making with others by gathering input
6. Ability to seek resources of families, business, and community members in support of the school’s goals
7. Ability to develop partnerships, coalitions, and networks to impact student achievement
8. Ability to actively engage the community to share responsibility for student and school success
9. Ability to involve family and community in appropriate policy implementation, program planning, and assessment efforts
10. Knowledge to make parents partners in their student’s education

**Standard 6: Technology**

Plans, implements, and evaluates the effective integration of current technologies and electronic tools in teaching, management, research, and communication.

**Standard 6: Rationale**

This standard addresses the need for effective leadership for technology in schools. An underlying assumption of this standard is that instructional leaders should be competent users of information and technology tools common to information-age professionals. The effective educational leader should be a hands-on user of technology. While technology
empowers instructional leaders by the information it can readily produce and communicates, it exponentially empowers the instructional leader who masters the tools and processes that allow creative and dynamic management of available information. Instructional leaders who recognize the potential of technology understand that leadership has a responsibility to ensure technological equity. They must also know that technology can unlock tremendous potential in learners and staff with special and diverse needs.

Standard 6: Key Indicators
1. Ability to implement a plan for the use of technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich curriculum, instruction, and assessment
2. Ability to develop a plan for technology integration for the school community
3. Knowledge to discover practical approaches for developing and implementing successful technology planning
4. Ability to model the use of technology for personal and professional productivity
5. Ability to develop an effective teacher professional development plan to increase technology usage to support curriculum-based integration practices
6. Ability to promote the effective integration of technology throughout the teaching and learning environment
7. Knowledge to increase access to educational technologies for the school
8. Ability to provide support for teachers to increase the use of technology already in the school/classrooms
9. Ability to use technology to support the analysis and use of student assessment data

Standard 7: Management of the Learning Organization
Manages the organization, facilities, and financial resources; implements operational plans; and promotes collaboration to create a safe and effective learning environment.

Standard 7: Rationale
This standard addresses the need to enhance student learning through effective, efficient, and equitable utilization of resources. Instructional leaders must use their knowledge of organizations to create a learning environment conducive to the success of all students. Proper allocation of resources such as personnel, facilities, and technology is essential to creating an effective learning environment. Resource management decisions should give priority to teaching, student achievement, and student development. Also, operational procedures and policies must be established to maintain school safety and security and to strengthen the academic environment. All management decisions, including those regarding human resources, fiscal operations, facilities, legal issues, time management, scheduling, technology, and equipment, should be based on sound organizational practice. Instructional leaders must monitor and evaluate operational systems to ensure that they enhance student learning and reflect the school’s and system’s accountability to the community. They also actively seek additional sources of financial, human, and physical support. They involve stakeholders to ensure the management and operational decisions take into consideration the needs of multiple constituencies while at the same time focusing the entire community on student achievement as the ultimate goal. To include stakeholders in management decisions,
instructional leaders must be competent in conflict resolution, consensus-building, group processes, and effective communication.

**Standard 7: Key Indicators**
1. Knowledge to develop and administer policies that provide a safe school environment
2. Ability to apply operational plans and processes to accomplish strategic goals
3. Ability to attend to student learning goals in the daily operation of the school
4. Knowledge to identify and analyze the major sources of fiscal and non-fiscal resources for the school including business and community resources
5. Knowledge to build and ability to support a culture of learning at the school
6. Knowledge to manage financial and material assets and capital goods and services in order to allocate resources according to school priorities
7. Knowledge to use an efficient budget planning process that involves staff and community
8. Ability to identify and organize resources to achieve curricular and instructional goals
9. Ability to develop techniques and organizational skills necessary to lead/manage a complex and diverse organization
10. Ability to plan and schedule one’s own and others’ work so that resources are used appropriately in meeting priorities and goals
11. Ability to use goals to manage activities
12. Knowledge to create and ability to empower a school leadership team that shares responsibility for the management of the learning organization

**Standard 8: Ethics**
Demonstrates honesty, integrity, and fairness to guide school policies and practices consistent with current legal and ethical standards for professional educators.

**Standard 8: Rationale**
This standard addresses the educational leader’s role as the “first citizen” of the school/system community. Instructional leaders should set the tone for how employees and students interact with one another and with members of the school, system, and larger community. The leader’s contacts with students, parents, and employees must reflect concern for others as well as for the organization and the position. Instructional leaders must develop the ability to examine personal and professional values that reflect a code of ethics. They must be able to serve as role models, accepting responsibility for using their position ethically and constructively on behalf of the school/system community.

**Standard 8: Key Indicators**
1. Knowledge and ability to adhere to a professional code of ethics and values
2. Knowledge and ability to make decisions based on the legal, moral, and ethical implications of policy options and political strategies
3. Knowledge and ability to develop well-reasoned educational beliefs based upon an understanding of teaching and learning
4. Knowledge to understand ethical and legal concerns educators face when using technology throughout the teaching and learning environment
5. Knowledge and ability to develop a personal code of ethics embracing diversity, integrity, and the dignity of all people
6. Knowledge and ability to act in accordance with federal and state constitutional provisions, statutory standards, and regulatory applications
7. Ability to make decisions within an ethical context.

2.7 State Evaluation Standards for Administrators

Superintendents of Alabama public schools are ultimately evaluated by the local board of education (for appointed superintendents) or by voters (for elected superintendents). The performance of superintendents has been formally evaluated since 1996 according to the instruments and procedures developed by a representative task force using national standards of the Council of Chief State School Officers known as The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. The explicit emphasis on teaching and learning can be found in The Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program (PEPE) for superintendents (http://www.alabamapepe.com). Consistent with the national shift in priorities described above, the primary goal of the PEPE for superintendents is the improvement of teaching and learning. Superintendents are called upon to accomplish this by (a) removing barriers to instruction in the schools, (b) ensuring systematic curriculum development, and (c) ensuring that ongoing instruction meets the needs of all students.

Since February 2008, committees and ALSDE leadership have implemented revisions to the PEPE system for administrators and teachers. Practitioners and school system personnel collaborated with ALSDE department leadership to retain the effectiveness of the PEPE program while reducing the amount of paper documentation and time needed to implement the program. The first administrator system to be revised and implemented is the one for school principals, LEADAlabama (http://leadalabama.asc.edu/Public/sdeLogin.aspx). Changes to evaluation systems for all school and system leaders are being developed to align with the new leadership standards for Alabama school leaders. During the development and implementation of new systems for evaluating school system leaders, boards of education may continue to use the Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) process for evaluating superintendents or may choose to use locally-developed programs of evaluation. As public employees (appointed Superintendents) or public officials (elected Superintendents), evaluation results of Superintendents are public records and available to the public under provisions of Alabama’s Open Meetings Act (Alabama Legislative Act 2005-40) (http://www.acca-online.org/oml/ag_open_meeting.pdf).

2.8 Professional Standards for Content Areas and Subjects

Glatthorn (2000) predicts that the influence of professional organizations on the curriculum in K-12 schools will increase. While the adopted Alabama Courses of Study for the minimum content for Alabama classrooms, superintendents and their designated staff for monitoring
curriculum development and implementation may consider standards offered by the content-specific national organizations when determining rigor, relevance and variety in course offerings and curriculum sequence. The following documents guide the curriculum development process.

**Arts**

**Civics**

**Economics**

**English/Language Arts**
The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and its affiliate organization, the International Reading Association (IRA), regularly revise and publish content standards in the areas of reading and language arts. Consideration of these standards in local curriculum decisions ensures that national measures of learning in these areas are included. NCTE and IRA standards are available on the NCTE website [http://www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org).

**Foreign Language**

**Health**

**History**
National Center for History in the Schools.  
The National Center for History in the Schools has developed and published national standards for history by grade span (K-4 and 5-12). The standards were developed with
funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the US Department of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles. The standards address historical thinking, United States history, and world history. The standards may be accessed and downloaded from the UCLA website at [http://nchs.ucla.edu/Standards/](http://nchs.ucla.edu/Standards/)

**Mathematics**


**Physical Education**


**Social Studies**

National Council for the Social Studies. *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning and Assessment*, NCSS, Waldorf, MD, 2010. The revised standards, like the earlier social studies standards published in 1994, continue to be structured around the ten themes of social studies. However, the revised standards offer a sharper focus on:

- Purposes
- Questions for Exploration
- Knowledge: what learners need to understand
- Processes: what learners will be capable of doing
- Products: how learners demonstrate understanding

The revised standards also include:

- Enhancements in the descriptions of the ten themes and the associated learning expectations
- The addition of new descriptions of standards-based class practices to time-tested descriptions that were included in the original edition of the standards
- A stronger focus on student products and their assessment
- An updated list of essential social studies skills and strategies, including literacy strategies

Additional related content standards available from the National Council for the Social Studies include those for History, Geography, Civics and Government, Economics, Psychology and
Education Technology. NCSS publications of their recommended standards may be found at http://www.socialstudies.org/standards

Science
National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and National Research Council (NRC). National science education standards. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1996, revised 2003. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) developed by a consortium of 26 states, represents the efforts of science educators and researchers to bring K-12 science instruction to higher standards in three important dimensions—science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts. The NGSS are based on the NRC Framework for K-12 Science Education. Lesson plans, instructional videos, web-based seminars, as well as valuable background information and teaching resources are available at http://www.acca-online.org/oml/ag_open_meeting.pdf.

2.9 Common Core State Standards

In a collaborative effort, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) has organized a consortia of states embracing a set of common core curriculum standards. The mission statement of the initiative is “...to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. “With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.”

Alabama is among the 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia who have adopted the common core standards to guide curriculum development, instruction, and assessment. Included with the content standards in academic subjects are college- and career-readiness standards developed using criteria that:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are Informed by top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and,
- Are evidence and/or research based.

Downloadable information and supporting documentation on the common core standards may be found at http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards.
2.10 Alabama College and Career Ready Initiative (Alabama Common Core Standards)

The Alabama State Board of Education approved the adoption of the internationally benchmarked Common Core State Standards along with selected Alabama standards in November 2010. By combining both Common Core and Alabama's standards, our state has adopted one of the most comprehensive sets of standards in the nation, ensuring students are prepared for a successful future in the ever-expanding global environment. A website has been created to help Alabama educators better understand the standards as well as provide high-quality resources and instructional materials to implement the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) [Alabama College- & Career-Ready Standards (CCRS) | College-and Career-Ready Initiative]. The Alabama Insight online curriculum tool is provided to each Alabama school system. This site is password protected, accessible to Alabama educators with passwords provided by each system’s technology coordinator.

ALSDE leaders have provided resources and publications to assist local school system administrators in communicating and implementing Alabama’s CCRS. The first content areas to incorporate common core and CCRS standards are mathematics and English/language arts. The summary that follows is from The Facts About Alabama College and Career Standards, published by the Alabama State Department of Education in 2011. (https://www.alsde.edu/general/ALCCS_The_Facts_About_Alabama_College_and_Career_Initiative.pdf).

The Standards
[Alabama’s] new standards will provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn so that teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.

Consistent standards will provide appropriate academic benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live, and allow states to more effectively help all students succeed. With students, parents, and teachers all on the same page and working together toward shared goals, [Alabama educators] can ensure students make progress each year and graduate from school prepared to succeed and build a strong future for themselves, our communities, and the country. These new standards are designed to be relevant in the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills [Alabama] young people need for success in both college and career.

When American students have the skills and knowledge needed in today’s job market, our communities will be strong and competitive in the global economy. The standards incorporate the best and highest of previous state standards in the U.S. and are internationally benchmarked to the top performing nations around the world.

The Development Process
The Alabama College and Career Ready Initiative was a state-led effort to establish consistent and clear education standards for English-language arts and mathematics so students will be
prepared for success in today’s world. The initiative was launched by state leaders through their membership in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center).

The process used to write the standards was designed to ensure the standards were informed by the best standards among states and around the globe; the experience of teachers, content experts, states, and feedback from the general public. The development process began by working with higher education, employers, and the best research available to determine what students need to be college and career ready. Standards were then developed for each grade level to prepare students to meet those expectations by graduation.

CCSSO and the NGA Center received nearly 10,000 comments from the public on the standards, and experts worked to incorporate that feedback for the final release. Next, CCSSO and the NGA Center worked with experts to ensure the K-12 standards are aligned with the college and career ready standards. Finally, a validation committee of experts reviewed the standards and determined that they will prepare students for college and career. Each state that chose to adopt the standards did so through its own unique process of determining educational standards.

The Mathematics Standards
The standards stress not only procedural skills, but also conceptual understanding to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information they need to succeed at higher levels — rather than the current practices by which many students learn enough to get by on the next test, but forget it shortly thereafter, only to review it again the following year.

The K-5 standards provide students with a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals, which help young students build the foundation to successfully apply more demanding math concepts and procedures, and move into practical applications of those core math principles.

In kindergarten, the standards follow successful international models and recommendations from the National Research Council’s Early Math Panel report by focusing kindergarten work on the number core: learning how numbers correspond to quantities, and learning how to put numbers together and take them apart (the building blocks of addition and subtraction).

The K-5 standards build on the best state standards to provide detailed guidance to teachers on how to navigate their way through complex topics such as fractions, negative numbers, and geometry, and to do so by maintaining a continuous progression from grade to grade.

Having built a strong K-5 foundation, students can do hands-on learning in geometry, algebra, and probability and statistics once they reach the middle school level. Students who have completed grade 7 and mastered its content and skills will be well-prepared for algebra in grade 8. The middle school standards are robust and provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school mathematics.
The high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically. The high school standards set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness by helping students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do. The high school standards emphasize mathematical modeling – the use of mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations – to help students better understand the concept and improve decision-making skills.

The English-Language Arts Standards

Reading
The standards establish a staircase of increasing complexity in what students must be able to read so all students are ready for the demands of college-and career-level reading no later than the end of high school. The standards also require the progressive development of reading comprehension so that students advancing through the grades are able to gain more from whatever they read. Through reading a diverse array of classic and contemporary literature as well as challenging informational texts in a range of subjects, students are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspectives.

Because the standards are building blocks for successful classrooms – but recognize teachers, school districts, and states need to decide on appropriate curriculum – they intentionally do not offer a required reading list. Instead, they offer numerous sample texts to help teachers prepare for the school year and allow parents and students to know what to expect at the beginning of the year.

The standards mandate certain critical types of content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, foundational U.S. documents, and seminal works of literature. The standards appropriately defer the many remaining decisions about what and how to teach to states, districts, and schools.

Writing
The ability to write logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence is a cornerstone of the writing standards, with opinion writing – a basic form of argument – extending down into the earliest grades.

Student research – both short focused projects (such as those commonly required in the workplace) and longer term in-depth research – is emphasized throughout the standards, but most prominently in the writing strand, since a written analysis and presentation of findings is a critical skill for students to master. Annotated samples of student writing accompany the standards and help establish adequate performance levels in writing arguments, informational/explanatory texts, and narratives in the various grades.
Speaking and Listening
The standards require that students gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence through listening and speaking as well as through various media platforms. An important focus of the speaking and listening standards is academic discussion in one-on-one, small-group, and whole-class settings. Formal presentations are one important way these standards are put into practice, but so is the more informal discussion that takes place as students collaborate to answer questions, build understanding, and solve problems.

Language
The standards expect that students will grow their vocabularies through a mix of conversations, direct instruction, and reading. The standards will help students determine word meanings, appreciate the nuances of words, and steadily expand their repertoire of words and phrases.

The standards help prepare students for real life experience at college and in 21st century careers. The standards recognize that students must be able to use formal English in their writing and speaking, but they must also be able to make informed, skillful choices among the many ways to express themselves through language. Vocabulary and conventions are treated in their own strand not because skills in these areas should be handled in isolation, but because their use extends across reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Media and Technology
Just as media and technology are integrated in school and life in the 21st century, skills related to media use (both critical analysis and production of media), are integrated throughout the standards.

Implementation
The standards do not tell teachers how to run their classrooms or principals how to run schools. They clearly lay out what students should learn, but allow schools and teachers to decide how to best help students reach their academic goals. The Common Core State Standards have always been, and continue to be, a state-led effort. The standards are being implemented by each state individually. The federal government did not play a role in the development of the standards, and it is not playing a role in implementation.

2.11 Standards for 21st Century Learners
In the mid-1990s, education writers and researchers began to publish standards and sets of learning skills to be added to or integrated with traditional academic content to better prepare students for 21st century learning and for living successfully in 21st century society. Two organizations, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the (P21), have each published a set of standards and/or frameworks for these recommended standards. In its 2007 publication Standards for the 21st-Century Learner, AASL advocates an integrated
approach to literacy, technology, and inquiry while stressing ethical behavior in the use of information. A complete downloadable description of the standards, a cross-referencing of the AASL standards with the Common Core Standards may be found at http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/learningstandards/standards.cfm.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) is a national organization that advocates for 21st century readiness for every student. The organization, formed in 2002 as a collaboration among the US Department of Education, AOL Time Warner Foundation, Apple Computer, Inc., Cable in the Classroom, Cisco Systems, Inc., Dell Computer Corporation, Microsoft Corporation, the National Education Association, and SAP. They are based in Washington, DC and the list of strategic council members includes representatives from a wide array of companies and organizations that supply school materials, computer equipment, software, textbooks, and education products. Two outstanding organizations that have joined the partnership are AASL and The College Board’s Advanced Placement Program (AP Program). Their mission is “to serve as a catalyst to position 21st century readiness at the center of US K12 education by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders.” A summary of the organization’s beliefs is included in all their publications:

Every child in the U.S. needs 21st century knowledge and skills to succeed as effective citizens, workers and leaders. This can be accomplished by fusing the three Rs and four Cs.

There is a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need in typical 21st century communities and workplaces.

To successfully face rigorous higher education coursework, career challenges and a globally competitive workforce, U.S. schools must align classroom environments with real world environments by fusing the three Rs and four Cs:

- The three Rs include: English, reading or language arts; mathematics; science; foreign languages; civics; government; economics; arts; history; and geography.
- The four Cs include: critical thinking and problem solving; communication, collaboration; and creativity and innovation.

Sixteen states have endorsed the P21 standards and beliefs and have been designated as P21 Leadership States. P21 Leadership States design new standards, assessments, and professional development programs to ensure 21st century readiness for every student. To become a P21 Leadership State, a state demonstrates commitment from the governor and chief state school officer, and submits an application to P21 that describes the state’s plan to fuse the three Rs and four Cs (critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation) within standards, assessments and professional
development programs. Participating states thus far include Arizona, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, South Carolina, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Additional details about the P21 projects, their Framework describing student outcomes and support systems, publications, professional development opportunities, implementation guides, and scheduled events may be found at www.p21.org.

Of particular interest is the P21 Framework graphic and its supporting information on education standards. Standards for core subjects (3Rs) are presented in light of 21st century themes. In addition to the academic core, P21 describes standards in three other critical areas necessary for student success: Life and Career Skills, Learning and Innovation Skills (the 4 Cs), and Information, Media and Technology skills.

Authors Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel have embraced the P21 framework and disseminated it widely in their 2009 publication 21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in our Times (published by Wiley and Sons, San Francisco, CA: 2009). The book has an accompanying DVD and the authors maintain an active blog and website for the exchange of teaching/learning ideas related to the “21st Century Education movement.” The authors identify and illustrate “the skills needed to survive and thrive in a complex and connected world,” dividing the learning needed by today’s students into three categories: learning and innovation skills, digital literacy skills, and life and career skills. “Route 21” is their web repository of 21st century learning resources and examples. It can be accessed at http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/route21.
3. HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Americans have never agreed about the purpose of public education. Since its inception, educators have vacillated between attempts to achieve educational excellence or to achieve educational equity. Compounding the problem is the field of curriculum itself which "spirals out like the seemingly endless suburbs of a modern megalopolis" (Flinders & Thornton, 1997). Following are selected highlights of what many have come to refer to at the battle over the curriculum (see Module 81 for examples of other contemporary issues related to public education).

3.1 Historical Considerations

Early Twentieth Century:
The challenges of the early twentieth century were remarkably similar to those of today. The population of schools was burgeoning, industry was on the rise, and the nation was becoming more pluralistic with an increasing number of immigrant children entering public schools. So it is not surprising that many features of today's curriculum (tracking, standardized testing, civic education) originated during this time. Franklin Bobbitt’s emphasis on scientific management in schools, standards of efficiency, diagnostic testing, dividing teaching and learning into its smallest parts, and tracking students based on testing all have their roots in the early 20th century model of administering schools based on an efficiency-oriented approach. Not all early 20th century educators accepted the scientific method of administering schools. Progressive educators, such as John Dewey, George Counts, Ella Flagg Young, and Jane Addams worked diligently to administer schools based on a model of democracy, rather than efficiency. Child-centered Progressive educators believed that the primary purpose of schools should be to unleash the individual potential of all children and to prepare them to be democratic citizens. Other progressive educators, such as George Counts who wrote Dare the School Build a New Social Order?, believed that schools should be sites of social reconstruction and that teachers should be agents of social change.

Mid-Twentieth Century:
The Tylerian Rationale drove curriculum development in U. S. schools for the last half of the 20th century. This rationale was first articulated by Ralph W. Tyler in his 1949 classic, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. This approach to curriculum development provides a process or procedure for identifying curriculum objectives. In other words, the model is responsive to the question “What steps does one follow in planning a curriculum?”

Tyler recommended that curriculum planners identify general objectives by gathering data from three sources: the learners, contemporary life outside the schools, and the subject matter. After identifying numerous general objectives, the planners refine them by filtering
them through two screens: the educational and social philosophy of the school and the psychology of learning. The general objectives that successfully pass through the two screens become what are now popularly known as instructional objectives. In describing educational objectives Tyler referred to them as “goals,” “educational ends,” “educational purposes,” and “behavioral objectives.” The following four questions posed by Tyler directed curriculum development for much of the past century:

1. What educational purpose should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

The “Tylerian Rationale” has come under fire in recent years. Critics maintain that the approach does not consider the interdependence of the four functions of curriculum development (identifying objectives, selecting the means for the attainment of those objectives, organizing these means, and evaluating the outcomes). Failing to consider such interaction can result in curriculum development that becomes a mechanical or procedural process. Critics also maintain that, from a political perspective, failing to consider the interaction can result in one group of individuals determining the ends and another merely deciding how to attain the ends.

The 1950s and 1960s:
Against the backdrop of the cold war and the Soviet Union’s launching of Sputnik in 1957, the late 1950s and 1960s saw enormous reform efforts. Public schools were blamed for not producing scientists on the level of the Soviet Union. The media was filled with stories comparing what Johnny was taught in school to what Ivan was taught in school. The key word was rigor and, consistent with those who saw education as essential for national defense purposes, the math, science, and foreign language curricula came under attack. This was the era of the "new math," "new physics" and "new biology."

Also during this time segregation of schooling came under attack, and in Brown v. Board of Education (1954), the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were inherently unequal. Efforts to de-segregate public schools were met with resistance in many areas of the United States, especially in southern states. School systems entered into consent decrees with supervision by officers of federal courts re-design school systems, re-organize schools, and consolidate previously racially-segregated school systems to ensure equal access to curriculum offerings, more equitable distribution of instructional resources, and acceptable staffing ratios to meet court orders. During the War on Poverty in the 1960s, several educational initiatives were begun that targeted low-income children. One of the most well-known was Head Start, which served children who, because of their parents’ poverty, were at great risk for failing school.
3.2 The Roots of Accountability

The Coleman Report (1966)
The Coleman Report was the second largest study ever conducted in the United States. Coleman and his staff canvassed schools across the country in rural, urban, and suburban settings. He considered the contributions to school quality of a wide range of characteristics—teacher academic credentials, system per-pupil expenditures, instructional materials, socioeconomic background of students, racial mix of students, structure and age of the physical plant, and size of the school. Some of the major findings of this study include:

- Most school variables had little or no relationship to student achievement.
- Performance on standardized tests was not affected by teacher credentials, per pupil cost, materials, or curriculum.
- The variable that had the greatest relationship with student achievement was the composition of the student population.
- Students from low-income populations did significantly better when they attended schools where a majority of students came from middle- or upper-income populations. When school composition was mostly low income, students did not perform as well.

The strongest variable accounting for student achievement was parents’ socioeconomic status (SES). Children of middle- or upper-income families entered school substantially ahead of students of low-income families; as they continued in school, the achievement gap between socioeconomic levels grew larger. Wealthy students stayed ahead and poor students fell further behind, regardless of the school’s physical plant, teachers, materials, or finances.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983)
The National Commission on Excellence in Education was created in 1981 under the Reagan administration. In 1983, this commission released a report (A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform) that had a strong and pervasive national influence on the curriculum. The report began with the following statement:

Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world.

The driving forces for the report were concerns over equity issues and the perceived inability to compete in global markets. More, specifically, the report linked the vitality of the military and national economy to the performance of the educational system (Kowalski, 1999). Subsequent to this report, educational administrators were called upon to increase graduation rates, raise standardized test scores, and increase computer literacy. This report is often cited as the birth of the standards and accountability movement which had greatly shaped school curriculum today. What followed in the 1990s was the development of Goals
2000: Educate America Act of 1994, which initiated the setting of national and state standards on every aspect of public schooling, including curriculum content, teacher licensure/certification, and standardized testing. Also part of the 1990s educational agenda were issues of school choice, school vouchers, and more control at the local level by principals, parents, and teachers.

3.3 Continuing Efforts to Achieve Educational Excellence and Equity

In January 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act. The purpose of the Act is to increase the quality of education for all students (educational excellence) and close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students (educational equity). Analyzing performance results by sub-groups of students (disaggregating performance data) assists in monitoring differences in student performance across groups.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)
The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) was signed into law by President Obama on February 17th, 2009. It is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart our economy, create or save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. The Act is an extraordinary response to a crisis unlike any since the Great Depression, and includes measures to modernize our nation’s infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need. Several features of the Recovery Act provide incentives, grants, and programs that impact public education.

On July 24, 2009, President Obama and Secretary Duncan announced the draft application for the $4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund. They also announced the following information programs to provide funds, awards, incentives and assistance for public schools and state education agencies:

Race to the Top: Through Race to the Top, the U. S. Department of Education asks states to advance reforms around four specific areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and
- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.

Awards in Race to the Top go to states that are leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive education reform. Race to
the Top winners will help trail-blaze effective reforms and provide examples for states and local school systems throughout the country to follow as they too are hard at work on reforms that can transform our schools for decades to come.

**Race to the Top Assessment Program**: competitive grants are available to consortia of states in these two areas:

**(1) Comprehensive Assessment System grant.** To fully meet the dual needs for accountability and instructional improvement, state needs assessment systems that are based on standards designed to prepare students for college and the workplace, that more validly measure student knowledge and skills, that better reflect good instructional practices, and that support a culture of continuous improvement in education. The Comprehensive Assessment Systems grant category supports the development of such assessment systems by consortia of states.

**(2) High School Course Assessment grant.** In our nation’s high schools, the rigor of courses offered varies and, in many cases, is not sufficient to prepare students for success in college and careers. To promote consistently high levels of rigor in high school courses across a well-rounded curriculum, the High School Course Assessment grant category supports the development of high school course assessment programs by consortia of states.


Grant applications, technical assistance, and detailed descriptions of these programs are available from the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U. S. Department of Education ([http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/programs.html](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/programs.html)).
There is no reference to education in the U.S. Constitution. Rather, the right to an education arises from state constitutions. Nevertheless, since the late 1700s with the passage of the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787, the federal government has passed legislation that has implications for the curriculum. In the Morrill Act of 1862, federally owned land was set aside in each state to establish colleges and universities for the study of agriculture and mechanical arts. In 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act was passed which provided money grants for vocational education, home economics, and agricultural subjects. However, until the mid-20th century, the role of the federal government in education was minimal. This began to change in the 1950s with the passage of the National Defense Act in 1958 and the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The U.S. Department of Education, established in 1979, funds educational activities, coordinates educational functions, provides technical assistance, and provides regulatory oversight regarding these laws. Selected major federal legislative acts with direct implications for the curriculum follow:

4. ROLES: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1957 National Defense Education Act (NDEA)
The National Defense Education Act, passed in the aftermath of the launching of Sputnik, emphasized the importance of education in the national defense and targeted the need for improved instruction in science, mathematics, foreign language, and other critical subjects. The Act promoted curriculum reform in these areas.

1969 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as "the Nation's Report Card," is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Since 1969, assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and the arts. In 1987, a highly visible national study panel issued The Nation's Report Card, a report that recommended massive changes in governance and procedures for the NAEP. The panel proposed, for example, that state-by-state test score comparisons be undertaken. NAEP does not provide scores for individual students or schools; instead, it offers results regarding subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment for populations of students (e.g., fourth-graders) and subgroups of those populations (e.g., female students, Hispanic students). NAEP results are based on a sample of student populations of interest. National NAEP reports information for the nation and specific geographic regions of the country. It includes students drawn from both public and nonpublic schools and reports results for student achievement at grades 4, 8, and 12.

Since 1990, NAEP assessments have also been conducted to give results for participating states. Those that choose to participate receive assessment results that report on the performance of students in that state. Detailed information about the NAEP

**Head Start**

Head Start is a comprehensive program designed to foster the healthy development of young children from low-income families. The program has grown from a brief, eight-week summer program for preschoolers in 1965 to a year-round program today, serving children from birth to age five and pregnant women. Head Start provides children from low-income families with daily nutritious meals and many opportunities for social, emotional, and intellectual growth that can prepare them for success in school and in life. The program also connects children to a health care source and provides vital support services to their families. Each year, over 800,000 children from low-income families attend Head Start classrooms or receive Head Start services in their homes. They include infants and toddlers, children of migrant farm workers, and American Indian families, as well as children with disabilities.

1972 **Title IX of the Education Amendments**

In June 1972, the President signed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., into law. Title IX is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. The principle objective of Title IX is to avoid the use of federal money to support sexually discriminatory practices in education programs, such as sexual harassment and employment discrimination, and to provide individual citizens effective protection against those practices. Title IX applies, with a few specific exceptions, to all aspects of federally funded education programs or activities. In addition to traditional educational institutions, such as colleges, universities, and elementary and secondary schools, Title IX also applies to any education or training program operated by a recipient of federal financial assistance. Many of these education program providers/recipients became subject to Title IX regulations when the Title IX final common rule was published on August 30, 2000.

1974 **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."
Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student’s education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law; or
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

1984 Equal Access Act (EAA)

The Equal Access Act (EAA) was signed into law in 1984. In 1990 the Supreme Court upheld the Act in Board of Education of the Westdale Community Schools v. Mergens. Essentially, the Equal Access Act requires that secondary school facilities be accessible to religious and political clubs in the same way that they are to other noncurricular clubs such as chess. Two key terms related to the Equal Access Act are important:
Limited open forum: A public secondary school has a limited open forum whenever such school allows one or more non-curriculum-related student groups to meet on school premises during non-instructional time.

Non-curriculum-related student group: The subject matter of the group will not be taught in the regular curriculum, participation in the group is not required for a particular course, or participation does not result in academic credits. In the Mergens case a chess club that existed at the school and was considered non-curricular had access to school facilities. Therefore, the school was forced to comply with the Equal Access Act and permit a Bible club to meet on school property.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1975
The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), was first enacted in 1975. This landmark legislation was needed to assure that students with disabilities receive free appropriate public education (FAPE) and the related services and support they need to achieve. IDEA was created to help states and school systems meet their legal obligations to educate children with disabilities, and to pay part of the extra expenses of doing so.

IDEA has several parts: Part B provides grants to states for services to preschool and school-aged children. Part C funds early intervention services for infants, toddlers, and their families, and Part D supports research and professional development programs. Currently in the U.S., approximately 6 million children receive special education services.

When children are identified as eligible for special education services, an individualized education program (IEP) is developed by a team, which includes the child's parents, teachers, and other school staff. The IEP outlines the specific services and supports the child's needs, within the least restrictive environment (LRE). While the law has been reauthorized and improved over the years, the IEP and LRE provisions have been protected as basic rights of children with disabilities. Parent involvement is also a fundamental principle of IDEA. Parents must be fully informed of their children's rights, and they can participate in all decisions affecting their child. IDEA also outlines due process provisions, which allow parents to challenge school system decisions.

When IDEA was originally enacted, Congress recognized that school systems would incur higher costs in educating children with disabilities and promised to pay 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure to help cover the added expense. Unfortunately, the funding has never come close to meeting the need. In FY 2002, federal funds only contributed 17 percent of this cost.

In 2001, several bills in Congress would have provided mandatory full funding for IDEA, to guarantee that the federal contribution would be fulfilled, but those efforts failed. Full funding supporters argue that increases in the federal contribution for IDEA free up
money school systems have been paying that would otherwise be available for other purposes. The full funding proposals would allow systems to offset 55 percent of their IDEA increases, more if they are in full compliance with IDEA, and use it for other local purposes. Current law allows school systems to use 20 percent of their IDEA funding increases for other purposes.

During the consideration of IDEA full funding, there were also attempts to amend the IDEA discipline provisions in current law, which require schools to provide alternative education services to children with disabilities if there is a need for suspension or expulsion from their regular education placement.

1994 **School-to-Work Opportunities Act**
The School-to-Work Opportunities Act was signed into law in 1994. There are three components to the Act: the school-based learning component, the work-based learning component, and the connecting activities component.

The **school-based learning component** of a School-to-Work Opportunities program shall include:

1. Career awareness and career exploration and counseling (beginning at the earliest possible age, but not later than the 7th grade) in order to help students who may be interested to identify, and select or reconsider, their interests, goals, and **career majors**, including those options that may not be traditional for their gender, race, or ethnicity.
2. Initial selection by interested students of a career major no later than the beginning of the 11th grade.
3. A program of study designed to meet the same academic content standards the State has established for all students, including, where applicable, standards established under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, and to meet the requirements necessary to prepare a student for postsecondary education and the requirements necessary for a student to earn a skill certificate.
4. A program of instruction and curriculum that integrates academic and vocational learning (including applied methodologies and team-teaching strategies), and incorporates instruction, to the extent practicable, in **all aspects of an industry**, appropriately tied to the career major of a participant.
5. Regularly scheduled evaluations involving ongoing consultation and problem solving with students and school dropouts to identify their academic strengths and weaknesses, academic progress, workplace knowledge, goals, and the need for additional learning opportunities to master core academic and vocational skills.
6. Procedures to facilitate the entry of students participating in a School-to-Work Opportunities program into additional training or postsecondary education programs, as well as to facilitate the transfer of the students between education and training programs.
The **work-based learning component** of a School-to-Work Opportunities program shall include:

1. **Work experience**
   (a) A planned program of job training and work experiences (including training related to pre-employment and employment skills to be mastered at progressively higher levels) that are coordinated with learning in the school-based learning component described in section 102 and are relevant to the career majors of students and lead to the award of skill certificates.

2. **Workplace mentoring**

3. Instruction in general workplace competencies, including instruction and activities related to developing positive work attitudes, and employability and participative skills.

4. Broad instruction, to the extent practicable, in all aspects of the industry.

**Permissible Activities:** May include such activities as paid work experience, job shadowing, school-sponsored enterprises, or on-the-job training.

The **connecting component** of a School-to-Work Opportunities program shall include:

1. Matching students with the work-based learning opportunities of employers.

2. Providing, with respect to each student, a **school site mentor** to act as a liaison among the student and the employer, school, teacher, school administrator, and parent of the student, and, if appropriate, other community partners.

3. Providing technical assistance and services to employers, including small- and medium-sized businesses, and other parties in designing school-based learning components described in section 102, work-based learning components described in section 103, and counseling and case management services and training teachers, workplace mentors, school site mentors and counselors.

4. Providing assistance to schools and employers to integrate school-based and work-based learning and integrate academic and occupational learning into the program.

5. Encouraging the active participation of employers, in cooperation with local education officials, in the implementation of local activities described in section 102, section 103, or this section.

6. Providing assistance to participants who have completed the program in finding an appropriate job, continuing their education, or entering into an additional training program.

7. Linking the participants with other community services that may be necessary to assure a successful transition from school to work.

8. Collecting and analyzing information regarding post-program outcomes of participants in the School-to-Work Opportunities program, to the extent practicable, on the basis of socioeconomic status, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, and disability, and on the basis of whether the participants are students with limited-English proficiency, school dropouts, disadvantaged students, or academically talented students.
9. Linking youth development activities under this Act with employer and industry strategies for upgrading the skills of their workers.

1998 Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Amendments (Public Law 105-332). (Perkins III)


Perhaps the most significant change in the re-authorized Perkins Act is the emphasis placed on academic standards. Where the 1990 Act focused solely on the integration of academic and vocational proficiencies, the 1998 Act identifies development of rigorous academic standards and accountability as additional priorities. The Secretary of Education will not be involved in the development of state performance measures, as each state will determine its own. However, power is given to the Secretary to impose sanctions on states that fail to meet performance levels for 2 or more consecutive years. The Act also outlines various opportunities for states and local areas to integrate the vocational education and workforce investment systems. However, new and strict barriers are placed on linkages between vocational education and School-to-Work programs. Another significant change in funding allocations is the removal of gender equity "set asides" (funding allocated specifically to serve displaced homemakers, single parents, pregnant teens, and grants to surmount sex bias).

The Perkins Act defines vocational-technical education as organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Programs include competency-based applied learning which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem solving skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society.

According to the National Assessment of Vocational Education study, the most frequent uses of funds included: occupationally-relevant equipment, vocational curriculum materials, materials for learning labs, curriculum development or modification, staff development, career counseling and guidance activities, efforts for academic-vocational integration, supplemental services for special populations, hiring vocational staff, remedial classes, and expansion of tech prep programs.
Perkins III includes a number of provisions designed to support the preparation of individuals for nontraditional training and employment. Section 3(17) of Perkins III defines "nontraditional training and employment" as "occupations or fields of work, including careers in computer science, technology, and other emerging high skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work." An enormous amount of information is available via the website of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) section on "Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)."

2001 Bilingual Education Act
Bilingual/Immigrant State Grants are authorized under Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110, the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act). These grants ensure that limited-English-proficient (LEP) children attain adequate English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment and meet the same challenging state academic standards as all children are expected to meet. Bilingual/Immigrant State Grants support states, school systems, and institutions of higher education to develop their capacity to teach LEP students effectively. The funds can be used to upgrade instruction, revise curricula, or expand training opportunities for teachers.

2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)
Our nation's largest and most comprehensive federal education law is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which was enacted in 1965. Congress reauthorized ESEA in December 2001, renaming it the No Child Left Behind Act. The stated goal of the reauthorized ESEA is to "close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers" through "stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work."

ESEA provides supplemental assistance to help low-achieving children reach academic standards, funds teacher and principal training and recruitment efforts, assists limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in acquiring the language skills needed for academic achievement, and supports such programs as safe and drug-free schools, and before- and after-school community learning centers.

NCLB Accountability for Student Learning: The reforms set forth in the reauthorized ESEA required new testing and accountability measures. For example, beginning in the 2005-2006 school years, states annually test students in third through eighth grade to track student progress in reading and math. Beginning in the year 2007-2008, states administer similar yearly assessments in science. Test results are measured and reported to parents and the public. The test data must be broken down by race, gender, and other criteria to identify how groups are progressing in meeting state standards. States set their own performance standards, but they must participate in the National Assessment of Education Progress tests, which offer a sampling of student performance.
nationwide. Schools must show within 12 years that every student meets state standards or is receiving supplemental educational services. ESEA contains a program designed to ensure children are reading before grade three, and boosts bilingual education services to children not proficient in English.

**Teachers under NCLB:** All schools must have a qualified teacher in every classroom. Federal funds are available for teacher training. Class size reduction is eliminated as a separate program in ESEA, but teacher quality funds can be used to recruit and hire teachers.

**NCLB Parent Involvement:** Parent involvement provisions are stronger in the reauthorized ESEA. Incorporated in the law are many of the requirements included in the National PTA-initiated Parent Act, a bill designed to strengthen parents' participation in their children's education by broadening ESEA's existing Title I parent involvement policies and extending parent involvement requirements to other programs in the law. States and schools must report their parent involvement practices with regards to safe and drug-free schools, education technology, and professional development activities. For the first time, ESEA defines the term "parent involvement." Based on PTA’s National Standards for Parent and Family Involvement, the term "parent involvement" means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s education at schools; and that parents are full partners in their children’s education and are included, as appropriate, in the decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

**Other Features of NCLB:** The features of the *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*, range from block grants to states for innovative education programs to the sweeping requirement that all students must be academically "proficient" within 12 years. To demonstrate progress toward that goal, systems were required to publicize school report cards beginning in 2002-03 and begin testing third through eighth graders in reading and math against state standards in 2005-06. Further, within four years of the enactment of the law, all teachers in core academic subjects were required to be "highly qualified." Additional features of the legislation specified sanctions for low-performing schools and rewards for high performing schools. Parents may request information from schools about teacher credentials and certification under the “Parents Right to Know” provisions of the law. Schools falling below performance standards for multiple years must offer parents school choice options and supplemental education services, at no cost, provided by agencies outside the school system.

The official U.S. Department of Education website—[www.ed.gov/nclb](http://www.ed.gov/nclb)—has an overview and the full text of the Act, as well as information about what individual states can expect. For a concise description of 25 of its provisions, see "An ESEA Primer" at
Specific information about the Title I section for disadvantaged students is at www.edsource.org/edu.

2002 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Part B
Originally passed in 1987, the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act had little impact on public schools until its reauthorization in January 2002 as a part of NCLB. Subtitle B of the act deals exclusively with education for homeless children and youths. It mandates that each state educational agency ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths. Regulatory guidance in the act provides a definition of homelessness and obligates public school systems to review and revise any compulsory residency requirements or school enrollment or attendance regulations that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance or success in school of homeless students. The McKinney-Vento Act states that “homeless children and youths should have access to the education and other services that such children and youths need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. The entire content of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act may be downloaded or read at http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/mv_full_text.pdf.

2006 Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006
The U.S. Congress reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. The new legislation, entitled the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Educational Improvement Act of 2006 provides increased focus on the academic achievement of career and technical education students, strengthens the connections between secondary and postsecondary education, and improves state and local accountability.

2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009
In Feb. 13, 2009, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 at the urging of President Obama. President Obama signed the act on February 19, 2009. ARRA, also known as the stimulus program, was the largest one-time infusion of federal education dollars to states and systems in the nation’s history. As the program took shape Education Secretary Arne Duncan and other officials repeatedly warned states and systems to avoid spending the money in ways that could lead to dislocations when the gush of federal money came to an end (Recovery Act).

But from the start, those warnings seemed at odds with the stimulus law’s goal of jump-starting the economy, and the administration announced in the fall of 2010 that school systems had used stimulus money to save, or create, some 250,000 education jobs. A direct response to the economic crisis, ARRA had three immediate goals:

- Create new jobs and save existing ones
- Spur economic activity and invest in long-term growth
• Foster unprecedented levels of accountability and transparency in government spending.

ARRA funds were an additional appropriation to the funds currently authorized through NCLB. Four assurances were embedded in ARRA:
• Stronger standards and assessments
• Effective teachers and leaders
• Using data systems to improve instruction, and
• Turning around the lowest-performing schools

ARRA provided additional funding for Title I, Parts A and D, IDEA, and McKinney Vento Homeless Education and required that the funds be used as authorized in the current NCLB Act. The Alabama Governor’s Office also received additional funds to support state needs, including public education, through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), which was also part of the stimulus package.

NCLB/ESEA: Looking Ahead to Reauthorization
The Obama administration has made its priorities for reauthorization somewhat clear, particularly through a document it released March 13, 2010 called the Blueprint for Education Reform. The blueprint emphasizes four major areas:
(1) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness;
(2) Providing information to families to help them evaluate and improve their children's schools;
(3) Implementing college- and career-ready standards; and
(4) Improving student learning and achievement in America's lowest-performing schools by providing intensive support and effective interventions.

The entire document along with supporting resources may be downloaded from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/publicationtoc.html. The blueprint challenges the nation to embrace education standards that would put America on a path to global leadership. It provides incentives for states to adopt academic standards that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, and create accountability systems that measure student growth toward meeting the goal that all children graduate and succeed in college (ESEA Reauthorization: A Blueprint for Reform).

The Blueprint for Reform is organized around seven major themes:
• College Career Ready Students
• Great Teachers and Great Learners
• Meeting the Needs of English Learners and Diverse Learners
• A Complete Education
• Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students
• Fostering Innovation and Excellence
• Additional Cross Cutting Priorities
Instead of labeling failures, as NCLB was noted for doing, the *Blueprint for Education Reform* proposes to reward successes. There has been much conversation at federal levels regarding a move from more formula based funding to a more competitive process for awarding funds. Many of the new funds released by the Obama Administration have been competitive - Race to the Top and 1003(g) School Improvement Grants (SIG) are two examples.

What does Congress want for the new ESEA? A look at recently proposed education legislation in the House and Senate can give us a preliminary picture (Cohen).

1. **A new take on teacher comparability – a provision of ESEA that determines whether systems are equitably funding low-income schools.**
   
   In April of 2010, Congressman Chaka Fattah (D-PA) introduced the ESEA Fiscal Fairness Act which would correct some of the major flaws in the existing teacher comparability provision of ESEA. The provision is supposed to ensure that school systems provide equitable state and local resources to both their high- and low-poverty schools, but loopholes exist. Currently, the provision allows systems to demonstrate comparability in several ways including providing evidence of a set teacher salary schedule or similar student-teacher ratios across schools. The Fattah bill would have changed the provision so that systems could only demonstrate comparability by showing that low- and high-income schools have similar state and local per pupil expenditures, including all salaries and non-personnel expenditures (except any additional funds spent on English language learner or special education instruction). Such a change would ensure that systems do not opt to use less rigorous methods to demonstrate comparability -- methods that misrepresent the amount of state and local funds Title I schools actually receive. The legislation would also mandate that systems include any staff salary variations due to years of experience, incentive pay, bonuses, and other compensation in their per pupil expenditure calculations for low- and high-income schools. The current rules allow systems to overlook such variation in teacher pay, perpetuating the uneven distribution of teachers where more experienced teachers tend to teach in higher-income schools.

   Teacher comparability is a hot-button issue in education today. It often draws the ire of teachers’ unions because it threatens to upset the way teachers are currently compensated and assigned seniority. To make major improvements to the comparability provision in the law, legislators will have to tread carefully on these issues.

2. **Less stringent models for the School Improvement Grant program.**
   
   In December of 2010, the Senate version of the Omnibus Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2011 included language that would have overturned a requirement set by the Department of Education in late October to limit the number of schools that employ the transformation model for their school improvement efforts. The
transformation model is considered the least intrusive of the four strategies for school improvement defined by the Department of Education and systems overwhelmingly selected this model in their applications for the funds.

In general, Congress has been less than thrilled with the Obama administration’s changes to the School Improvement Grant program, which have made the program stricter. Representative Judy Chu (D-CA) released a report describing how the program’s models do not provide schools enough flexibility to take students’ needs into consideration. Representative Glenn Thompson (R-PA) complained in a congressional hearing that the program represented federal intrusion in local control of education and did not have proper congressional oversight. And Senator Michael Enzi (R-WY) has expressed concern that the program is inappropriate for struggling rural schools. Given this vocal criticism of the program, it seems likely that Congress will limit the Obama administration’s influence over the School Improvement Grant program to ensure more flexibility.

3. A greater focus on increasing high school graduation rates.

The 111th Congress submitted several pieces of legislation focused on improving high school graduation rates in the reauthorization of ESEA. These include the Graduation for All Act (Miller, D-CA), the Graduation Promise Act of 2009 (Hinojosa, D-TX and Bingaman, D-NM), the Turning Around Low-Performing Public High Schools Act (McCarthy, D-NY), the Fast Track to College Act of 2009 (Kildee, D-MI), and the Graduate for a Better Future Act (Burr, R-NC), among others. These bills mainly focus on providing grants for schools with low graduation rates to partner with local organizations or institutions of higher education to improve student achievement.

Currently, ESEA has a limited focus on the high school grades and improving student achievement in those grades. While students are currently tested in either 10th or 11th grade for NCLB accountability purposes, many systems choose not to give Title I funds to their high schools in favor of elementary and middle schools. The numerous bills submitted in the last congress that focus on high school suggest that the reauthorization of ESEA will likely include more programs directed at improving high school graduation rates.

4.2 Federal Funding for Public Education

Each year Congress budgets and appropriates funds for education. Currently, the federal school funding investment hovers around 8%, but most of that education funding is appropriated to elementary schools and post-secondary institutions. Federal education program "requirements" are not unfunded mandates because the conditions in federal law apply only when a state, LEA or grantee voluntarily chooses to accept federal funds. Any state that does not want to abide by a federal program’s requirements can simply choose not to accept the federal funds associated with that program. While most states choose to accept and use federal
Formula Grants versus Competitive Grants

The table that follows lists the major programs of NCLB and identifies the programs that are awarded to LEAs based on a formula grant and those that are awarded to LEAs based on a competitive process. LEAs must meet specific criteria in order to be eligible to receive the formula grants and to apply for the competitive grants. In addition, some programs originally funded through NCLB are no longer active. Those programs are noted in the table by an asterisk (*).

### Formula Grants versus Competitive Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Formula Grant</th>
<th>Competitive Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title I, Part A</td>
<td>Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Title I, Part B, Subpart 1</td>
<td>Reading First</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Title I, Part B, Subpart 2</td>
<td>Early Reading First</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title I, Part B, Subpart 3</td>
<td>Even Start Family Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title I, Part C</td>
<td>Education of Migratory Children</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Title I, Part D</td>
<td>Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Title I, Part F</td>
<td>Comprehensive School Reform</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title II, Part A</td>
<td>Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Title II, Part B</td>
<td>Mathematics and Science Partnerships</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Title II, Part C</td>
<td>Innovation for Teacher Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title II, Part D</td>
<td>Enhancing Education through Technology</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title III, Part A</td>
<td>English Language Acquisition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Title IV, Part A</td>
<td>Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title IV, Part B</td>
<td>21st Century Community Learning Centers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Title V, Part A</td>
<td>Innovative Programs</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title VI, Part B</td>
<td>Rural Education Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title VII, Part A</td>
<td>Indian Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title VIII</td>
<td>Impact Aid</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title X, Part C</td>
<td>Homeless Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3 Purpose and Use of Federal Funds

Each Title is developed for a specific purpose and allocated funds must be used to support the specified purpose. Use of funds must be reasonable and necessary for the implementation of the program and allocable by federal regulations. If the use is not allowable by state laws, then federal funds may not be used. For example, it is an allowable use of federal funds to be used...
for the purchase of food, however, because the State of Alabama prohibits the purchase of food with state funds, it is therefore an unallowable use of federal funds.

The Office of Management and Budgets (OMB) provides guidance on the allowable use of funds. Circular A-87 establishes principles and standards for determining costs for Federal awards carried out through grants, cost reimbursement contracts, and other agreements with State and local governments and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments. Circular A-133 provides guidance for LEAs on the components of the required single audit.

It is vitally important for the LEA Superintendent to work closely with LEA Program Coordinators to ensure all funds are used in accordance with established laws and principles. There are times when system superintendents and program coordinators may not agree on the administration of funds and one, or the other, may seek additional guidance from the SDE. When this occurs, all parties responsible for the administration of funds should participate in the discussion to avoid conflict or confusion regarding the administration of funds. While the SDE provides guidance on the use of funds, the guidance does not always provide a “black and white” picture; the law is often “grey” regarding the use funds. This allows LEAs the flexibility to make determinations regarding the use of funds based on the unique needs of the system, as well as to base the use of federal funds on the determination of how other state and local funds are used.

A Federal Programs handbook for Alabama Superintendents (2012), developed by The University of Alabama Superintendents’ Academy is available to provide additional detailed guidance on the use of federal funds and implementing federal programs in local school systems.

4.4 US Department of Education Resources

The U. S. Department of Education (USDOE) provided information and links to valuable resources through its website http://www.ed.gov/. The various sections or pages of the site describe the latest available information on funding, policy, research, and education news. Blog posts, press releases, and major speeches on federal education policies and programs contain useful information for administrators.

More useful to LEAs, superintendents, and local school system curriculum personnel is the information found at the USDOE subsidiary, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), created in 2002. IES is composed of four centers: National Center for Education Research (NCER), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), and National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). Extensive information about the NAEP assessment and data comparing student achievement across states is provided by IES in their section entitled Data Files and Tools. Released in August 2011, the NAEP Primer is a guide for educators on the intricacies of the NAEP database and is available through the IES website http://ies.ed.gov/whatsnew/. Local school system personnel involved in grant writing will find useful information from the IES publication of the Condition of
Education (COE), a congressionally mandated annual report that summarizes important developments and trends in education using the latest available statistics. The 2011 report may be downloaded at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/.
5. ROLES: STATE GOVERNMENT

The Alabama legislature has constructed a state-level system with three state actors: the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, and the State Department of Education (ALSDE).

5.1 State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is an executive branch entity within the state government. Consequently, the rules passed by the State Board of Education are “regulations” or “regulatory law” (as opposed to the policies passed by local boards of education). State law gives the State Board the authority to take over local schools or school systems for academic reasons. The mission statement of the Alabama State Board of Education is as follows:

To provide a state system of education which is committed to academic excellence and which provides education of the highest quality to all Alabama students, preparing them for the 21st century.

The following goals and initiatives of the Alabama State Board of Education demonstrate that curriculum and instruction are a high priority for the Board members:

- all children enter public education ready to learn
- increased public confidence in public education
- accountability and decision making at appropriate levels
- high academic standards for all students
- safe and disciplined learning environment
- adequate resources for a quality education
- well qualified teachers and other school personnel

5.2 State Superintendent of Education

The State Superintendent of Education is the Alabama Board of Education's executive officer for the State Department of Education. The state superintendent is the state's top appointed official over Alabama's K-12 public schools. In this capacity, the superintendent performs a major role in issues related to curriculum and instructional leadership. For example the current superintendent oversees implementation of the Education Accountability Law passed in the 1995 Legislative Session.
5.3 Code of Alabama (2001 Replacement)

The following tables provide an overview of the Sections of the Code of Alabama addressing the requirements for curriculum and instruction. Note that a specified Section may apply to superintendents of city school systems, county school systems, or both. The content of these tables was extracted from the Law Training Guide compiled by Dr. Dave Dagley of the University of Alabama.

Table 1
Curriculum Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-6B-2</td>
<td>Specifies a core curriculum for all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Require city and county superintendents to prescribe written courses of study and submit them for approval to their respective boards of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-12-20</td>
<td>Require city and county boards of educations to adopt a course of study and make copies of the course of study available to teachers and citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-35-4</td>
<td>Requires the State Board of Education, based upon the recommendation of the State Superintendent, to prescribe the minimum contents of courses of study for all grade levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-35-1</td>
<td>Requires that a Courses of Study committee advise the State Superintendent on course of study contents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-31-61</td>
<td>Requires local boards of education to adopt textbooks that have been approved by the State Board of Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-36-62</td>
<td>Requires local boards of education to appoint local textbook committees for the purpose of selecting textbooks from the State Board-approved list of textbooks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-1-36</td>
<td>Requires tutoring for students who score below average scores on the SAT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-40-01</td>
<td>Requires instruction in physical education (excepting church schools).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-40-1.1</td>
<td>Requires instruction in parenting skills and responsibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16-40-9  Requires instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

16-40A-2  Describes the minimum contents to be included in sex education curricula.

16-40-3  Describes the minimum contents to be included in drug education curricula.

16-40A-4  Prohibits proposing or encouraging illegal conduct.

16-41  Requires that schools teach about the dangers of drugs.

16-41-5  Prohibits the exclusion of nonpublic school teachers or administrators from participating in inservice teacher education institutes or curriculum development programs established by Chapter 24.

16-43-3  Requires all students daily to have the opportunity to voluntarily recite the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States.
### Table 2  
Instructional Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Superintendent</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-8-3</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Requires county boards of education to divide the county into compulsory school attendance zones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-11-20</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Requires city boards of education to grade and standardize schools under their jurisdiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-8-29</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Requires county boards of education to grade and standardize schools under their jurisdiction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 16-8-36 | Both           | Stipulates the following grade levels unless otherwise authorized by the State Board of Education:  
Elementary Schools (1-6)  
Junior High (7-9)  
High Schools (10-12) |
| 16-8-11 | County         | Requires superintendents to maintain a uniform and effective system of public schools throughout their counties. |
| 16-8-30 | County         | Requires superintendents to establish a uniform opening date for schools throughout the county. |
| 16-8-41 | Both           | Permit students (ages 5-8) to attend kindergarten. |
| 16-11-16|                |             |
| 16-8-28 | County         | Requires county boards of education to prescribe on the written recommendation of the county superintendent of education, courses of study and to supply printed copy of these courses of study to every teacher and to every interested citizen of the county. |
| 16-11-20| City           | Requires city board of education to adopt a course of study and provide printed copies to teachers and interested citizens. |
16-11-23 City Gives city boards of education the authority to establish libraries and special schools.

16-8-35 County Charges county boards of education with prescribing the conditions for promotion from elementary school to junior high school and from junior high school to high school.

16-9-26 Both 16-12-11 Requires both county and city superintendents to visit schools, observe management and instruction, and make recommendations for improvement.

5.4 Alabama Administrative Code
(Alabama State Board of Education Chapter 290)

The Alabama Administrative Code is published by the Legislative Reference Service pursuant to subsection (e) of Section 41-2-7 of the Code of Alabama 1975. The Alabama Administrative Code is a compilation of the rules of all state agencies covered by the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act. The Code is compiled by agency generally in alphabetical order by agency name and includes a table of contents for each agency's rules. Example:

Career Education (290-080-020-.01) The Alabama Career Education State Plan, 1978-1983, adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to P.L. 95-207, is hereby incorporated by this rule and made a part of the Rules of the State Board of Education.

Table 3
Curriculum and Instructional Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>290-050-010</td>
<td>Kindergarten Programs: Specifies minimum standards for organizing kindergarten programs in Alabama schools regarding, for example, teacher certification, teacher-pupil ratio, student age, daily schedule, transportation, classroom space, and program evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290-080-010</td>
<td>Special Programs 1 - Adult Education: Requires the State Board of Education to provide to individuals who are unable to successfully complete the requirements necessary to earn a high school diploma the opportunity to be administered the Tests of General Educational Development (GED) Test.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
290-080-020 Special Programs 1 - Career Education: The Alabama Career Education State Plan, 1978-1983, adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to P.L. 95-207, is hereby incorporated by this rule and made a part of the Rules of the State Board of Education. A copy of the state plan titled, "Alabama Career Education State Plan", may be obtained from the State Superintendent of Education, State Department of Education.

290-080-030 Special Programs 1 - Child Nutrition Programs: Stipulates the conditions, standards, and procedures for operating child nutrition programs.

290-080-050 Special Programs 1 - Community Education: The State plan for community education, adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to Title VIII, P.L. 95-561, is hereby incorporated by this rule and made a part of the Rules of the State Board of Education. A copy of the state plan titled, “Alabama Community Education State Plan,” may be obtained from the State Superintendent of Education, Montgomery, Alabama 36103.

290-080-060 Special Programs 1 - Approved Basic Skills Education Programs: Stipulates the minimum standards approved basic skills education programs must meet regarding, for example, instructional objectives, participation limits, and certification issuance.

290-080-090 Special Programs 1 - Child Identification: Stipulates that education agencies serving children with disabilities must develop and implement procedures that ensure that all children within their jurisdiction, birth to twenty-one, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who need special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated.

290-2-2 School Facilities: Stipulates approval of construction and renovation of school facilities, construction requirements, requirements for a school to be classified as an approved center, and school site requirements.

290-2-3 Alabama Textbook Program: Stipulates procedures for the purchase of textbooks and other instructional materials, procedures for textbook adoption, and inventory systems and storage.

290-4-1 Education Accountability: Stipulates the authority that the State Superintendent of Education has in carrying out the review, examination, and supervisory responsibilities, to require reasonable and appropriate reports, and to conduct hearings for the purpose of ensuring that due process requirements are met. For example, the State Superintendent of Education shall have authority to
investigate the progress of schools and/or school systems that do not make consistent academic gains from year to year.

290-4-2 Instructional Services: Stipulates the policies regarding a unified, coordinated state testing program and the assessment required of students of special populations and for an Alabama High School Diploma

Additional information about the entire Alabama Administrative Code, including acquiring the code in hardcopy form, may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Service, Administrative Procedure Division, 435 Alabama State House, Montgomery, Alabama 36130. Telephone: (334) 242-7570. Their website may be accessed at http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/

5.5 Alabama Courses of Study

The Courses of Study developed by the Alabama State Department of Education and adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education contain the minimum content standards for the curriculum in public schools in Alabama. Committees of educators from local school systems, post-secondary institutions, and ALSDE staff work to revise courses of study for the various subjects and content areas. Drafts of the proposed course of study are available for public comment, input and review on the ALSDE website after the committee work is complete.

The six-year cycle for revising content standards and courses of study corresponds to and precedes the textbook adoption cycle by one year. Beginning with the 2010 adoptions for mathematics and language arts, Alabama courses of study are being aligned with the common core standards described previously. After adoption at the state level, local school systems have a semester or academic year to prepare for a implement the new course content.

The table below reflects the time schedule for revision of the Alabama courses of study and textbook adoption from 2012 until 2023.
### Alabama Cycles for Curriculum Revision, Textbook Adoption and Curriculum Implementation – 2010-2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State COS Adoption</th>
<th>State Textbook Adoption</th>
<th>Subject Areas</th>
<th>LEA COS Implementation Fall Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Language Arts (Reading and Literature)</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language Arts (Grammar, Composition, Handwriting, Speech, Spelling, Dictionaries)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Driver and Traffic Safety Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Languages other than English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Career and Technical Education</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technology Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Language Arts (Reading and Literature)</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language Arts (Grammar, Composition, Handwriting, Speech, Spelling, Dictionaries)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Driver and Traffic Safety Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Arts Education (Dance, Theatre, Music, and Visual Arts)</td>
<td>2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Languages other than English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Career and Technical Education</td>
<td>2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technology Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.6 Alabama State Department of Education

The State Department of Education (ALSDE) operates under the direction of the State Superintendent of Education with the advice and counsel of the State Board of Education. The duties of the Department of Education are to assist in executing the policies and procedures authorized by law and by regulations by the State Board of Education.
The Alabama State Department of Education is organized through offices performing related functions. A brief description of the responsibilities of each office is described below. The directors, specialists, staff and publications of each office may be accessed through links on the ALSDE website. https://www.alsde.edu/home/Default.aspx

**Office of Communications:** The Communications Office uses a plan of aggressive communications to increase awareness and understanding of the State Board of Education’s high academic standards, goals and initiatives, and policies. The section also publishes *Alabama Education News*, directs news media relations, coordinates various teacher and school recognition programs, and conducts public information efforts.

**Office of Education Information and Accountability:** The Education Information and Accountability team works with SDE section internally and with LEAs across the state seeking quality data for the decision making process. The goal is to assist each section at the Alabama Department of Education to meet the objectives within Plan 2020 as set by the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education. The accountability team is responsible for managing and developing the state accountability program as it pertains to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations and reporting. Implementation of the accountability law as defined by the Alabama Legislature and *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* Federal Legislation are supported through this section. Additional LEA support for E-Rate, Alabama K-12 Joint Purchasing (ALJP) and STIPD programs is also provided through this office.

**Office of General Counsel:** The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides legal counsel to the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, and the State Department of Education. The OGC reviews and provides suggestions on interpretation of statutory and case precedent. In addition to legal compliance review, the OGC handles all litigation involving the department, the State Board, and the State Superintendent. The attorneys within the office advise local Alabama school systems as needed when issues of potential statewide impact arise.

**Office of Information Systems:** The Information Systems section is responsible for all programming, technical, production control, and application development operations within the State Department of Education. Primary responsibilities include database management, software development, technical support, data management and analysis, functional analysis, and project management. Additional responsibilities involve development and maintenance of the State Department of Education’s website, coordination of data systems services to school systems throughout the State, and report preparation and distribution in response to internal and external requests for information. Activities of this section include technical assistance, employee training, inventory and disposition of equipment, and equipment repair and maintenance. The Data Collection office within Information Systems serves as the primary supplier of teacher and student information for K-12 education. The data collected serves as the basis for the distribution of state funds to the LEAs and for accountability reporting. To carry out its mission the Data Collection office:
• develops computer-based data collection forms,
• prepares reporting specifications and coordinates with vendors of student and financial systems to facilitate reporting directly from their systems,
• provides technical assistance to LEA personnel using the state provided programs, and
• develops computer programs to process the reported data for use within the department.

**Office of Financial Management:** This office is responsible for all accounting activities for the SDE, including budgeting and budgetary control; compliance with state and federal laws, regulations and policies; all fiscal transactions; departmental payrolls; financial and technical assistance to LEAs; and coordination with auditors from the State Examiners of Public Accounts and Federal Agencies regarding audits of state and federal programs. Units within this office include:

- SDE Accounting
- Payroll
- LEA Accounting
- LEA Funding and State Audits
- Operations

**Office of Human Resources:** This office coordinates all personnel actions for each division of the Department, including the Office of Disability Determination. This includes all matters related to employee pay, hiring, promotions, terminations, separations, transfers, and retirements. In addition, this office is also responsible for the administration of all staff performance appraisals and any disciplinary actions, if applicable. All services are provided in accordance with the Rules of the State Personnel Board and departmental policies and procedures.

**Office of Learning Support:** The Office of Learning Support collaborates with other offices to ensure that all students are engaged in relevant and rigorous learning experiences in an orderly, safe and caring environment. The sections in the Office of Learning Support provide services, training and resources for schools and districts to improve instruction and student achievement. Within this office, specific areas of responsibility and assistance is provided through these sections:

- **Federal Programs:** The major responsibilities of the Federal Programs Section are to administer all federally funded education programs and to provide technical assistance to local education agencies and schools by:
  - providing technical assistance related to federal programs in local education agencies and schools as part of Alabama's support process;
  - promoting, supervising, and coordinating statewide educational programs with federal programs;
  - assisting schools in developing, revising, and implementing their school wide, targeted assistance, and continuous improvement plans;
  - providing technical assistance related to federal programs in local education agencies and schools as part of Alabama's support process;
• **Prevention and Support Services:** This office provides technical assistance to school and school system personnel in the areas of school safety, discipline, dropout prevention, attendance, the Alabama Student Assistance Plan, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities plans and programs, the comprehensive guidance and counseling program, the Alabama School Health Services (AHSH), behavior support plans (BSP), and School Incident Reporting (SIR).

• **Special Education Services:** Special Education Services (SES) provides technical assistance to all education agencies serving Alabama’s gifted children as well as children with disabilities. SES is also responsible for ensuring that education agencies providing services are in compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations and for processing all complaints and requests for due process hearings and mediation regarding special education issues. Through the SES office, schools and systems may access information regarding federal regulations, special education process charts, due process for special education students, discipline of special education students, mediation, special education complaints, manifestation determinations, and surrogate parents. Personnel are available to provide technical assistance, resources, and training for LEAs on identification of gifted and preschool special needs students, programs for students with specific disabilities, assistive technology, instructional modifications and accommodations, alternative assessment, special education budgets, special education program applications, and focused monitoring.

• **Technology Initiatives:** The Office of Technology Initiatives serves as a single point of contact in school system technology planning. This office implements the Alabama Technology Plan for K-12 Education, leads the ACCESS distance learning program, and supports LEAs in technology planning. It is responsible for responding to requests from organizations and agencies needing technology data and maintaining a database of technology compiled from yearly survey reports. The Technology Initiatives office coordinates and implements all aspects of the Alabama Educational Technology Conference. LEAs may receive assistance and information from this office about the Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX), the Alabama Virtual Library, the federal Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Title II Part D grant program, eLearning Alabama, E-Rate, the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Technology in Motion professional development program, and technology standards. School systems may request specific technology training for administrators and teachers through this SDE office.

**Office of Student Learning:** The Office of Student Learning (OSL) exists to support school systems and schools in improving the learning for all students. The following SDE sections comprise the OSL and are committed to working together to provide a seamless system of service to school systems:
• **Assessment:** Each facet of the state testing program is managed from this office which oversees the development, administration, scoring, and reporting of all required tests for K-12 students in Alabama.

• **AMSTI:** The mission of the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) is to improve math and science teaching in Alabama so all students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for success in postsecondary studies and in the workforce. To accomplish this AMSTI provides teachers with ongoing, grade and subject level professional development and the equipment and materials needed to teach math and science using hands-on, activity-based instruction.

• **ARI:** The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) is a statewide K-12 initiative managed by the Department of Education. The goal of the ARI is to significantly improve reading instruction and ultimately achieve 100% literacy among public school students. The Alabama Reading Initiative provides differentiated levels of support, including professional development, onsite support, and school coaches to over 1,000 schools. The initiative focuses intensely on three aspects of the teaching of reading: preventing reading difficulties, identifying struggling readers and intervening to help them become proficient readers, and expanding the reading power of all students.

• **Career Technical Education:** The Career and Technical Education Section is responsible for facilitating career and technical education programming at the state and federal level in all local education agencies and in selected institutionalized environments. The staff assists in the delivery of state-of-the-art, articulated career technical and academic education.

• **Curriculum:** This office is responsible for the development, implementation, and assessment of the minimum curriculum content (standards) and course design for K-12 students in the public schools. It is responsible for instructional support that includes courses of study, instructional materials and research, curriculum alignment materials, and the textbook adoption program.

• **Instructional Services:** The Instructional Services office is responsible for assisting schools with the frameworks/systems/supports that are needed to provide effective instruction. Primary responsibilities include School Improvement, Response to Instruction (RtI), and Making Middle Grades Work. Additional responsibilities include Awards, Grants, Scholarships, Advanced Placement programs, International Baccalaureate, Instructional Partners, and Instructional Strategies Project. Instructional Services also shares responsibility for social sciences projects, the new College- and Career-Ready Standards for mathematics and English/Language Arts, and High Schools that Work.
Office of Supporting Programs: The Office of Supporting Programs is responsible for the implementation of the Child Nutrition Program, Transportation Program, School Architect, Local School System Fiscal Accountability, and Compliance Monitoring. The staff consists of well-trained individuals who specialize in these areas. The mission is to assist schools in providing the best overall educational experiences possible through the effective implementation of each individual program and to assist in making every child graduate and every graduate prepared. Offices within the Supporting Programs Office assist school systems with facets of school operation that contribute to an effective, well-rounded system of supports for the instructional program:

- **Child Nutrition Programs**: This office is responsible for the management and supervision of all aspects of the state Child Nutrition Program in both school nutrition and preschool nutrition settings. Activities include interpretation of federal laws and state laws, policies, program assessments, audits and reviews; the processing and allocation of United States Department of Agriculture commodities, operation of the statewide procurement system to insure high quality, cost efficient products for all school systems that participate, and the provision of training and technical assistance.

- **LEA Accounting**: Responsible for the determination of state appropriations to Alabama school systems and ensures accountability requirements for school systems as mandated. Activities include K-12 and State Department of Education funding, budget planning, local education agency audits, warrants, and technical assistance to local school systems.

- **School Architect**: The Office of the State School Architect oversees the required Capital Plans submitted by LEAS. In addition, this office performs these functions:
  - Reviews and approves schematic, preliminary and final plans and specifications for projects involving alterations, additions, and new construction of schools.
  - Reviews and approves architectural agreements, construction contracts, and change orders.
  - Advises local boards of education with design, cost estimates, and construction methods for school buildings.
  - Advises project architects and engineers with respect to design, bidding, and construction of schools.
  - Administers K-12 State Bond issues for the Alabama Public School and College Authority.
  - Prepares deeds and leases for property sold or exchanged by county systems.
  - Inspects and approves all new sites for school construction.
  - Generates and maintains complete inventory of all school facilities.
  - Responsible for yearly Capital Planning and Assessment of facilities as required by the Foundation Program.

- **Pupil Transportation**: Responsible for the management of a statewide comprehensive student transportation program. Activities include:
• School bus inspection
• Fleet renewal assistance
• Driver Education Programs
• Training and certification of school bus drivers, transportation supervisors, and other transportation personnel
• Technical assistance with transportation issues for local school systems
• Monitoring and evaluation of state and local operations

• Compliance Monitoring: The objective of the LEA Compliance Monitoring program is to adequately monitor all K-12 school systems in Alabama for compliance with state and federal regulations and State Board of Education mandates. The goal of this office continues to be one that will protect each school system as well as the state from any financial charge back that could possibly be imposed as a result of non-compliance of legal requirements that may be identified through the annual audit process performed by the Alabama Department of the Examiners of Public Accounts or by a local system’s private audit firm. The SDE monitoring efforts have been designed to protect each local system’s financial interest as specified in the cooperative agreement each system maintains with the US Department of Education. [The steps and procedures of LEA Compliance Monitoring related to the instructional programs of the school systems will be discussed with greater detail elsewhere in this manual.]

Office of Teaching and Leading: The Office of Teaching and Leading provides services related to teacher/educator recruitment, preparation programs, testing, placement, formative evaluation of educators, professional development, verification of educators’ higher degrees for pay purposes, and identification of highly qualified teachers based on federal guidelines. This office is responsible for ensuring that Alabama colleges and universities meet the continuously updated teacher education program approval and certification standards adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE). Individuals who satisfy background clearance requirements, complete approved programs in Alabama or present valid professional educator certificates earned from other states, and meet SBE test requirements may apply for Alabama certification. Individuals who meet alternative approach criteria adopted by the SBE may also apply for alternative approach and professional educator certificates. Through EDUCATE Alabama/LEAD Alabama, this office is responsible for educator and leader formative assessment and mentoring, coordinating the provision of quality professional development opportunities, and identifying Torchbearer schools.

Office of Research and Development: The Research and Development Section is responsible for utilizing data to examine how current initiatives and educational practices advocated by the Alabama Department of Education and/or Local Education Agencies impact students’ academic and social development. Research and Development is also responsible for delivery of data and analytics necessary to ensure informed decision-making regarding future efforts.
5.7 ALSDE Differentiated Support for School Systems

The State Superintendent of Education announced in June 2012 a reorganization of the offices of the State Department of Education (SDE) to better serve the needs of local school systems in efforts to increase student achievement and graduate students who are prepared for the future. This new structure for assisting school systems was described in a memorandum to city and county superintendents, emphasizing the SDE’s goals for supporting the implementation of the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS).

Central to the SDE Differentiated Support structure is a SDE Regional Team in each of the eleven inservice regions composed of representatives from each of the SDE sections (ARI, AMSTI, Special Education, Federal Programs, Finance, etc.) with representatives from the Regional Inservice Centers, Higher Education, and the Office of School Readiness (Pre-K). These teams will plan support with systems within each inservice center region. The purpose of the teams is to work collaboratively with the school systems to establish a system of precise, differentiated support. Outlined below are a few examples of how the new structure will assist school systems according to LEA needs:

- **Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP):** It is necessary for school systems and schools to engage in a process that helps them to respond to the needs of changing populations of students and changing curricula. The SDE will continue to support the CIP process. However, there will not be a separate school improvement entity. Assistance in developing CIPs will be provided as needed. Continuous Improvement Plans (ACIP) are developed and submitted through the Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST).

- **Differentiated School System Services:** The SDE recognizes that what would be considered the most important tasks for one school or school system could be radically different for another. The department’s new structure will foster a service plan for each school system based on priorities jointly identified by the system and the SDE.

- **Targeted Support for Lowest-Performing Schools:** Support for schools that are struggling academically is both complex and challenging. The department will partner with school systems to develop a customized plan for improvement for each system where needed.

- **Reading Coach Expectations:** In the past, reading coach allocations were used to fund a reading coach assigned to each school with any configuration of Grades k-3 or to the ARI-PAL Cohort 1 schools. Beginning with the FY2013 allocation, local school systems will have the opportunity to exercise flexibility and utilize instructional coaches in order to provide coaching support in the schools that have the greatest needs in grades K through 12 in all content areas.

- **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS):** Early learning assessments are important to monitor the growth of young children. Under the differentiated school system support model, local systems will have the option to use DIBELS or another measure of progress of young learners to inform instruction. DIBELS is not a required assessment, however, the state department will fund the use of DIBELS as a formative assessment in grades K-2 for systems that wish to continue using the assessment.
As the new structure for the SDE Regional Teams is being developed and implemented, each school system has been asked to designate personnel to partner with the Regional Team and to serve as the local CCRS Implementation Team.

### 5.8 ALSDE State-Mandated Plans

The Code of Alabama §16-13-231 and §16-13-234 and the Alabama Administrative Code 290-1-4.01 require local education agencies (LEAs) to submit annual plans in the following areas:

- **Capital Improvement Plan**: a proposed building program which sets out in detail the location of all present and proposed buildings; which indicates proposed educational centers and grades to be taught at these centers and which provides schools for all children of the local board of education.
- **Transportation Plan**: except for those city boards of education not maintaining a transportation system, a proposed transportation program showing the proposed routing of buses and the condition of all roads to be used for transportation.
- **Professional Development Plan**: A proposed professional development program which sets out in detail the professional development needs of employees of the local board of education.
- **Technology Plan**: A proposed technology program which sets out in detail the proposed expenditures of technology funds.
- **Special Education Plan**: A proposed program for the provision of services to students with disabilities and gifted students in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.
- **Plan for At-Risk Students**: A proposed program for the provision of educational services to at-risk students in compliance with applicable state and federal laws. The proposed program for at-risk students shall include the provision that all funds allocated shall be spent for at-risk students.
- **Career Technical Education Program Improvement Plan**: A proposed program for the provision of vocational educational services in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

**Federal Programs Plan**: In addition to the state-mandated plans related to the Foundation Program described above, school systems receiving federal funds (Title I, Title II, Title III, Title VI-B, etc.) are required to submit Federal Programs Consolidated Applications that describe the school system plan for using federal funds to improve student achievement in accordance with federal guidelines and regulations.

**Continuous Improvement Plan**: Alabama’s Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) should be used by all schools in improvement and Title I schools not in improvement to facilitate the planning process. Three templates are available based on the specific school scenario: Title I Schoolwide, Title I Targeted Assistance, or Non-Title. The final plan must be approved by the local education agency’s (LEA’s) board members and signed by the superintendent, federal programs coordinator, principal, and committee members. A CIP is effective for a two-year period and should be reviewed and revised monthly.
• **CIP Requirements**: The CIP should be collaboratively developed by a school team that is representative of the challenges being addressed with support from the LEA. Team members that must be present include the principal, guidance counselor, system school improvement specialist (or other designee), appropriate content-area teachers, parent representatives, and student representatives (as appropriate). Depending on the data, additional members may include special population representatives (Technology Coordinator, Special Education, ELL, etc.), system federal programs coordinator, system chief school financial officer, community stakeholders, or any other member as appropriate.

• **CIP Purpose**: The CIP is a document that is designed to serve as a guide or roadmap to the school improvement effort of each school within a school system. A CIP should be a living document and should be reviewed regularly and revised as needed in response to the school’s progress on the identified goals and strategies. Each plan must follow an approval process with the final approval being with the Board of Education. Once the plan is Board-approved and signed, it is not necessary to obtain additional Board approval when revisions are made to the plan.

To view a school’s current Continuous Improvement Plan, select the “search plans” link at this website [www.alsdecip.com/Search/Plans](http://www.alsdecip.com/Search/Plans) and scroll to the name of the school.

Beginning with the 2013 – 2014 academic year, the ALSDE, in partnership with AdvancED, is launching a new method for developing and submitting continuous improvement plans. The ASSIST platform is designed for local school systems to enter and manage data needed to support the continuous improvement planning and reporting process. According to initial information distributed by AdvancED and ALSDE officials the major benefit of using ASSIST software to submit local school system plans is that goals, data, and strategies for any required plan (CIP, technology, professional development, and accreditation, etc.) are aligned and available for all plans. The ASSIST goal builder provides a structured process for developing goals, objectives, strategies, and activities. Tools for conducting climate and culture surveys, data collection instruments for comprehensive monitoring information as well as information needed for Focus and/or Priority schools for 30-60-and 90 day reporting are scheduled to become parts of the ASSIST platform. Eight school systems (Coosa County, Bullock County, Bibb County, Barbour County, Florence City, Madison City, Satsuma City, and Morgan County) have agreed to pilot the monitoring compliance monitoring process using ASSIST. Additional information about the AdvancED/ASSIST platform and about upcoming training opportunities for school systems is available from tony Thacker at tthacker@alsde.edu or Logan Search at lsearcy@alsde.edu.

### 5.9 ALSDE Compliance Monitoring

The objective of the LEA Compliance Monitoring program is to adequately monitor all K-12 school systems in Alabama for compliance with state and federal regulations and State Board of
Education mandates. The goal of the Office of Compliance Monitoring continues to be one that will protect your school system as well as the state from any financial charge back that could possibly be imposed as a result of non-compliance of legal requirements that may be identified through the annual audit process performed by the Alabama Department of the Examiners of Public Accounts or by a local school system’s private audit firm. The monitoring efforts have been designed to protect the local school system’s financial interest as specified in the cooperative agreement each system maintains with the United States Department of Education.

After departmental research and planning, the following monitoring method was devised which includes:

- A self-assessment to be completed by the school system on a yearly basis due by November 1 of each year.
- An on-site monitoring visit conducted by the ALSDE, of the local school system, once every four years.
- A desk audit – The desk audit is a document used in conjunction with the on-site monitoring process and is designed to help complete the on-site monitoring process in a more timely manner. If the information is not available to complete the desk audit, it will be completed during the on-site monitoring visit.

LEA Self-Assessment

By September of each year, every school system receives a memorandum from the ALSDE via the ALSDE Memoranda Center. The memorandum directs each school system through the self-assessment process. The self-assessment documents noted below can be found on the ALSDE website (www.alsde.edu) under Offices, then Office of Supporting Programs, then Compliance Monitoring, and then Publications. The documents needed for the self-assessment are:

- Self-assessment document
- Document of assurance (due by November 1)
- Request for technical assistance

Steps in the self-assessment process are as follows:

1. Review the self-assessment monitoring document, making sure the system is conforming to all annual legal requirements. The document is to be filed in the local central office. The completion of the self-assessment should be done as a collaborative effort based on areas of responsibilities. Through the self-assessment process, a system is able to identify areas of needed improvement and request assistance in these areas before an on-site monitoring occurs.

2. Complete the document of assurance form and the technical assistance form and mail them to the ALSDE by November 1 of each year.
**On-Site Monitoring Process (required once every three-years)**
The second part of the LEA Compliance Monitoring process is the on-site monitoring. Each school system is visited by a team of ALSDE staff once every four years to ensure each system is in compliance in all areas identified in the monitoring document. All of our state’s legal obligations cannot be met simply by each system’s submission of a signed assurance document, therefore, an on-site visit is necessary to verify compliance. This on-site effort is conducted by an ALSDE coordinator, and a team of ALSDE staff dedicated to the compliance monitoring effort.

The compliance monitoring coordinator publishes a schedule every August of approximately 45 school systems that will be visited. These systems receive the following from the ALSDE via the ALSDE Memoranda Center:
- Memorandum explaining the on-site visit monitoring process
- Compliance monitoring on-site schedule
- Compliance on-site review manual
- Compliance desk audit review manual

The compliance monitoring coordinator contacts the system to schedule a Webinar conference date to include the monitoring coordinator, selected ALSDE staff, the local school superintendent, and selected school system staff. This conference is to discuss preparations for the system’s upcoming onsite monitoring visit, and to answer any questions the system may have. The Webinar conference includes several systems to be monitored and the monitoring coordinator will inform each system as to the time and date of the entrance and the exit of the visit. Each system is to advise the monitoring coordinator as to where the ALSDE review staff is to meet and work while conducting the review of their school system.

Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, compliance monitoring changes include new items to document compliance with the School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012. In addition, student transcripts (3% of 11th grade and 12th grade students or a minimum of 10 students) will be randomly selected and reviewed during the on-site visit. Information about school Library Media services and school nurses are items on the latest compliance monitoring documentation checklists. Additional information about the compliance monitoring process, forms for requesting technical assistance, and the schedule of on-site visits is available at [http://forums.adobe.com/docs/DOC-2731](http://forums.adobe.com/docs/DOC-2731)

**On-Site Monitoring Visit**
An “entrance conference” is conducted on the first day of the on-site monitoring and the ALSDE monitoring staff is introduced to the school system staff. The number of the ALSDE monitoring staff conducting the monitoring is determined by the number of schools within the LEA. On the last day of the visit, an “exit meeting” is conducted. The findings and citations are discussed with the system. A handwritten draft of the on-site monitoring document is left with the local school superintendent.
Post On-Site Monitoring Visit
The ALSDE will electronically send the school system their on-site monitoring document and Corrective Action Plan (CAP) composed of all citations written at the on-site monitoring. All citations must be corrected within a sixty (60) day timeframe. Each system must communicate to the ALSDE how they corrected each citation and must submit documents of evidence. When the ALSDE receives this information, it is disseminated to each applicable division/program whereupon each ALSDE staff member reviews the evidence and completes a sign-off sheet indicating that each citation has been corrected. When all citations have been corrected, a letter is sent to the system indicating compliance.

Systems that fail to adhere to the sixty (60) day timeframe in correcting their citations may request additional time from the ALSDE by submitting a letter. Systems that fail to correct citations within the allotted timeframe may be subject to having state and federal funds withheld until all citations are cleared.
6. ROLES: THE SCHOOL BOARD

A local board of education is the legally constituted body that governs a local school system, promotes student learning, and prepares student to be college and career ready. A local school board, and not individual board members, is entrusted with this responsibility.

The primary role of the school board is to establish policies. Policies are assertions of the goals of the school system. As such, they are concerned with aims rather than procedures. A well-crafted policy statement is “complete, has provisions for review and amendments, is clear to those asked to implement the policy and to those affected by the policy, is limited to the essential information, and is not subject to change due to a personnel turnover” (Kowalski, 1999).

Policies serve as guidelines for discretionary decision making. Specific policy decisions by school boards, called “policy statements,” usually arise in response to a problem. The problem may surface formally by means of a needs assessment or informally due to an emergency or crisis. For example, many educational organizations have recently developed policy statements regarding anti-bullying, use of social media, concussions in athletics, and physical restraint of students.

In addition to establishing policies, the Board must ensure that local curriculum and instruction policies comply with federal and state laws. In all cases where State laws do not provide or prohibit, the Board shall consider itself the agent responsible for establishing and appraising the educational activities under its jurisdiction.

School boards should work with the superintendent, system employees, parents, and the community to establish a vision and a mission statement for the school system. It is important that the system’s commitment to high academic standards be communicated to all stakeholders in the system on a regular basis and be included in an active strategic plan for the school system. Further, the board should take a leadership role in providing the necessary resources for students to successfully meet their educational goals.

An excellent source of information regarding School Boards and Superintendents of Education is a collaborative project by the Alabama Association of School Administrators (AASA) and The Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB). The publication, “School Boards and Superintendents: Roles and Responsibilities” lists the functions of each.
6.1 School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012

Alabama Legislative Act 2012-221, also known as the School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012 was passed in April of 2012. The stated purpose of the act is to enhance the effectiveness of public education governance in Alabama through the establishment of training requirements, boardsmanship standards, and accountability measures that are designed to promote informed deliberations and decisions, to revise the qualifications for serving as a member of a local board of education, to provide a code of conduct for each member of a local board of education in order to better ensure that any decision or action of a local board of education is based on the interests of students or the system, and to foster the development and implementation or organizational practices that are designed to promote broad support of the public schools. The purposes of this act are:

- To require prospective board members to publicly affirm certain principles of educational governance;
- To specify the responsibilities of board members;
- To provide for the implementation of training and continuing education in boardsmanship for all board members;
- To provide for certain sanctions to be imposed upon board members upon a finding that the action or inaction of a board member constitutes neglect of duty or willful misconduct;
- To require the State Board of Education and local board of education to adopt a model code of conduct for board members; and
- To amend state laws relating to the qualifications of members of city and county boards of education.

6.2 Board Member Qualifications

With the passage of the School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012, the minimum requirements for an individual to serve as an elected or appointed school board member were amended. Eligibility for election or appointment to a school board now requires that the individual:

- be of good moral character;
- have at least a high school diploma or equivalent;
- is not employed by the school board on which he/she seeks to serve;
- is not a registered sex offender;
- is not a convicted felon; and,
- is not be serving on the board of a private school or college.

An elected or appointed board member must vacate office when he/she moves from the school system the board member represents.
6.3 Board Member Affirmation and Duties

The duties and responsibilities of local board of education members are described in the School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012. The Act requires an official affirmation by the board member upon taking office that:

- The actions and decisions made as a school board member will be based on the needs and interests of the students and the school system.
- No decision or action will be made to serve or promote the personal, political, or financial interests of the school board member.
- Each decision or action will be based on the interests of the school system as a whole.
- The views of all school board members and the local superintendent will be considered before making a decision or taking action on any matter before the board.
- Formal actions will be taken after recommendation and consultation with the local superintendent and that board members may not individually or jointly attempt to direct or corrupt school operations, or obstruct the local superintendent’s duties.
- The board member will promote public support for the school system and endorse programs to improve the quality of public education for all students.
- The board member will attend scheduled meetings and participate in training programs and school functions.

The new duties and responsibilities of school board members described in the Act specify that board members are to:

- Work with the local superintendent to establish a vision for the school system by adopting goals that address student needs, advance student performance, and review data to monitor implementation of policies and programs.
- Adopt policies and programs to meet the adopted goals and respond to system needs recommended by the local superintendent.
- Address personnel recommendations submitted by the local school superintendent in a timely manner and take personnel actions based on student needs and system finances without regard to personal preferences or political interests.
- Approve operating budgets aligned with the adopted goals as recommended by the local superintendent.
- Advocate for the needs, resources, and interests of students and allow the local superintendent to address constituent issues.

The Act directs the state superintendent to develop continuing education and training programs for school board members to provide each school board member with an understanding of the role of the school board member in assuring the effective provision of educational services. The state superintendent is also directed to develop and issue regulations needed to impose sanctions against a school board member for failure to meet
training and attendance requirements, neglect of duty, or willful misconduct. Upon the determination that misconduct, neglect of duty, or failure to meet stated requirements, a local board member may receive formal censure or reprimand by the local board of education. In addition, after investigation of serious and substantial allegations of misconduct by a local board member or board members, the state superintendent may recommend the State Board of Education approve sanctions including formal censure or reprimand by the State Board of Education and disqualification from future school board service by the school board member.

6.4 Board Member Code of Conduct

A sample code of conduct for local board of education members has been provided to serve as a guide for local school systems. According to provisions of the School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012, local boards are required to adopt a code of conduct for members by April of 2013. The sample code of conduct contains these features:

Conduct of Individuals
1. Attends and participates in regularly scheduled and called board meetings.
2. Reads and prepares in advance to discuss issues to be considered on the board agenda.
3. Recognizes that the authority of the board rests only with the board as a whole and not with individual board members.
4. Upholds and enforces applicable laws, rules and regulations of the local board, and the Alabama State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining specifically to the school system.
5. Renders all decisions based on available facts by exercising independent judgment instead of the opinion of individuals or special interest groups.
6. Works with other board members and the Superintendent to establish effective policies to further the educational goals of the school system.
7. Makes decisions on policy matters only after full consideration at public board meetings.
8. Complies with the requirements of the School Board Governance Improvement Act.
9. Communicates in a respectful, professional manner with and about fellow board members and the Superintendent.
10. Takes no action that will compromise the board or school system administration.
11. Refrains from using the position of school board member for personal or partisan gain or to benefit any person or entity over the interests of the school system.
12. Informs the Superintendent and fellow board members of business relationships or family members or close associates or private interests.
13. Abstains from voting on or seeking to influence personnel or other actions involving family members or close associates or private interests.
14. Communicates to the board and the Superintendent public reaction to board policies and school programs.
15. Advocates for the needs, resources, and interests of the public school students and the school system.
16. Safeguards the confidentiality of nonpublic information.
17. Shows respect and courtesy to staff members.

**Conduct of Individuals at Board Meetings**

1. Work with other board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during the discussion and resolution of issues at board meetings.
2. Take actions that reflect that the first and foremost concern is for the educational welfare of all students attending system schools.
3. Make decisions in accordance with the interests of the school system as a whole based on system finances available to accomplish education goals and comply with the *School Fiscal Accountability Act*.
4. Abide by and support all majority decisions of the board.
5. Act on personnel recommendations of the Superintendent in a timely manner, particularly when there are financial implications of such decisions.
6. Approve operating budgets and budget amendments that are aligned with system goals and objectives and are fiscally responsible.
7. Honor and protect the confidentiality of all discussions during executive session of the board.

**Conduct of the Board as a Whole**

1. Recognize that the Superintendent serves as the chief executive officer and secretary to the board and should be present at all meetings of the board except when his or her contract, salary or performance is under consideration.
2. Honor the Superintendent’s authority for the day-to-day administration of the school system.
3. In concert with the Superintendent, regularly and systematically communicate board actions and decisions to students, staff, and the community.
4. Review and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs to improve system performance.
5. Develop, in concert with the Superintendent, the vision and goals for the school system to address student needs, advance student performance, and monitor the implementation of policies and programs.
6. Provide opportunities for all members to express opinions prior to board action.

**6.5 Board of Education Research Studies**

The National School Board Association (NSBA) reports that recent research on school board governance has demonstrated that school boards in systems with higher student achievement are significantly different in knowledge, beliefs, and actions from the boards in lower achieving systems. Current research projects sponsored by or in conjunction with NSBA are looking at the key behaviors that are correlated with higher student achievement as well as the implications
for board development programs. Their website (http://www.nsba.org) lists current or recent research projects of interest to school boards.

6.6 Board of Education Strategic Planning

Local boards of education engage in strategic planning to determine the goals, objectives, and tasks needed to accomplish the school system’s mission. Such planning is most effective when it involves stakeholders in determining the priorities to be addressed and when employees and staff members are engaged in the development of the plan’s tasks, timelines, and strategies. A strategic plan allows the board and the superintendent to schedule regular reviews of accomplishments and help to demonstrate the accountability of the board as stewards of public resources. Although most strategic plans are for a 5-year time period, they may be of any duration and may change as system circumstances or needs demand. Once approved, the strategic plan should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders and should be monitored and reported upon at regular intervals, usually at least annually.

Boards of education and school systems participating in the AdvancEd accreditation process must commit to systematic and strategic planning for continuous improvement. The accreditation quality standards for system leadership include provisions that the system:

(1) operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness;

(2) maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning; and

(3) implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

6.7 Board Orientation, Training, and Evaluation

In its 2009 session, the Alabama Legislature passed Legislative Act 2009-297 requiring boards of education to establish policies and procedures for the orientation and on-going training and development of board members. The legislation recommends that local boards of education engage in periodic review and evaluation to determine training needs. Features of the School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012 further develop the role of the state superintendent and the State Board of Education in providing on-going training for local board of education members. The Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) plays an important role in board member development training through its regular meetings, conferences, conventions, webinars, and special training events. AASB publishes many resources to assist local boards of education in leading school systems. Specific AASB resources for school systems about Act 2012-221 is available from the AASB website at
School board members who take office on or after January 1, 2013, must complete (within one year from the date of taking office) an orientation that includes the following topics:

- Board member’s roles and responsibilities
- Finance
- Ethics
- Board meetings
- Student and school performance
- The Governance Act
- Legal and personnel issues
- Working with the board attorney
- Working with the superintendent
- Advocacy
- Public/media relations

In addition, school board members must participate in six (6) hours of training annually after July 1, 2013. Two (2) of the required six hours of training must be earned as a whole board interactive training. These sessions are to be attended by at least a majority of the board and are to be led by a facilitator who leads the board through an analysis and discussion of a specific issue currently facing the board. The goal of this whole board training is intended to involve the board and superintendent actively in learning, reviewing research, and discussing options related to local issues, goals, or plans. As a member of the team, the superintendent is involved in identifying topics of greatest need for review, setting up and briefing the facilitator on the issue and need, and providing the leadership for any follow up required as a result of the training.
7. ROLES: THE SUPERINTENDENT

7.1 Fluctuating Expectations for the Superintendent

It is important to situate any discussion of the current role of the superintendent in the broader historical context because expectations for superintendents tend to fluctuate with social, political, and economic trends. For example, over time (1820 to 1990) Peterson and Barnett (2003) identified the primary roles of the superintendent as follows:

- 1820-1850 Clerks for the school board
- 1850-1890 Scholarly educational leaders
- 1900-1930 Business managers
- 1930-1950 Educational statesmen
- 1950-1970 Educational professionals
- 1970-1980 Accountable public servants
- 1980-1990 Political strategists

7.2 The Current Roles and Responsibilities of Superintendents in Alabama

In Alabama the superintendent of the school system is a Constitutional officer. The roles, requirements, and duties of city and county superintendents of education are listed in the *Code of Alabama* 16-9 and 16-12. The local school superintendent’s duties include the assurance that the quality of the school system’s educational program is consonant with legislative intent, consistent with the needs of students and employees, and commensurate with the changing needs of the community. As the chief executive officer of the school system, the superintendent is responsible for recommending to the Board such policies as necessary to ensure that the instructional program offered to the students of the school system is high quality, appropriate and in compliance with federal and state laws. The publication “School Boards and Superintendents: Roles and Responsibilities,” a collaborative project by the Alabama Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) lists the functions of the superintendent.

- To serve as the board’s adviser and the school system’s chief executive officer.
- To serve as the school system’s educational leader.
- To keep the board informed about school operations and programs.
- To interpret the needs of the school system to the board.
- To present and recommend policy options along with specific recommendations to the board when circumstances require the board to adopt new policies or revise existing policies.
- To develop and inform the board of administrative procedures needed to implement board policy.
To manage the school system’s day to day operations.
- To evaluate personnel and keep the board informed about evaluations.
- To develop an adequate program of school community relations which keeps the community informed about board policies, programs, and procedures.
- To propose and institute a process for long-range and strategic planning.
- To develop and carry out a plan to keep the total staff informed about the mission, goals, and strategies of the school system.
- To ensure that professional development opportunities are available to all school system employees.
- To develop and implement a continuing plan for working with the news media.
- To provide board members with information on any recommendations for school board action in advance of each board meeting, if possible.
- To oversee the school system’s finances and provide the board with regular reports on the school system’s financial operations.

7.3 Superintendent Priorities - What Factors Influence Them?

Superintendents spend their energies in very different ways. Although some superintendents become directly involved in curricular and instructional issues, many, if not most, delegate this responsibility to others. A survey of 326 superintendents (Bredeson, 1995) indicated superintendents often rank instructional leadership as their top priority but do not spend their time accordingly. As one superintendent noted, superintendents are hired for their ideas in curriculum and fired for issues related to finance. When asked to identify the most important things they DO regarding instructional leadership, the top-ranked responses were as follows:

1. Instructional Support
   - Financial, personnel, and material resources.
   - Logistical and psychological support.

2. Instructional Collaboration
   - Plan, design, and implement curriculum and instructional work.

3. Instructional Delegation
   - Enable teachers, principal, and directors of instruction to carry out their work.

4. Instructional Vision and Purpose
   - Keep the focus on students and learning.

Whether superintendents either take a hands-on approach or delegate the responsibility for curriculum and instruction to others often hinges on personal variables such as (a) interest, training, background, and expertise, (b) system size, and (c) board expectations (Glass et al., 2000; Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybouts, 1996).
Personal Variables
Superintendents tend to take a more active role in their areas of personal interest and expertise. Consequently, beyond the minimum requirements, the role of superintendents regarding curriculum and instruction varies widely from system to system.

System Size
System size also influences the superintendent’s role in curriculum and instructional issues. Obviously, superintendents in large systems have access to more specialists, and, therefore delegate more responsibility than do superintendents in smaller systems. When superintendents have access to specialists such as assistant or associate superintendents or directors of curriculum, these individuals perform the instructional duties necessary to provide learning opportunities for students and engage in curriculum development. In this case, superintendents provide support for these individuals by managing and allocating the needed resources. In smaller systems, principals may be responsible for curriculum development.

Board Expectations
Finally, board expectations may influence the exercise of the superintendent’s role. As noted earlier in this document, superintendents functioned as system managers for most of the 20th century. Evidence exists that the desire for superintendents to function as instructional leaders has yet to influence the expectations of the majority of board members. Nationwide, less than half of superintendents report that their board members expect them to function as instructional leaders (Glass, et al., 2000). Furthermore, board expectations for superintendents vary by gender with a higher percentage of women (women = 36.5%; men = 24.0%) reporting that they were hired as superintendents because of their expertise in instructional leadership.

7.4 The ABCs of the Superintendent’s Work

Regardless of whether superintendents take an active role in curriculum and instructional leadership or delegate it to others, it is essential that they establish an organizational framework that facilitates curriculum development. This involves, at a minimum, specifying the role of the superintendent in curricular matters, providing staff with clear job descriptions, and organizing the central office in a way that maximizes the expertise of each staff member. Furthermore, all superintendents must ground their work within the framework of strategic planning and comprehensive policies.

"Teaching Teachers" and Planning for Improvement
As educational leaders, superintendents teach others about the budget process, lead the system in a strategic planning process, and regularly visit schools and classrooms (Johnson, 1996). In terms of strategic planning, effective superintendents are able to respond positively to the following questions:
• Do staff, board members, and community members know where the superintendent stands on key curricular issues?
• Are curricular decisions based on a clear philosophy of education coupled with a clear vision and mission for the school system?
• Is a comprehensive set of policies in place stating what directions will be taken to accomplish the desired educational outcome?
• Are sufficient regulations in place to prescribe how the intended directions will be reached?

Initiating Policy
Superintendents often initiate policy. In 1992, 70% of superintendents indicated they originate most new policies (Glass, et al., 2000). By 2000, this number had dropped to 43%. Superintendents in smaller systems (fewer than 3,000 students) initiate policy much more frequently than superintendents in large systems. For major policy initiatives, superintendents often form a task force to conduct the research, seek the input of relevant stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and administrators, and write the policy. Superintendents also devise regulations or administrative directives developed in conjunction with policy statements. As opposed to policies which are approved by board members at a public meeting, regulations are only approved by the superintendent.

Superintendent’s Role in Test Security
The ALSDE, Office of Student Learning, Student Assessment, provides explicit roles and responsibilities for superintendents as it pertains to testing and accountability. Superintendents, working through their System Test Coordinators, have the responsibility of ensuring that the administration of statewide assessments conforms to proper procedures and standardized conditions. Ultimate responsibility for test security in the LEA rests with the local Superintendent. It is imperative the Superintendent and/or his designee attend the required System Coordinator training events held throughout the year to obtain necessary training for uncompromised testing/assessment protocols. The following handbook, annually provided to each system, should be thoroughly reviewed and explicitly followed: https://www.alsde.edu/sec/sa/Testing/STC%20Handbook%202014-2015%203-14.pdf. Also, the ALSDE enforces the Test Security Policy which must be signed by any and all employees who work with and around testing materials and kept on file at the LEA. Note: Failure to follow security procedures promulgated by the Alabama State Board of Education and published in the Alabama State Board of Education, State Department of Education, Administrative Code (290-040-020-.04), the Student Assessment Handbook, and the test administrator’s manuals may result in disciplinary action by the local board of education and/or revocation of the teaching certificate by the Alabama State Department of Education. Additional details of the policy can be located at https://www.alsde.edu/sec/sa/Pages/testing-all.aspx?navtext=Testing%20Information%20and%20Resources.
7.5 The Superintendent as Communicator

Performing the above curriculum-related responsibilities involves extensive formal and informal communication with board members, principals, and others who have a stake in public education. To be successful, the superintendent must be competent and skilled in communicating the system’s curriculum strengths and identifying its weaknesses. Schools today use a variety of media, such as written publications, the local newspaper and web pages to keep parents, students, and the community informed about curriculum content, academic requirements, student achievement data, and instructional opportunities. It is very beneficial to obtain documentation from parents and students about their receipt of curriculum standards, grading practices, promotion and retention standards, and graduation requirements. Specific examples of areas of communication follow.

Communicating about Curriculum Changes

The management of change is particularly critical as budgets shrink and demands for academic excellence increase. An example of managing change is planning for the phasing in and phasing out of particular courses or bodies of content to minimize negative consequences for students. Careful monitoring of student transcripts, grades, and standardized test data can often prevent the unexpected or traumatic outcome of student retention or failure to graduate. Frequent meaningful communication between home and school ensures that students and their families understand the consequences of poor course selection or poor academic performance. Keeping students and parents informed of tutoring opportunities, help sessions, special services, and academic assistance opportunities is important for productive relationships and student success.

Communicating about Graduation Requirements

Local school systems must establish and clearly communicate all graduation requirements to students and parents. Requirements for participation in graduation ceremonies, requirements for passing required assessments and course credits, criteria for honor graduates, and all other features related to the status of graduates must be clearly communicated to students throughout their enrollment in the school system. It is recommended that documentation be maintained of students’ and parents’ receipt of all information related to graduation requirements and criteria for participation in graduation ceremonies.

Issuing Accountability Reports

Whatever formal accountability reporting systems are mandated by the State Board of Education, the US Department of Education, or local boards, superintendents who are effective communicators share regularly with employees, parents, and the public the status of the school system. To be accountable for public resources and the academic achievement of students is a primary responsibility of the local school superintendent. Maintaining accurate and timely information on the school system’s finances, academic progress, enrollment, discipline, and
employee performance is critical to the superintendent’s ability to keep all school system stakeholders engaged and informed about the work of the schools.

**Telling the Good News**
Support for public schools can no longer be taken for granted. Reasons superintendents need to actively seek community support include: (a) the erosion of confidence in public schools, (b) most taxpayers (80%) do not have children in K-12 public schools, (c) educational needs and priorities are shifting, and (d) the need for voter approval of tax increases (Kowalski, 1999). Gaining such support involves devising a variety of communication vehicles to present the “good news” about educational accomplishments. Newsletters, public speaking opportunities, the school system website, as well as the skillful and strategic use of social media, advertising, and technological communication systems can all enhance the public’s knowledge of and support for the school system. It is a responsibility of the superintendent to see that the system’s accomplishments, progress, and efforts are presented clearly and effectively and that community engagement with and support for the school system is nurtured.

**Disseminating Curriculum Policies**
Regarding policy dissemination and interpretation, there are two audiences: those charged with implementing the policy and those affected by the policy implementation. For example, a board policy on student discipline provides direction for educational personnel in making decisions about discipline and information to students and parents regarding the disciplinary decision likely to be made.

Policies should be communicated to every employee in the system as well as parents, students, and the general public. All of these stakeholders should have reasonable access to the policy manual. Policy manuals for employees are often found in administrative offices and, sometimes, in the faculty workspace. Most school systems now include access to the system policies, procedures, forms and publications on the system and local school websites.

### 7.6 Leading System Improvement

**Managing Change**
Rapid social change, technological advances, escalating targets for accountability reporting, and fluctuating financial support are only a few of the major forces that require effective superintendents to be skilled at managing change. The factors identified by Douglas Reeves in his 2009 book, *Leading Change in Your School* (ASCD, Alexandria, VA) identifies aspects of leading change in a school. His comprehensive discussion and practical examples of leading change to improve student achievement is an extension of his articles on this topic written for *Educational Leadership*. These same areas of expertise he identified and described for school principals are valuable for superintendents as well. Reeves offers recommendations in four critical areas for education leaders who want to successfully manage change:
1. *Creating conditions for change*, including assessments to determine persona and organizational readiness for change;
2. *Planning change*, including cautionary notes about strategic planning;
3. *Implementing change*, including the importance of moving from rhetoric to day-to-day reality; and
4. *Sustaining change*, including the need to reorient priorities and values so that individual convenience gives way to a shared sense of the greater good.

One of the most persuasive and prolific authors in recent decades on managing change in education is Michael Fullan, professor emeritus at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. His latest books on the topic of leading change in education are *The Six Secrets of Change, Realization* (with Lyn Sharratt), *Motion Leadership: The Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy*, and *All Systems Go: The Change Imperative for Whole System Reform* (Corwin Press, 2010). In *All Systems Go*, Fullan stresses the importance of leadership in sustainable school system change. “Changing whole education systems for the better, as measured by student achievement, requires coordinated leadership at the school, community, system, and government levels.” He stresses the need for educational leaders to build collective capacity for change and improvement. He identifies eight characteristics of an effective school system (p. 36) that result from leadership’s successful management of change to build collective capacity.
### Characteristics of an Effective School System

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<tr>
<td>1. Focus</td>
<td>A clear direction and relentless focus on student achievement through instructional improvement in the classroom; a central and singular focus from which all other pieces can flow. A system must continuously strengthen its core by increasing teachers’ skills and knowledge, engaging students in learning, and ensuring the curriculum challenges students.</td>
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<td>2. Data</td>
<td>Access to and use of data on student learning as a strategy for classroom and school improvement and to monitor progress; the development and use of ongoing means of diagnosing student needs and addressing them through specific instructional responses.</td>
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<td>3. Leadership</td>
<td>Development of teacher, principal, and system leadership to share effective practices from each other and from the larger research base. Leadership roles are defined so that leaders participate as learners in working with teachers to address instructional needs.</td>
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<td>4. Resources</td>
<td>Allocating resources in accordance with this focus without a reliance on one-time, special funding. Resources should be clearly aligned to support the teaching and learning core of the system’s work.</td>
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<td>5. Reduced Distractors</td>
<td>A concerted effort to reduce the distracters that undermine teachers’ and principals’ capacity to carry out their primary mission. Effective systems do not take on too many initiatives at once; excessive bureaucracy, inconsistent messages, multiple non-classroom initiatives, and time-and-energy-consuming conflict all distract from the focus of student achievement.</td>
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<td>6. Community</td>
<td>Links to parents and the community and related agencies to provide support for students and educators and to intervene early in case of difficulties experienced by students and by schools.</td>
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<td>7. Communication</td>
<td>A constant and consistent communication that focuses on the core message up and down and across the system. Clear communication so that everyone knows the central focus of teaching and learning priorities and how to achieve them. Staying on message is crucial.</td>
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<td>8. Esprit de Corps</td>
<td>A sense of identity and sense of community among teachers and principals and between schools and the system. People take pride in their work and that of their colleagues and feel a strong sense of affinity with the system as a whole. Allegiances are strong, and collaborative competition leverages the schools to stronger and stronger performance.</td>
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The same themes identified by Fullan for successful educational change are listed in a 66-page report (2009) by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) entitled *The System Leadership Challenge: Empowering Principals to Improve Teaching and Learning*. In an excerpt from this report, Gene Bottoms and Betty Fry describe the characteristics of system support for school improvement for Educational Research Service. The Bottoms/Fry report summary is included in the *2011 Superintendents’ Briefing Book: Vital Information for School System Leaders* published by Educational Research Service. The authors stress the role of the superintendent in organizing and sustaining system support for schools and principals as they work to effect positive change in student achievement. The full report may be downloaded at [http://publications.sreb.org/2009/09B11_System_Leadership_Challenge_Color.pdf](http://publications.sreb.org/2009/09B11_System_Leadership_Challenge_Color.pdf)

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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Strategy Definition</th>
<th>Recommended System Actions</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish a clear focus and a strategic plan for improving student achievement</td>
<td>Strengthen and clearly articulate system improvement goals and strategies to improve student graduation rates and college/career readiness by specifying what is to be improved, the level of improvement expected and the timeline for improvement.  Monitor each school’s progress on system improvement goals and the extent to which proven school and classroom practices have been implemented.  Provide formative feedback to teachers and principals.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Organize and engage the system office in support of each school</td>
<td>Align the work of the system office staff with goals and improvement framework by redefining their roles and responsibility to work with principals and teachers collaboratively in achieving system goals and achievement targets.  Review where decision-making authority lies in the system, and give principals authority commensurate with their responsibilities.  Provide specialized training and coaching to build system staff capacity to support schools.  Hold system staff accountable for work that helps schools achieve specific goals for improvement. Provide incentives for performance that supports schools and student achievement. Recognize system office staff whose service to schools is valued by principals and teachers and has resulted in improved school and classroom practices and student outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Strategy Definition</td>
<td>Recommended System Actions</td>
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| 3        | Provide instruction coherence and support. | Redefine the job of school principals to emphasize responsibilities for providing instructional leadership that improves teaching and learning.  
Engage school leaders and teachers in identifying core elements of effective instructional practices that will motivate more students to meet rigorous standards; provided training for leaders and teachers to use standards-based instructional planning and research-based instructional strategies.  
Create an accountability system that rewards school leaders and teachers for making changes in school curriculum, classroom practices, and student support system that raise achievement and improve graduation rates.  
Establish a repository of exemplary, engaging, standards-based units, projects and lessons that teachers can use in planning their own instruction.  
Establish policies and practices that enable teams of teachers to develop multidisciplinary courses that teach essential college- and career-readiness skills. |
| 4        | Invest heavily in instruction-related professional learning for principals, teachers, and school system leaders | Establish and support collaborative partnerships (with universities, professional organizations, and other entities) to prepare leaders for improving curriculum and instructional practices.  
Encourage and support school-based professional learning strategies aligned with the school’s assessed needs and improvement plans.  
Provide professional learning for teachers on how to make greater use of project- and problem-based authentic assignments to engage and motivate students in more intellectually demanding course work.  
Create a system to support peer-to-peer learning opportunities among principals, especially for those serving low-performing schools.  
Support networking opportunities that allow teachers to share classroom practices that advance student achievement. Provide guidance for teachers to identify true college- and career-readiness level work and to align assignments and assessments with higher-level standards. |
| 5        | Provide high-quality data that link student achievement to school and classroom practices and assist | Develop a robust set of indicators to track progress on system goals and the impact on student performance of specific programs, instructional improvements and interventions.  
Drive the routine use of data for decisions about continuous |
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<tr>
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<th>Instructional Leadership Handbook</th>
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<tr>
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<td>school to use data effectively.</td>
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<td>improvement of instruction and student achievement to the school and classroom level, rather than concentrating such decisions at the system level.</td>
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<td>Assist schools in developing their own “short cycle” assessments to supplement system-developed assessments in order to foster school-level accountability for student learning.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Optimize the use of resources to support learning improvement.</td>
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<td>Review school budgeting policies and practices to streamline the process and give schools more flexibility in using resources. Secure adequate resources and budget to provide an adequate supply of up-to-date instructional tools and materials.</td>
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<td>Review ways of using school time and organizing staff so teachers can work together on instructional issues.</td>
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<td>Provide financial support to schools for targeted interventions that improve student achievement (e.g., grade- and credit-recovery programs, extended instructional time, extra-help or tutorial programs).</td>
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<td>Conduct systematic program reviews to assess outcomes, identify best investments, and discontinue allocations when warranted. Focus spending on research-based instruction proven to increase student achievement.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Use open, credible processes to involve progressive school and community leaders in school improvement.</td>
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<td>Establish policies and structures for parents and community leaders to assist schools in planning, implementing and soliciting support for changes in school and classroom practices that foster greater student motivation and success.</td>
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<td>Create focus campaigns led by the school board, superintendent and system staff to engage and inform parents and community leaders about the type of school reform that will be necessary and the level of effort students must make to graduate prepared for postsecondary study and careers.</td>
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</table>
8. HUMAN RESOURCES

8.1 Teacher Qualifications

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 required states receiving Federal education funds to develop standards and criteria by which teachers could meet the legislation’s definition of “highly qualified.”

The Alabama Model for Identifying Highly Qualified Teachers (revised 2006) describes criteria for determining the status of teachers who are new to the profession (employed for the first time in an Alabama public school after the first day of school, 2002-2003). Kindergarten teachers must be certified in Early Childhood Education.

Are Highly Qualified Teachers the Key to Closing the Achievement Gap?

Prince (2002) argues that closing the academic achievement gap between the rich and poor may well be the most complex and intractable problem that superintendents face. A series of strategies has been tried and found wanting (smaller classes, smaller schools, lengthening the school day or year, before and after school programs and so forth). She argues that none of these strategies are likely to be very effective unless superintendents find a way to ensure that students with the greatest needs are assigned the very best teachers and principals. Haycock (1998) concurs by maintaining that half of the achievement gap would disappear if poor and minority children had highly qualified teachers.

8.2 Educator Evaluation

EDUCATEAlabama is a formative and online instrument used in the evaluation of all teachers. Teachers include classroom teachers, librarians, counselors, and all other teachers with the exception of those with administrative certification serving in an administrative position. The instrument was adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education in 2009. The system is based on the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development which is based on the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS). Each of the AQTS has indicators in the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development. The AQTS are as follows:

- **Standard 1—Content Knowledge:** To improve the learning of all students, teachers master the disciplines related to their teaching fields including the central concepts, important facts and skills, and tools of inquiry; they anchor content in learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.
- **Standard 2—Teaching and Learning:** To increase the achievement of every student, teachers draw upon a thorough understanding of learning and development; recognize the role of families in supporting learning; design a student centered learning environment; and
use research-based instructional and assessment strategies that motivate, engage, and maximize the learning of all students.

- **Standard 3—Literacy:** To improve student learning and achievement, teachers use knowledge of effective oral and written communications, reading, mathematics, and technology to facilitate and support direct instruction, active inquiry, collaboration, and positive interaction.

- **Standard 4—Diversity:** To improve the learning of all students, teachers differentiate instruction in ways that exhibit a deep understanding of how cultural, ethnic, and social background; second language learning; special needs; exceptionalities; and learning styles affect student motivation, cognitive processing, and academic performance.

- **Standard 5—Professionalism:** To increase the achievement of all students, teachers engage in continuous learning and self-improvement; collaborate with colleagues to create and adopt research-based best practices to achieve ongoing classroom and school improvement; and adhere to the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics and federal, state, and local laws and policies.

The EDUCATEAlabama process begins with an educator self-assessment. The educator will assess him/herself on each indicator in the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development as Pre-Service and Beginning, Emerging, Applying, Integrating, or Innovating. Once the self-assessment is complete, the educator and the evaluator engage in a dialogue using the results of the self-assessment and the needs of the school and educator. The dialogue results in the educator and evaluator assigning 2-3 indicators to a Professional Learning Plan (PLP). The PLP serves as the basis for the educator’s professional growth for the current year. Throughout the year, the educator and the evaluator will insert supporting evidence into the Educate Alabama system. Evidence such as observations (by the evaluator), data, and general comments can be inserted by both the educator and the evaluator. This process is done annually for every educator.

LEADAlabama is the formative and online instrument used in the evaluation for all school leaders. For the purpose of LEADAlabama, a school leader is one who holds administrative certification and is serving in an instructional leader position. This includes principals, assistant principals, central office administrators, and other building level administrators. The Lead Alabama instrument is based on the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders and the Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development. The Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development has 23 indicators on which the educational leader will assess him/herself as either Pre-Service, Developing, Collaborative, Accomplished, or Distinguished. The standards are as follows:

- **Standard 1: Planning for Continuous Improvement.** Engages the school community in developing and maintaining a shared vision; plans effectively; uses critical thinking and problem-solving techniques; collects, analyzes, and interprets data; allocates resources; and evaluates results for the purpose of continuous school improvement.
• **Standard 2: Teaching and Learning.** The instructional leader promotes and monitors the success of all students in the learning environment by collaboratively aligning the curriculum; by aligning the instruction and the assessment process to ensure effective student achievement; and by using a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability.

• **Standard 3: Human Resources Development.** Recruits, selects, organizes, evaluates, and mentors faculty and staff to accomplish school and system goals. Works collaboratively with the school faculty and staff to plan and implement effective professional development that is based upon student needs and that promotes both individual and organizational growth and leads to improved teaching and learning. Initiates and nurtures interpersonal relationships to facilitate teamwork and enhance student achievement.

• **Standard 4: Diversity.** Responds to and influences the larger personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context in the classroom, school, and the local community while addressing diverse student needs to ensure the success of all students.

• **Standard 5: Community and Stakeholder Relationships.** Identifies the unique characteristics of the community to create and sustain mutually supportive family-school-community relations.

• **Standard 6: Technology.** Plans, implements, and evaluates the effective integration of current technologies and electronic tools in teaching, management, research, and communication.

• **Standard 7: Management of the Learning Organization.** Manages the organization, facilities, and financial resources; implements operational plans; and promotes collaboration to create a safe and effective learning environment.

• **Standard 8: Ethics.** Demonstrates honesty, integrity, and fairness to guide school policies and practices consistent with current legal and ethical standards for professional educators.

The LEADAlabama process begins with an instructional leader self-assessment. The instructional leader will assess him/herself on each standard and indicator in The Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development as **Pre-Service, Developing, Collaborative, Accomplished, or Distinguished.** Once the self-assessment is complete, the instructional leader and the leader’s supervisor engage in a dialogue. The dialogue results in the educator and evaluator assigning 2-3 indicators to the Professional Learning Plan (PLP). The PLP serves as the basis for the instructional leader’s professional growth for the current year. Throughout the year, the leader and the evaluator will insert supporting evidence into the Educate Alabama system. For principals, there is an additional VAL-ED 360° Feedback Tool which requires the completion of a survey taken by the principal, the principal’s supervisor, and all the teachers. This data is incorporated into the principal’s LEADAlabama for the current year. Each principal will participate in LEADAlabama annually but will only have the VAL-ED component once every three years.
8.3 Hiring Quality School Leaders

Choosing an effective school principal is one of the most significant decisions that a superintendent or school board can make, as new leadership can propel a system forward in meeting its goals (Elmore and Burney, 2000). Principals are responsible for setting school improvement agendas and teacher workplace conditions and ensuring that the school performs in accordance with state/national policies and community expectations (Clifford, 2011). School leadership, after instructional quality, is the most significant school-related contributor to what and how much students learn at school (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Workforce projections indicate that more school boards and superintendents will need to hire new principals for their schools (Educational Research Service, 2000). According to some estimates, 40 percent of the current principal workforce will retire by 2014 (Baltzell & Dentler, 1983; Educational Research Service, 2000; Hammond, Muffs, & Sciascia, 2001). Other researchers contend that increased job stress and complexity will further accelerate retirement and attrition of the current principal workforce (Gates, Ringel, Santibafiez, Ross, & Chung, 2006). The new generation of school principals is older, more diverse, more professionally experienced, and more mobile than principals of 10 or 20 years ago as outlined in the table that follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Demographics of the New Generation of School Principals</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aging Profession</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing Proportion of Women</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Low Minority Representation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>More Highly Experienced Educators</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Increased Mobility</strong></td>
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Several studies suggest that urban and rural systems, particularly those with a poor record of student achievement and high family poverty rates, are struggling to fill vacant school principal positions (Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2001; The New Teacher Project, 2006; Olson, 2008). Often a superintendent’s effectiveness is determined by his/her ability to recruit, develop, and retain high quality school principals. Innovative practices such as school system-based programs to recruit, support, and reward aspiring leaders have shown promise. The ability to negotiate principal salaries and recent changes to the Alabama Tenure Law (establishing contract principals) have been perceived by many as successful efforts to increase the pool of quality applicants for school principals.

8.4 Organizing the Central Office Staff

An important aspect of the superintendent’s ability to influence student achievement and to promote school system effectiveness is his/her decisions about the organization of the central office staff. The setting of priorities for central office work and evaluating the effectiveness of central office personnel is a key element of the superintendent’s job responsibility. Until recently, little research existed on the function and role of the central office in school improvement efforts. A recent study to examine when considering re-organization of the central office is the one reported in 2010 by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CTP) at the University of Washington. This study, supported by the Wallace Foundation, is summarized by Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, and Newton (Education Research Service, 2011) in an article entitled Central Office Transformation for System-wide Teaching and Learning Improvement: Executive Summary. The study looked inside central offices to understand more specifically what central office administrators were doing as part of the school system’s transformation process.

8.5 Students First Act (Code of Alabama §16-24C-1 through §16-24C-14)

Passed in early 2011 the Students First Act of 2011 replaces the previous Teacher Tenure Act and Fair Dismissal Act. The Alabama Legislature described the primary purpose of this act (also identified as Act 2011-270) in its opening lines: The purpose of this chapter is to improve the quality of public education in the State of Alabama. The Act sets out to accomplish this purpose by:

1. Providing for fundamental fairness and due process to employees covered by this chapter.
2. Restoring primary authority and responsibility for maintaining a competent educational workforce to employers covered by this chapter.
3. Enhancing the ability of public educational agencies to increase student academic achievement and student performance through effective allocation of personnel resources.
4. Investing employers covered by this chapter with the discretion and flexibility necessary to make the most effective use of limited educational resources.
5. Eliminating costly, cumbersome, and counterproductive legal challenges to routine personnel decisions by simplifying administrative adjudication and review of contested personnel decisions.

**Employees Covered by the Students First Act**
All employees who are considered teachers and classified employees are covered by the Students First Act. Classified employees include full time employees such as bus drivers, CNP workers, custodians, maintenance personnel, secretaries, instructional aides, and non-certified supervisors. Teachers are those who must hold a professional educator certificate. The Students First Act does not cover superintendents, Chief School Financial Officers, temporary/part-time/substitutes, summer school personnel, pilot program personnel, and occasional, season, or supplemental personnel.

**Tenure and Non-Probationary Status under the Students First Act**
Tenure is applicable to all employees covered by the Students First Act. Tenure/Non-probationary status is earned after three consecutive years with the Board of Education. For the purposes of tenure/non-probationary status, a full year includes employees hired prior to October 1 of a given year. If an employee is hired after October 1 of a year, it will not serve as credit for tenure.

Employees will earn tenure after the third year unless they are notified in writing prior to the close of the third year. The third year is defined as the last day of the third year for teachers and June 15 of the third year for classified employees. All service credit must be consecutive in order to count as credit for tenure/non-probationary status. Further, teachers must hold a professional certificate for each of the three years. Credit from time as a classified employee and as a teacher cannot be combined to serve as time toward tenure/non-probationary status. Neither tenure nor non-probationary status apply to a specific position, rank, work site, assignment, title, or compensation.

**Termination of Employees under the Students First Act**

*Probationary Classified Employees*
Classified employees who have not yet earned tenure may be terminated during the probationary period. The termination is effectuated by a recommendation by the superintendent and the approval of the Board of Education. The terminated employee gets 15 days of pay, and the decision cannot be appealed.

*Non-Tenured Teachers*
Teachers who have not yet earned tenure may be terminated during the three year probationary period. If the termination is during the school year, a 30 day notice is required. The teacher can submit a letter to the Board of Education to explain why the Board of Education should not take such action. If the termination is at the end of the year for the following year, the written notice must be before June 15 unless it is the teacher’s third year.
it is the teacher’s third year, written notice must be on or before the last day of the school year. The non-tenured teacher’s termination cannot be appealed.

Tenured and Non-probationary Employees
Employees who have tenure/non-probationary status may be terminated for the following reasons: justifiable decrease in number of positions, incompetency, and insubordination, neglect of duty, immorality, and failure to perform duties in a satisfactory manner and other and just cause. The process for terminating a tenured or non-probationary employee requires written notice of the termination which must include the reason, the facts, the statutory grounds for the termination, and the opportunity to request a hearing with the Board of Education within 15 days of the notice. The termination hearing is with the Board of Education and the employee. If the Board of Education votes to accept the termination recommendation, a written notice must be provided within 10 calendar days of the Board of Education’s vote. The notice of the right to appeal must be included. If the employee appeals within fifteen (15) days of the vote, the case goes to a hearing officer. If the hearing officer upholds the decision, the final appeal by either party can be with the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals.

Suspension of Employees under the Students First Act
Employees can be suspended with or without pay for 20 work days. The suspension is done by the superintendent providing written notice with the reasons for the suspension. The employee can provide a letter to the Board of Education and request to meet with the Board of Education. The Board of Education votes on the recommendation. If approved, the superintendent provides written notification to the employee of the suspension. The employee has no right to appeal the decision after the approval of the Board of Education. Employees may be suspended for more than 20 work days with the same process used for terminations.

Transfers and Re-assignments of Employees under the Students First Act
The Students First Act differentiates between a transfer (between schools) and a re-assignment (within a school/facility).

Re-Assignment of Tenured and Probationary Teachers
A superintendent, without Board of Education approval, can re-assign a teacher within the same school (grade change, work location within the school) or campus/facility as long as it is done by the 20th calendar day after school begins. However, the teacher must hold certification for the newly assigned position and there cannot be a loss of compensation as a result of the re-assignment. There is no appeal to this re-assignment.

Re-Assignment of Probationary and Non-Probationary Classified Employees
A re-assignment for probationary and non-probationary classified employees, while not directly addressed in the Students First Act, may be done with notice, recommendation to the Board of Education by the superintendent, approval by the Board of Education, and notice of the decision. There is no appeal to this re-assignment.
Transfer of Tenured Teachers
For teachers, proper certification must be held, there should not be any reduction in compensation, the transfer should be done within the first 20 calendar days of school, and the transfer should only take place once per school year. If the transfer is within a high school feeder pattern, the teacher can request a meeting with the Board of Education. If the transfer is outside of the high school feeder pattern, then a hearing with the Board of Education can be requested. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent and the approval of the Board of Education, the decision to transfer the employee is final with no appeal rights.

Transfer of Probationary Teachers
A transfer of a probationary teacher, while not directly addressed in the Students First Act, may be done with a superintendent’s recommendation to the Board of Education. If approved, the decision to transfer the probationary teacher is final with no appeal rights.

Transfer of Probationary Classified Employees
A transfer of a probationary classified employee, while not directly addressed in the Students First Act, may be done with a superintendent’s recommendation to the Board of Education. If approved, the decision to transfer the employee is final with no appeal rights.

Transfer of Non-Probationary Classified Employees
For non-probationary classified employees, a transfer cannot result in a reduction in compensation. Written notice of the transfer must be provided 15 days before the decision, and the effective date of the transfer cannot be less than 15 calendar days from the decision. If a non-probationary classified employee is recommended to a transfer outside of the high school feeder pattern, the appeal process is the same that for appealing a termination.

Voluntary Transfers for All Employees
Employees can voluntarily be re-assigned or transferred at any time.

Reduction in Pay for Employees
Probationary and non-tenured employees can be transferred with a reduction in pay assuming proper certification is held (if applicable), written notice is provided with an explanation of the compensation changes, and there is an opportunity to object in writing before the Board of Education’s vote. The transfer must be effective 15 days after the vote.

Non-probationary and tenured transfers with a reduction in pay are handled in the same manner as a termination.

Administrative Leave
A superintendent can place an employee on paid administrative leave.
Resignation
A tenured teacher is not permitted to resign within 30 calendar days before the first day of school for students. A tenured teacher or other employee may terminate his or her employment at any other time by giving five days' written notice to the employing board of education. Any teacher terminating his or her employment in violation of this section is guilty of unprofessional conduct, and the State Superintendent of Education may revoke or suspend the certificate of such teacher.

Teacher Certification Loss
A loss of teacher certification results in a termination.

Reduction in Force (RIF)
The Students First Act provides that actions due to a RIF are not covered by the Students First Act. A RIF policy must be in place and there is no right to contest a reduction in force layoff with the Students First Act. Objective criteria for determining which employees will be affected by a reduction in force may be announced at the time the Board of Education declares the RIF. Selections of employees to be released due to a reduction in force must not be for personal or political reasons. Additional information about reductions in force and employee layoffs are available in the Code of Alabama §16-1-33 (1975) as amended http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/searchableinstruments/2012rs/bills/sb550.htm.

For a summary of the impact of the Students First Act of 2011, see Dr. Dave Dagley’s article on page 10 of the Council of Leadership of Alabama Schools (CLAS) end of year publication at http://www.clasleaders.org/images/stories/Mag_Archive/YearEndIssue2011.pdf. The Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) also has published resources for board members and superintendents that describe key features of the Students First Act of 2011. The 120-page booklet Guidelines for Implementing the Students First Act is available free from http://www.alabamaschoolboards.org/PDFs/GuidelinesforImplementingStudentsFirstAct_May2012.pdf.

8.6 Teacher Accountability Act (Code of Alabama §16-24B-1 through §16-24B-8)

Probationary Period
Newly hired principals may be hired for a probationary period for up to two years. If the newly hired principal has previously served as a principal, the probationary period can only be one year in length.

Termination of Contract Probationary Principal
Probationary principals may be terminated at the end of the probationary period. While reasons may be provided, they are not required. If the termination recommendation is made during the probationary period, the probationary principal is able to request a hearing.

Contract Principal
If the Board of Education keeps the probationary principal past the probationary period, the principal is provided a contract for not less than three years.

Termination and Non-Renewal of Contract Principal
A contract principal can be terminated during his/her contract period for specified reasons (immorality, insubordination, neglect of duty, conviction of a felony or crime, failure to fulfill the duties and responsibilities imposed upon principals by state law, willful failure to comply with board policy, a justifiable decrease in the number of positions due to decreased enrollment or decreased funding, failure to maintain her or his certificate in current status, other good and just cause, incompetency, and failure to perform duties in a satisfactory manner). The principal has specific process rights if the contract is terminated during the contract period.

A contract principal can be non-renewed at the end of the contract period. The non-renewal must be done at least 90 days before the expiration of the current contract. The superintendent’s recommendation to non-renew the contract principal must include reasons for such action. Aside from personal or political reasons, the reason for non-renewal can be for any reason beyond those provided for during the contract period. The contract principal has specific process rights should he or she be recommended for non-renewal.

Evaluation of Contract Principals
All contract principals must be evaluated each year. For each year the contract principal is not evaluated with an Alabama State Department of Education approved instrument, the contract period extends the contract period for one year.

8.7 Employee Leave
Managing the various types of leave can be a challenge for school and system leaders. The information below provides a basic overview of the types of leave available to employees in Alabama schools. An additional challenge is to obtain reliable, qualified substitutes when teachers or other employees are away from their duties.
Sick Leave
Full-time employees earn one day of sick leave per month of contract. The number of days of sick leave that can be accumulated by an employee is unlimited. The reasons for taking sick leave are as follows:

- Personal illness or doctor’s quarantine.
- Incapacitating personal injury.
- Attendance upon an ill member of the employee’s immediate family (parent, spouse, child, foster child currently in the care and custody of the employee, sibling); or an individual with a close personal tie.
- Death in the family of the employee (parent, spouse, child, sibling, parent-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew, niece, grandchild, grandparent, uncle or aunt).
- Death, injury, or sickness of another person who has unusually strong personal ties to the employee, such as a person who stood in loco parentis.

Sick Leave Banks
Employees may voluntarily become members of the local sick leave bank. The bank allows a member to borrow days from the collective bank when his/her accrued sick leave has been exhausted. The borrowed days must be repaid to the sick leave bank.

Catastrophic Leave
Members of the sick leave bank are eligible to request donated days for the purpose of catastrophic leave. Catastrophic leave is defined as “Any illness, injury, or pregnancy or medical condition related to childbirth, certified by a licensed physician which causes the employee to be absent from work for an extended period of time.” This enables other members to donate sick days to a sick leave bank member after all personal and sick leave days are exhausted.

Personal Leave
Employees are entitled to at least two days but not more than five personal leave days. Unused personal leave days cannot be accrued but can be converted to sick leave days, or employees can receive payment for the cost of the substitute. Employees are not required to provide reason for the personal leave. The state pays for the first two personal leave days for employees. If additional personal leave days are granted, they are paid for by the local board of education.

On-the-Job Injury (OJI)
OJI is defined as “…any accident or injury to the employee occurring during the performance of duties (or when directed or requested by the employer to be on the property of the employer), which prevents the employee from working or returning to his or her job.” After such injury, an employee has 24 hours to report to the superintendent or another as stipulated by local policy.
If the OJI is supported, the employee has up to 90 days to be out without an impact on compensation and his/her own sick leave days. An approved OJI also allows the employee to file with the State Board of Adjustments for unpaid medical expenses.

**Leaves of Absences**
Employees may be granted, in accordance with local policies, one year but no more than two consecutive years of a leave of absence.

**Vacation**
Local boards of education have the authority to establish policies to grant vacation leave to employees.

**Military Leave**
Employees are provided no more than 168 hours of leave for federal military leave per calendar year. Employees in the military also have explicit protections under the *Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act USERRA*.

**Family Medical Leave Act**
Eligible employees have rights to take leave in accordance with the FMLA. The FMLA allows eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave in a one year period for specified reasons. Qualifying reasons include the birth of a child; adoption of a child; to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition, a serious health condition of the employee; a qualifying exigency from the employee’s spouse, child or parent on “covered active duty” or 26 workweeks to care for a servicemen with a serious injury or illness if the member is a spouse, child, parent or next of kin. For more information see [http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/](http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/).

Local policies can stipulate if FMLA can be taken concurrently with paid leave options such as sick leave, personal leave, and vacation leave.
9. PHYSICAL RESOURCES: FACILITIES

9.1 Office of the State Architect

The office of the State Architect provides assistance and advice to local school systems for the design and construction of new school facilities and for the renovation of existing facilities. Local school systems review and submit annually a Capital Plan Report that identifies facilities needs and long range planning information. The Capital Plan and a current facilities assessment are due to the ALSDE each year by September 15. Public School Funds (PSF) may not be released to a school system until its Capital Plan has been approved.

The duties of the State Architect’s office include:

- Reviews and approves schematic, preliminary and final plans and specifications for projects involving alterations, additions, and new construction of schools
- Reviews and approves architectural agreements, construction contracts, and change orders.
- Advises local boards of education with design, cost estimates, and construction methods for school buildings.
- Advises project architects and engineers with respect to design, bidding, and construction of schools.
- Administers K-12 State Bond issues for the Alabama Public School and College Authority.
- Prepares deeds and leases for property sold or exchanged by county systems.
- Inspects and approves all new sites for school construction.
- Generates and maintains complete inventory of all school facilities.
- Responsible for yearly Capital Planning and Assessment of facilities as required by the Foundation Program.

Plans for new buildings, additions and major renovations, regardless of the source of funding for these projects, must be approved by the State Department of Education and the Alabama Building Commission. The current edition of the Alabama Building Commission (ABC) uniform documents used to guide school construction may be accessed at www.bc.state.al.us.

9.2 School Site Requirements

The school grounds must be large enough to provide outdoor areas for physical education and recreation. The minimum requirements for school sites (as described in the Alabama Administrative Code Chapter 290-2-2-.04) are as follows:

An elementary school is a school with any combination of Grades K-8, and must not contain a grade above 8.
Both existing and proposed elementary schools must have a base of five acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.

A **middle school** is a school with a combination of grades 4-9, but not including both grades 4 and 9.

- Both existing and proposed middle schools must have a base of ten acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.

A **secondary school** is a school with any combination of grades 5-12 but must contain a grade above eight.

- Existing secondary schools must have a base of 15 acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.
- A proposed secondary school must have a minimum base of 30 acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.

A **unit school** is a school that includes grades below five and above eight with a principal on a single campus.

- An existing unit school must have a minimum of 25 acres of land.
- A proposed unit school must have a minimum base of 30 acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.

**Area Vocational Schools (Career Technical Centers).**

- Both existing and proposed area vocational schools (Career Technical Centers) must have a minimum of 10 acres of land.

### 9.3 New Thinking about School Facilities

With the proliferation of technology and emphasis on 21st century learning outcomes, many education writers and researchers are examining the future designs of school facilities. Superintendents contemplating growing student populations and decreasing budgets must consider innovative uses of school facilities and must lead efforts to reexamine school buildings in light of 21st century needs. An excellent resource is the 2009 edition of *Teaching the Digital Generation: No More Cookie-Cutter High Schools* by Kelly, McCain, and Jukes (Corwin Press, CA: 2009). In the introduction, the authors point out the impetus for the book:

The 21st century is a fundamentally different environment that is demanding completely new ideas for how things get done. These sweeping changes are occurring so rapidly and are of such magnitude that education must quickly adapt or face the very real prospect of becoming irrelevant. It is absolutely critical that everyone involved in education realize that change is not optional for schools today.
Kelly, McCain and Jukes provide a very dramatic and memorable discussion of their concept of TTWWADI (The Way We’ve Always Done It) and embrace the belief that TTWWADI is a major cause of lack of innovation and positive change in education. Creative and interesting new ideas about what schools could look like, how technology can enhance education and reduce costs, and designs for futuristic spaces for schooling are presented in the book and on the authors’ website www.nomorecookiecutterschools.com.

10. INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES: MATERIALS

10.1 The Alabama Textbook Law, Selection Procedures, Adoption Regulations

Chapter 36, Code of Alabama 1975 and subsequent amendments regulate the textbook adoption process for public schools in Alabama. In this legislation the State Textbook Committee is created for the purpose of considering the merit of the textbooks offered for use in the public elementary and high schools of the state and making recommendations for approval or rejection, or both, to the State Board of Education.

The State Textbook Committee is composed of 23 members. Four of the members are to be secondary school classroom teachers and four are to be elementary school classroom teachers. One of these eight members is appointed from each of the seven US congressional systems and one shall be appointed statewide. Four members are appointed from the state at large, and these four members may be either classroom teachers or persons actively engaged in a supervisory or administrative capacity in the field of education. Two members of the committee must be employees of state institutions of high learning. These 14 members of the State Textbook Committee are appointed by the State Board of Education, upon nominations made by the State Superintendent of Education. Nine members are appointed by the Governor, subject to the confirmation of the Senate by April 1 of each year, one from each of the seven congressional systems and two appointed statewide. The two statewide appointees of the governor must be members of local boards of education at the time of their appointment. The nine members appointed by the governor are to have general knowledge of the subject area to be considered for textbook adoption and are to have a demonstrated ability to read and write at a post high school level. These nine members, other than the two local board of education members, are not to be employed in education. Rules regarding committee member confidentiality, integrity, voting, reporting, and potential conflicts of interest are described in the law.

Based upon the recommendations of the State Textbook Committee, the State Board of Education shall adopt textbooks from which members of local boards of education may adopt for use in their systems. Members of local boards of education may not adopt textbooks nor expend public funds for textbooks that have been rejected by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education divides the subjects of study in the public schools so that all textbooks on a given subject for grades kindergarten through 12 shall be considered for adoption in one year. New adoptions made during any year are not to be used in the public schools until the next ensuing scholastic year.

The adoption schedule for each subject area is determined by the State Superintendent of Education based on the Courses of Study development schedule, knowledge-base changes, financial considerations, the need for staggered adoption schedules, needs expressed by the local superintendents, contract expiration dates, and other factors deemed appropriate by the
State Superintendent of Education. Prior to adoptions by the State Board of Education, members of the public are allowed a reasonable amount of time to be heard concerning any book recommended for adoption or rejection. Adoption or rejection, or both, of any textbooks are made only at a public meeting of the State Board of Education. Notice of the time and place of the meeting to consider textbook adoptions and rejections must be given for at least 30 days by notice to news media and by posting a notice on a bulletin board or in some other conspicuous place in the offices of the State Department of Education.

Local textbook committees are appointed by each separate local board of education. The number, size, and composition (to include parents) of the committees are to be determined by each local board of education. A copy of local school board policies in regard to local textbook committees is to be kept on file by each local superintendent. Names of each person serving on a local textbook committee are also to be kept on file in the local superintendent’s office. Rules regarding committee member confidentiality, integrity, voting, reporting, and potential conflicts of interest are described in the law.

No textbook is to be used in any public school of this state unless recommended by a local textbook committee and, upon the recommendation of a local superintendent, adopted by the local board of education. The adoption of a textbook by a local board of education is to be by majority vote of the local board of education and to be for a period determined by the State Superintendent of Education. Not later than 30 days after the date of the local adoption, the local superintendent of education is to file a report with the State Superintendent of Education listing the title, the name of the author, the publisher, and the date of adoption of the textbook with verification to the State Superintendent that all procedures described in the textbook law have been followed.

Publishers are to furnish samples of all state-adopted textbook to each local board of education for evaluation by the local textbook committee. One copy of each textbook adopted by the local textbook committee shall be retained by the local board of education as an official sample. All samples not adopted by the local boards are to be returned to the publishers at the expense of the publishers. Samples of those books adopted become the property of the local boards of education. If the publisher fails to reclaim samples of the non-adopted books within 90 days, the sample books become the property of the local board of education.

All textbooks furnished free of charge to pupils are the property of the local board of education, as long as textbook funds are expended as prescribed by law. When distributed to pupils the textbooks are to be retained for normal use only during the period they are engaged in a course of study for which the textbooks are selected. At the completion of each course of study or otherwise at the instructions of the principal or teacher in charge, the textbooks are to be returned as directed. A receipt is required from each pupil, parent, or guardian upon issuance of any textbook. The parent, guardian, or other person having custody of a child to whom textbooks are issued are held liable for any loss, abuse, or damage in excess of that which
would result from the normal use of the textbooks. In computing the loss or damage of a textbook that has been in use for a year or more, the basis of computation is a variable of 50 to 75 percent of the original cost of the book to the local board of education. If the parent, guardian, or person having custody of the child to whom the textbook was issued fails to pay the assessed damages within 30 days after notification, the student is not entitled to further use of the textbooks until remittance of the amount of loss or damage has been made.

Pupils enrolled in the public schools or any parent or guardian of the pupil may buy textbooks at the price paid for them by the local board of education. Sale of these textbooks may be made by the local board of education in the school system where the student is enrolled. The local board of education may make such sales through a designated employee or agent thereof. All books issued by the separate schools and school systems may be used by pupils to whom issued in the same manner and to the same extent as though the books were owned by the pupils, their parents, or guardians as the case may be, except that such pupils, parents, guardians are liable for such loss or damage to books as prescribed by law and for the return of the textbook.

The Legislature finds that textbooks and other instructional materials are among the basic tools of learning that must exist if Alabama students are to succeed. All students in the public schools are to be provided with adequate and current textbooks and other necessary instructional supplies for use in their education. Textbooks and other supporting materials are to be appropriate for their course work and are to be in suitable condition. Where textbooks are to be issued in accordance to the state textbook law, every student is to have his or her own copy of the issued textbook of the correct edition, which he or she is to be permitted to take home each day for home study for the entire school year or for the portion of the year when the book is issued.

10.2 Administrative Code Requirements Regarding Textbook Provision

The Alabama Administrative Code (290-2-3-.02) establishes the definition of a textbook and describes methods and procedures for textbook adoption, purchase, distribution and use. Textbooks are defined as systematically organized materials, such as hardbound books, softcover books, or technology based programs that are comprehensive enough to cover the primary objectives in the standard course of study for a grade or course. Local boards of education may purchase readiness materials and softcover worktexts that have been recommended by the State Textbook Committee and approved by the State Board of Education.

Local boards of education, which have certified to the State Superintendent that all students are provided with adequate and current textbooks as prescribed in Chapter 36, Code of Alabama 1975, may purchase teacher’s editions, workbooks and other materials which accompany adopted textbooks and have been recommended by the State Textbook Committee.
and approved by the State Board of Education. All materials submitted for substitution must be reviewed and approved by specialists from the Alabama State Department of Education.

No textbook shall be adopted for use in any public school of this state unless the textbook is adopted by the local textbook committee and, upon the recommendation of the local superintendent, adopted by the local board of education. An inventory system that provides an accurate system of accounting for all textbooks must be maintained at the local board level. The local board must account for all materials which have been distributed to local schools; stored; given or exchanged with other local school systems; and/or worn out or disposed of in accordance with Chapter 36, Code of Alabama 1975. Each local board shall provide safe and dry storage facilities for textbooks.

10.3 Alabama Ahead Act of 2012

Alabama Legislative Act 2012-560, also known as the Alabama Ahead Act of 2012, became law in May 2012. This act allows the Alabama Public School and College Authority (PSCA) to sell and issue 20-year tax exempt bonds up to $100,000,000 to provide Alabama’s high schools with digital textbooks. Specifically, when funded, the law calls for the provision to all student and teachers, where available, approved textbooks and instructional materials in electronic format and, where feasible, to provide computer equipment and software for reading and interacting with digital textbooks and other instructional materials.

The Alabama Ahead Act defines “computer equipment and software” as pen-enabled tablets, mobile computers, or similar wireless electronic devices for storing, reading, access, exploring, and interacting with digital textbooks and other instructional material as well as software necessary for such equipment, learning management systems and equipment necessary to support wireless local area networks. Digital textbooks are defined as interactive, multimedia electronic books or digital resources that can be used creatively by learners.

When funded and implemented, one component of the implementation of the Alabama Ahead Act is provision for teacher professional development so that lesson planning and classroom instruction can take full advantage of the digital resources. A copy of the entire act may be downloaded from http://www.ssaonline.org/Download.asp?L=0&LMID=269364&PN=DocumentUploads&DivisionID=&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&SubP=&Act=Download&T=1&I=181940

10.4 Instructional Supplies

The Alabama Legislature amended Section 16 of the Code of Alabama 1975 in April of 1998 in House Bill 230 to address instructional supplies. Section 11, subsection (e) of this act states that instructional supplies, including library books and media resources, science equipment, classroom furniture, audiovisual equipment, maps and globes, marker boards, art and music
supplies, and other educational materials, are to be provided in all schools in adequate form and quantity. The intent of this act is to make it unnecessary for teachers to make personal expenditures to provide the materials described in the law.

10.5 Policies for Selection of Materials and Resources

It is important that LEAs and Boards of Education support the principles of academic and intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. In so doing, conflicts may arise when the teacher’s choice of instructional material or the library/media specialist’s choice of materials differs with the values or beliefs of students, parents, and/or community members. A system procedure should be established to allow for the fair and orderly review of print and non-print materials so that all involved parties would know that opinions will be considered and that appropriate educational materials will be used by the school system.

Typical policies and procedures to review print and non-print materials include the following components:

- The identification of personnel to receive complaints about materials
- The steps to be followed when materials are challenged
- The personnel to be involved in the review of the challenged material
- Criteria to be used in review of the challenged material
- How the decisions about the materials will be reported
- Procedures for appeal of a decision regarding challenged material

Consultation with board attorneys and/or other legal agencies is recommended when developing procedures for reviewing instructional materials and for handling challenges. Professional development for teachers and school staff members should be provided on materials selection, appropriate instructional materials development, and how challenges to materials are to be handled in the school system.

10.6 Foundation Program Allocations

Alabama Legislative Acts 95-313 and 98-320 amended section 16-6B-10 of the Code of Alabama 1975 regarding Foundation Program allocations for instructional support. According to the revisions in this act, it is the intent of the Legislature to see that funds allocated for classroom instructional support actually reach the classroom. To that end, the State Department of Education is to monitor the flow of funds appropriated for various instructional purposes. Classroom instructional support is defined as those funds appropriated for instructional supplies, library enhancement, textbooks, technology and professional development.
School budgets are to be developed within each school with teachers’ direct input into the development of the budgets for classroom instructional support. Local boards of education are to ensure that principals and classroom teachers are given the opportunity to participate in decisions concerning the appropriate use and expenditure of classroom instructional support funds.

Classroom instructional materials and supplies must be budgeted for all teachers at the rate appropriated per teacher unit by the Legislature in the Foundation Program. Textbook funds must be budgeted for all students based on the rate appropriated per student by the Legislature in the Foundation Program. Technology funds, professional development funds, and library enhancement funds must be budgeted for all teachers based on the rate per teacher unit appropriated by the Legislature in the Foundation Program.

10.7 Procurement Policies, Fixed Assets, Accounting/Inventory Responsibilities

Procurement of instructional materials, instructional equipment, and supplies for the implementation of the curriculum is governed by local school accounting regulations. Teachers must requisition materials, supplies, and equipment using approved purchase orders or system requisition forms. Accounting codes on such requisitions describe the purpose of the items as well as the funds with which the purchase is to be made.

Equipment valued at $5,000.00 and above is determined to be a fixed asset of the school system and, as such, must be inventoried in the system’s fixed asset listing. The serial number, fund, date of purchase, and location of the item is to be recorded in the system’s inventory of fixed assets. Auditing of these assets is conducted periodically and procedures to be followed to delete inventory are described in local school accounting manuals.

It is the responsibility of the principal and other designated school officials to approve purchases of instructional materials, equipment, and supplies to determine their suitability for the instructional program. Budgetary procedures dictate that teachers be involved in the decision-making process when considering purchases for the instructional program.

System fiscal officers and purchasing office personnel provide guidance to local school personnel when purchases must be made through competitive bidding, through the awarding of contracts, and/or with certain types of grant funds which may be restrictive.

10.8 Supplementing Expensive Courses

Schools and schools systems often supplement expensive elective courses, such as band, choral music, art, drama, driver education, career technical courses requiring laboratories or equipment, or technology courses. The costs of instruments, performance venues, equipment, technology, extracurricular rehearsals, and materials often exceed the system and/or state
allocations combined with student-paid tuition or fees. A variety of methods for supplementing these programs exist throughout school systems. Booster clubs are sometimes formed by parents of students in these courses with the purpose of conducting fund-raising events and sponsoring student activities. School systems may make allocations of local revenues to the various programs based on need, student enrollment, or other objective criteria.

A long-range plan for the purchase of major instruments, uniforms, machinery, computer networks, laboratories, and specialized classrooms is beneficial to efforts to establish viable electives. Budgeting for equipment maintenance, repair and/or replacement, instrument tuning and reconditioning, travel to competitions, and other expensive components of the instructional program will ensure continued opportunities for students to participate.

10.9 Course Fees and Fee Waivers

Section 16-10-6 of the Code of Alabama (1975) prohibits the collection of any fees from students in the first six grades of school. Voluntary contributions may be solicited and accepted. Section 16-13-13 of the Code of Alabama (1975) states that fees are not to be charged in courses required for graduation.

Schools and systems may charge reasonable fees for elective courses or courses not required for graduation. These fees may not exceed $40 per course according to the Alabama Administrative Code. It is advisable to publish the course fee schedule well in advance of course selection dates and to inform parents of payment plans or alternative course selections. Local system policies may allow school administrators to waive course fees for students presenting extenuating circumstances. Students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches may request and should be granted fee waivers. Many schools assess fees for advanced levels of required academic courses as well as for elective courses.
11. ALIGNING THE CURRICULUM

From the perspective of a superintendent, the curriculum is the body of content, knowledge, skills, and processes taught by the school system. The challenge is to assure that there is consistency among the mandated curricula, the taught curricula, and the tested curricula of a school. To provide direction in fulfilling this responsibility, this handbook focuses on the following broad areas:

- the official or required curriculum in Alabama public schools,
- the resources that are helpful in implementing the required curriculum,
- the state tests (and other tests) which should be considered for purposes of curriculum alignment,
- how superintendents can determine what is actually being taught, and
- methods for determining whether a misalignment among the official, taught, and tested curricula exists.

11.1 Curriculum Mandated for K-12 Schools

The primary source for curriculum content standards by subject and by grade level is the published set of Courses of Study developed by the Alabama State Department of Education and adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education. By law, these publications form the minimum content standards for lesson plans and curriculum development for local school systems in Alabama. Subject areas are revised by committees of teachers, administrators, parents and SDE personnel on a six-year cycle. When needed, revisions or addenda are published at points within the six-year cycle.

The Administrative Code of Alabama and the Courses of Study publications describe the minimum course requirements for high school graduation. These sequences of courses must be made available to students within the system. K-8 curriculum must be planned to support student success in the high school program of study. Local school systems have discretion in offering additional courses to fulfill graduation requirements and to meet the goals of the system.

11.2 Common Core State Standards K-12

The State Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent have both embraced the concept of Common Core Standards in mathematics and English Language Arts in an effort to guarantee that Alabama students will be prepared to meet 21st century challenges. The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have developed the K-12 standards for English-language arts and mathematics in the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI). In 2010 the State of Alabama joined forty-eight
other states in adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Common Core Math standards can be viewed on ALEX (Alabama Learning Exchange) under 2010 Course of Study (http://alex.state.al.us/index.php). The Common Core State Standards are scheduled to be implemented during the 2012-13 school year. "These standards are the critical first step for the transformation of our state education systems" stated Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers. "We're committed to ensuring students are achieving to their highest levels and given every opportunity throughout their education to do so."

These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards are:

- Aligned with college and work expectations;
- Clear, understandable and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Evidence-based.


11.3 Curriculum Required for Post-Secondary Institutions

In addition to the basic mandated state curriculum for high school graduation, local systems must consider requirements of a variety of post-secondary institutions and programs when planning course offerings. Colleges, universities, and post-secondary training schools have varying entrance requirements. Students and parents must be encouraged to consult school administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, and specific post-secondary programs to determine the best course selections or programs of study.

Local curriculum planning activities should include examination of entrance requirements of the post-secondary programs most frequently attended by system graduates. National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requirements are important to students within the system who may be planning post-secondary athletic participation. Publications of the NCAA are available to assist systems in determining the acceptability of courses to fulfill these requirements. (http://www.ncaa.org) and (http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net). Local guidance and counseling personnel and post-secondary admissions officers are valuable resources when planning curriculum offerings to facilitate post-secondary enrollment, scholarship awards, and/or apprenticeship placements.
Articulation agreements between local school systems and technical schools or community colleges may dictate the sequence and course content of various technical or academic courses. Dual enrollment or early college admission policies of the system may specify particular courses for inclusion in these programs.

11.4 Accreditation Standards

AdvancED System Accreditation is a system approach to improving student performance results over time. System Accreditation recognizes that increasing student achievement involves more than improving instruction. It is a result of how well all the parts of the education system—the system, school, and classroom—work together to meet the needs of students. System Accreditation applies the three pillars of accreditation—high standards, continuous improvement, and quality assurance—to the entire system to ensure alignment and support between and among the system and its schools. The System Accreditation process provides the system and all of its schools with a comprehensive framework for continually improving student achievement and system performance. The AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems form the foundation of System Accreditation. The standards build on NCA CASI’s and SACS CASI’s system accreditation standards.

To be accredited, the system must:

1. Meet the AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems and ensure that their schools meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools
   The standards require that the system and its schools have a clear vision and purpose; have effective and responsive leadership; have a rigorous curriculum taught through sound, research-based methods; collect, report, and use performance results; provide adequate resources and support for its educational programs; and value and communicate with their stakeholders.

2. Engage in continuous improvement
   To demonstrate continuous improvement, the system and its schools must implement an improvement plan based on student performance and school/community data that includes clear goals for raising the achievement of all students. The system and its schools also must document growth in student performance and organizational effectiveness.

3. Demonstrate quality assurance through external review
   Systems must be evaluated by a team of professionals from outside the system on a periodic basis. The team engages the system staff in a healthy, professional dialogue about system improvement efforts, validates that the system meets the standards for accreditation, and provides feedback and makes recommendations concerning future efforts to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.
The five standards described by AdvancED accreditation materials are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As systems reach a higher level of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards has corresponding indicators and an impact statement.

The indicators are operational definitions or descriptions of exemplary practices and processes. Together, the indicators provide a comprehensive picture of each standard.

The impact statement describes characteristics, processes, and actions that would be observable and verifiable in a system that effectively implements the standards.

System Accreditation Standards

**Standard 1: Purpose and Direction**
The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

**Quality System Indicators for Standard 1**
1.1 The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.
1.2 The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.
1.3 The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.
1.4 Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.

**Standard 2: Governance and Leadership**
The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.

**Quality System Indicators for Standard 2**
2.1 The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.
2.2 The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.
2.3 The governing body ensures that leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.
2.4 Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system’s purpose and direction.

2.5 Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system’s purpose and direction.

2.6 Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.

**Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning**

The system’s curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

**Quality System Indicators for Standard 3**

3.1 The system’s curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.

3.2 Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.

3.3 Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.

3.4 System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.

3.5 The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.

3.6 Teachers implement the system’s instructional process in support of student learning.

3.7 Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system’s values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

3.8 The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children’s education and keep them informed of their children’s learning progress.

3.9 The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student’s school who supports that student’s educational experience.

3.10 Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.

3.11 All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.

3.12 The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.
Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems
The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Quality System Indicators for Standard 4
4.1 The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs.
4.2 Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.
4.3 The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.
4.4 The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.
4.5 The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.
4.6 The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system’s teaching, learning, and operational needs.
4.7 The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.
4.8 The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning needs of all students.

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement
The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Quality System Indicators for Standard 5
5.1 The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.
5.2 Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.
5.3 Throughout the system professional and support staff members are trained in the interpretation and use of data.
5.4 The system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.
5.5 System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.
AdvancEd quality standards for schools and school systems can be accessed at: http://www.advanc-ed.org/new-standards-quality

11.5 State and Local Graduation Requirements

Minimum course requirements for high school graduation are described in the Alabama Administrative Code. Local school systems may adopt additional requirements beyond the minimum prescribed by the state and may offer additional types of diploma endorsements. Factors to consider when adding requirements include the number of class periods in the school day, the availability of facilities and qualified personnel, the access to courses by students, and the rate at which students are passing the minimum requirements. Graduation pathways and diploma options for special education students are determined by the student’s IEP team.

Local school systems must establish and clearly communicate all graduation requirements to students and parents. Requirements for participation in graduation ceremonies, requirements for passing all relevant portions of the AHSGE or end-of-course tests, course credits, criteria for honor graduates, and all other features related to the status of graduates must be clearly communicated to students throughout their enrollment in the school system. It is recommended that documentation be maintained of students’ and parents’ receipt of all information related to graduation requirements and criteria for participation in graduation ceremonies.

Alabama High School Diploma
Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2013-14, the Alabama High School Diploma serves as the default diploma for all students and requires the successful completion of 24 credits (units).

- English 4 credits
- Mathematics 4 credits including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II/Algebra II with Trigonometry or the equivalent
- Science 4 credits
- Social Studies 4 credits
- Physical Education/LIFE 1 credit
- Health Education 0.5 credits
- Career Preparedness Course 1 credit (Career and Academic Planning, Computer Applications, or Financial Literacy)
- CTE and/or Foreign Language and/or Arts Education 3 credits
- Electives 2.5 credits
- Total 24 credits
Additional information about diploma requirements, specific courses that may be substituted for required academic core courses, and answers to frequently asked questions about the Alabama diploma and graduation standards may be found at
https://connect.alsde.edu/sites/memos/Memoranda/FY13-2036.pdf and
http://www.alsde.edu/general/New_Diploma_FAQs_Revised_6-6-13.doc.

**Gratuation Certificate**

Boards of education may allow special education students, with the exception of the gifted and the speech-impaired, to earn a graduation certificate instead of a State-approved diploma. Such students are to follow the objectives established for them at the annual IEP meeting by the IEP team. When the goals of the IEP have been met, the student may be awarded a graduation certificate and may participate in all activities associated with graduation from high school. Students who are awarded the graduation certificate are NOT counted as “graduates” when determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the accountability system. A student who receives a Graduation Certificate may continue to work toward the Alabama High School Diploma or the Alabama Occupational Diploma to age 21 with IDEA services.

11.6 Where Does One Find the Mandated Curriculum?

The minimum course content and mandated curriculum for Alabama schools is found in the published **Courses of Study** adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education (www.alsde.edu). In addition to these Courses of Study, the following resources are helpful when evaluating course content and curriculum offerings at the local school and system level:

**ALEX (Alabama Learning Exchange)**

Accessed through the Alabama State Department of Education website (www.alsde.edu), ALEX is an exchange for educators of lesson plans, web resources, and teacher information related to the Alabama Courses of Study. Teachers may contribute lesson plans, units, resources, and ideas and may share in collaborative planning for instruction. Questions may be posted on the exchange site, and educators may recommend and review teaching resources and materials.

**AHSGE Item Specifications**

AHSGE item specifications are useful in lesson planning and for identification of content standards for remediation and/or review. Printed copies of item specifications are available in schools and can be downloaded from the ALSDE website (www.alsde.edu) by selecting Sections, Student Assessment, and Publications.

**ASA Item Specifications**

Items specifications for the Alabama Science Assessment (ASA) are available from the ALSDE (www.alsde.edu) website. At the ALSDE website, select Sections, Student Assessment, and Publications.
Local Publications, Curriculum Guides, Pacing Guides
Local school systems may publish curriculum guides, course syllabi, pacing guides, and other materials that assist teachers in coordinating lessons, integrating curriculum and providing students with effective instruction. Many systems are providing access to these resources on the school system website or through other technology. Local curriculum guides are useful in establishing system and school priorities and to ensure that specific local content standards are addressed.

11.7 What Tests Form the Basis for Curriculum Alignment?

ACCESS for ELLs
Alabama has been a member of World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), a consortium of 28 states, since 2005. The role of WIDA is to advance academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators. WIDA’s English language proficiency assessment, Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs), has been administered annually to English language learners (ELs) in the state of Alabama since joining the consortium in 2005. During the 2011-12 school year, over 17,000 students were assessed with ACCESS for ELLs.

ACCESS for ELLs is a standards-based, criterion-referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English language learners’ social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English, as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, within the school context, across four language domains, including reading, writing, speaking and listening. In order for students to demonstrate English language proficiency, a composite proficiency level of 4.8 must be attained. Once a student attains this score, he/she is determined to be English language proficient and will no longer be assessed with ACCESS for ELLs.

WIDA is in the final stages of developing its 2012 Edition of the English Language Development Standards, which include a direct connection to the Common Core English language arts and mathematics standards. In addition, Alternate ACCESS for ELLs will be administered in Alabama for the first time during the 2012-2013 school year. This assessment was developed through an Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG) and is administered to the most severely, cognitively-disabled EL students. WIDA is also the recipient of the ASSETS grant that will allow for the development of the next generation, technology-based English language proficiency tests available for all consortium states in 2016. Alabama will be a part of this effort as well.
DIBELS (grades K, 1, and 2)
The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) has been moved from Assessment and Accountability to the Alabama Reading Initiative section and is not a required assessment. These indicators are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills. The measures were developed upon the essential early literacy domains discussed in both the National Reading Panel (2000) and National Research Council (1998) reports to assess student development of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and automaticity and fluency with the code. When used as recommended, the results can be employed to evaluate individual student development as well as provide grade-level feedback toward validated instructional objectives. The ALSDE continues to support DIBELS as a formative/benchmark assessment choice for students in Kindergarten through Grade 3. Local education agencies (LEAs) have the option to choose between DIBELS 6th Edition, DIBELS Next, or another formative/benchmark assessment. The ALSDE will pay for DIBELS data entry for students in Kindergarten through Grade 3. When LEAs choose to begin using DIBELS Next, the LEA is responsible for providing professional development to ensure that teachers administer DIBELS Next with fidelity to testing guidelines.

Alabama Science Assessment (ASA) (grades 5 and 7)
The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandated that by the 2007-2008 school year, all states must administer annual science assessments at least once in grades 3-5, once in grade 6-9, and once in grades 10-12. In order to comply with this federal law, these assessments must be aligned with state academic content and achievement standards and involve multiple measures of higher-order thinking and understanding. The Alabama Science Assessment: Grades 5 and 7 (ASA) is a criterion referenced test that will measure students’ mastery of the Alabama Course of Study: Science Bulletin 2005, No. 20. Physical Science, Life Science, and Earth and Space Science are assessed in grade 5. The grade 7 assessment measures students’ knowledge of Life Science.

ACT Assessment
The ACT Assessment is designed to assess high school students’ general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The tests cover four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. An optional 30-minute writing test is now available. Virtually all colleges and universities in the U.S. accept the ACT. The ACT includes 215 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes to complete. In the US, the ACT is administered on five national test dates, in October, December, February, April and June. Currently, some states offer a sixth national test date in September. ACT staff are studying the feasibility of adding the September date to all state test schedules. The ACT is administered to all Alabama juniors during the spring each year.

Examination of students’ ACT scores in the academic areas can reveal important information to local schools and school systems about the strength and weakness of the curriculum and its
implementation. The scores are tied to empirically derived College Readiness Standards™. ACT has aligned the ACT Assessment with the Alabama Courses of Study and the Alabama High School Graduation Exam. Utilizing ACT data and resources, schools and systems can develop an action plan to ensure college readiness for all students. Under Alabama’s new assessment program, the ACT will replace the AHSGE as the culminating measure of high school students’ academic abilities.

**ACT Aspire**

On April 11, 2013, the State Board of Education adopted the ACT Aspire assessment to replace the ARMT+ in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics. In addition, students in grades 5 and 7 are required to take the science portion of the ACT Aspire. Students in grade 10 will be required to take the Aspire assessment beginning the 2015-2016 school year. ACT Aspire is a computer-based, longitudinal assessment system that connects growth and progress from elementary grades through high school in the context of college and career readiness. However, school systems may opt to take the assessment as a paper-pencil assessment instead of an online assessment. Details about the goals and components of this assessment system may be viewed at [http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pages/home](http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pages/home).

Dates for the administration of ACT Aspire and other state-mandated assessments may be viewed at [https://connect.alsde.edu/sites/memos/Memoranda/FY13-2065.pdf](https://connect.alsde.edu/sites/memos/Memoranda/FY13-2065.pdf).

**Advanced Placement (AP) Tests**

With 37 courses and exams across 22 subject areas, the Advanced Placement (AP) program allows high school students to get a head start on college-level work; improve writing skills and sharpen problem-solving techniques; and develop the study habits necessary for tackling rigorous course work. Many colleges and universities award credit or allow advanced placement for students who earn a qualifying score on an end-of-course AP test. Aligning curriculum in advanced placement courses with the end-of-course test is essential to the quality of a system’s AP program.

**Alternate Assessments**

Alternate assessments are designed to measure the academic performance of students who are unable to participate in general large-scale assessments used by systems and states. This is due, in part, to the reference to “alternate assessment” in the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which calls for states to have alternate assessments in place by July 1, 2000.

In Alabama, alternate assessments include measures of student achievement of IEP goals, student progress toward academic benchmarks, and mastery of content standards.
The *Alabama Alternate Assessment* (AAA) has been revised in response to guidance from the United States Department of Education for compliance with the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. The AAA is no longer a measure of a student’s progress on IEP goals and benchmarks. The Revised 2007 AAA measures a student’s proficiency of state content standards (*Revised 2006 Alabama Extended Standards* in reading and mathematics). Teachers collect a body of evidence (BOE) representing a student’s proficiency of each extended standard for his/her grade level of enrollment. The body of evidence will be packaged and shipped to CTB for scoring. A student’s participation in the AAA is an IEP Team decision. The assessment participation guidelines for students with disabilities are

- All students with disabilities in Grades K-2 receiving special education services must participate in DIBELS or the AAA. For students in these grades, evidence must be submitted to document achievement of the Alabama Extended Standards in reading for their grade level of enrollment.
- All students with disabilities in Grades 3-8 receiving special education services must participate in the Aspire assessment or in the AAA. For students in these grades who are being assessed with the AAA, evidence must be submitted to document achievement of the Alabama Extended Standards in reading and mathematics for their grade level of enrollment.
- All students with disabilities in Grades 5 and 7 receiving special education services who participate in ARMT+ must also participate in the ASA. For students in these grades who are participating in the AAA, evidence must be submitted to document achievement of the Alabama Extended Standards in science for their grade level of enrollment.
- All students with disabilities in Grade 11 receiving special education services must participate in the AHSGE or the AAA. Evidence must be submitted to document achievement of the 11th grade Alabama Extended Standards in reading, mathematics, and science.

**QualityCore® End-of-Course Tests (optional for school systems)**
The Alabama State Board of Education adopted End-of-Course tests to replace the Alabama High School Graduation Exam on September 10, 2009. These tests are being phased in beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. For the first year of phase in, tests will be administered for English 9, English 10, Algebra I, and Geometry. Additional tests for other required courses will be added on a schedule to be announced by the ALSDE.

After the first year of implementing end-of-course tests, plans include methods for counting these assessments as a portion of the student’s final course grade. For detailed information on the QualityCore® assessments and other features of the program’s supports for curriculum and instruction, see the section entitled “ACT’s QualityCore Frequently Asked Questions” in the document *Alabama Department of Education College and Career Readiness Delivery Plan: A Component of Plan 2020, Strategies for Learners*, which is available at [http://alex.state.al.us/showpage.php?lnk=cosdircommentselectsys](http://alex.state.al.us/showpage.php?lnk=cosdircommentselectsys)
11.8 What Other Assessments and Standards Could be Considered?

TIMSS Study
The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, formerly known as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study) resulted from the American education community’s need for reliable and timely data on the mathematics and science achievement of U.S. students compared to that of students in other countries. TIMSS is the most comprehensive and rigorous assessment of its kind ever undertaken. Offered in 1995, 1999, 2003, and 2007 TIMSS provides trend data on students’ mathematics and science achievement from an international perspective.

Summaries of the comparative indicators of education in the United States with other countries and summaries of the studies’ results are available from the National Center for Education Statistics (http://www.nces.ed.gov/timms).

In 2011, more than 60 countries and jurisdictions, including the United States, will participate in TIMSS. More than 20,000 students in more than 1,000 schools across the United States will take the assessment in spring 2011, joining almost 500,000 other students around the world taking part in TIMSS. Because the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) will also be administered at grade four in spring 2011, TIMSS and PIRLS in the United States will be administered in the same schools to the extent feasible. Students will take either TIMSS or PIRLS on the day of the assessments.

In addition, to address the interest in states benchmarking to international standards, NCES is initiating a new effort to link the states scores from the national assessment—NAEP-- to TIMSS. The 2011 NAEP-TIMSS Linking Study is designed to provide all states with estimates that compare their own students’ performance against international benchmarks. Alabama is one of eight states to participate in the NAEP-TIMSS Linking Study. The other seven states are California, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and North Carolina.

Outcomes and goals of this effort to link TIMSS and NAEP are to:

- provide better NAEP-TIMSS linkage through common items taken by the same student at the same time,
- evaluate the success of both the projection method that makes use of the correlation in performance between NAEP and TIMSS and the simpler “statistical moderation” method of linking, and
- measure the impact of administering assessments later in the school year on test performance (winter vs. spring comparison).

Actual TIMSS results for the eight validation states will be released at the same time as the international and national results, currently scheduled for December 2012. The results of the
2011 NAEP-TIMSS Linking Study—with predicted TIMSS mathematics and science scores for all 50 states and the System of Columbia—will be released after the TIMSS results.

**National Council of Teachers of English Standards**
The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and its affiliate organization, the International Reading Association (IRA), regularly revise and publish content standards in the areas of reading and language arts. Consideration of these standards in local curriculum decisions ensures that national measures of learning in these areas are included. NCTE and IRA standards are available on the NCTE website [http://www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org).

**National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards**
The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) regularly revises and publishes content standards in mathematics. Consideration of these standards in local curriculum decisions ensures that national measures of learning in mathematics are included. NCTM standards are available on the NCTM website [http://www.nctm.org](http://www.nctm.org).

**National Geography Standards**
The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) has established eighteen national geography standards. The goal of the National Geography Standards is to produce a geographically informed person who sees meaning in the arrangement of things in space and applies a spatial perspective to life situations. The standards as well as instructional activities, lesson plans, and assessment instruments related to the geography standards may be found at [http://ncge.org/publications](http://ncge.org/publications) or [http://www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com).

**National History Standards**
The National Center for History in the Schools has developed and published national standards for history by grade span (K-4 and 5-12). The standards were developed with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the U.S. Department of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles. The standards address historical thinking, United States history, and world history. The standards may be accessed and downloaded from the UCLA website at [http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards/](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards/).

**National Science Education Standards**
The National Science Education Standards, developed in 1995 and updated in 2003 by the National Research Council (NRC) and the Center for Education, present a vision of a scientifically literate populace. They outline what students need to know, understand, and be able to do to be scientifically literate at different grade levels. They describe an educational system in which all students demonstrate high levels of performance in the areas of science and technology. The National Science Standards rest on the premise that science is an active process; they describe standards for science teaching, standards for assessment in science education as well as science...
content. The National Science Education Standards information may be accessed on line at http://nap.edu/readingroom/books/nses/.

NAEP Studies
The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), also known as “the Nation’s Report Card,” is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in key subject areas at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. NAEP is mandated by the U.S. Congress and is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education. It provides reliable student achievement profiles to American educators and citizens. Since 1969, assessments have been conducted periodically at the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, economics, geography, and the arts.

NAEP, which is administered by outside contractor staff, does not provide scores for individual students or schools; instead, it offers results regarding subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment for populations of students (e.g., fourth-graders) and subgroups of those populations (e.g., female students, Hispanic students). NAEP results are based on a sample of student populations of interest. Detailed information about the NAEP assessments and reports of NAEP data may be found at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/.

SCANS Skills
The Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) was appointed in 1991 by the Secretary of Labor to determine the skills students need to succeed in the world of work. The Commission’s fundamental purpose is to encourage a high-performance economy characterized by high-skill, high-wage employment. The SCANS initial report, *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000*, concluded that a high-performance workplace requires workers who have a solid foundation in the basic literacy and computational skills, in the thinking skills necessary to put knowledge to work, and in the personal qualities that make workers dedicated and trustworthy. Curriculum materials, lesson plans, and professional development activities for teachers have been developed by a wide variety of organizations to incorporate results of the SCANS report into K-12 school programs. Additional information and specific descriptions of the SCANS skills may be found at http://www.academicinnovations.com.

WorkKeys
The WorkKeys Employment System is a comprehensive system for measuring, communicating and improving the common skills required for success in the workplace. It allows these skills to be quantitatively assessed in both individual persons and in actual jobs. WorkKeys was developed by ACT, Inc., the creators of the ACT Assessment college entrance exam. WorkKeys measures the basic skills that individuals can apply to workplace situations. This assessment is
in use in all 50 states and is considered by many to be the nationwide standard for measuring workplace skills. The Workkeys assessment is administered to all Alabama seniors each year.

**National Career Readiness Certificate**

The National Career Readiness Certificate, based on the WorkKeys system, is building momentum in many states across the country. Government leaders and businesses are embracing the concept of this portable employability credential. Through this system, students have the chance to qualify for a certificate to show employers that they have the foundational skills necessary for job training. The idea is to have our nation accept the National Career Readiness Certificate as a standard of work readiness. Alabama two-year colleges have developed an Alabama Career Readiness Certificate, and their goal is to work with secondary schools so that their students leave high school with a certificate as well as a diploma.

**NAEYC Standards**

The National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the nation’s largest and most influential organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade. Founded in 1926, NAEYC celebrated its 75th anniversary with over 100,000 members and a national network of nearly 450 local, state and regional affiliates. NAEYC Affiliate Groups work to improve professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education and to build public support for high quality early childhood programs. Information about recommended curricula, assessment, and educational setting for young children is available from NAEYC in their publications and from their website [http://www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).

It is the belief of NAEYC that curriculum decisions not only involve questions about how children learn, but also what learning is appropriate and when it is best learned. NAEYC guidelines address both curriculum and assessment for young children. NAEYC acknowledges the importance of rich, meaningful content in a program of developmentally appropriate teaching practices for young children.

**International Reading Association Guidelines**

The International Reading Association (IRA) is a professional membership organization dedicated to promoting high levels of literacy for all by improving the quality of reading instruction, disseminating research and information about reading, and encouraging the lifetime reading habit. The IRA membership includes classroom teachers, reading specialists, consultants, administrators, supervisors, university faculty, researchers, psychologists, librarians, media specialists, and parents. With membership and affiliates in 99 countries, the IRA network extends to more than 300,000 people worldwide.

The International Reading Association provides curriculum guidance, professional development activities, and research resources for the improvement of reading instruction and literacy development for all ages.
The IRA organization has formed a partnership with the National Council of Teachers of English in the development of twelve standards for language skills necessary for students to pursue life’s goals and to participate as fully informed, productive members of society. The association has a wide range of publications which can be located through their office headquarters at 800 Barksdale Road, P. O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714 or the organization’s website http://www.reading.org.

**Tech Prep Consortia Agreements**

Secondary schools offering career/technical programs may enter into agreements with post-secondary institutions to implement a Tech Prep Program. There are currently 22 tech prep consortia operating in Alabama. Tech Prep grants provide funds for teacher training, curriculum alignment projects between secondary and post-secondary schools, content and skills articulation efforts, assessment activities, and equipment. A Tech Prep program is a program of study that:

- Combines at least two years of secondary education with at least two years of postsecondary education in a non-duplicative, sequential course of study based on recommended career/technical education secondary programs.
- Integrates academic instruction and career/technical instruction.
- Uses work-based and worksite learning where available and appropriate.
- Provides technical preparation in a career field such as Family and Consumer Sciences, Technical Education, Agriscience Education, Business and Marketing Education, and Health Care Science.
- Builds student competence in mathematics, science, reading, writing, communications, economics, and workplace skills through applied, contextual academics and integrated instruction in a coherent sequence of courses.
- Leads to an associate degree, a two-year postsecondary certificate, or a postsecondary two-year apprenticeship with a provision, if applicable, for the student to continue toward the completion of a baccalaureate degree.
- Leads to placement in appropriate employment or to further education.

**High Schools That Work (HSTW)**

Many high schools in Alabama and throughout the United States are enlisting in the High Schools That Work program to align curriculum with current standards and to improve student achievement. High Schools That Work (HSTW) provides a framework of goals, key practices, and key conditions for accelerating learning and setting higher standards for high school students. Its goals are to:

- Raise the mathematics, science, and communication, problem-solving, and technical achievement of students to the national average and above.
Blend the essential content of traditional college-preparatory studies with quality career/technical education studies by creating conditions that support school leaders, teachers, and counselors in carrying out key practices.

Advance state and local policies and leadership initiatives necessary to sustain a continuous school-improvement effort.

Competitive grant funds are available to assist schools that wish to participate in the HSTW initiative. Professional development for school staff is essential to the success of the program. Collaborative planning by academic and career/technical teachers is essential, and clear communication of student achievement goals and performance standards is a key component of the program.

HSTW is an initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Additional information about HSTW is available from Sherry Key, State coordinator at skey@alsde.edu or Gene Bottoms, SREB senior vice president and director of High Schools That Work at gene.bottoms@sreb.org.

11.9 What Curriculum is Being Taught?

**Curriculum Audits by Internal Committee and/or External Consultant**

Curriculum audits, by internal committees of teachers, administrators, parents, external consultants, or professional firms, are valuable for determining the actual content being taught in schools. There are many survey instruments and recommended organizational structures for evaluating a system’s or school’s implementation of the published curriculum.

In order to maintain accredited status, the accreditation process requires that schools examine the instructional program and its resources during annual reviews and periodic site visits. In addition, State Department of Education periodic monitoring teams examine the implementation of the State Courses of Study and instructional standards mandated in the Alabama Administrative Code during their on-site reviews.

When establishing system policies and procedures for curriculum audits and reviews, it is important to determine what is being taught, how it is being taught, the timelines and appropriate pacing of teaching, how teaching of the content is documented, and how student achievement reflects the mastery of the content. Reports of these studies and recommendations for changes based on these studies can be very beneficial to school improvement efforts.

Collaborative efforts of teachers and school system staff are very effective when analyzing course content and identifying the tasks, skills, and standards from the various state tests relative to each grade level and subject area. Attached are sample copies of elementary curriculum guides with SAT10 and State Course of Study objectives identified. When these are
provided for teachers in a consolidated format, lesson planning and assessment activities are more easily accomplished.

Secondary course syllabi, pacing guides, and standardized test alignment information are attached to illustrate the curriculum products that can be developed by system or school level curriculum committees. Making these documents accessible to teachers in print form or over local area computer networks enables teachers to coordinate teaching and facilitate lesson planning. When teachers identify in lesson plans specific objectives related to the assessment standards, documentation is created for accountability purposes.

Curriculum mapping projects, curriculum development consulting firms or individuals, and commercially available computer programs are available to assist systems with curriculum planning or revision projects.

**Curriculum Mapping**
Curriculum mapping is a process for collecting data that identify the core content, processes, and assessment used in curriculum for each subject area in order to improve communication and instruction in all areas of the curriculum.

A curriculum map is useful in:

- helping teachers understand what is taught and when in all subject areas and all grades.
- assisting teachers in creating unified interdisciplinary units that foster students' understanding of concepts, ideas, and activities across many subject areas.
- assisting arts teachers in scheduling performances and field trips without interfering with state assessments or major testing blocks in the academic subjects.
- helping coordinate areas of study into larger interdisciplinary units (even if they are assessed separately by subject area).
- acting as a successful venue for fostering conversation about curriculum and instruction among all faculty members.
- assisting teachers in reflecting and adjusting their own lesson units during the school year.

There are many models for successful curriculum mapping and many companies now produce software products to assist individual schools or systems manage the curriculum mapping process. Basic procedural steps in most curriculum mapping models are included in the following outline:

1. Teachers of various subject areas construct a timeline detailing what they actually teach during a unit and when. Descriptions on the timeline should contain content, an objective, activities, an assessment, and, as appropriate, field trips or special events that would take place in conjunction with the unit.
Each subject area map is posted, reviewed, and discussed by the entire staff. The staff looks for common ideas, concepts, and/or themes. Adjustments are discussed and units moved from one time to another to create a more comprehensive interdisciplinary unit. (Hint: Post-it notes temporarily placed on timelines help move areas of study more easily). The maps are kept posted in an area that may be accessed by all members of the staff for continued review and revision as the curriculum evolves during the school year. (from Guide to Curriculum Mapping by Joyce Payne, 2001).


**Teacher, Parent, Student, and Administrator Surveys**

Many sources of survey instruments are available to school systems from commercial entities and from professional education organizations. Surveys can add valuable information to determinations about the effectiveness of the current curriculum and the opinions of the system’s stakeholders.

Schools participating in the school improvement model of accreditation review designed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools may obtain from SACS a variety of survey instruments to collect data from parents, students, and community members about the effectiveness of the instructional program and about school climate.

The Office of Prevention and support Services requires that each school system completes a needs assessment of its students, teachers, and parents pertaining to school safety and drug use. The nationally-normed Pride Survey is utilized to gather and analyze this data which produces information about individual schools (grades 6-12), about the school system, about the state, and about national trends.

Surveys required as data collection instruments for the evaluation of school administrators, central office directors, superintendents and other certified school staff in the Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program (PEPE) contain items that yield information about the school curriculum and the effectiveness of instructional leadership and strategies.

An important source for survey instruments designed to evaluate school progress and to assist schools in planning is The National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). NSSE is a
non-profit educational research and development organization founded in 1933 by the regional school accreditation commissions in the United States. The NSSE’s current scope of work includes a comprehensive series of publications and services to support data-driven and research-based school improvement planning. NSSE’s publications include surveys for various grade-spans and for a wide variety of stakeholders. Lists of the NSSEs’ publications may be found at http://www.schoolimprovement@nsse.org.

Compilation and Analysis of Student Performance Data
It is very beneficial for school officials, teachers, parents, and community members when student performance data are compiled and presented in a variety of understandable and useful formats. Student performance data resulting from standardized testing, interest inventories, graduation data, attendance reports, discipline data, student recognition programs, and follow-up reports of graduates and/or drop outs can reveal valuable information for analysis, program revision, and instructional strategies.

To be of benefit, student achievement test data must be reported both individually, by disaggregated sub-groups, in summary, and over time. Examinations of the same group of students as they progress through the grade levels can provide important clues to curriculum strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and overlapping content. Comparing student achievement with norming groups, with similarly- and differently-abled peers, as well as among schools provides teachers and administrators with data for curriculum decision-making.

Reports of causes of student drop outs, reports on post-secondary placements of career technical students, graduates, scholarships, and student retentions are required at the end of each school year. Procedures for the timely collection and accurate maintenance of these data are critical to the success of the academic planning process for a system. Very often, the same data are useful for grant applications, inclusion in community profiles, and to local business/industry planning agencies.

Data-driven Decision Making
Data collection, analysis and reporting are critical components of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). School systems must collect more data, in more detail and disaggregate them. State-level systems and support are being developed for collecting and integrating student assessment data with demographic information.

The National Education Technology Plan, Toward A New Golden Age in American Education (www.NationalEdTechPlan.org) calls upon states, systems and schools to establish a plan to integrate data systems; use data from both administrative and instructional systems to understand relationships; ensure interoperability; and use assessment results to inform instruction.
11.10 Indicators of Data-Driven Decision Making

Evidence that a school or school system is engaged in data-driven decision making include:

- Leaders enable the systematic collection of information pertaining to school, system, and state goals and standards.
- Principals and faculty analyze and interpret the data to inform decision making.
- Educators at every level are trained to use and analyze the data.

Test scores are useful, but any teacher can tell you that they don't tell the whole story. Data-driven decision making begins with a line of inquiry about the facts. Educators can verify or disprove intuitions about why certain students score lower on reading tests than others, for example.

Each school and system needs to identify performance indicators and the types of data to collect. The most pertinent information will vary across schools and systems, depending on their unique goals and challenges. The types of data include:

- Test scores (standardized tests, ACT Aspire, and ACT scores)
- Graduation rates
- Grade point averages
- Attendance
- Discipline
- Demographics (gender, ethnicity, language proficiency, socioeconomic data)
- School readiness
- Parental involvement
- Perceptions and beliefs

Examining relationships across multiple categories of data can provide new insight into student learning and ways to improve it. Collecting and interpreting data, using data to improve learning, and the study of data over time are all requirements of accountability reporting systems. This requires training and practice in using data as well as the time and forum to have purposeful discussions about the data and what it means.


The chapter (8) on alignment and instructional benchmarking in Elaine K. McEwan’s recent volume Ten Traits of Highly Effective Schools: Raising the Achievement Bar for All Students
(Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2009) provides practical information for school leaders on benchmark assessment in academic courses and steps to aligning assessment and instruction. The sections on characteristics of data-driven schools and using data to improve teachers’ instruction (Chapter 9, Results) provide practical instructions to implementing improvement strategies and measuring the results of these strategies using student achievement data.

11.11 Methods for Diagnosing Instructional Strengths and Weaknesses

Formative Assessments
Formative assessments should be used regularly and should be used to guide instruction taking place in the classroom. Formative assessments should be standards based and should depict where students are performing in regards to standards mastery.

Performance Assessments
Performance assessment is a measure of assessment based on authentic tasks, such as activities, exercises, or problems that require students to show what they can do. Some performance tasks are designed to have students demonstrate their understanding by applying their knowledge to a particular situation. For example, students might be given a current political map of Africa showing the names and locations of countries and a similar map from 1945 and be asked to identify and explain differences and similarities. To be more authentic (more like what someone might be expected to do in the adult world), the task might be to prepare a newspaper article explaining the changes.

Performance tasks often have more than one acceptable solution; they may call for a student to create a response to a problem and then explain or defend it. The process involves the use of higher-order thinking skills (e.g., cause and effect analysis, deductive or inductive reasoning, experimentation, and problem solving). Performance tasks may be used primarily for assessment at the end of a period of instruction, but are frequently used for learning as well as assessment.

Authentic Assessments
Assessments developed by teachers to be administered in the classroom are critical in determining student progress. The types of assessments teachers design can contribute to or detract from students’ abilities to demonstrate learning on standardized tests. Recent innovations in teaching/learning models involve assisting teachers in constructing authentic assessments of student learning and curriculum content mastery.

Authentic assessment shifts the focus from “Do you know it?” to “How well can you use what you know?” This relevant, real-world assessment method enables students to construct knowledge and apply complex thinking skills. Authentic assessment engages students in applying knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful and reflective of real life.
Authentic assessment takes many forms. The following list from *Curriculum Design for the New Millennium* (Litchfield Public Schools) provides a sample of the opportunities for authentic assessment throughout a student’s K-12 experience: (http://litchfieldpublicschool.org/currdesign/)

- Letter writing
- Role playing
- Interviewing
- Inventing
- Peer editing, conferring with peers
- Comparing/contrasting
- Debating
- Writing an analysis
- Displaying information
- Keeping a scientific journal, writing lab reports
- Designing
- Comparing genres
- Composing a song
- Drawing
- Critiquing artwork
- Writing fiction, writing nonfiction
- Problem solving with algebra, problem solving with geometry

**Standards**


Standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do. Different types of standards address various aspects important to learning:

1. content standards cover what students are to learn in various subject areas, such as math or science;
2. performance standards specify what levels of learning are expected;
3. opportunity-to-learn standards state the conditions and resources necessary to give all students an equal chance to meet performance standards; and,
4. world-class standards indicate content and performances that are expected of students in other industrialized countries.

The term “standards” is also attached to the movement in the United States to bring United States students’ academic achievement and knowledge on a par with students’
accomplishments in the other industrialized countries. Debate continues over which standards are relevant, what benchmarks indicate adequate mastery of standards at various periods of time, and over the definitions of the rigor and relevance of particular standards.

**ACT Assessment**
The ACT Assessment, or ACT as it is commonly called, is a national college admission examination that consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. Virtually all U. S. colleges and universities accept ACT results. The ACT includes 215 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes to complete with breaks. Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes.

In the U.S., the ACT is administered on five national test dates, in October, December, February, April, and June. In selected states, the ACT is also offered in late September. The ACT measures high school students’ general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. It is most often taken during the 11th and/or 12th grade years.

The ACT is not an aptitude or an IQ test. Instead, the questions on the ACT are directly related to what students have learned in high school courses in English, mathematics, and science. Because the ACT tests are based on what is taught in the high school curriculum, students are generally more comfortable with the ACT than they are with the traditional aptitude tests or tests with narrower content. A perfect score on the ACT is 36.

In addition to the four tests, the ACT also provides test takers with a unique interest inventory that provides valuable information for career and educational planning and a student profile section that provides a comprehensive profile of the student’s high school work and future plans. Detailed information about the ACT Assessment test, its results, practice test questions, test registration procedures, and test accommodations for students with disabilities is available from [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

An optional Writing test has been added to the ACT as a fifth test. Students who elect to take the Writing test must also sit for the ACT; the Writing test may not be taken as a stand-alone assessment. Parents, students, and school personnel may obtain more information from [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

**Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) administered by The College Board**
The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,000 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT, the PSAT/NMSQT, and the Advanced Placement Program (AP). The
College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

The SAT (pronounced "S-A-T") Reasoning Test, formerly called the Scholastic Aptitude Test and Scholastic Achievement Test, is a type of standardized test frequently used by colleges and universities in the United States to aid in the selection of incoming students. In the U.S., the SAT is administered by the private College Board, and is developed, published, and scored by the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

The SAT Subject Tests are 20 one-hour multiple-choice tests given in individual subjects. A student chooses which ones he or she will take, depending upon individual factors, such as college entrance requirements. Until 1994, the SAT Subject Tests were known as Achievement Tests; until January 2005 they were formally named "SAT II," the name by which they are still well known. The exception to the one-hour time was the Writing test, which was divided into a 20-minute essay question and a 40-minute multiple choice section; it was discontinued after January 2005. A student may take up to three SAT Subject tests on any given date, which are the same dates as for the administration of the SAT Reasoning Test.

The SAT Reasoning Test™ was administered for the first time on March 12, 2005. Changes to the test include the addition of third-year college preparatory math, more critical reading, and a new writing section. The College Board made these changes to better reflect what students study in high school. Changes included the removal of analogy questions from the Critical Reading (formerly verbal) section and quantitative comparisons from the mathematics section. A writing section (with an essay) based largely on the former SAT II Writing Subject Test was added to the exam, and the mathematics section was expanded to cover three years of high school mathematics. Also, since the writing section was included in the SAT I, the SAT II Writing Subject Test was discontinued. Short passages with one or two questions following them replaced analogies. Scores on each section range from 200 to 800, with scores always being a multiple of 10.

The new SAT contains ten sections and a total length of 3 hours 45 minutes; with the additional writing section, a "perfect" score on the new SAT is 2400. Scores are calculated by the addition of the score on each section; thus a score of 800 on the Critical Reading, Math and Writing sections is needed for a perfect score. The ten sections are divided up as follows: three math, three reading, and three writing, with one equating section which may be any one of the three types. The equating section does not count in any way towards a student's score; it is used to test questions for future exams and to compare the difficulty level of each exam. During the test, takers do not know which section is the equating section (however, it is never the essay or Section 10, which is always a ten minute writing section). Each of the questions within a section is ordered by difficulty (the test is commonly said to be "powered"). However, an important exception exists: questions that follow the long and short reading passages are organized chronologically instead of by difficulty. It's also important to note that each question carries the
same weighting. Each question now has five answer choices. Ten of the questions in one of the math sections are not multiple-choice. Instead, these questions require the test taker to input the result of their calculations in a four-column grid. For each correct answer, one raw point is added; for each incorrect answer one-fourth of a point is deducted. However, for the ten student-produced answers in the math section, no points are deducted for a wrong answer. The final score is derived from the raw score; the precise conversion chart varies between test administrations due to minor variations in test difficulty.

Many American colleges requiring the test will continue to consider only the reading and math score combination in the criteria of their admissions process. Some colleges will now accept the writing section in lieu of the SAT II: Writing Subject Test, which has been discontinued. For additional information on the College Board, administration dates for the SAT, and score reporting, see www.collegeboard.com.

NAEP Pilot Assessments
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test is a standardized norm-referenced test. The NAEP test is commonly described as a national academic achievement test. It is a series of timed tests assessing students’ performance in selected subjects (English, mathematics, reading, science, writing, U.S. History, geography, civics, and the arts). It includes multiple choice items, constructed responses (short and extended), and science hands-on tasks. The results of NAEP tests are reported on the national level and by region of the country, not by school system, school, or individual student. Only group statistics are reported, broken down by gender, ethnicity and other variables that illuminate students’ instructional experiences. NAEP results are based on a sample of populations.

Participation in NAEP pilot assessments is by random selection. Schools within systems are asked to participate in the norming activities by taking all or portions of the planned assessments in grades 4, 8 and 10. Results from the pilot administrations can provide a system with information about student performance compared to similarly prepared students across the nation. Conclusions about curriculum, instructional strategies, materials, and course sequencing can be drawn when this information is analyzed in light of local circumstances.

Additional information about the NAEP testing program and state profiles of results from previous administrations of the NAEP assessments can be found at www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard.

EXPLORE (Administered to all 8th graders in Alabama)
ACT, Inc., produces the EXPLORE assessment, designed to help eighth- and ninth- graders explore a broad range of options for their future. The EXPLORE program prepares students not only for their high school coursework, but for their post-high school choices as well. EXPLORE is administered during the regular school day at the school’s convenience with reusable test booklets and machine-scored answer documents. EXPLORE is made up of four academic
achievement tests and other key components. The academic portions of the test include English (40 test items taken in 30 minutes), mathematics (30 test items taken in 30 minutes), reading (30 test items taken in 30 minutes), and science reasoning (38 test items taken in 30 minutes). In addition to the diagnostic academic information from the content portions of the test, students complete the UNIACT Interest Inventory (90 items) that helps students explore personally relevant career options. A Needs Assessment portion of the instrument collects information about students’ perceived needs. The instrument also gathers information about students’ school coursework plans, educational and career plans after high school, and other relevant information about the individual student’s background and aspirations.

Reports from the EXPLORE assessment are addressed to the student, the parents, and school personnel and include “It’s Your Future: A Student’s Guide to EXPLORE” which explains the EXPLORE report profile, a study skills checklist, and a course planner. The content of the EXPLORE tests is closely tied to that of the achievement tests in the ACT Assessment which is broadly used for college entrance and placement decisions. School officials and teachers may use the group reports and individual student achievement data from EXPLORE to examine strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum or to adjust instructional sequences for optimal student progress.

**PSAT/NMSQT**
The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is a co-sponsored program by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). The PSAT/NMSQT is a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT I: Reasoning Test and SAT II: Writing Test. It also gives students a chance to qualify for National Merit Scholarship Corporation’s scholarship programs.

The PSAT/NMSQT measures verbal reasoning skills, critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. The most common reasons students take the PSAT/NMSQAT test are (a) to receive feedback on strengths and weaknesses on skills necessary for college study; (b) to see how one would perform on an admissions test and to compare oneself with others applying to college; (c) to enter the competition for scholarships; and (d) to help prepare for the SAT Program tests. Students typically take the PSAT/NMSQT in the sophomore or junior year of high school. It is a junior level test, and only juniors are considered for National Merit status.

School officials, teachers, counselors, parents and students obtain valuable information for student planning and curriculum development from the PSAT/NMSQT results. Only individual student results are returned from this assessment. For additional information on PSAT administration dates and sites and information about the National Merit Scholarship program see [http://www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org).
ASSET testing
The ASSET Student Success System, a testing and advising program offered by ACT, Inc., for placing students into postsecondary institutions, offers:
- convenient paper-and-pencil format
- immediate score reports for students
- a proven record of validity and reliability
Nearly 400 community and technical colleges use ASSET to determine student placement and ability to benefit. Additional information on the ASSET program is available from http://www.act.org/asset/.

COMPASS
COMPASS is an untimed, computerized test used to evaluate students’ skills and to place them in appropriate classes. COMPASS offers tests in reading, writing, math, writing essay, and English as a Second Language (ESL). COMPASS is not used as a traditional test. There is generally no “passing score.” Rather, the COMPASS scores indicate areas of strength and areas in which the students may need help. Students receive their test results immediately upon completion of testing; the report includes placement messages informing the students of the courses they need to take and how to register. All community colleges in Alabama use COMPASS. Community colleges may administer COMPASS to students in high schools already using EXPLORE and PLAN to prepare remediation plans so that students meet benchmarks before they leave high school and enroll in college courses.

WorkKeys
WorkKeys assessments give students and workers reliable information about their workplace skill levels. Combined with information about skill levels required for jobs, this assessment information can enable users to make better career and educational decisions. The WorkKeys assessment, developed by ACT, Inc., is used by schools, businesses, and industries to determine the workplace skill level of prospective employees, and to collect data on the workplace skills needed for various occupations. Both computer-based and paper-and-pencil versions of the WorkKeys assessment are available. The skill areas tested in the assessment program include applied mathematics, applied technology, business writing, listening, locating information, observation, readiness, reading for information, teamwork, and writing.

WorkKeys is typically administered during the 12th grade. Using WorkKeys employers can identify and develop workers for a wide range of skilled jobs. Students and workers can document and advance their employability skills. WorkKeys results enable educators to tailor instructional programs to help students acquire the skills employers need. The student profile of test results provides information for teachers about student abilities in the skill areas so that remediation, intervention, or additional instruction can be provided. Progress in the skill areas can be determined when students take the assessment over appropriate time intervals. KeyTrain, an instructional software package, is aligned with the WorkKeys assessment, is available from ACT, Inc. to allow for individualized instruction to improve workplace skills and
abilities as measured on WorkKeys. More information about WorkKeys and KeyTrain is available from www.act.org/workkeys/.

**STIAssessment**

This software program has the ability to benchmark skills throughout the school year and automatically generate individual and aggregate reports by class, school, and population subgroups. This web-based assessment solution provides teachers and administrators with the information they need to make timely and effective decisions about curriculum, instruction, remediation, acceleration and placement.

STIAssessment integrates with the student information system and it allows for the archiving and alignment of student data to assessment data, creating a living assessment record that follows students throughout their school career. The STIAssessment is available to systems that are able to fund it and/or receive grants.

The assessments can be delivered either online or on paper. If delivered on paper, they can be scanned for rapid scoring. Results on students’ benchmark assessments allow immediate action for placing students properly and to initiate remediation. Since these assessments are aligned to state standards, this program predicts whether or not students will be prepared to achieve success on annual exams. More information about STIAssessment is available from www.sti-k12.com.

**11.12 Regulatory Issues**

**Career Technical Business Industry Certification (BIC) Standards**

Career/technical education provides opportunities for secondary students to acquire specific and useful occupational training, in addition to required academic course content. Career/technical education prepares students to be well rounded and to succeed and profit from new skills, knowledge, and understanding in a chosen career path. CTE in Alabama is organized according to the following 16 National Career Clusters:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications
- Business Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Finance
- Government & Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology

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Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
Manufacturing
Marketing
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

The career/technical educational programs and standards in Alabama were revised in 1997 when the Business Industry Certification program was initiated and then again January 2006 when the program format was updated. The BIC standards address teacher preparation and certification issues, course content, facilities standards, financial support, student academic and skill achievement standards, and equipment needs for programs to be successful.

The purpose of the Business Industry Certification (BIC) program is to raise the standards for all career/technical programs to those needed for effective workforce development. Teachers and administrators of career/technical programs receive copies of the standards to be met, are trained in strategies for improved teaching and lesson presentation, receive lists of current technology and equipment needed for the programs, and establish committees of practitioners to review each program on a rotating schedule. When visiting teams of educators, business/industry representatives and SDE staff members complete the scheduled review of a school’s program, a report is filed with the SDE Career/Technical Education Department. When all standards are met, the program is deemed “Business Industry Certified.”

The standards for BIC were developed by educators and business/industry representatives to describe best practices and current equipment/materials needed for programs to be relevant in today’s workforce development climate. Teachers have opportunities to participate in professional development training to prepare lesson plans, policies, and procedures for meeting the BIC standards. Copies of the BIC standards, equipment lists for each program, and schedules of BIC reviews are available from the office of Career/Technical Education, Alabama State Department of Education, Room 5239, Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery, Alabama, 36130 or from the Career/Technical Education section publications list on the Alabama State Department of Education website at www.alsde.edu.

Summer School
The Alabama Administrative Code (290-3-1-.02(6)(a) establishes the method for operating public summer school programs. All public schools conducting a summer school must file a registration report with the State Department of Education. The Registration report forms, available from the State Department of Education, must be filed no later than the end of the first week of summer school.

A certified administrator must administer the summer school, and each teacher in a registered summer school must hold a valid Alabama certificate in each subject taught as required in regular school sessions. The public summer school must be authorized by the local board of
education, and the superintendent and principal of the school are responsible for organizing the summer school program and registering it with the SDE.

A student desiring to do summer school work in a school other than that in which he/she is regularly enrolled must obtain written permission from his/her principal and parent(s)/guardian(s). If prior permission of the school principal is not obtained, the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for errors in course selection in summer school.

Distance Education
The Alabama Distance Learning Plan, introduced in 2004, was developed utilizing qualitative and quantitative information from existing distance learning initiatives in Alabama and is supported with research of successful distance learning programs throughout the nation. The plan, Alabama Connecting Classroom, Educators, and Students Statewide (ACCESS), provides access to high quality instruction and coursework by:

- Providing a technical infrastructure to deliver pedagogically sound courses via the Internet and a catalogue of approved Internet-based courses using the latest interactive instructional models.
- Blending online/Internet-based coursework with Alabama certified teachers as E-teachers from delivery school sites to receiver school sites that otherwise would not have an Alabama certified teacher to instruct the course.

The objectives for the ACCESS distance education program for Alabama include:

- Provide access to advanced diploma courses
- Provide access to additional course offerings
- Provide access to advanced placement or dual enrollment courses
- Provide access to remediation and supplemental resources
- Leverage existing resources and distance learning offerings
- Provide teachers with additional multimedia and technology tools to enhance instruction.

Strategies included in the ACCESS plan include efforts to increase connectivity to all high schools, to all existing IVC labs, to develop blended course models for distance education delivery, and to create two professional development centers to support distance learning throughout the state. The plan is designed to support distance education as a means of reaching underserved high school students across the state and to support teachers and school leaders by offering additional technology resources directly to school systems and classrooms. Using asynchronous Internet delivery and synchronous interactive videconferencing (IVC), the ACCESS initiative offers more than fifty courses and remediation activities. More information may be downloaded at http://alex.state.al.us/access.
Alabama Credit Recovery Program
Credit Recovery in Alabama is a course-specific, skill-based extended learning opportunity for students who have been unsuccessful in mastering content or skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion. Credit Recovery study is based on deficiencies rather than a repeat of the entire course. Students who have not achieved a baseline score (established by the LEA) in a course must repeat the entire course either in summer school or the following school year.

LEAs offering Credit Recovery must develop program rules, regulations, and processes and provide them in writing to students, parents, guardians, and the State Department of Education. LEAs must address the following guidelines for admission and removal, instruction, content and curriculum, grades, and credits:

- LEA rules, regulations, or procedures for admissions to and removal from Credit Recovery program may include but not be limited to attendance, discipline, availability of coursework, availability of space, appropriate progress, and grades.
- Students must complete an application process established by the LEA.
- Parent consent is required for a study to apply for Credit Recovery.
- Students must earn a baseline score (established by the LEA) for admission to the program.
- Facilitators of computer-based Credit Recovery programs that are software based, have no online teacher, and are purchased from vendors shall be certified teachers and shall receive training pertaining to course organization, online/computer-based instruction management, and related technology.
- Facilitators of online courses that are provided by the SDE and which have certified, highly qualified teachers shall be adults approved by the local school and receive professional development in online technology and technical aspects of Web-based instruction.
- Teachers of teacher-based programs shall be Highly Qualified in core academic areas.
- Students in Credit Recovery shall either complete a course skill-specific diagnostic tool provided by the vendor of the software or online course to determine skill-specific goals; or the teacher who assigned the failing grade to the student will be required to determine skill-specific goals by designating the exact course of study content standards that were not met by the student.
- Credit Recovery content may be delivered through instructional technology or by a Highly Qualified teacher.
- Credit Recovery curriculum shall be aligned with Alabama academic content standards approved by the State Board of Education.
- LEAs are responsible for establishing specific uniform procedures for evaluation of student progress and awarding of final grades in Credit Recovery programs. The grading formula may or may not include the original failing grade in the calculation of the final credit recovery grade. LEAs may choose the option of forgiveness, in which an original
grade of F may be replaced with a C after successful completion of the Credit Recovery course when computing students’ GPAs.

- Credit Recovery courses in which students participate are to be included in calculating students’ total credits for a school year.
- Students may accumulate only 10 credits during a year, including summer school.

**Transfer Credit from Non-Accredited Schools/School Setting(s)**

Any school/school setting not accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education is considered a non-accredited school for the purpose of transfer of class/grade credit. When students transfer into a system from a non-accredited school or school setting, determinations about acceptance of credits and grades must be made according to the Alabama Administrative Code.

Credit for elective courses is to be transferred without validation. Non-contested credit for core courses (English, mathematics, science, and social studies) shall be transferred using all official records and nationally standardized tests by the principal. The principal should notify the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) of placement decisions and credit transfers. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) disagrees with the placement and/or credit transfer decisions of the principal, core course credits must be validated by the administration of the most recent final examination for each prerequisite core course in which enrollment is requested. For each test the student passes, as determined by the school grading scale, the student shall be placed in the next level core course and credit shall be transferred for prerequisite courses. For any test failed, no credit shall be transferred for the prerequisite course(s) in that subject.

All transfer students must pass required assessments and meet local board of education graduation requirements.

**Transfer Credit From Accredited Schools**

A student transferring to an Alabama public school from a public or non-public school accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education will have all credits and current class/grade placement accepted without validation upon the receipt of an official transcript(s). (Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-.02(7)(j)2(k)) All transfer students must pass the Alabama High School Graduation Examination (AHSGE) and meet local board of education graduation requirements.

**Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit**

Local school systems may establish dual enrollment programs allowing certain students to enroll in post-secondary institutions in order to dually earn credits for a high school diploma and/or post-secondary degree at both the high school and participating post-secondary levels.

To be eligible for participation in a dual enrollment program a student must have a 3.0 (B) average in completed school courses. The student must have written approval of the student’s
principal and the superintendent or superintendent’s designee. The student must be in grade 11 or 12 or have an exception granted by the participating post-secondary institution upon the recommendation of the student’s principal and superintendent and in accordance with Alabama Administrative Code 290-8-9-.17 regarding gifted and talented students.

In order to dually enroll in an occupational/technical course, a student must have a 3.0 (B) grade point average in high school courses directly related to the occupational/technical studies (if applicable) which the student intends to pursue at the post-secondary level and an overall 2.5 (C+) grade point average in high school course work.

When a school system decides to participate with post-secondary institutions in a dual enrollment agreement, the following features of Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-.02(10)(a)3 apply:

- Only post-secondary/college level courses are eligible. Remedial level courses shall not meet the requirements of the dual enrollment program.
- Students enrolled in courses offered during the normal high school day, on or off the high school campus, shall have prior permission of the student’s principal, superintendent or superintendent’s designee, and the participating post-secondary institution president.
- Local boards of education shall adopt policies addressing parental permission and travel for courses offered off the high school campus during the normal school day.
- Ten quarter/six semester credit hours at the post-secondary level shall equal one credit at the high school level in the same or related subject. Partial credit agreements shall be developed between the local board of education and participating post-secondary institutions.

A formal agreement of partnership between the local school system and each post-secondary institution in which dual enrollment credit is permitted should describe the features of the dual enrollment program. When local schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/AdvancED, post-secondary institutions must also be accredited by SACS, and SACS guidelines should be followed for the granting of dual credit.

Students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) should be informed of their responsibilities related to dual enrollment course participation in each of the following areas:

- Written parent permission is required for participation in dual enrollment/dual credit courses.
- Transportation related to dual enrollment/dual credit course participation is usually the responsibility of the student and/or parent.
• Students are responsible for knowing policies relative to dual enrollment/dual credit of colleges/universities to which they plan to transfer credit.
• Students participating in the dual enrollment/dual credit program shall pay tuition and other required costs as established by the post-secondary institution.

Early College Enrollment Program (ECEP): Through the Early College Enrollment Program (ECEP), qualifying high school juniors and seniors earn college credits while completing high school. ECEP participants earn credits applicable toward high school graduation and college degree requirements at no cost to the student. Features of this program include:

• Participation in the ECEP program does not affect a student’s eligibility to participate in high school extracurricular activities provided the student meets minimum requirements of “Academics First” (No pass-No play).
• Any public community and/or technical college and public high school in Alabama may provide the ECEP option for secondary students.
• Participation in the ECEP and in any particular career/technical postsecondary program is at the discretion of the local education agency (LEA).
• Students are not restricted to attending the two-year college(s) which service area(s) includes their high school.
• The maximum length of the ECEP is four semesters for students who enter as high school juniors and two semesters for those who enter as seniors.
• ECEP students may remain enrolled one additional semester past the maximum number of semesters to complete remaining course requirements. The cost of attending the additional semester is the responsibility of the student.
• By taking the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), students may receive college credit in mathematics, English, science, and history/behavioral sciences through the credit-by-examination process. The cost of the CLEP is the responsibility of the student.
• Enrollment slots shall be reserved each year in each postsecondary major (technical and allied health) for ECEP students as determined by the college.
• There shall be one representative from each participating LEA and one representative from each college to coordinate activities associated with the ECEP.
• ECEP graduates shall have the opportunity to earn an industry credential or certification when available. Colleges will provide to ECEP graduates documentation of technical, technological, academic, and employability skills attained.
• Students who enter the ECEP as high school juniors may enroll in a maximum of three developmental courses the semester immediately preceding the semester of ECEP enrollment. Students who enter as high school seniors may enroll in a maximum of three developmental courses the fall, spring, and/or summer semester prior to ECEP enrollment. Colleges shall provide institutional scholarships to students that cover costs of tuition and fees for these developmental courses. Only those students whose acceptance in the ECEP is conditional because of insufficient COMPASS placement test
scores may receive these scholarships. A scholarship will cover the cost of taking a course once and will not be available for repeating a course.

- The LEA and the college will ensure compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

The intended benefits of the ECEP program include these features:

- Promotes articulation between secondary and postsecondary education for career/technical education courses.
- Allows student to earn college credits before high school graduation at no cost to the student.
- Provides diploma options that meet academic requirements for applied associate degree and occupational/technical certificate.
- Provides diploma options that accommodate students wishing to transfer credit to baccalaureate degree programs.
- Prepares students to enter high-skill, high-wage employment earlier in their career.
- Expands program and delivery options for secondary students.
- Encourages high-achieving students to enroll in career/technical education.
- Creates structure for delivering high-cost programs at greater efficiency in small/rural school systems.
- Motivates students.

“No pass-No play”/Academics First

In 1999 the Alabama Board of Education, as a part of its efforts to raise academic standards, first suggested, then mandated that local school systems enact policies to implement an initiative called “Academics First.” The rules and policies resulting from this initiative are commonly referred to as “No pass-No play” since their impact was most immediately evident in secondary school athletic programs. The model policies issued by the SDE described academic requirements to be met before students would be allowed to participate in competitive athletics. Many local school systems expanded these requirements for all students by requiring the same academic standards for participation in all extra-curricular activities. The aspects of “Academics First” adopted by most local school systems include the following:

- Students entering grade 10-12 must, for the last two (2) terms of attendance and summer school, if applicable, have a passing grade and earn the appropriate number of credits in each of six (6) units of credit, including four (4) credits from the four (4) core subjects composed of English, science, social studies, and mathematics with a numerical composite average of 70.
- Students entering grades 8 and 9 must, for the last two terms of attendance and summer school, if applicable, have a passing grade in five (5) subjects with a composite numerical average of 70.
• Students promoted to the seventh grade for the first time are eligible.
• Physical education may count as only one (1) unit per year.
• No more than two (2) units may be earned during summer school. If a unit(s) or subject(s) is (are) repeated in summer school, the higher numerical grade for the unit(s) or subject(s) may be used to compute the composite grade average for eligibility determination purposes.
• Students deemed ineligible at the beginning of the school year by virtue of having failed to meet the requirements outlined in these requirements may regain their eligibility at the end of the first term by meeting the requirements for eligibility in the two most recently completed terms, including summer school. Eligibility restoration must be determined no later than five (5) days after the beginning of the succeeding term.
• An ineligible student may not become eligible after the fifth day of each term. Bona fide transfer students may be handled according to rules of the Alabama High School Athletic Association for sports.

NCAA Requirements
The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was founded in 1906. It is made up of 977 schools classified in three divisions (Division I has 321 schools; Division II has 260; and Division III has 396). Schools in Division I compete at the so-called major-college level. Students should register with the eligibility center after the completion of their junior year in high school. Parents, athletic directors, coaches, teachers, administrators, and counselors must be aware of the NCAA academic eligibility requirements when planning course selections to enable high school students to meet the standards required for participation in college-level sports programs. A student entering a Division I college on or after August 1, 2008, is classified a “qualifier” when he or she meets the following requirements:

• graduates from high school;
• completes a core curriculum of at least 16 academic course units including 4 years of English; 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher); 2 years of natural or physical science (including at least one laboratory course); 2 years of social science; 1 year of additional English, mathematics, or natural or physical science; and 4 years of additional academic courses in any of the areas listed above, foreign language, or non-doctrinal religion/philosophy courses. (Note: computer science courses may only be used for initial-eligibility purposes if the course receives graduation credit in mathematics or natural/physical science and is listed as such on the high school’s list of NCAA-approved core courses.
• earns a core-course grade-point average (based on a maximum of 4.00) and a combined score on the SAT critical reading and math sections or a sum score on the ACT based on the qualifier index scale. The qualifier index scale is a listing of the various combinations
of acceptable scores on the ACT or SAT combined with the student’s GPA. The higher the GPA, the lower the score required on the ACT or SAT. Or, the lower the GPA, the higher the score required on the ACT or SAT. The qualifier index scale is available online at www.ncaa.org/eligibility.

A student entering a Division II college is deemed “eligible” when he or she meets the following requirements:

- graduates from high school

- successfully completes a core curriculum of at least 14 academic course units including 3 years of English; 2 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher); 2 years of natural or physical science (including at least one laboratory course); 2 years of social science; 2 years of additional English, mathematics, or natural or physical science; and 3 years of additional academic courses in any of the areas listed above, foreign language, or non-doctrinal religion/philosophy courses. (Note: computer science courses may only be used for initial-eligibility purposes if the course receives graduation credit in mathematics or natural/physical science and is listed as such on the high school’s list of NCAA-approved core courses.)

- earns a core-course grade-point average of 2.00 (based on a maximum of 4.00). Division II does not have a sliding scale.

- earns a combined score on the SAT critical reading and math sections of 820 or a sum score on the ACT of 68. The SAT combined score is based on the verbal and math sections only. The Writing score is not considered.

- Beginning August 1, 2013, students planning to attend an NCAA Division II institution are required to complete 16 core courses.

The ACT score used for NCAA purposes is a sum of the four sections on the ACT: English, math, reading, and science reasoning. The SAT score used for NCAA purposes include only the critical reading and math sections. The writing section is not used. All ACT and SAT scores must be reported directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center from the testing agency. Scores on transcripts will not be used for Division I or Division II schools. When registering for the SAT or ACT, students must use the clearinghouse code of 9999 to make sure scores are reported directly to NCAA.

Each year high schools must go online to the NCAA Clearinghouse to make sure that courses the student athletes are taking meet the definitions of core curriculum as described by the NCAA. When advising students on course selections, athletic directors, school counselors, administrators and teachers will need to look at their high school’s list of NCAA-approved core
courses on the Eligibility Center’s web site to make certain that courses being taken qualify as core courses. Previously, this was handled with a 48-H form that was submitted to the NCAA.

Students with disabilities may receive accommodations in order to meet NCAA initial-eligibility standards. To receive accommodations, the student’s disability must be documented. There is no need to document a student’s disability with the NCAA if the student

• takes a nonstandard ACT or SAT; and/or
• takes courses for students with disabilities that are designated on the high school’s list of NCAA-approved core courses.

In NCAA Division I only, if a student uses approved courses taken after the eighth semester of high school and before initial full-time collegiate enrollment, the following documents must be submitted to the NCAA national office:

• signed copy of the most recent professional evaluation report diagnosing the student’s disability, including diagnostic test results; and
• copy of the student’s most recent Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or other statement form the high school describing the accommodations received by the student because of the disability.

Additional information for students with education-impacting disabilities may be found under Frequently Asked Questions at www.ncaa.org
12. ACCOUNTABILITY

Alabama’s Accountability Model will consist of indicators from PLAN 2020. The new Accountability Model is currently in the process of being developed. Information concerning the new Alabama Plan 2020 Accountability Model will be available from the Alabama State Department of Education.
13. PLAN 2020 –A Change in Alabama’s Accountability System

13.1 Flexibility Request Waiver Application

In its Flexibility Request Waiver Application to the US Department of Education, the Alabama State Department of Education put forth Plan 2020, Alabama’s eight-year strategic plan for education. Plan 2020 was crafted in a manner that maintains the most promising aspects of No Child Left Behind (NCLB)—the focus on closing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates, and moving students to proficiency—but its primary emphasis is placed on college-/career-ready goals. Such an approach addresses the needs of students in a more global manner with an eye on their futures, not just their present. Plan 2020 also provides a more balanced approach to assessment and offers annual growth expectations at the student, classroom, grade, school, system, and state levels.

Alabama’s Plan 2020 addresses all three principles of the waiver request:

- Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students
- Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support
- Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

Alabama’s proposed statewide accountability system has been designed to make annual determinations based on four different categories of components—

- college- and career-ready students;
- school- and system-level metrics shown to be leading indicators of students’ success;
- teacher and leader effectiveness based on multiple measures of student learning; and
- a local indicator taken from the school’s/system’s improvement plan.

The new state accountability system also incorporates core components found in Act 2012-402, recently passed by the Alabama Legislature, which requires the State Superintendent of Education to develop a school grading system reflective of school and system performance. The proposed accountability model maintains the focus on proficiency, increasing the quality of instruction and improved outcomes for diverse populations that was the hallmark of No Child Left Behind, but it increases the acceptable standard of achievement to college- and career-readiness while at the same time allowing schools and systems to address an issue that is specific to their own situations. The Alabama Plan 2020 approach to accountability moves the focus of accountability off of a single test and towards a more comprehensive set of measures. This move will ensure that all schools are provided an opportunity to adequately and accurately showcase their strengths, as well as identify areas for improvement.
13.2 Goals, Strategies and Components of Plan 2020

The stated vision of Alabama’s Plan 2020 is “every child a graduate; every graduate prepared for college, work, and adulthood in the 21st century.” The prepared graduate as described in Plan 2020 is one that:

- Possesses the knowledge and skills needed to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at a two- or four-year college, trade school, or technical school without the need for remediation, and
- Possesses the ability to apply core academic skills to real-world situations through collaboration with peers in problem-solving, precision and punctuality in delivery of a product, and a desire to be a life-long learner.

Plan 2020 is organized around four areas of priority with objectives, strategies and measures of success by 2016 in each priority area. Detailed descriptions of these features, supporting documentation, video and digital presentations, and brochures about Plan 2020 may be accessed at www.alsde.edu. Plan 2020, which has been embraced by the State Board of Education, professional organizations, and teachers and administrators throughout the state, provides a focused but comprehensive framework for a statewide approach to education that concentrates on connecting adult activities to improved student outcomes resulting in a continuously increasing percentage of students who are college- and career-ready.

Plan 2020 strategies found in four domains include:

**Alabama’s 2020 Learners Strategies:**

- Develop and implement a unified PreK through college and career readiness plan.
- Develop and adopt college- and career-ready aligned standards in all subject areas, K-12.
- Create and implement a balanced and meaningful assessment and accountability system.
- Align available programmatic and fiscal resources to support local school needs in the area of instruction.

**Alabama’s 2020 Support Systems Strategies:**

- Implement an early warning system for student absences and build a community-based support and intervention system.
- Implement a Positive Behavior Support or other related student and school culture program to support student ownership of their actions that includes alternatives to traditional disciplinary sanctions.
- Implement Alabama’s Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Plan.
- Develop and implement a Coordinated School Health and Support Program.
Alabama’s 2020 Professionals Strategies:
- Redesign and reinvest in the Alabama Teacher Recruitment and Incentive Program (ATRIP).
- Review the admission and certification criteria for Alabama’s teacher preparation programs.
- Provide a comprehensive induction and mentoring program for new teachers.
- Develop and implement a professional growth evaluation system for teachers and leaders that includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement.
- Provide research-based professional growth opportunities for Alabama’s teachers and leaders based on their individual and collective professional learning plans.

Alabama’s 2020 Schools and Systems Strategies:
- Analyze the current funding formula for public education.
- Develop a differentiated and customized support and intervention system for local school systems.
- Create a policy environment that promotes and rewards performance, innovation, and creativity.
- Conduct a study of existing capital outlay needs for school systems.
- Implement an early warning system for student absences and build a community-based support and intervention system.
- Implement a Positive Behavior Support or other related student and school culture program to support student ownership of their actions that includes alternatives to traditional disciplinary sanctions.
- Implement Alabama’s Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Plan.
- Develop and implement a Coordinated School Health and Support Program.

13.3 Accountability Reporting Under Plan 2020

Alabama Plan 2020 uses multiple indicators to measure progress in the areas of Alabama’s Learners, Alabama’s Support Systems, Alabama’s Professionals, and Alabama’s Schools/Systems to determine a single school performance index. This single school performance index will be the trigger for recognition and support for schools and systems. The overall number incorporates a robust set of success factors but remains strongly focused on the learning gains of individual students.

The new state accountability system will be incorporated into the plan required by Act 2012-402 passed by the Alabama Legislature so there is one system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support. Act 2012-402 requires the State Superintendent of Education to develop a school grading system reflective of school and system performance and to create the Legislative School Performance Recognition Program.
Alabama Plan 2020 uses multiple indicators to measure progress in the areas of Alabama’s Learners, Alabama’s Support Systems, Alabama’s Professionals, and Alabama’s Schools/Systems to determine a single school performance index. This single school performance index will be the trigger for recognition and support for schools and systems. The overall number incorporates a robust set of success factors but remains strongly focused on the learning gains of individual students. Regional Planning Teams (RPTs) centered in the state’s eleven Regional Inservice Center areas and regional support staff (RSS) of over 300 specialists and instructional coaches will work with local school systems to improve priority and focus schools and to support and enhance instructional programs at schools identified as reward schools. The Alabama State Department of Education will publish each school’s annual measurable objectives (AMOs) and whether they were met on an annual basis. As part of a system of accountability and performance metrics, these targets will help schools, systems, and community stakeholders more fully understand the performance of the schools by identifying both strengths and areas of improvement.

Priority Schools
Under current proposals, from the pool of all schools may be identified as Priority Schools using the following criteria:

1. Any school that is a Tier I or Tier II school improvement grant (SIG) school as of September 30, 2012.
2. Any school with an All Students participation rate of less than 95% for two or more years.
3. Any school with a graduation rate of 60% or below for two or more consecutive years.
   OR
4. The lowest ranking scores using the School/System Performance Index so that at least 5% of the Title I schools are classified as Priority based on achievement and lack of progress.

When a Priority School is identified, the RPT will meet with the LEA to make a plan for gathering the data and information needed to make an informed decision about the appropriate improvement model to be selected. This collaborative effort will include a multi-day, on-site assessment related to the eight turnaround principles, a review of the feeder schools’ data to determine whether a feeder pattern intervention is needed as opposed to a single school intervention, and a more in-depth review of the school’s data.

Recent school improvement research from Leithwood and Harris (2010) indicates the importance of recognition of the interdependence between the elementary and secondary schools that serve the same families. Alabama has some experience in working with feeder patterns in which one or more of the schools were considered low performing. The process to work with Priority Schools will build from that experience and include an assessment of the feeder schools. The RPT will review models of school improvement that reflect the eight turnaround principles with system leadership and feeder pattern leadership. These models will
not be one size fits all and will be customized to meet the specific needs and priorities of the schools.

The Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is the means for collecting, reviewing, and prioritizing data and needs. The Continuous Improvement Leadership Teams that include teachers and administrators will develop 30-60-90 day plans to address immediate concerns and will be able to use the Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST) process to develop long-range plans that include strategies for measuring levels of implementation and impact on student learning. ASSIST is an electronic planning and monitoring process supported by the Southern Accreditation for Colleges and Schools (SACS)/AdvancED. Once the specific and precise intervention strategies are determined by the collaborative planning of the RPT and LEA, then appropriate Regional Support Staff (RSS) will be assigned to the system and/or schools. RSS will be assigned based on the identified needs of the system and/or schools matched with the expertise and skills of the RSS. A three-year commitment will be required and the plan will be adjusted each year based on data and evaluation.

A Priority School may apply to exit this designation after two years if it can meet the required criteria, which demonstrate potential for sustained improvement and growth.

1. The school no longer meets the definition of a Priority School.
2. The school’s GAP Group and Non-GAP Group meet its AMO targets in reading and math for two consecutive years.
3. Follow-up system and school audits show that the required interventions are being faithfully implemented.
4. High schools that had a graduation rate of less than 60% must show improvement by increasing the graduation rate to 70% or above for two consecutive years.

Focus Schools

From the pool of school not identified as Priority Schools, Focus Schools will be identified according to the following criteria:

1. Any school with a gap index score 5 points or more below the state gap index score for the gap group for each subject. The disproportionate gap performance index is calculated as follows: statewide gap index score in subject–school gap index score in subject. Schools are selected from this list based on the largest difference until 10% of the Title I schools in the state have been identified as Focus.

2. Any school with a within-school achievement gap that is among the largest gap between the highest and lowest performing subgroup index scores within a subject. This is calculated by rank-ordering schools based on the difference between the highest subgroup index score and the lowest subgroup index score from each subject.
The support of the Focus Schools mirrors the process for Priority Schools. The ALSDE is committed to providing differentiated support to all systems with more intense assistance to Priority and Focus Schools. Upon identification as a Focus School, the school and the system will be required to undergo a comprehensive assessment of their leadership practices, curricular and instructional structures, culture and climate, and family/community engagement. The results of this multi-day, on-site assessment will provide information that will be considered to determine whether the school and system have the capacity to lead the intervention process. This assessment will be conducted within 30 days of identification as a Focus School. The ALSDE will provide the level of intervention needed to ensure students have an optimal learning environment.

A Focus School may apply to exit this designation after one year if it can meet the required criteria, which demonstrate potential for sustained improvement and growth.

1. The school no longer meets the definition of a Focus School.
2. The school’s GAP Group meets its AMO targets in reading and math.
3. Annual monitoring indicates that required interventions are being faithfully implemented.

Reward Schools
Alabama’s letter grade system (A, B, C, D, F) based on the School Performance Index will be an effective measure for communicating school and system performance. As part of the School Performance Index, the emphasis on the new learning gains measure will produce information to drive the state’s recognition and rewards of schools. Specifically, Reward Schools shall be:

1. High Performing Schools—Schools that are ranked an —A— on the new letter grade system and have demonstrated continued meaningful growth over a period of time by improving their School Performance Index by at least three (3) points each year for three consecutive years or being ranked in the top 5% overall and are not classified as a Focus School.

2. High Progress Schools—Schools demonstrating meaningful overall growth on the School Performance Index (i.e., 10 points) and are not classified as a Focus or Priority School.

Recognition of effective practices that produce results is critical to the sustainability of improvement efforts. Schools will be identified for specific improvement results such as student growth, closing the achievement gap, and increasing the number of prepared graduates. These Reward Schools will receive a monetary award (if funds are allocated by the state legislature) and be deemed a demonstration site for other schools. The teachers and administrators at the Reward Schools will be tapped to lead professional learning in their areas of expertise for other educators throughout the region and state. Reward Schools will also provide a site for RPT and RSS professional learning.
13.4 Differentiated Support for Local School Systems in Plan 2020

The goal of the ALSDE is to build capacity at the system and school level to engage in continual improvement practices that impact student achievement, close achievement gaps, promote student growth, and increase the number of graduates that are prepared for college and career. All ALSDE efforts to support this goal will be customized for each of the systems based on their current data and capacity. There are common expectations for all systems and schools to plan for continuous improvement. However, when it comes to interventions and supports, one size does not fit all. An accurate and comprehensive on-site assessment of the lowest performing systems will determine precise strategies for improvement and support. This assessment will be based on the eight turnaround principles:

1. **School Leadership**: The principal has the ability to lead the turnaround effort.
2. **School Climate and Culture**: A climate conducive to learning and a culture of high expectations are evident.
3. **Effective Instruction**: Teachers utilize research-based effective instruction to meet the needs of all students.
4. **Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention System**: Teachers have the foundational documents and instructional materials needed to teach to the rigorous college- and career-ready standards that have been adopted.
5. **Effective Staffing Practices**: The system and school have skills to better recruit, retain, and develop effective teachers and school leaders.
6. **Enabling the Effective Use of Data**: There is schoolwide use of data focused on improving teaching and learning, as well as climate and culture.
7. **Effective Use of Time**: Time is designed to better meet student needs and increase teacher collaboration focused on improving teaching and learning.
8. **Effective Family and Community Engagement**: There is a system for increasing academically focused family and community engagement.
14. DIAGNOSTIC AND PRESCRIPTIVE INSTRUCTION

14.1 Alabama Reading Initiative

The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) is a statewide K-12 initiative managed by the Alabama State Department of Education. The goal of ARI is to significantly improve reading instruction and ultimately achieve 100% literacy among public school students. The Alabama Reading Initiative provides teachers training to help them teach in proven and effective ways, specifically by integrating the best practices of phonics and the whole-language approach to teaching reading.

Since 1998-99, reading scores of students at ARI schools have shown more improvement than at non-ARI schools with similar demographics. In reading initiative schools, the percentage of students classified as struggling readers is decreasing; discipline referrals are down significantly; and special education referrals are reduced. Schools and school systems are supported in their ARI efforts by regional reading coaches, summer professional development activities, and principal coaches through the nine Regional Inservice Centers as funds are made available through the Alabama State Department of Education and the legislature.

To participate in the ARI training and to be designated a literacy demonstration site, schools must have the commitment of the principal and at least 85% of the faculty. The principal and teachers participate in an intensive two-week summer training session to learn instructional strategies and to plan collaboratively for reading achievement improvements in the school program. Throughout the subsequent school year, teachers collaborate to identify struggling readers, to devise lessons and present reading instruction targeted to eliminate students’ weaknesses, and assess achievement to document improvement and to adjust teaching. Reading specialists and reading coaches are critical to the success of the ARI program. These teachers provide encouragement, assistance, and job-embedded staff development for participating schools. Demonstration lessons, assessment analysis, and leadership for planning are just a few of the valuable services of the reading specialists to ARI-trained faculties.

After 2012, Alabama’s Regional Inservice Centers will offer professional development to school systems to continue ARI training for new teachers or for teachers whose PLPs call for additional training. In addition, local school systems have increased flexibility in assignments of instructional coaches to provide coaching and training for subject areas other than reading.

ARI-PAL
An additional initiative to improve reading by secondary school students began with the 2006-2007 school year under the ARI-PAL program. Middle schools and high schools considered “in need of improvement” according to AYP status are selected to receive ARI training and materials for implementing effective reading instruction programs.
Instructional Leadership Handbook

Additional information about the training modules, participating schools, ARI-PAL, and assessment results reported by the Alabama Reading Initiative may be found at http://www.alsde.edu.

14.2 Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI)

The Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative, commonly referred to as AMSTI, is the Alabama Department of Education's initiative to improve math and science teaching statewide. A Blue-Ribbon committee comprised of K-12 educators, higher education representatives, and business leaders designed AMSTI. The committee pursued every step possible to design the most effective statewide initiative for improving math and science teaching. AMSTI is research-based and incorporates best practices for math and science teaching. Additional information about current activities of AMSTI as well as achievement data for participating schools is available from the AMSTI website: www.asti.org.

The initiative provides three basic services: professional development, equipment and materials, and on-site support. Schools become official AMSTI Schools by sending all of their math and science teachers, and administrators to two-week Summer Institutes for two summers. At the Summer Institutes teachers receive grade and subject specific professional development that is highly applicable to their own classrooms. Instruction is delivered at the Summer Institutes by “master” teachers who have been certified as AMSTI trainers after successfully completing AMSTI trainer workshops.

AMSTI sites provide AMSTI School teachers with essentially all of the equipment, supplies, and resources needed to effectively engage students with hands-on, inquiry-based learning. Examples of equipment include labware, chemicals, global positioning devices, plants with growth containers, and many other items. The resources arrive packaged in “kits” ready for immediate use. Each kit is customized for the specific activities that will be taught. Once students complete the activities from a kit, it is returned to a materials center where it is refurbished to “like new” condition. Another kit targeting the next activities to be undertaken is delivered to the teacher and the newly refurbished kit is sent to another teacher.

AMSTI sites also provide extensive, on-site support and mentoring. Once teachers complete the Summer Institute, math and science specialists from the site regularly visit the schools where they serve as mentors, helping teachers implement what was learned during the summer. Such support is vital for teachers to become comfortable and skilled at inquiry-based, hands-on learning.

Each region of the state must have an AMSTI site to support schools within the region. The AMSTI site conducts the Summer Institutes for teachers within the region, under the supervision of the Alabama Department of Education. The site also operates a materials center.
that refurbishes kits and rotates them among teachers. In addition, it provides the math and science specialists that deliver on-site mentoring.

Evaluation results, provided by the initiative's external evaluator, indicate that AMSTI is highly successful in improving student achievement. Students in AMSTI Schools scored dramatically higher on the Stanford Achievement Test in math, science, and reading, and on the Alabama High School Graduation Exam, as compared to schools with similar demographics that had not participated in AMSTI.

AMSTI has a proven track record for helping students develop the math and science skills and knowledge necessary for success in the workforce and postsecondary studies. The initiative provides equity and adequacy for all students in Alabama, regardless of their location or background. The goal is to have AMSTI available to all schools statewide. Currently, the growth of AMSTI is limited only by funding.

AMSTI training emphasizes having students learn by doing. Teachers learn how to engage student in solving real-life problems using the same equipment and processes that mathematicians and scientists use to solve problems. Such hands-on learning helps bring science and math to life for students. Technology plays a major role in the initiative.

**14.3 US Department of Education Online and Print Resources**

The U. S. Department of Education ([www.USDOE.gov](http://www.USDOE.gov)) publishes information valuable to schools, parents, school leaders, and colleges of education on the latest research, innovations, and programs to assist in the improvement of academic achievement. Extensive explanations of all aspects of the NCLB legislation, its funding structure, rewards and sanctions, and parent involvement components are available at the agency website.

The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 established within the U.S. Department of Education, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES. The mission of IES is to provide rigorous evidence on which to ground education practice and policy. This is accomplished through the work of its four centers. Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst was appointed to a 6-year term as the first Director of the Institute in November 2002. Through the IES activities, the U.S. Education Department awarded new 5-year contracts to 10 Regional Educational Laboratories charged with carrying out research, development, dissemination, training, and technical assistance activities. Administered by the department's National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the laboratories "provide a critical link between research and practice," said Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst, IES director in a 2004 IES newsletter.

The laboratories, serving geographic regions that span the nation, work to ensure that those involved in educational improvement at the local, state, and regional levels have access to the best
available information from research and practice. Contract amounts reflect the number of local education agencies and school-age children in a region, as well as the cost of providing services.

Requests for proposals, grant applications, research findings, and clearinghouse information on all IES programs are updated regularly and are available at the institute’s website at http://ies.ed.gov.

### 14.4 Scientifically Based Research Programs (Evidence-based Education)

As part of the goal to improve the performance of all students, the *No Child Left Behind Act* requires programs and practices to be based on research. The term, "scientifically based research programs," appears throughout the law – from reading to teacher professional development to supplemental education services to anti-drug-abuse programs. The mandate for research-based programs raises questions regarding definition, enforcement and the quality of existing education research. Despite reservations and concerns, the insistence on using "what works" could prompt discussion, debate and action, and ultimately lead to better teaching and learning in classrooms across the country.

Under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the term 'scientifically based research' (A) means research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and (B) includes research that:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators
- Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls
- Ensures experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings
- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

Reviews and descriptions of programs considered to be effective and scientifically research based can be found on the US Department of Education website (http://www.ed.gov) under Proven Programs.
14.5 Research on Classroom Practices to Improve Achievement

To lead and support efforts to improve student achievement, superintendents and school administrators have opportunities to influence change in instructional practices. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix answer or series of specific activities that guarantee increased student achievement. The process is complex and requires perseverance, patience and a multi-faceted approach to sustain improvement over time. In an article to summarize research on classroom effective classroom practices and achievement for the National Middle School Association in 2005 entitled What Works to Improve Student Achievement, Susan Trimble provides an excellent overview of the literature on this topic to inform administrators. While the specific target of Trimble’s article is the middle school administrator, the research studies and principles cited can benefit school system leaders for all grade levels. The entire article can be downloaded from the National Middle School Association website at www.nmsa.org or from their site for NMSA Research Study #20 at http://www.amle.org/portals/0/pdf/publications/on_target/achievement/achievement_4.pdf.

Trimble’s identifies the most beneficial classroom practices and teaching strategies including:

Clear Academic Focus

- **Learning goals that are performance based** contribute to increased student learning by focusing instruction on targeted outcomes (Brophy & Good, 1986; Cotton, 2000).

- **Learning goals based on standards and measured periodically** are most effective for student learning (Black & William, 1998, a synthesis of 250 articles). The Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) report, *Raising the Bar* (SREB, 2001a), reports effective teacher practices as presenting challenging requirements, giving students actual examples of high quality student work, and sharing the assessment criteria by indicating the amount and quality of work needed to earn an A or B.

- **Task orientation** where class is businesslike with emphasis on completing work has been associated with higher achievement (Lee & Smith, 1993). A comparison of students in the 90% level of achievement with students in the 10% level of achievement found their perceptions of the learning environment differed on task orientation, student involvement, and rule clarity (Waxman & Huange, 1996).

Teaching Strategies

Quality of instruction has a strong impact on student learning (Brophy & Good, 1986; Stigler & Heister, 1999). This is a widely accepted generalization. The following strategies have been identified as effective by major research studies (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Hattie, Biggs, & Purdie, 1996):
• **Establishing high standards** and expressing a willingness to help students achieve them are teacher practices associated with higher achievement (Phillips, 1997; Southern Regional Education Board SREB, 2001a, 2001b).

• **Implementing assessments to measure progress toward goals and to inform practice** (Black & William, 1998; Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995; Falk & Ort, 1998; Pressley, Yokoi, Rankin, Wharton-McDonald, & Mistretta, 1997; Stiggins, 2002) provides descriptive feedback of teaching effectiveness, while building students’ confidence and resulting in adjustment to instruction (Cotton, 2000; SREB, 2001a; Stiggins, 2002). Likewise, teachers learn more if they assess their teaching and the students’ learning and use it to change instruction. Constantly assessing student progress is one of the practices of teachers “who succeed at developing real understanding of challenging subjects” (Darling-Hammond, 1996, p. 11).

• **Applying a deep understanding of subject matter** and of the characteristics of young adolescents is a requirement of teaching certification. Mertens and Flowers (2003, February) reported that certified middle level teachers in teams with common planning times had the highest levels of effective team and classroom practices. Team practices were defined as curriculum coordination and integration practices, coordination of student assignments, parent contact and involvement, and contact with other building resource staff. Classroom practices were defined as small group, active instruction, integrated and interdisciplinary practices, authentic instruction and assessment, critical thinking practices, reading and writing skill practices, and math skill practices. Numerous other studies present evidence of the association between certified teachers and student learning (Chatterji, 2002; SREB, 2001b; Wenglinsky, 2000). A deep understanding of subject matter provides teachers with the background for higher order thinking and questioning skills (SREB, 2001c).

• **Promoting critical thinking and higher order thinking** (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993). Teachers who are able to discern students’ level of thinking and use it to construct knowledge help them to develop a better understanding of content (Darling-Hammond, 1996).

• **Learning in context** with integrated and interdisciplinary practices, using meaningful tasks (Flowers, et al., 2000) and an integrated curriculum (Jackson & Davis, 2000; also, see Hartzler’s meta-analysis of studies on integrated curriculum and achievement, 2000).

• **Implementing mastery learning** and the scaffolding of successful steps to develop confidence and skills (Hattie, et al., 1996).

• **Promoting student engagement** with a task orientation (Waxman & Huang, 1996). Hattie et al. (1996) found promoting higher student engagement was a common feature of 51 studies
of learning skills. Student involvement is increased by using effective questioning techniques (Cotton, 2000). Motivation and homework were found to have a significant effect on the achievement of eighth graders (Bruce & Singh, 1996).

- **Using small groups and individual attention** (Flowers, et al., 2000a) with cooperative learning properly implemented (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

**Support for Teaching and Learning**

- **Extra help and resources for students.** Supporting students through enhancement and extra practice has been related to greater achievement (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993). Large-scale reform programs repeatedly report achievement gains associated with enhanced practice in reading, math, and writing (Middle Start, 2002; Mid South Middle Start, 2002). In a study of 26 middle schools in Massachusetts implementing *Turning Points* recommendations (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989), math manipulatives and extended writing were associated with achievement gains (DePascale, 1997). Extra resources provided to reforming schools are also an essential component of conditions to enable achievement gains, reported by Balfanz and Mac Iver (2000). Likewise, extra resources for schools, particularly middle schools with high populations of at-risk students, were a condition of 31 Illinois middle schools that implemented *Turning Points* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) recommendations and reported achievement gains (see [www.turningpts.org](http://www.turningpts.org)).

- **Collaborative structures for teachers.** Instructional improvements in the classroom occur best in schools that have established organizational conditions to support teacher collaboration, such as, common planning time, teams that engage in positive adult-child relationships, heterogeneous groupings of students, and flexible scheduling (Flowers, et al., 2000a, 2000b; Miles & Darling-Hammond, 1998).

- **Time for teachers to work together** provides support for learning together, solving problems, and discussing values (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Miles & Darling-Hammond, 1998). Common planning time enables teachers to work together on interdisciplinary teams, resulting in student achievement scores improving (Mertens & Flowers, in press).

- **Professional development** is needed for teachers to gain the skills necessary for school improvement processes, for teaming, for teaching young adolescents, and for implementing alternative assessments and data-based decision making (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 2002; Wenglinsky, 2000). Among the leadership skills necessary to improve school effectiveness are collecting and evaluating school and classroom data (King, 1999; Stiggins, 2002). Other skills needed to positively influence student achievement are working with special populations, high-order skills for math, and laboratory skills for science with frequent hands-on activities and testing of classroom learning tied to standards.
(Wenglinsky, 2000). Spigler and Hiebert (2000) concluded, after analyzing teaching videos of eighth grade math classrooms in Japan, Germany, and the United States, that teachers would benefit from examining lessons for more content and more problem solving situations that are aligned to standards. They recommended that teachers learn in groups how to incorporate more content and problem solving.
## 15. TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS, CURRICULUM AND INTEGRATION

### 15.1 Technology Standards for Administrators

(3) Technology Curriculum – The curriculum shall provide the prospective educational administrator with the following knowledge and ability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of:</th>
<th>Ability to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) the skills required to develop a shared vision for the comprehensive integration of technology, communicate that vision, and facilitate a process for fostering and nurturing a culture to achieve the vision.</td>
<td>(i) describe mechanisms for creating a shared vision for the comprehensive integration of technology, communicating that vision, and facilitating a process that fosters and nurtures a culture to achieve the vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) technology plan development, resource alignment (e.g., funding, staff and time, hardware/software, total cost of ownership issues), and leadership skills necessary to integrate technology to support effective learning and administration.</td>
<td>(ii) develop a technology plan including resource alignment (e.g., funding, staff and time, hardware/software), and demonstrate leadership skills necessary to integrate technology to support effective learning and administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) technologies appropriate for curriculum areas, instructional strategies, and student-centered learning environments to maximize learning and teaching to meet the individual needs of all learners.</td>
<td>(iii) facilitate the selection and use of technologies appropriate for curriculum areas, instructional strategies, and student-centered learning environments to maximize learning and teaching to meet the individual needs of all learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) available technologies; existing Alabama and national technology standards for students, teachers, and administrators; related trends and issues; current research; and professional development resources in order to enhance professional practices of educational leaders, increase job-related technology use, and improve the productivity of self and other school personnel.</td>
<td>(iv) apply and model technology applications professional practices that demonstrate knowledge of available technologies; existing Alabama and national technology standards for students, teachers, and administrators; related trends and issues; current research; and professional development resources in order to enhance professional practices of educational leaders, increase job-related technology use, and improve the productivity of self and other school personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) prevalent technology-based managerial, financial, and operational systems used in Alabama schools.</td>
<td>(v) use prevalent technology-based managerial, financial, and operational systems used in Alabama schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(vi) the use of technology to facilitate effective assessment and evaluation, including:
the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and communication of findings to improve instructional practice and student learning;
the use of assessment of staff knowledge, skills, and performance in using technology to facilitate quality professional development and guide personnel decisions;
the use of technology to assess and evaluate managerial and operational systems; and assessment and evaluation of, using multiple methods, appropriate uses of technology resources for learning, communication, and productivity.

(vi) use technology to facilitate effective assessment and evaluation, including:
the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and communication of findings to improve instructional practice and student learning;
the use of assessment of staff knowledge, skills, and performance in using technology to facilitate quality professional development and guide personnel decisions;
the use of technology to assess and evaluate managerial and operational systems; and assessment and evaluation of, using multiple methods, appropriate uses of technology resources for learning, communication, and productivity.

(vii) the social, legal, and ethical issues related to technology.

(vii) demonstrate responsible decision making that reflects understanding of social, legal, and ethical issues related to technology.

15.2 Alabama’s K-12 Technology Education Curriculum

National Educational Technology Standards for Students
The National Educational Technology Standards for Students produced by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has established technology literacy as a national goal. The six strands as defined ISTE are: (1) basic operations and concepts, (2) social, ethical, and human issues, (3) technology productivity tools, (4) technology communications tools, (5) technology research tools, and (6) technology problem-solving and decision-making tools.

The Code of Alabama
The Code of Alabama (1975), §16-35-4 specifies the minimum required content standards students need for achieving technology literacy. These content standards are consistent with the ISTE standards. In developing local curriculum, school systems may go beyond the minimum standards.

The Alabama Course of Study: Technology Education
The Alabama Course of Study: Technology Education defines the minimum required content needed by students for achieving technology literacy in the State of Alabama. The contents are consistent with the requirements of both the Code of Alabama (1975), §16-35-4 and the National Educational Technology Standards for Students. At a minimum, implementing the
Course of Study involves making decisions about integrating technology into all areas of the curriculum, about where computers should be physically located, and about how to assess student performance. [ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/61/Technology%20Ed%20COS.doc](ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/61/Technology%20Ed%20COS.doc)

**Integrating Technology into the Curriculum: A Definition**
The technology content standards are designed to enhance learning within and across all curricula. The International Society for Technology in Education describes the curricular integration of technology as follows: “Curriculum integration with the use of technology involves the infusion of technology as a tool to enhance the learning in a content area or multidisciplinary setting. Technology enables students to learn in ways not previously possible. Effective integration of technology is achieved when students are able to select technology tools to help them obtain information in a timely manner, analyze and synthesize the information, and present it professionally. The technology should become an integral part of how the classroom functions—as accessible as all other classroom tools.” ([National Educational Technology Standards for Students](http://example.com), p. 6)

**Where Should Computers be Located?**
Integration of technology into the classroom does not require a computer lab. Nevertheless, computer labs are recommended for every school. In classrooms with one computer, placing the computer in a central location available to all learners is recommended. With three to five computers in the classroom, creating computer stations with two chairs around each computer is recommended in order to promote collaboration and cooperative learning. For greatest accessibility by students, computers should be available for use in each classroom and in the library media center as well as in the computer lab.

**How Should Computer Literacy be Assessed?**
The intertwining of the knowledge, processes, and applications of technology in the standards necessitates a variety of assessment methods to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, acquire the needed knowledge of technology and skills of technology use. Assessment must include the use of a variety of assessment instruments such as multiple-choice items, pre- and post-exams of performance, checklists, open-ended essay items, journals, lab reports, creative dramatics, verbal explanations, portfolios, and projects.

**15.3 Integrating Technology into Classroom Practice**
Technology in the classroom provides a springboard for students of all backgrounds to learn 21st century skills and methods of research. A variety of mechanisms allow students to participate in online classes, conduct effective research, and develop communication skills. Technology expands students' abilities to locate a plethora of credible sources by using electronic reference materials and the Internet, and teachers help students properly cite electronic resources such as text, graphics, sound, and videos. Research tools such as word
processing, e-mail, groupware, presentation software, social media and the Internet help students access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create, and communicate information.

Through the use of technology, students can incorporate creativity into presentations as well as increase their exposure to individuals, cultures, and perspectives around the world. Webcams and podcasts between students and professionals in specialized subject areas connect students worldwide. Teachers can combine AP Language/Comparative Government wikis with RSS feeds, video, and blog discussions. Other useful tools include EBSCOhost, RSS feed, Diilgo (Digest of Internet Information), and Google Notebook. Students can peruse information from various viewpoints following Left/Right observations such as Huffington Post, the Daily Beast or the Drudge Report.

Students need help building connections between everyday-life authority judgment and problems that they encounter in the classroom and the real world. Using technology is a way to help students develop questioning habits that transfer across a range of situations and other life experiences.

15.4 Types of Classroom Technology

Technologies used in the classroom include hardware, software, and the Internet. In the 21st century, hardware has come to include not only computers, but also SmartBoards™, document cameras, data projectors, student response devices, computer tablet devices, smartphones, interactive tables (multi-touch, multi-user device for teaching early childhood skills), digital cameras/camcorder, flat panel televisions, laptops, Blu-ray/DVD players, audio books, ebooks, ereaders, scanning technology, laser printers, and video game consoles.

Software includes programs which run on the hardware. These programs can include video editing, photo editing, audio editing as well as numerous interactive programs that can be used for all subject matter. Programs may reside on a CD which is installed on one computer or software that is provided on the school or system server. Programs installed on the school or system servers are generally networked and are shared among students, teachers and schools. Browsers (which must be installed on the computer) allow students to access the Internet. Types of browsers are Internet Explorer, Safari, Mozilla, Firefox, Google Chrome and Opera.

A relatively new technology, “cloud”-based services store information remotely, allowing multiple individuals access to the information from multiple locations. Types of cloud-based services include:

Renaissance Learning products such as Accelerated Reader, Math, Early Literacy, and Math Facts in a Flash measure reading and math online. (http://www.renlearn.com/)
Follett Destiny (library catalogue) is a site students and parents may access from home. (http://www.follettsoftware.com/)

IXL math highlights students' progress as they practice math skills and generates detailed performance reports to give teachers valuable insight about their students' abilities in math. (http://www.ixl.com/reports/)

Investigations is a complete K-5 mathematics curriculum, developed at TERC in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is designed to help all children understand fundamental ideas of number and operations, geometry, data, measurement and early algebra. (http://investigations.terc.edu/)

Sqworl is a web application that provides a clean and simple way to visually bookmark multiple URLs. (http://sqworl.com/)

LiveBinders is a 3-ring binder for the Web that allows students or teachers to collect resources, organize them neatly and easily, and present them with professional ease. (http://livebinders.com/).

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet Protocol Suite (TCP/IP) to serve users worldwide. Each website on the Internet has a unique address which is called a URL (Uniform Resource Leader). The address is the path that identifies where the website is stored. The type of site is indicated by a special ending such as “.edu” (education-related), “.org” (organization-based), “.net” (general), and “.gov” (government resource). An example of a URL is: http://www.alsde.edu

There are virtually unlimited resources available to students on the Internet, but teachers should ensure that students are properly supervised and trained on what resources are credible to use in which contexts. Resources include blogs, wikispaces, email service providers, video/audio podcasts, video/audio live streams, websites, interactive virtual field trips, webquests, webcam chatting (such as Skype), Google voice, and Apple Facetime. When using the Internet, widgets are useful applications designed to enhance the web running in conjunction with the browser. Examples of widgets are Shockwave, Adobe Flash, Java and CSS. Widgets enhance the web-browsing experience through providing more dynamic interfaces to users.

Social networking sites are web-based tools that promote a way for people to connect, collaborate, form online communities. Examples of social networking platforms include Twitter, Facebook, BranchOut (for professional networking on Facebook), Googleplus, Four Square, Get Glue, listservs, message boards, Flickr, and Delicious.
15.5 Pairing Technology and Effective Instructional Strategies

Unfortunately, many classrooms have not advanced the use of technology beyond teacher or student presentations (using PowerPoint or a similar product) or drill/practice games used by students at learning stations. Relatively few teachers have had opportunities to learn and practice varied products to enhance instruction. A valuable resource for teachers and administrators that demonstrates a wide variety of classroom instructional technology uses is *Using Technology with Classroom Instruction that Works* (Pitler, Hubbell, Kuhn, & Malenoski. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2007). The book is a companion for the highly successful McREL/ASCD 2001 publication *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock). The authors group instructional technology into seven genres (see table that follows)-- word processing applications, organizing and brainstorming software, multimedia, data collection tools, spreadsheet software, communication software, and Web resources—and provide examples of how these various types of technology support the nine categories of research-based strategies proven to be effective in increasing student achievement. Whether a teacher is trained in the “classroom instruction that works” strategies or not, this resource provides practical examples of a broad array of technology-enhanced lessons and ideas for using technology to engage students at every grade level.

With the passage of the Alabama Ahead Act of 2012, public schools in Alabama have an opportunity to make meaningful progress with instructional technology. Professional development for teachers as well as improved infrastructure will be components of the new initiative to equip every high school student with pen-enabled digital devices and to move toward digital textbooks and instructional resources.

The increased availability and technological training for teachers’ use of smart boards, multimedia classroom presentation equipment, and individual student response systems is changing the way instruction is implemented in Alabama public schools classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven Categories of [Instructional] Technology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Pitler et al., 2007)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word processing applications</td>
<td>Software that enables the user to type and manipulate text</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, OpenOffice.org Writer, Google Docs, MYAccess!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreadsheet software</td>
<td>Software that enables the user to type and manipulate numbers</td>
<td>Microsoft Excel, OpenOffice.org Calc, InspireData, Google Spreadsheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing and brainstorming software</td>
<td>Software that enables the user to create idea maps, charts, and category maps</td>
<td>Inspiration, Kidspiration, BrainStorm, SMART Ideas, Visual Mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia</td>
<td>Software that enables the user to create or access visual images, text, and sound in one product</td>
<td>iMovie, Microsoft Movie Maker, Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft PowerPoint, KidPix Studio, Keynote, OpenOffice.org Impress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection tools</td>
<td>Software and hardware that enable the user to gather data</td>
<td>Probeware, USB microscopes, classroom response systems, Survey Monkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web resources</td>
<td>Resources available on the web that enable the user to gather information or apply or practice a concept</td>
<td>Virtual tours, information, applets, movies, pictures, simulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication software</td>
<td>Software that enables the user to communicate via text, presentation, voice, or a combination of the three</td>
<td>Blogs, e-mail, VoIP, podcasts, wikis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 15.6 The Digital Divide in Schools

Research conducted in 2010 by the Pew Internet & American Life Project found the following:

“Six in ten Americans go online wirelessly using a laptop or cell phone; African-Americans and 18-29 year olds lead the way in the use of cell phone data applications, but older adults are gaining ground. Six in ten American adults are now wireless internet users, and mobile data applications have grown more popular over the last year. As of May 2010, 59% of all adult Americans go online wirelessly. Our definition of a wireless internet user includes the following activities:

- Going online with a laptop using a wi-fi connection or mobile broadband card. Roughly half of all adults (47%) go online in this way, up from the 39% who did so at a similar point in 2009.
- Use the internet, email or instant messaging on a cell phone. Two in five adults (40%) do at least one of these using a mobile device, an increase from the 32% of adults who did so in 2009.

Taken together, 59% of American adults now go online wirelessly using either a laptop or cell phone, an increase over the 51% of Americans who did so at a similar point in 2009. Cell phone ownership has remained stable over the last year, but users are taking advantage of a much wider range of their phones’ capabilities compared with a similar point in 2009. Of the eight mobile data applications we asked about in both 2009 and 2010, all showed statistically significant year-to-year growth.” (Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, April 29 May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older; n=1,917 based on cell phone users. [http://pewinternet.org](http://pewinternet.org))

A student with a Smartphone (cell phone) today may record a video, send or receive instant messages, play music, access the internet, send or receive email, play a game, send or receive
text messages or take a picture -- all for educational purposes. Technology is cheaper and easily accessible which makes integration into the classroom effortless. Moreover, the technology industry, rapidly recognizing that the average student no longer needs extensive training to work with classroom technology, has greatly diminished the cost of materials and equipment. The learning curve for students has dramatically decreased for students who now have technology in the classroom, library, computer labs, and home.

15.7 Networked Information Resources

Telecommunications, electronic information sources and networked services significantly alter the information landscape for schools by opening classrooms and library media centers to a broader array of resources. Students now have the world at their fingertips. Wireless technologies provide even more freedom and opportunities. While this availability of information provides students with current information often not even available in textbooks, it also brings its own set of concerns, including the opportunity for students to access inappropriate and/or inaccurate information, the ease with which plagiarism can occur, and considerations about the ethical use of networks.

15.8 Using the Internet Safely

K-12 schools should begin teaching research skills to students as early as possible, especially paying attention to using the Internet wisely. Educators need to be able to provide students with knowledge and skills as how to conduct Internet searches and to know which sites to direct students to use. The following sites are straightforward and uncomplicated for students:

Search engines:
http://www.avl.lib.al.us/
http://www.thinkfinity.org
http://www.discoveryeducation.com/
http://alex.state.al.us/index.php
http://www.ThinkQuest.org
http://www.Infoplease.com
http://www.EnchantedLearning.com
http://www.AskKids.com
http://www.FactMonster.com
http://Kids.Yahoo.com
http://www.Yippy.com
http://www.google.com (older students)
Using Internet for Research

Safe websites for student research include:
- http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/
- http://www.gaillovely.com/resources.htm
- http://www.thinkfinity.org
- http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/
- http://illuminations.nctm.org/
- http://www.scienecnetlinks.com/
- http://www.econedlink.org/
- http://historyexplorer.americanhistory.si.edu/
- http://www.readwritethink.org/
- http://wonderopolis.org/
- http://www.ala.org/greatsites/

System leaders, school administrators, and classroom teachers must model safe use of networked resources and must provide effective instruction and supervision for students using technology. Codes of student conduct, employee workplace guidelines, and system safeguards must be regularly updated and consistently monitored to prevent and/or punish inappropriate or illegal use of system technology resources and networks. An excellent resource for superintendents, technology coordinators, and school principals is Aimee Bissonette’s book *Cyber Law: Maximizing Safety and Minimizing Risk in Classrooms* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2009).

15.9 Technology Professional Development

School Leadership Teams need to help develop a plan for professional development for their respective schools that incorporates technology integration in all subject and content areas. Components of effective professional plans include the following:

- providing a variety of learning experiences;
- active participation by all educators;
- hands-on, interactive activities;
- connecting what educators learn to students’ learning;
- learning applications specific to the curriculum;
- sufficient time for learning, practicing, and planning;
- technology support;
- administrative support;
• adequate resources;
• funding;
• evaluation; and
• ongoing development opportunities, rather than one-time workshops.

Professional development opportunities are readily available to educators with the advent of webinars, podcasts, videoconferencing, and other technological communications tools. Many of these services are free. Alabama offers numerous professional development opportunities provided by a variety of organizations as well as on the Internet. The Alabama Learning Exchange (http://alex.state.al.us) is a resource that has a wealth of options for administrators and faculty. Many publishers of professional development materials as well as companies who market K-12 professional development services now provide professional development programs delivered via technology. Examples include:

LearnCentral (www.learncentral.org/)
Knowledge Delivery Systems (www.kdsi.org)
School Improvement Network Online Professional Development (www.pd360.com/)
iNACOL—International Association for K-12 Online Learning (www.inacol.org)
Leaner.org (www.learner.org)
Online Teachers: Professional Development (www.srebonlineteachers.org)
PBS TeacherLine (www.pbs.org/teacherline/)
Intel Teach for K-12 Educators (www.intel.com)
Staff Development for Educators (www.ed2go.com/sde/)

15.10 Planning for the Future of Instructional Technology

School design and infrastructure considerations must include plans for the integration of technology and technological delivery of instruction. An excellent source for revising planning for facilities is Teaching the Digital Generation: No More Cookie-Cutter High Schools by Frank Kelly, Ted McCain and Ian Jukes (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2009). The authors provide thought-provoking rationales to move communities from industrial age high schools to more flexible learning environments that incorporate and take advantage of 21st century instructional technology.

An additional resource for instructional leaders who want ideas for planning is The Future of Schooling: Educating America in 2020 by Goodwin, Lefkowits, Woempner and Hubbell, (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2010). It is a research-based set of scenarios to assist educators in identifying the actions to be taken today to maximize success for future schools.
15.11 Barriers to Technology Integration

When attempting to integrate technology, teachers typically encounter barriers such as a lack of or inadequate training and staff development in using the technology, limited knowledge of how to integrate technology into the curriculum, teacher pedagogical beliefs, limited access to equipment, lack of time to learn and practice technologies, and insufficient administrative support (Faison, 1996; Laffey & Musser, 1998; Langone, Wissick, Langone, & Ross, 1998; Myrhe, 1998; Siegel, 1995; U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1995).

When exploring the technology use challenges faced by public K-12 teachers, the U. S. Department of Education (2000) found that 83% of the teachers surveyed reported a lack of release time to learn, practice, and plan ways to use computers and the Internet in the classroom; 68% reported a lack of support for integrating technology into the curriculum; 66% reported a lack of training opportunities; 64% reported a lack of technical support or advice; and 43% reported a lack of administrative support. Sheingold and Hadley (1990) maintained there are three conditions that need to be met before teachers successfully adopt technology: (a) computers are accessible to teachers and students, (b) teachers are supported in learning and planning to use technology, and (c) the school structure encourages technology use.

The school leader plays an important role in classroom technology. Norum (1999) reported that administrators have a critical role in technology integration and resulting changes in classroom practices. An administrator's support or lack of support for technology sends a message to the school community about technology’s importance to that school or system.

15.12 Technology-related Terminology

Asynchronous: literally means “not at the same time.” Blogs, threaded discussion boards and emails are examples of asynchronous technology tools. An asynchronous distance education course is one in which the instruction is delivered at one time and the work can be done at a different time.

Blog: A weblog, or blog, can be defined as an Internet diary. Weblogs (blogs) enable users to publish comments, images and ideas instantly for other people to read. Bloggers frequently include weblinks to other materials to enrich the content of their postings. Teachers and students may use blogs to extend class discussions, pursue collaborative projects, publish the products of their work, or communicate with parents, experts, students in other schools, etc. Free, easy-to-use weblog services like blogger make it simple for the non-expert to create a blog. For additional information on blogging see http://snipurl.com/teenblogging and http://snipurl.com/blogging_fears.
**Filtering:** Filtering is the process of controlling access to a network by analyzing the incoming and outgoing packets of information from the Internet. School systems often use filters to guard against certain content reading students.

**Podcasting:** Podcasting is a method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio or video programs, over the Internet for playback on mobile devices and personal computers. Podcasts are often distributed using “rich site summary (RSS)” feeds. Teachers and students use tools like digital recorders and editing software to produce audio/video “podcasts” about things they are learning and classroom activities. Information about podcasting for educators and students is available from [http://www.stager.org/podcasting](http://www.stager.org/podcasting) [http://snipurl.com/EWpodcasting](http://snipurl.com/EWpodcasting).

**Rich Site Summary (RSS):** Anyone who creates Web content (webpages, blogs, wikis, etc.) can use RSS software to create a data feed that supplies headlines, links and article summaries to others who subscribe to your content source. Most free blogging services include simple directions for including an RSS feed in your blog. Those who want to keep track of your new blog entries will subscribe, often by creating an account at a free “aggregator” service like Bloglines. A daily visit to your bloglines account will show you summaries of all new material at the blogs, wikis, webpages, etc. you subscribe to. Two sources of information about RSS and social software include [http://ripmixlearn.blogspot.com/](http://ripmixlearn.blogspot.com/) and [http://snipurl.com/DWandRSS](http://snipurl.com/DWandRSS).

**Social Networking:** Social network theory emerged in the 1950s to describe the ways people are connected together through family, work, community, etc. In the context of Internet technology and the Web, social networking refers to the communications and relationships that develop through the use of social software—Internet, applications that help connect friends, business partners, teachers, students and others together using a variety of technological tools.

**Social Software:** Web-based tools that promote social networking, allowing people to connect and collaborate and to form online communities. Early examples of social software include email listservs, message boards, and similar sites. More recent examples range from publishing tools like blogs and wikis, to information sharing sites like Flickr or Delicious, to social network services like MySpace or eHarmony.

**Wiki:** Wiki is the Hawaiian work for quick. A wiki is a website that anyone can edit at any time. Users can easily add, remove, or otherwise edit all content on a wiki page, very quickly and easily. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for collaborative writing, brainstorming, and project development. Typically, a wiki website provides an easy way to monitor changes and restore earlier versions of pages. Some free wiki services offer the option of password protection to prevent non-participants from editing pages.
Instructional Technology References


16. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

16.1 Definition of Assistive Technologies

According to the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act (Tech Act Legislation - P.L.100-407), which has been adopted in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), an assistive technology device has been defined as: "... any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities" [20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Section 1401].

IDEA goes on to define assistive technology services to include "any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device" [20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Section 1401]. This law specifically mentions the following services:

(A) the evaluation of the needs of such child, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment;

(B) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by such child;

(C) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices;

(D) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;

(E) training or technical assistance for such child, or, where appropriate, the family of such child; and

(F) training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of such child. [20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Section 1402]

This following site is designed to assist in answering questions about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

IDEA Practices
http://www.ideapractices.org/
16.2 Why are Assistive Technologies Important?

There are many benefits to students who are disabled and given the opportunity to use assistive technologies. These include the development of a positive self-concept, increasing independence, inclusion in the regular classroom, strengthening of existing abilities, and improvement in academic performance.

16.3 What is the Involvement of Administrators?

The Alabama Technology Administrator Standards state that the higher education curriculum for administrators will provide prospective administrators with:

The knowledge of: (iii) technologies appropriate for curriculum areas, instructional strategies, and student-centered learning environments to maximize learning and teaching to meet the individual needs of all learners.

The ability to: (iii) facilitate the selection and use of technologies appropriate for curriculum areas, instructional strategies, and student-centered learning environments to maximize learning and teaching to meet the individual needs of all learners.

This means that administrators will need to be aware of

- The importance of Assistive Technologies
- The role these technologies play in providing students with disabilities equal educational opportunities and access to the same learning devices as other students
- The major legislation related to individuals with disabilities [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act (Tech Act of 1988 - P.L.100-407), Rehab Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)]
- The use of Assistive Technologies
- The availability of Assistive Technologies
- Resources for assistance and information about Assistive Technologies
- Funding
- Professional development for teachers

The Council for Exceptional Children (1991) published strategic planning guidelines that can assist administrators in developing a plan for the acquisition and use of Assistive Technologies. The plan includes:

- Developing a common vision
- Scanning the environment (needs assessment)
- Assessing the problems (determining barriers to change)
- Selecting outcomes
- Choosing strategies and activities
• Building support
• Establishing accountability/metrics for evaluation

16.4 Types of Assistive Technologies

There are many types of Assistive Technologies available from eyeglasses and hearing aids to motorized wheelchairs. Of most concern to administrators are those Assistive Technologies that can be used to provide students with disabilities with an appropriate education. These can range from pencil grips to aid in holding a pencil to Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) devices.

For students who experience difficulty using a standard keyboard, teachers can begin by modifying a standard keyboard. Schmitt (1990) listed 10 ways to modify a keyboard:
• Positioning (wireless keyboard)
• Headstick, mouthstick, utility cuff, or other pointer
• Moisture guard
• Stickers to mark keys
• Removal of auto-repeat features
• Making the shift, control, and other keys locking
• Keyboard delay
• Rearranged keyboard
• Keyguard
• Speed enhancement (word prediction, abbreviations)

If modifying a standard keyboard is not sufficient, there are alternative keyboards available. These include:

*Intellikeys*
http://www.intellitools.com/
• Intelligent, programmable keyboard
• Provides computer access for persons who have difficulty using a mouse or standard keyboard.
• User touches a printed overlay placed over a touch-sensitive panel.

*Large Print Keyboards*
*Large Print and Braille Labels for regular keyboards*
The Key Connection
http://www.customkeys.com/
Discover:Screen
Madentec
http://www.madentec.com/
- Talking on screen keyboard
- Point and click access to standard keyboard letters, whole words and communication phrases
- Keyboard can show keys with letters, pictures or words

Datadesk’s Little Fingers™ Keyboard
Infogrip, Inc.
http://www.infogrip.com
- Small 101-style keyboard designed specifically for small hands
- Keys are 20% smaller than traditional keys
- Keyboard spacing is more compact
- Available in two models: Little Fingers Combo with a built in three-button trackball and Little Fingers with a numeric keypad

Discover:Kenx®
Madentec
http://www.madentec.com/
- Software and hardware combination that offers changeable input options
- Create computer access customized to each student.
- Multiple input methods
- Move from a mouse to a switch to a head pointer to an alternative keyboard quickly and easily
- On screen or alternative keyboard layouts

16.5 Alternative Input Devices

1) Penny & Giles Roller Joystick II
DonJohnston, Inc
http://www.donjohnston.com/
- Functions like standard joystick
- Colored buttons for click and drag
- 3” high
- Includes three jacks so switches can perform button functions
- For Windows and Macintosh computers
- Uses PS/2 and USB connections
- Comes with interchangeable SoftKnob and T-bar joystick handles
2) **HeadWay**  
DonJohnston, Inc  
- Mouse alternative that uses a small, infrared transmitter
- Head movements control the mouse cursor on-screen
- Adjustable sensitivity to reduce unwanted cursor movements due to unintentional head motion
- Switch for mouse clicks

3) **TouchFree™ Switch by Edmark/Riverdeep**  
Infogrip, Inc.  
[http://www.infogrip.com](http://www.infogrip.com)
- Use with single switch scanning software
- No touch action required
- Digital video camera and easy to install switch software
- Flexible and customizable click capabilities
- TouchFree Switch can be activated by a choice of large or small body movements; can be customized
- Point camera at arm, elbow, face or foot
- Zoom in or out to capture small or large movements

4) **Tash's Switch Click**  
Infogrip, Inc.  
[http://www.infogrip.com](http://www.infogrip.com)
- Enters a left mouse click
- Plugs directly into mouse port
- Can use Switch Click alone with scanning software or plug pointing device into Switch Click and use pointing device to move cursor and Switch Click to handle left mouse clicks
- External switch jack; can choose to use size switch to best fits needs

5) **Eyegaze Communication System**  
LC Technologies, Inc.  
- Communication and control system controlled by eyes
- Look at control keys displayed on screen to synthesize speech, control environment (lights, appliances, etc.), type, operate a telephone, run computer software, operate a computer mouse, and access the Internet and e-mail

6) **ScanSoft's Dragon NaturallySpeaking®** (Speech Recognition Software)  
Infogrip, Inc.  
[http://www.infogrip.com](http://www.infogrip.com)
• True continuous speech
• Speak to computer naturally, at normal pace of up to 160 words per minute, without pausing between words
• Create, edit and format word or phrase using intuitive commands

7) **Commodio's QPointer Voice**
Infogrip, Inc.
[http://www.infogrip.com](http://www.infogrip.com)
- Complete and intuitive computer control by voice
- Allows operation of any application and complete control over Windows
- Dictate directly into any application, write and send email, surf the web and emulate all mouse functions

8) **Visual Impairment**
For students who are visually impaired, there are several options, including voice output, large screen monitors, and Braille text. Voice or speech output devices use digitized human speech or synthesized robotic-sounding speech.

9) **BIGSHOT Screen Magnifier by Ai Squared**
Infogrip, Inc.
[http://www.infogrip.com](http://www.infogrip.com)
- Magnifies computer screen allowing focus on work without straining to see
- 20 levels of magnification, from 105% to 200%
- Change the magnification level with a mouse wheel
- Full Screen Mode, which enlarges entire monitor screen to the magnification level selected

10) **TextHELP! ScreenReader by TexHelp Systems**
Infogrip, Inc.
[http://www.infogrip.com](http://www.infogrip.com)
- Simple text to speech product
- Reads window menus, documents, emails or Internet pages
- Easy to use toolbar provides five features to select from

16.6 **Augmentative Alternative Communication Devices**

*LightWRITER*
1) ZYGO Industries, Inc.
- Portable text-to-speech communication aid
- Large, bright displays
• Easily seen by both the user and the listener(s)
• For users with autism, laryngectomies, C.P., head injury, ALS, etc.
• Now accessible through Morse code

2) DynaWrite
DynaVox Systems LLC
http://www.dynavoxsys.com/
• Keyboard-based communication device
• Accessed using variety of selection methods and scanning configurations
• Documents created and stored on DynaWrite can be backed up to PC or Mac
• Function keys activate features common to all DynaVox devices
• Text-editing capabilities
• Personal reminders menu
• Integrated help menu
• Store thousands of Keyboard, single- and dual-switch scanning
• DECertalk™ with 10 synthesized voices
• VeriVox with 3 synthesized voices
• Digitized speech and sound available

3) Pathfinder with Unity 128
Prentke Romich Company
• http://store.prentrom.com/cgi-bin/store/index.html
• Powerful communications tool
• Static keyboard plus a color dynamic display
• Contains vocabulary (Unity 128), pictures, computer keyboard emulation and infrared controls
• Synthesized speech with memory capacity that holds thousands of words
• Range of age and gender appropriate voice options.
• Digitized speech option for adding fun sounds, songs or additional languages

4) ChatBox and ChatBox-DX,
Prentke Romich Company
http://store.prentrom.com/cgi-bin/store/index.html
Voice output communication devices
Combine use of meaningful pictorial images with the latest technology
For use by individuals experiencing cognitive and language limitations, brain disorders, cerebral palsy or conditions that result in temporary loss of speech.
ChatBox-DX for individuals with visual difficulty or very poor motor skills
16.7 Assistive Software

ClickIt
http://www.intellitools.com/
- Provides access to "point-and-click" software programs
- Add Hot Spots and scanning to popular software
- Users touch an overlay or a switch to activate selected areas on the screen

CameraMouse
Infogrip, Inc.
http://www.infogrip.com
- Hands free computer control
- Uses video camera to track body movements and convert movements to cursor movements on computer screen
- Built-in toolbar allows emulation of all mouse
- Non-intrusive
- Works with all standard software
- No wires, dots, infrared beams, or other head apparatuses needed for activation

PixWriter - Slater Software, Inc.
(Don Johnston Inc.)
http://www.donjohnston.com/
- Easy-to-use early writing intervention
- Users write by selecting pictures and word buttons
- Built-in speech provides immediate, lets teachers create talking documents

16.8 Assistive Writing Tools

Write Outloud
(Don Johnston Inc.)
http://www.donjohnston.com/
- Easy to use word processor
- Gives immediate speech feedback as words, sentences and paragraphs are typed
- Extensive keyboard shortcuts

Braille 'n Speak
Freedom Scientific
http://www.blazie.com/
Combines speech with a standard Perkins-style keyboard
- Weighs less than one pound
- Includes word processing with spell check
• Built-in speech synthesizer for input and editing directly into memory
• Information read back at the press of a single command.
• Input information in Grade 1 or Grade 2 Braille through six-key mode

_Braille Blazer_
Freedom Scientific
• Compact and quiet
• High-quality Braille on many sizes of Braille paper, plastic labels and index cards
• Internal speech synthesizer for quick and simple configuration
• Can be used with any PC or Freedom Scientific notetaker

### 16.9 Critical Thinking Tools

_Inspiration - Visual Learning Tool_
Inspiration Software, Inc.
Grades 6-Adult
• Strengthens critical thinking, comprehension, and writing across the curriculum
• Diagramming and outlining environments

_Kidspiration -_
Inspiration Software, Inc.
• Grades K-5
• Brainstorm ideas with pictures and words
• Organize and categorize information visually
• Create stories and descriptions using visual tools
• Explore new ideas with thought webs and visual mapping

_Other Devices_
• Closed captioning
• Pencil grips
• Raised line paper
• Talking calculators
• Tape recorders
16.10 Resources for Information on Assistive Technologies

Local Resources and Information

Alabama Statewide Technology Access and Response Project System for Alabamians with Disabilities (STAR) http://www.rehab.state.al.us/star/
800-STAR-656

TASC- Technology Assistance for Special Consumers
http://tasc.ataccess.org/main.html
256-532-5996

UAB Civitan International Research Center’s Sparks Clinic
http://www.circ.uab.edu/
800-822-2472

National Resources and Information

AbilityHub - Assistive Technology Solutions
http://www.abilityhub.com/

Abledata
http://www.abledata.com/

Alliance for Technology Access (ATA)
http://www.ataccess.org/
415-455-4575

American Printing House for the Blind
www.aph.org/
502-895-2405

Barrier Free Education - Tools for Learning
http://barrier-free.arch.gatech.edu/Tools/index.html

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)
www.cast.org/
781-245-2212

Closing the Gap - Computer Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation
www.closingthegap.com/
612-248-3294
Computing OutLoud
http://www.out-loud.com/

Council for Exceptional Children
http://www.cec.sped.org/dv/
703-620-3660

Equal Access to Software and Information (EASI)
http://www.rit.edu/%7Eeasi/

Family Guide to Assistive Technology
http://www.pluk.org/AT1.html

Fritschi’s Assistive Technology Resources
http://fritschi.home.mindspring.com/at.html

Infinitec Inc. - Infinite Potential through Assistive Technology
http://www.infinitec.org/

LD Resources
http://www.ldresources.com

(NCDDR) National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research
http://www.ncddr.org/

National Center to Improve Practice in Special Education Through Technology, Media and Materials (NCIP)
http://www2.edc.org/NCIP/

Project LITT - Literacy Instruction Through Technology
http://edweb.sdsu.edu/SPED/ProjectLitt/LITT

Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA)
www.resna.org/
703-524-6686

Tech Act Programs by State
http://www.abledata.com/abledata.cfm?pageid=113573&top=16050&sectionid=19326

Technology for the Blind
http://www.nfb.org/tech.htm
TRACE Center
http://www.trace.wisc.edu/
301-589-3786

Untangling the Web - Assistive Technology Resources (not specifically computer-related)
http://www.icdi.wvu.edu/others.htm#g10

Assistive Technology References


17. ACCEPTABLE TECHNOLOGY USE AND COPYRIGHT POLICIES

Because copyright is complex and the laws can be vague, schools/systems should provide users with clear acceptable use policies and guidelines. There are three main areas of copyright that directly affect education. They include (1) the illegal use and copying of copyrighted software, (2) fair use of copyrighted materials, and (3) use of copyrighted materials in employee and student web pages and presentations.

17.1 Copyright Definition

Copyright is the ownership and control of intellectual property in original works of authorship. The laws of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) provide protection to the owner of copyright, which is available to both published and unpublished works. In addition to the Copyright Act, Alabama provides for offenses against intellectual property and computer equipment and supplies. Title 13A of the Alabama Criminal Code (1975) is titled the Alabama Computer Crime Act. This Act provides definitions for data, intellectual property, computer programs, computers, computer software, computer systems, computer networks, computer system services, property, financial instruments, and access.

“Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (title 17, U. S. Code) to the authors of “original works of authorship,” including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works.”

Educators should assume all works created after 1978 are protected by copyright. For resources helpful for explaining copyright issues to teachers, parents, and students see the following guide from the US Copyright Office: http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ21.pdf

17.2 Copyright Infringement and Potential Fines

Classroom teachers, librarians, technicians, principals, curriculum coordinators, superintendents and Boards of Education are liable for infringements under the law. All educators should be aware of the types of infringement defined by copyright rules and the types of consequences that may be associated with copyright infringement. Some examples of infringement described by Carol Simpson (2010) in Copyright for School Libraries: A Practical Guide. 5th ed. follow:

- **Innocent infringement:** Teacher reads in a journal that an item has fallen into public domain and makes copies. In truth, the journal confused two items of similar title so the teacher’s infringement in copying the item is innocent.
• **Standard Infringement:** The librarian makes copies of an article for class many months in advance without making any attempt to contact the copyright holder and obtain permission.

• **Willful infringement:** A principal asks permission to reproduce copies of a journal article for the faculty and is denied. He makes the copies anyway without a reasonable basis to believe he didn’t need permission.

**Fines for Copyright Infringement**

As punishment for copyright violations, courts have imposed fines ranging from $750 to $30,000 per infringement. There may be additional damages awarded, based on the circumstances involved, with intentional/statutory infringement fines of $150,000 per instance. In 1992, software copyright infringement was raised to felony status with fines up to $250,000 per instance.

**17.3 Fair Use and Copyright Exceptions**

The law—Title 17, United State Code, Public Law 94-553, 90 Stat. 2541, as amended—gives citizens special exceptions. Fair Use has certain aspects that apply to everyone and others that apply only to certain classes of use, such as use in nonprofit schools.

When determining Fair Use, factors considered shall include:

1) The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature, or for nonprofit educational purposes.

2) The nature of the copyrighted work;

3) The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and

4) The effects of the use upon the potential market for a value of the copyrighted work (Simpson, 2010.)

Educators should be knowledgeable about Fair Use standards and copyright laws when obtaining, copying, and distributing instructional materials. Fair use is one of the most misunderstood aspects of copyright law. *Copyright for Administrators* (Simpson, 2008, p. 24) highlights the following common misconceptions:

- **Misconception #1**—*Schools can use any copyright protected materials they wish because they are schools.*

- **Misconception #2**—*Using materials is OK if you don’t make a profit.*

- **Misconception #3**—*Promoting someone’s work by distributing copies is justification for free use.*
Misconception #4—Materials used “for the good of the kids” absolves one of copyright liability.

A teacher may not

- copy “to create or to replace or to substitute for anthologies, compilations, or collective works” from consumable products;
- copy to substitute for purchasing resources;
- copy at direction of superior, i.e., principal; or,
- copy same item each semester.

17.4 Use of Commercial Videos/DVDs/Movies

Fair Use does not allow use of commercial videos for re-enforcement, entertainment, or reward without paying public performance rights fees in advance.

Commercial videos/DVDs (movies)

- cannot be used for reward or entertainment in cases of “Free Fridays”, during testing, “rainy-day recess, Field Day, or “free movie” night.
- must be used as part of face-to-face instruction
- must be documented in lesson plans, showing how the video supports goals and objectives of lesson plan and what learning activities are associated with the viewing of the video; and,
- must be a true and legal copy (Simpson, 2010).

Commercial videos/DVDs (movies) can be rented from video rental store or public library, borrowed from a student, owned by the classroom teacher; or purchased by the school.

Consider any program on regular networks, e.g., ABC, CBS, NBC to be restricted clearance; and encourage use of Cable-in-the-Classroom programming as a means of obtaining television programs for classroom use (Simpson, 2010).

17.5 Computer Software Copyright and Licensing

Purchasing computer software involves licenses. A software license agreement is a contract between the "licensor" and purchaser of the right to use software. The license may define ways under which the copy can be used, in addition to the automatic rights of the buyer (17 U.S.C. § 117). The most common types of licenses are: Single User; Lab packs; Network license; and Site license. Responsibility for software inventory, distribution, and maintenance of software license agreements should be assigned to someone by the superintendent.
17.6 Copyright and Internet Materials

Fair use guidelines apply to copyrighted materials on the Internet in the same manner as written materials. If school employees and/or students use copyrighted materials from the Internet, these materials should be treated in the same manner as printed materials, following Copyright Law, Fair Use guidelines and school/system policies.

When using Internet materials, unless specifically stated, assume that everything is copyright protected; that Fair Use guidelines apply; and that a person may not take print, images, etc., from Internet sites and re-post on an Internet site. However, a person may post such material on a protected school/system intranet. (Simpson, 2010.)

17.7 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not new; with the availability of digital materials on the Internet, it has just become easier to do and often easier to discover than it used to be. Rather than having to write down what they find in a written source, students now have the ability to go online and simply copy and paste information written by others into their own papers. There are also many online sources for buying or accessing term papers.

According to Simpson (2005) an instance of plagiarism is more than likely a copyright violation because in the absence attribution, the student is not covered by fair use exemption. With ethical issues it is important that adherence to copyright law, and rules against plagiarism should be fully explained in the student codes of conduct stressing the penalties for violations.

There are many Internet sites that provide information on plagiarism. Some of the websites offer ways to detect plagiarism, while others offer ways to prevent or discourage it. Preventing plagiarism occurs mainly through educating students as to what plagiarism is, providing them with information on how to appropriately use and cite sources, and providing alternative assignments that don’t lend themselves to plagiarism. Some of the many Internet web sites that cover these topics available are presented below.

- Plagiarism.org - [http://www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org),
  - Provides information for educators and students concerning Internet plagiarism
  - Hand outs for teachers and students
    - Definition of plagiarism
    - Guidelines for citing sources
    - Directions for students on writing papers
  - Online service for checking papers against a database
  - Information on two popular programs used to determine whether or not plagiarism has occurred
• Turnitin (http://www.turnitin.com)
• iThenticate (http://www.ithenticate.com)

• Several free plagiarism-detecting sites are available:
  ▪ Plagiarism.net (http://plagiarisma.net)
  ▪ Paper Rater (https://www.paperrater.com/plagiarism_checker)
  ▪ The Plagiarism Checker (http://www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker/)

• The Plagiarism Resource Site – http://plagiarism.bloomfieldmedia.com/z-wordpress/
  ▪ Goal is to help reduce impact of plagiarism on education and educational institutions
  ▪ Distributes free software to detect plagiarism
  ▪ Provides links to other resources
  ▪ Site’s sole author is Lou Bloomfield
    ▪ Professor of Physics
    ▪ University of Virginia
    ▪ Box 400714
    ▪ Charlottesville, VA 22904-4714
    ▪ lab3e@Virginia.EDU

• Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers
  ▪ http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm
  ▪ Possible reasons students plagiarize
  ▪ Forms of plagiarism
  ▪ Prevention strategies
  ▪ Detecting plagiarism

• Plagiarism – http://www.web-miner.com/plagiarism
  ▪ Provides variety of resources, including
    ▪ Plagiarism articles
    ▪ Instructor information
    ▪ Student information
    ▪ Plagiarism case studies
    ▪ Plagiarism detection tools
    ▪ Term paper sites

• The New Plagiarism: Seven Antidotes to Prevent Highway Robbery in an Electronic Age
  ▪ Site’s author is Jamie McKenzie
Many educators also use search engines such as Google (http://www.Google.com) to search for suspect phrases.

Teachers need to be cautioned that the web sites and programs available for detecting plagiarism will not find all instances. These programs and sites compare submitted papers to databases of existing digital sources, and not all students will use digital resources. Therefore, teachers should not solely depend on these web sites to identify all instances of plagiarism, but these programs and sites can be helpful.

17.8 Acceptable Use Policies

Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) are developed by schools and school systems to govern the use of technologies in a school/system. Such policies should focus on the responsible use of various technologies by teachers, staff and students, including individual computers and peripherals, computer networks, the Internet, and access and transmitting of information to K-12 classrooms and the library. When developing an Acceptable Use Policy, include (a) illegal use and copying of copyrighted software, (b) fair use of copyrighted materials, and (c) use of copyrighted materials in employee and student presentations. Educators need to be sensitive to issues and make an effort to insure that students are directed to appropriate websites for K-12. Students and employees should have signed the school system’s AUP policy, and these should be on file at the school or employee worksite.

Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) are developed by schools and school systems to govern the use of technologies in a school/system. Such policies should focus on the responsible use of technologies by teachers, staff and students, including individual computers and peripherals, computer networks, the Internet, and access and transmitting of information to K-12 classrooms and the library media center. Following is a checklist to assist in the development of Acceptable Use Policies.

- Preamble explaining the reasons for the policy and describing how the policy was adopted
- Description of the instructional philosophies and strategies that will be supported by technology use in the school/system
• Description of the educational uses and advantages of using technology in the school/system
• Definitions of key words used in the policy
• Delineation of the responsibilities of educators, parents, and students for using available technologies
• Code of conduct governing behavior while using technologies
• Statement that users should comply with all federal and state laws governing the use of technologies (i.e., Alabama Criminal Computer Act, Copyright Laws, Fair Use)
• Description of the consequences of violating the code of conduct outlined in the AUP
• Description of what constitutes acceptable uses of the technologies
• Description of what constitutes unacceptable uses of the technologies (i.e., plagiarism, copyright infringement, software piracy, slander, libel, defamation of character, profanity, obscenity, and pornography)
• Disclaimer releasing the school/system from responsibility under specific circumstances
• Statement reminding users that use of technologies is a privilege not a right
• Statement that e-mails are not private, but belong to the institution
• Description of types of filtering, how users are protected while using the Internet
• Description of types of digital materials allowed by teachers and students and how these materials will be preserved (i.e., web sites)
• Description of possible risks to users while using technology
• Description of appropriate behaviors and etiquette while using technology (i.e., not making personal disclosures over the Internet, using Netiquette, etc., using ethical behavior)
• Statement that the AUP is in compliance with state and national telecommunication rules and regulations

There should be an acknowledgement/signature form for teachers, staff, students, and parents indicating their intent to abide by the AUP.

17.9 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

“Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) capitalizes on students’ increased access to personal technology devices such as tablets, smart phones, and laptops. Students on both k-12 and college campuses have adapted to this idea; it is not unusual for students to bring a laptop to class.

Many teachers have questions about the efficacy of this strategy as well as the potential negative consequences of students using the devices for non-educational purposes during class. While there is a danger of students becoming distracted or inattentive, with proper supervision from the teacher and engaging activities, BYOD can be an effective classroom strategy.
Promising strategies and activities using BYOD include the following:

- Poll or quiz questions that are answered via laptops or smart phones with the results projected at the front of the classroom
- Guest lecturers that speak to the class via Skype or a webcam, with students capturing video and audio for future use
- Native language speakers to assist in foreign language conversations at each student’s desk
- Clips from published video lectures (via service such as iTunesU or TedEx) that students can view on their own devices or edit together for a presentation
- Web-based applications (such as Google Docs) that allow each student to contribute to the development of a document or presentation at the same time from their personal device
- Visualization applications (such as Google Maps or Google Earth) that students can use to view maps and make study notes directly on their devices

Source: https://blogs.princeton.edu/etc/2012/06/08/byod-bring-your-own-device-and-the-classroom/

Schools must be able to address potential concerns associated with a BYOD program. The Pros and Cons of BYOD in the Classroom (http://www.novadesk.com/blog/bid/75344/The-Pros-and_Cons-of-BYOD-in-the-Classroom) highlights the following considerations:

- Devices pose a potential distraction.
- Tech-savvy students are likely to find ways to circumvent filters.
- The potential for a digital divide between students from lower-income families and those from middle-class families.

With the change by many local school systems to allow students to bring their own devices, technology Acceptable Usage Policies must necessarily change and adapt to these new challenges. A sample of a newly-adopted technology use policy from the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education passed in June 2012 includes the following language to address BYOD issues:

“Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)/Personal technology-related devices such as but not limited to laptops, cell phones, smart-phones, iTouch/iPods/iPads/slate or tablet devices, cameras or other electronic devices, etc., used on school grounds are subject to all items covered in this policy and other applicable published guidelines. The permission for such personal devices to be brought to school and the use of such devices will be at the discretion of the local school administrators and school rules.”
The user should not access local area network or wide area network resources that require authentication without the explicit permission of the Technology Coordinator. Student/Employee open access Internet connectivity is available for BYOD and visiting devices and is subject to the conditions outlined in this policy and all other school system policies and guidelines as well as local, state, and federal laws. Students/Employees will be required to register their personal devices before obtaining access rights to these resources. Guest presenters will be provided access through the local school administrators and system technology staff.

Due to the ability of broadband technologies that may reside in some of these personal devices (Smart-phones, MIFI, 3G-4G and future technologies), the system has no means to monitor the use or sites accessed from these devices while on school property. Users are responsible for proper conduct when using this form of technology communication at school or work.

The board of education, school system, schools and employees of the system assume no responsibility or liability for the theft, loss, or damage to any personal devices or the inappropriate and/or mis conduct use of an individual’s device using non-system provided broadband or Wi-Fi connectivity.

The school system does not require students or employees to bring their own devices to school; however, we do believe such devices do provide students and teachers a resource tool that aids them in their education and job.

During Testing all students must comply with the applicable procedures and guidelines established by the Assessment Department of the Alabama State Department of Education, ACT, College Board and/or system.

SOURCE: Tuscaloosa County Board of Education, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

In addition to crafting a sound Acceptable Use Policy, the school or school system must take into account the necessary infrastructure to support a BYOD program. The Alberta, Canada Ministry of Education produced an extensive guide on the topic of BYOD:


17.10 Social and Ethical Considerations of Acceptable Technology Use

The integration of computers into educational institutions requires not only knowledge of the laws regarding technology, but also the need for identifying social and ethical considerations in the use of the technology. Although certain practices may not be unlawful, they may still be unethical or
unacceptable. Recent cases involving students’ and/or teachers’ use of social media, violations by students or employees of system technology policies while off campus, and fraudulent use of school system technology resources will have an impact on future acceptable use policies and codes of conduct.

Issues related to “cyberbullying” leading to student suicide, terrorist threats and acts of terrorism communicated via Internet or social media, and recent proliferation of “sexting” will present challenges to school system leaders, teachers, and parents. School system policies and procedures must be in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) of 2000, both to be eligible for e-Rate funding and to protect students.

The following resources will help school leaders understand their responsibilities and provide sample policies:

- [http://stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)

Other issues involved in the use of technology in education are equity issues. Educators must be sensitive to these issues and make an effort to insure that computers are equally available for all students, to select software and computer activities that are appropriate for all children, and to insure that all students have equal opportunities to use computers.

**Additional Resources and Useful Links Related to Copyright and Acceptable Use**

*Copyright Law of the United States of America*
[http://www.copyright.gov/title17/](http://www.copyright.gov/title17/)

*Copyright Basics*
[http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf](http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf)

*Copyright: An Overview*
[http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/copyright.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/copyright.html)

*Copyright Website*

*The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)*
U.S. Copyright Office Summary

*Educause - The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998*
Fair Use of Copyrighted Materials
http://copyright.lib.utexas.edu/copypol2.html

South Washington County Schools Acceptable Use Policy
For staff:

For students:

Santa Barbara Unified School District

Eugene, OR School System - 4JNet, E-mail, Internet use, student privacy guidelines, copyright and plagiarism
http://www.4j.lane.edu/4jnet/

Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual
http://policy.cps.edu/download.aspx?ID=2

The Teach Act
http://copyright.lib.utexas.edu/teachact.html
18. STATE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES AND RESOURCES FOR ALABAMA EDUCATORS

18.1 Alabama State Technology Plan 2007 – 2012

The Alabama State Technology Plan 2007-2012 was adopted by the State Board of Education on October 12, 2006. As Alabama enters the new millennium, we must integrate new technologies into learning environments wherever students are actively engaged in dynamic, vibrant learning activities with other “learners”. It is with this idea in mind that the IMPACT (Indicators for Measuring Progress in Advancing Classroom Technology) document was created. The purpose of the IMPACT document is to make recommendations for all stakeholders’ effective use and integration of technology in the classroom and to provide guidelines for the creation of a unified technological infrastructure that supports 21st Century learning. ([https://docs.alsde.edu](https://docs.alsde.edu))

18.2 Alabama’s K-12 Technology Education Curriculum

**National Educational Technology Standards for Students**

The *National Educational Technology Standards for Students* produced by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has established technology literacy as a national goal. The six strands as defined ISTE are: (1) creativity and Innovation, (2) communication and collaboration, (3) research and information fluency, (4) critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making, (5) digital citizenship, and (6) technology operations and concepts. Descriptions of the strands can be found at [http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards/standards-for-students](http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards/standards-for-students).

Likewise, ISTE has established six strands of standards for teachers. They are as follows: (1) facilitate and inspire student learning, (2) design and develop digital-age learning experiences and assessments, (3) model digital-age work and learning, (4) promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility, and (5) engage in professional growth and leadership. Descriptions of the strands can be found at [http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards/standards-for-teachers](http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards/standards-for-teachers).

ISTE standards for administrator include the following strands: (1) visionary leadership, (2) digital-age learning culture, (3) excellence in professional practice, (4) systematic improvement, and (5) digital citizenship. Descriptions of the strands can be found at the following link: [http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards/standards-for-administrators](http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards/standards-for-administrators).

ISTE has developed standards for coaches, which include the following strands: (1) visionary leadership, (2) teaching, learning, and assessments, (3) digital-age learning environments, (4) professional development and program evaluation, (5) digital citizenship, and (6) content
knowledge and professional growth. Descriptions of the strands can be found at the following link: http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards/standards-for-coaches.

Finally, ISTE has developed standards for computer science teachers. The strands are as follows: (1) knowledge of content, (2) effective teaching and learning strategies, (3) effective learning environments, (4) effective professional knowledge and skills. Descriptions of the strands can be found at the following link: http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards/standards-for-computer-science-educators.

The Code of Alabama
The Code of Alabama (1975), §16-35-4 specifies the minimum required content standards students need for achieving technology literacy. These content standards are consistent with the ISTE standards. In developing local curriculum, school systems may go beyond the minimum standards.

The Alabama Course of Study: Technology Education
The Alabama Course of Study: Technology Education defines the minimum required content needed by students for achieving technology literacy in the State of Alabama. The contents are consistent with the requirements of both the Code of Alabama (1975), §16-35-4 and the National Educational Technology Standards for Students. At a minimum, implementing the Course of Study involves making decisions about integrating technology into all areas of the curriculum, about where computers should be physically located, and about how to assess student performance. The Technology Course of Study was updated in 2008 and can be found on the State Department’s website (www.alsde.edu).

18.3 State Technology Initiatives and Resources

AdvancED™ Assist is a software package that brings together an array of data to help administrators think more creatively about school improvement. AdvancED Assist collects past data and helps administrators build plans for future improvement.
Source: http://www.advanc-ed.org/services/assist

Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, & Students Statewide (ACCESS)
ACCESS is a statewide distance learning initiative that uses technology to deliver free, high-quality multimedia courses to students in Grades 9-12 across the state of Alabama, regardless of where they attend school. This program provides access to high quality instruction by certified and highly-qualified teachers; a statewide network infrastructure that delivers quality learning opportunities through quality of service delivery; cutting-edge technology and additional multimedia and tools to enable teachers to enhance instruction; and a wide range of courses that are available to relatively few Alabama students today. Course offerings include basic core courses, advanced and honors courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, dual credit courses, electives, and remediation and supplemental resources. These courses are
taught via the Web, interactive videoconferencing, and a unique blended approach that seeks to address the individual learning styles of all students. ACCESS website: www.accessdl.state.al.us

Alabama Educational Technology Conference (AETC)
AETC is a technology conference dedicated to the professional development of educators. The conference features nationally-known and home-grown experts that deliver presentations and hands-on workshops on current topics in the use of instructional technology. Additionally, the conference hosts one of the largest vendor shows in Alabama featuring state-of-the-art hardware and software for education. AETC website: http://alex.state.al.us/aetc

Alabama Insight: College- and Career-Ready Standards Unpacked is a web-based software that provides a professional unpacking of mathematics and English language arts College- and Career-Ready Standards in a dynamic database tool, taking the complicated planning out of the alignment process and saving Alabama educators time and resources. School system personnel are issued usernames and passwords to access the Alabama Insight Tool from the ALSDE website.

The web-based system provides a robust database, with five unpacked fields:
- Evidence of student attainment
- Key vocabulary for teachers
- Knowledge expected to attain the standard
- Skills expected to attain the standard
- Understandings expected to attain the standard

Alabama Insight allows users to filter the standards by grade level, by strand and CCRS subcategories for English Language Arts and by grade level, domain or conceptual category for mathematics, and by key word. Filtering allows teacher teams to look at vertical connections among certain strands of standards and search for specific content relevant to their alignment work and deep study of the standards.

A complete user’s guide for the Alabama Insight Tool may be downloaded from http://alex.state.al.us/staticfiles/Alabama_Insight_User%27s_Guide.pdf. To access the Alabama Insight Tool and related resources use the link from the ALSDE website http://alex.state.al.us/showpage.php?lnk=cosdircommentselectsys

Alabama K-12 Joint Purchasing
The Alabama K-12 Joint Purchasing Program provides a purchasing mechanism for K-12 Public School Systems within Alabama to purchase information technology related equipment jointly. This particular program is based on the Code of Alabama Title 16 Chapter 61E - “Information Technology Joint Purchase Agreements.” In accordance with this law and other state bid laws, school systems have jointly entered into information technology purchasing contracts through
the Montgomery County School System and with the Alabama Department of Education designated as the program administrator. As required by the new law all contract awardees are ISO-9001-certified and provide discount prices from the product line they were awarded. A list of these product lines and more information concerning are listed on this website with more contract and information available at ALJP2005. Joint Purchasing website: https://connect.alsde.edu/sites/eia/aljp/SitePages/ALJP%20(Alabama%20K-12%20(IT)%20Joint%20Purchasing)Home.aspx

Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX)
ALEX is the free, state educational Web portal designed to provide the best, high-quality resources and one-stop shopping for Alabama’s teachers, principals, parents, and students. Over 38,000 Web-based interactives, and panel-reviewed Alabama teacher lesson plans linked to Alabama’s official Courses of Study are available for all teachers to use in their classrooms immediately. This award-winning Web portal (2007 and 2008 “Best of the Web”) contains a wealth of additional resources to enhance learning every content area—all digital, all online, all completely Alabama’s. ALEX website: http://alex.state.al.us

Alabama Virtual Library (AVL)
The Alabama Virtual Library provides all students, teachers, and citizens of the State of Alabama with online access to essential library and information resources. It is primarily a group of online databases that have magazine, journal, and newspaper articles for research. Through the AVL, an equitable core of information sources is available to every student and citizen in Alabama, raising the level of excellence in schools and communities across the state. AVL website: http://www.avl.lib.al.us

APTPLUS
Alabama Public Television offers every school and teacher in the state FREE access to APTPLUS, an online, multimedia resource of K-12 core curriculum content and professional development through video-on-demand. Teachers and school administrators also can enroll in a password-protected section of the service, which is supported by 100% of Alabama’s school system. APTPLUS, website: www.APTPLUS.org

E-Rate Program Assistance
The E-Rate program is essential in the provision of vital educational resources for Alabama students by connecting classrooms with a world filled with valuable and educational information. This program provides much needed financial assistance in the form of discounts or reimbursements to school systems for the purchase of technology and access to the Internet. E-Rate website: https://connect.alsde.edu/sites/eia/erate/SitePages/Home.aspx

eLearning Alabama
eLearning Alabama is Alabama’s implementation of the E-Learning for Educators Initiative, a project funded through a federal Ready to Teach grant and multi-state collaboration between
nine state education agencies and associated public broadcast stations. eLearning Alabama partners are Alabama Department of Education (Technology in Motion) and Alabama Public Television. eLearning uses a web-based model to provide effective professional development that leads to gains in teacher’s content knowledge, improvements in their teaching practices and increases in the achievement of their students. eLearning offers a number of courses which are approved by the Alabama Council for Leadership Development for school leaders to earn PLUs.  http://elearning.alsde.edu

**GlobalScholar®** provides a suite of software programs designed to accelerate student growth and achievement, help teachers and administrators efficiently manage schools, and better assess student progress. Products can assist teachers in developing unique plans of instruction for each individual student as well as help administrators capture data related to teachers’ skills in a multidimensional way. http://www.scantron.com/

**HippoCampus**
HippoCampus is a free educational resource provided by ACCESS Distance Learning for teachers to support online, blended, and classroom instruction. Teachers may search across disciplines, link to the NROC-hosted media from within a LMS, or use the tools at the site to customize a version for their own students. HippoCampus allows teachers to:
- Browse the contents of a course, including readings, assignments, and assessments
- Search for multimedia course content using a standard text search
- Create their own HippoCampus site with custom subject and textbook lists, bookmarks, and announcements. http://www.hippocampus.org

**Intel Teach®**
Intel Teach® is a proven, worldwide professional development program that helps educators enhance 21st Century learning through the effective use of technology. The program delivers a range of offerings which includes both in-person and online instruction and incorporates relevant and useful online tools and resources. The program promotes 21st century learning skills critical for student success in today’s knowledge economy: skills such as digital literacy, problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration. The Intel Teach® website is: http://www.intel.com/education/teach

**QualityCore®,** designed by ACT®, provides a framework for increasing the quality and intensity of high school core courses. QualityCore offers flexible components to improve and align your current high school curriculum and instructional materials:
- instructional resources to assist teachers in developing customized plans for individual students
- customizable quizzes to monitor student progress
- end-of-course assessments to evaluate student gains in achievement course by course
- professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators

Source: http://www.act.org/qualitycore/about.html
Technology in Motion (TIM)
Technology in Motion (TiM) is a statewide initiative that provides high quality technology integration professional development for all K-12 public schools. This program serves every teacher and administrator across the state through continuous school-based, hands-on professional development opportunities. The TiM curriculum specialists provide on-going support that enhances teachers’ professional growth in effective teaching practices, the creation of technology-rich learning environments and project-based learning. TiM website: http://technologyinmotion.alsde.edu/

18.4 Learning Management Systems

Good teachers have efficient procedures to collect student work, critique it, and provide feedback. As classrooms move from student work being produced on paper to work being produced digitally, efficient procedures are equally important. The nature of those procedures, however, will change. A Learning Management System (LMS) is a software application which handles these administrative functions. Several examples of a Learning Management System are as follows:

1. Blackboard (http://www.blackboard.com)
2. Canvas (http://www.canvaslms.com)
3. Desire2Learn (http://www.d2l.com)
5. Google Classroom (https://classroom.google.com) Free. A tool within Google Apps for Education that helps teachers create and organize assignment quickly, provide feedback efficiently, and easily communicate with their classes.
6. itsIearning (http://www.itslearning.com)
8. My Big Campus (http://www.mybigcampus.com)

18.5 Other Resources

1. Animoto allows students to combine pictures into video-based presentations they can share with anyone.
2. Audacity is a free audio recording and editing program that lets users mix, record, and edit sounds.
3. Dropbox provides users with free online storage. The service allow users to access information stored in Dropbox from anywhere, share information with other users, and provides am almost instant backup on the Dropbox servers.
4. Evernote is a robust note-taking tool for teachers and students. Its strengths revolve around the file structure it provides through its “notebooks” metaphor, its ability to
sync and be edited across all devices, the ability to share information, and the ability to combine text, pictures, and audio within a single note. Evernote offers both free and paid accounts.

5. **Edublogs** provided a safe and secure environment for classroom blogs.

6. **Google Apps for Education** consists of a suite of free productivity tools for classroom collaboration. It can be used as a free LMS (Learning Management System).

7. Google Classroom is a tool within Google Apps for Education that helps teachers create and organize assignment quickly, provide feedback efficiently, and easily communicate with their classes.

8. **Google Drive** provides students and teachers with a free, web-based suite of word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Users are able to access their information from any devices that is connected to the Internet. Users can also share their files with selected people or provide links such that anyone with the link can access the information.

9. **Kahoot** is a student response system which students can use from any device connected to the Internet. The platform’s attraction is its game-like environment. Students receive immediate feedback regarding their answers and their standing with other participants. Scores are determined through a combination of correct answers and the speed with which participants answer questions. The teacher is able to save all student responses.

10. Khan Academy consists of a large library of math, science, and finance lectures and quizzes. This resource is an excellent one for teachers using the Flipped Classroom approach.

11. **Padlet** is collaborative, an online corkboard. Users add and arrange their thoughts from any device which can access the Internet. Students see the input of all other classmates.

12. **Photo Story 3** is a free Microsoft download. It allows users to import and arrange an array of pictures, add narrative to each picture, edit the zoom on each picture, and add music. The user is able to save the finished product as a movie. Uploading the finished product to YouTube is common.

13. Plickers is a free student response system that requires no technology devices for students. After creating an account and downloading the software, the teacher prints a set of cards, each one featuring a shape similar to a QR code. Students answer questions by holding up a card. The teacher scans all cards in the room with a mobile device, and the device reports the results and stores all data.

14. **Prezi** is a presentation tool that serves as an alternative to PowerPoint. The presentation is contained in one large image. The software zooms in and out of various sections within the presentation.

15. **QR (Quick Response) Codes** are designed to allow users to access information by scanning a three-dimensional bar code. The concept allows any student who has a mobile device to scan a printed code and be directed to a website, audio file, or video, have text revealed, dial a phone number, or add someone to the user’s contacts list. Students can create QR codes as well as read QR codes created by others.
16. **Quizlet** allows teachers to create study tools for students and allows students to create study tools for themselves. The most common use for the site is to compose sets of electronic flash cards. Users can also access flashcards created by other users.

17. **Skype** provides users with a way to communicate with others anywhere in the world via a free videoconferencing platform.

18. **Socrative** is a free student web-based response system. Students may use any device which accesses the Internet. Teachers are able to use the platform for formative assessment during any lesson or creative quizzes. The teacher is able to store all student responses.

19. **Screencast-O-Matic** is a free online tool for creating technology instructional videos. The program records a “movie” of the users screen, all mouse movements, voice, and even webcam. The limit for each video is 15 minutes.

20. **Symbaloo** is a web-based bookmarking tool. Each bookmark takes the form of a square tile. The attraction is that each page of Symbaloo (referred to as a “webmix”) can be assigned a URL which is shared with others. A teacher could access that URL from each computer or mobile device in the classroom one time and create a desktop shortcut on each device. Students can then access any of the sites in the webmix from that one shortcut. During the course of the school year, the teacher can change which sites are bookmarked. The shortcut on each classroom device will always reveal the most current version of the webmix.

21. **TED** stands for “technology,” “education,” and “design.” It is dedicated to “ideas worth spreading.” The website provides a library of short lectures designed to instruct and inspire.

22. **Twitter** is a free social network in which users communicate messages in 140 characters or less. The emergence of “hashtags” within tweets allows the entire platform to be searchable by subject.

23. **Wordle** allows students to generate word clouds from any text. The clouds give more prominence to words which appear more frequently.

24. **YouTube** provides an incredibly extensive library of videos. It offers the ability to search for desired content. A great deal of content is useful in the classroom. However, due to other content not suited to instruction, many schools block YouTube. In this case, **TeacherTube** serves as a substitute. All material on that site is appropriate for the classroom, although the amount of content is much less than YouTube.

### 18.6 Resources for Learning about New Resources

Technology is ever-changing. The savvy school leader identifies sources which will provide information on current tools, new developments, and best practice. Some of these resources are as follows:

1. **“Free Technology for Teachers,”** written by Richard Byrne, is a blog which reviews free tools relevant to the classroom. The frequency with which the author posts and the
able to search the blog for previous reviews make it an incredible source for educators.

2. “The Innovative Educator” is written by public school teacher Lisa Nielson. The posts focus on using available technology to inspire and motivate teachers. The blog will help teachers incorporate technology that students already use into the classroom.

3. “Cool Cat Teacher” is written by Vicki Davis, who is a classroom technology teacher in a small Georgia school. The blog’s aim is to help teachers use technology to add innovation to their teaching.

4. “Teacher Tech” is written by Alice Keeler. The blog provides “how-to” articles for technology-based tasks.

5. Feedly is the glue that holds everything together. This free service allows the user to “subscribe” to blogs (such as the four listed above). Every time new content posts on a blog to which the user has subscribed, that content goes to Feedly. Therefore, the school leader only has to go to one place to see all of the new content. By loading the Feedly mobile app, content can be read from anywhere.
19. SERVING DIVERSE POPULATIONS

19.1 Special Education

Two federal laws govern education of children with disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 requires that a recipient of federal funds “a free appropriate public education” (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school system’s jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. FAPE consists of education, related aids/services, and accommodations designed to meet the student’s individual needs. Section 504 requires a school system to provide to students with disabilities appropriate education services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a United States law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities from birth to age 18 or 21 in cases that involve 13 specified categories of disability.

The IDEA is "spending clause" legislation, meaning that it only applies to those States and their local educational agencies that accept federal funding under the IDEA. While States declining such funding are not subject to the IDEA, all States have accepted funding under this statute and are subject to it.

The IDEA and its predecessor statute, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act arose from federal case law holding the deprivation of free public education to disabled children constitutes a deprivation of due process. It has grown in scope and form over the years. IDEA has been reauthorized and amended a number of times, most recently in December 2004, which contained several significant amendments. In defining the purpose of special education, IDEA 2004 clarifies Congress’ intended outcome for each child with a disability: students must be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that prepares them for further education, employment and independent living.

19.2 IDEA 2004 and NCLB

A summary of the changes and new provisions of the IDEA 2004 revisions and how these changes incorporate the requirements of NCLB is available from the National Center for Learning Disabilities and is downloadable in its entirety from its website: www.ncld.org. The new IDEA provisions became effective July 1, 2005 and contain more than 40 references to No Child Left Behind. These references range from new provisions that allow IDEA funds to be used for activities required under NCLB and new requirements for the qualifications of special
education teachers to a variety of new requirements dealing with the assessments of students with disabilities. With this new alignment to the nation's main education law, it is critical for parents to understand several of NCLB's most important provisions.

1. **Complaints:** A new provision requires that a complaint must be limited to a violation that occurred not more than two years before the date the parent or school system knew or should have known about the alleged action.

2. **Consent for Services:** Schools must obtain informed parental consent before providing special education and related services to a child. Should a parent refuse to consent to the provision of services, the school system may not use procedures such as mediation and due process in order to provide services.

3. **Discipline:** Changes to provisions covering the treatment of students who violate a code of student conduct allows school personnel to make decisions regarding a change in placement on a case-by-case basis. Provisions to conduct a manifestation determination and to continue educational services in alternative settings have been maintained.

4. **Dispute Resolution:** Changes allow the use of mediation without first requiring the filing for a hearing and also introduce a new "Preliminary Meeting" that can be used to seek a resolution prior to a due process hearing. Additionally, new provisions substantially change the awarding of attorneys' fees.

5. **Evaluation Before Graduation:** The new bill makes it clear that schools are not required to perform an evaluation before termination of a child's eligibility due to graduation from secondary school with a standard diploma or due to exceeding the age eligibility for a free appropriate public education.

6. **Federal Funding:** While the new bill provides an authorization schedule for federal appropriations that is designed to achieve the full federal commitment by year 2011, appropriations are not mandatory and will, therefore, be subject to the yearly appropriations process.

7. **Highly Qualified Teachers:** NCLB calls for a highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom as of the 2005-2006 school year. To align IDEA with NCLB, and provide guidance for states and schools on how special education teachers can meet the highly qualified standard, the bill requires all special education teachers be certified in special education. New special education teachers teaching multiple subjects must meet the NCLB highly qualified standard in at least one core subject area (language arts, math, or science) and will have two years from the date of employment to take advantage of certain NCLB provisions to demonstrate competence in other core subject areas.
8. **Individualized Education Programs (IEPs):** IEPs must contain measurable annual goals and a description of how the child’s progress toward meeting those goals will be measured and reported, such as quarterly reports to parents. Additionally, special education and related services and supplementary aids and services must be based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable. Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals must be included in the IEP beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16. Any transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals must be included. Additional new provisions encourage systems to consolidate IEP meetings with reevaluation meetings and to use alternative means of meeting participation when conducting IEP team meetings, such as conference calls and video conferences. Changes to IEPs in effect can be made without convening the IEP team if both the school system and parent agree.

9. **IEP Team Attendance:** A member of the IEP team can be excused from attending the IEP meeting, in whole or in part, if the parent and school system agree that attendance is not necessary because the member’s area of curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed, or because the member has submitted input to the team in writing. Such agreements must be in writing.

10. **Notice of Procedural Safeguards:** Schools must distribute a copy of the procedural safeguards once per year, upon initial referral or request for evaluation, upon filing of a complaint, and upon request by a parent.

11. **Over-identification of Minorities:** A new provision requires states to have policies and procedures that are designed to prevent the inappropriate over-identification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as students with disabilities.

12. **Paperwork Reduction and Multi-Year IEP Pilot Program:** New provisions call for pilot programs in not more than 15 states to carry out activities designed to reduce paperwork burdens, enhance educational planning, improve positive outcomes for children with disabilities, promote collaboration between IEP team members and ensure satisfaction of family members. Additionally, up to 15 states can apply to take part in a pilot program focused on the development of a comprehensive, multi-year IEP.

13. **Prohibition of Mandatory Medication:** A new provision requires states to prohibit state and local school system personnel from requiring a child to obtain a prescription for a substance covered by the Controlled Substance Act as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation or receiving services under IDEA.
14. **Request for Evaluation**: The bill clarifies that a parent may initiate a request for an initial evaluation to determine if a child has a disability.

15. **Special Rule for Eligibility**: Expanded provision precludes schools from finding a child to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor for such determination is lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including in the essential components of reading instruction as defined in No Child Left Behind.

16. **Specific Learning Disabilities**: A new provision releases schools from the current regulatory requirement that a child must show a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in order to be determined to have a specific learning disability. Additionally, schools may begin to use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures as defined in IDEA. See NCLD’s at [www.ncld.org](http://www.ncld.org) for more information on these new provisions.

17. **Summary of Performance**: A new provision requires schools to provide a summary of a child's academic achievement and functional performance upon the termination of services. Such a summary must include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's postsecondary goals.

18. **Time Frame for Evaluation**: A new provision requires that an initial evaluation be completed within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation.

19. **Transferring From One School System to Another**: New provisions direct school systems to provide services to students with IEPs who transfer into a new school, including services comparable to those described in the previously held IEP. The new school must take steps to promptly obtain the child's records for the previous school and the previous school must take steps to promptly respond to such requests. For students who did not have an IEP in effect, but for whom an evaluation had begun, systems are required to promptly complete the evaluation.

19.3 **School Problem-Solving Teams (PSTs)**

A Problem-Solving Team (PST) is a school-based, data-driven, deliberative approach to meet the needs of at-risk students in regular education classroom settings. Team members discuss issues related to specific individual needs of students and teachers and offer teachers assistance in resolving learning problems. The team is composed of regular program teachers, administrators, counselors and other individuals, as needed (i.e., special education personnel). This team pools their expertise from many areas to help resolve many school and student issues. Using this collaborative approach, educators are given the opportunity to address...
concerns and find solutions. Through this team effort, referrals to programs outside the regular classroom can be significantly reduced.

Alabama schools are required to have at least one PST according to AAC 290-3-1-.02-(19). The code defines the PST as a model to guide general education intervention services for all students who have academic and/or behavioral difficulties. The PST is central to the schools’ successful implementation of the Response to Instruction (RtI) framework. The documentation requirements for a student’s referral to special education must be collected and provided by the PST. Any student who is reevaluated and determined not eligible for special education services must be referred to the school’s PST to determine the appropriate supplemental services to facilitate successful transition to the general education program.

19.4 Response to Instruction (RtI)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) includes a provision that allows states and school systems to use high quality, research based instruction in general and special education to provide services and interventions to students who may be at risk of or suspected of having learning disabilities. Alabama schools now use RtI practices to provide intervention for struggling students.

To ensure adequate instruction for students with a specific learning disability, identification must focus on assessments that are directly related to instruction. Services for struggling students must focus on intervention, not eligibility.

A “three-tier” system is required which will include research based instruction, continuous progress monitoring, differentiated curriculum and variations in duration, frequency and time of interventions. Additional information about RtI and its implementation in Alabama schools is available from http://www.alsde.edu/html/sections/doc_download.asp?section=54&id=10257&sort=31

PowerPoint presentations from the 2011 Mega Conference sessions that describe steps for successful implementation of RtI practices and the successful operation of school-based Problem Solving Teams (PSTs) are available from the Special Education Section of the ALSDE website.

19.5 Child Find

LEAs serving children with disabilities must develop and implement procedures that ensure that all children within their jurisdiction, birth to twenty-one, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who need special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. Child Find also applies to children with disabilities who attend private schools, including children attending religious schools, within the LEA’s jurisdiction, highly mobile children with disabilities (e.g., migrant children), homeless children, or children who are wards
of the State and children who are suspected of having a disability and are in need of special education, even though they have not failed, been retained in a course or grade, or are advancing from grade to grade.

Child Find includes a practical method of determining which children with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services and is designed to ensure the equitable participation of parentally-placed private school children with disabilities, as well as an accurate count of these children. Each LEA in which private, including religious, elementary schools and secondary schools are located must, in carrying out the Child Find provisions, include parentally-placed private school children who reside in a state other than the state in which the private schools are located.

For children who are transitioning from Part C (IDEA Early Intervention) to Part B preschool programs, LEAs are required to make FAPE available to each eligible child residing in their jurisdiction no later than the child’s third birthday and have an IEP developed and implemented for the child by that date. If the child’s third birthday occurs during the summer months, the child’s IEP Team will determine when special education services will begin. LEAs must participate in a transition planning conference arranged by the Early Intervention service provider in order to experience a smooth and effective transition to preschool programs.

19.6 Eligibility for Special Education Services

A simplified outline of the steps for determining a student’s eligibility for Special Education services is provided below:

- Request for Initial Evaluation Received
- No evaluation is needed – provide the parent with a Notice of Intent Regarding Special Education Services, a copy of the Special Education Rights and refer to Problem Solving Team (PST)
- Yes, evaluation is needed –
  - Obtain Notice and Consent for Initial Evaluation
  - Conduct Initial Evaluation
  - Provide parents Notice of Proposed Meeting Letter and provide the parent with a copy of the Special Education Rights.
  - Convene IEP/Eligibility Committee
- If Not Eligible – refer to PST
- If Eligible –
  - FAPE may be offered at this time. Notice and Consent for the Provision of Special Education Services must be obtained prior to the provision of services.
  - IEP must be conducted within 30 days.
  - Provide Notice of Proposed Meeting Letter
  - Develop IEP
19.7 Individualized Education Plans

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a legally binding document. It establishes a plan for an individual student who is identified as having one or more of 13 disabilities defined in IDEA. The document should contain an identification of: the student's disability, a statement of the student's present level of performance, long- and short-term instructional objectives that relate to present levels of performance, evaluation procedures, and a statement of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for that student.

Teachers and related service providers who will be implementing the IEP must be informed about the student's IEP and should be given a copy. The complete IEP process includes identification and intervention, the multi-factored evaluation, development of the IEP, implementation of the IEP, and an annual review.

System procedures for special education referrals, testing, and determining eligibility should follow established State Department of Education guidelines and must be completed within firmly defined time frames. Parent permission to evaluate must be obtained before any individualized testing or student evaluation can begin. When evaluations are complete, and it is determined that the student is eligible to receive special education services, an IEP meeting will be scheduled at a mutually acceptable place and time. The following people are to be included in an IEP meeting:

- parents or guardians
- not less than one regular education teacher of the child
- not less than one special education teacher of the child
- a system representative who is able to provide or supervise the provision of special education services and
- an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results
- the child, whenever appropriate
- Additional individuals who may attend are:
  - other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child
  - appropriate service providers
  - other individuals chosen by the parent or school system.

During the IEP meeting team members will:
- review evaluation results
- review the current IEP
- determine the area(s) of strengths and needs
- write goals and short-term objectives
- determine services needed and the duration of services
- determine the least restrictive setting in which to deliver the services
• ensure that the student participates to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers
• consider the need for extended school year

The law requires that an Individual Education Plan be implemented as soon as possible after the IEP conference has taken place. All education employees who work with the child are legally responsible to help the child meet the objectives of the IEP. Lack of participation in the IEP conference does not exclude any education employee from this responsibility. Therefore, it is imperative that the education employee has access to the child's IEP.

The IEP may be reviewed at any time during the school year at the parent’s or teacher’s request, but must be reviewed at least annually and the Persons Responsible for IEP Implementation form signed. This form must be completed for every student who has an IEP. The teacher or parent has the authority to reconvene the IEP team to review goals and objectives, modify the plan, and/or request additional assessment(s).

19.8 Inclusion

Inclusion is a term that expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students). Proponents of inclusion generally favor newer forms of education service delivery for students with special education needs.

Full inclusion means that all students, regardless of disability will be in a regular classroom/program full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting.

Inclusion is a philosophy and practice for providing educational services for special needs students that has come to replace “mainstreaming.” Generally, mainstreaming has been used to refer to the selective placement of special education students in one or more "regular" education classes. Proponents of mainstreaming generally assume that a student must "earn" his or her opportunity to be placed in regular classes by demonstrating an ability to "keep up" with the work assigned by the regular classroom teacher. This concept is closely linked to traditional forms of special education service delivery.

Without some degree of inclusion in the regular education classrooms, special needs students are generally served in resource rooms or in some other self-contained setting. Depending upon the severity of the student’s disability or upon the settings and resources available at a particular school, the resource classroom may be housed in the regular school or may be a specialized facility for students with similar needs.
19.9 Related Services

Public agencies must provide related services that are required to assist children with disabilities to benefit from special education. All related services may not be required for each individual child. Each IEP Team must determine what related services, if any, are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Related services may include, but are not limited to, audiology services, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling services, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, interpreting services, medical services (for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only), occupational therapy, parent counseling and training, physical therapy, psychological services, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, speech-language pathology, social work services in schools, school nurse services, school health services, and orientation and mobility services.

Related services do not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, the optimization of that device’s functioning (e.g., mapping), maintenance of the device, or the replacement of that device. However, nothing limits the right of a child with a surgically implanted device (e.g., cochlear implant) to receive related services as listed above that are determined by the IEP Team to be necessary for the child to receive FAPE. In addition, nothing limits the responsibility of a public agency to appropriately monitor and maintain medical devices that are needed to maintain the health and safety of the child, including breathing, nutrition, or operation of other bodily functions, while the child is transported to and from school or is at school. Finally, nothing prevents the routine checking of an external component of a surgically implanted device to make sure it is functioning properly.

19.10 Discipline of a Student with a Disability

Pursuant to IDEA, when disciplining a child with a disability, one must take that disability into consideration to determine the appropriateness of the disciplinary actions. For example, if a child with Autism is sensitive to loud noises, and she runs out of a room filled with loud noises due to sensory overload, appropriate disciplinary measure for that behavior (running out of the room) must take into account the child’s disability. Moreover, an assessment should be made as to whether appropriate accommodations were in place to meet the needs of the child.

According to the IDEA in cases of children with disabilities who have been suspended for 10 or more days for each school year (including partial days), the local education agency (LEA) must hold a manifestation determination hearing within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a child resulting from of a violation of code of student conduct. The Stay Put rule states that a child shall not be moved from his or her current placement or interim services into an alternative placement if the infraction was deemed to cause danger to other students. The LEA, the parent, and relevant members of the individualized education program (IEP) team (as determined by the parent and LEA) shall review all relevant information in the student's file,
including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by
the parents to determine if the conduct in question was:

- Caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- The direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP.

If the LEA, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team make the determination that the
conduct was a manifestation of the child’s disability, the IEP team shall:

- Conduct a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and implement a behavioral
  intervention plan (BIP) for such child, provided that the LEA had not conducted such
  assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a
  change in placement.
- In the situation where a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review
  the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral
  intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the
  parent and the LEA agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the
  behavior intervention plan.

If it is determined that a student's behavior is a manifestation of his or her disability, then he or
she may not be suspended or expelled. However, under IDEA 2004, if a student "brings a
weapon to school or a school function; or knowingly possess, uses, or sells illegal drugs or
controlled substances at school or a school function"; or causes "serious bodily injury upon
another person," he or she may be placed in an interim alternate educational setting (IAES) for
up to 45 school days. This allows the student to continue receiving educational services while
the IEP team has time to determine the appropriate placement and the appropriate course of
action including reviewing the FBA and the BIP.

### 19.11 Student Restraint and Seclusion

Although the provisions of the Alabama Administrative Code Chapter 290-3-1-.02(1)(f) revised
in 2009 describe the rules regarding the use of restraint and seclusion for all students, these
rules more frequently impact classrooms and programs for special education students. The
code sections require that each local education plan (school safety plan) shall include, at a
minimum, the following training features:

- Professional development shall include training appropriate school personnel in positive
  behavioral support and management of disruptive or dangerous student behavior in
  order to limit and reduce the use of seclusion and restraint to protect students.
  Appropriate school personnel may include, but is not limited to, teachers, teacher
  assistants, school administrators, bus drivers, school resource officers, school
  psychologists, and school counselors.
The training shall include instruction in positive behavioral support and management of student behavior, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint. The appropriate personnel with priority for the training shall include those staff members who are most likely to be called upon to prevent or address disruptive or dangerous student behavior.

Each local board of education shall include in its school safety plan procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of this training in preventing or addressing disruptive or dangerous student behavior. Local boards of education are encouraged to use available sources of discretionary revenue to train personnel in the management of disruptive or dangerous student behavior. By February 1, 2010, local boards of education shall amend their school safety plans to include this training.

Definitions important for school system personnel include:

1. **Physical restraint** is direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly restricts a student’s movement. The term physical restraint does not include mechanical restraint or chemical restraint. Additionally, physical restraint does not include: providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to a student in order to promote safety or to prevent self-injurious behavior; providing physical guidance or prompting to a student when teaching a skill; redirecting attention; providing guidance to a location; providing comfort; or providing limited physical contact as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person’s property.

2. **Chemical restraint** is any medication that is used to control violent physical behavior or to restrict the student’s freedom of movement that is not a prescribed treatment for a medical or psychiatric condition of the student.

3. **Mechanical restraint** is the use of any device or material attached to or adjacent to a student’s body that is intended to restrict the normal freedom of movement and which cannot be easily removed by the student. The term does not include an adaptive or protective device recommended by a physician or therapist when used as recommended by the physician or therapist to promote normative body positioning and physical functioning, and/or to prevent self injurious behavior. The term also does not include seatbelts and other safety equipment when used to secure students during transportation.
4. **Seclusion** is a procedure that isolates and confines the student in a separate, locked area until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to himself/herself or others. Seclusion occurs in a specifically constructed or designated room or space that is physically isolated from common areas and from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include situations in which a staff member trained in the use of de-escalation techniques or restraint is physically present in the same unlocked room as the student; time-out as defined herein; in-school suspension; detention; or a student-requested break in a different location in the room or in a separate room.

5. **Time-out** is a behavioral intervention in which the student is temporarily removed from the learning activity. Time-out is appropriately used and is not seclusion when:
   a. The non-locking setting used for time-out is appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated or cooled.
   b. The duration of the time-out is reasonable in light of the purpose of the time-out and the age of the child; however, each time-out should not exceed 45 minutes.
   c. The student is reasonably monitored by an attending adult who is in reasonable physical proximity of the student and has sight of the student while in time-out.
   d. The time-out space is free of objects that unreasonably expose the student or others to harm.

Additionally, the code specifically prohibits in Alabama public schools and educational programs the use of seclusion, any method of physical restraint that restricts the flow of air to a student’s lungs, the use of mechanical restraint, and the use of chemical restraint. The use of physical restraint is prohibited except in those situations in which the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques. Notwithstanding the foregoing, physical restraint is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs when used as a form of discipline or punishment. Schools that use physical restraint must develop and implement written policies to govern the use of physical restraint. Parents must be provided information regarding the school’s policies governing the use of physical restraint. Specific features of the written policies and the complete details of this chapter of the Alabama Administrative Code may be downloaded at [http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/290-3-1.pdf](http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/290-3-1.pdf).

### 19.12 Considerations for Desired Post-School Outcomes for Special Education Students

The student’s IEP Team makes decisions about the most appropriate outcome from among options available to all students in Alabama schools including:
• Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement (AHSD/AAE)
• Alabama High School Diploma (AHSD) without Endorsement (AHSD)
• Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Career/Technical Endorsement (AHSD/ACTE)
• Alabama High School Diploma with Career /Technical Endorsement (AHSD/CTE)
• Alabama High School Diploma with Credit Based Endorsement (AHSD/CBE)

The diploma options listed above prepare students for many post-school options. These diplomas are:
• Accepted by postsecondary institutions
• Accepted by the military
• Accepted by employers

Another option the IEP Team may consider is The Alabama Occupational Diploma (AOD), available only to students with disabilities as defined by IDEA. It prepares students for competitive employment and limited post-school options. The AOD is
• Accepted by many employers
• Accepted by the Alabama College System in degree programs with an ACT of 16
• Accepted by the Alabama College System in certain non-certificated programs
• May be accepted by the military on a case-by-case basis

If none of the above-described diplomas is appropriate for the student, the IEP Team may recommend that the student receive a Graduation Certificate (CERTIFICATE). The Graduation Certificate is only available to students with disabilities as defined by IDEA. It prepares students for their post-school transitional goals and:
• Is not generally accepted by postsecondary institutions
• Is not accepted by military recruiters
• May not be accepted by some employers

19.13 Special Education Transportation Issues: Length of School Day

School systems and IEP Team members must analyze the transportation routes and how these impact the learning needs of special needs students. Considerations include, but are not limited to these:
• Special needs routes must be in “balance” with regular bus routes
• Long rides can be seen as “punishment” for special needs students
• Must keep up with how long it takes to get each student to/from school
• May require changing sites for low-incidence populations to more central locations
• May require adding bus routes (vehicle, personnel, fuel, etc.)
Additional personnel, specialized equipment, and buses with air conditioning or special safety features may be required to meet IEP and/or related services requirements one or more students.

19.14 Lee v. Macon Litigation and Disproportionality

Alabama has worked diligently to address disproportionality in special education since 2000 through the initiatives of the Lee v. Macon Special Education Consent Decree. This Consent Decree required special education programs in this state to address the overrepresentation of African-American students identified as having mental retardation (MR – now known as Intellectual Disability - ID) and emotional disturbance (ED) and the underrepresentation of African-American students identified as having a specific learning disability (SLD) and giftedness (GT).

Alabama made significant progress in reducing the disparities and, in December 2006, was granted unitary status with the provision that the state would continue to provide training to teachers, administrators, and evaluators with regard to disproportionality. With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA), the focus of disproportionality is taken to the next level. IDEA 2004 regulations extend the directives of the Consent Decree mandates to include an analysis of three additional disability areas: autism (AUT), other health impairment (OHI), and speech or language impairment (SLI) in addition to MR/ID, ED, and SLD. It further requires that we also analyze state and local education agency (LEA) data with regard to disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity in least restrictive environment (LRE) and discipline.

Disproportionality in the context of the IDEA refers to comparisons made among groups of students by race or ethnicity who are identified for special education services. When students from particular racial or ethnic groups are identified at a greater or lesser rate than all other students, then that group may be said to be disproportionately represented. Disproportionate representation encompasses both “overrepresentation” in high incidence disabilities and “underrepresentation” in programs for gifted and talented. When a particular racial or ethnic group is represented in special education at a rate greater than in the population in general, the group is said to be overrepresented. It is evident that children of some racial or ethnic groups are overrepresented in some categories of special education. More specifically, research data show that the problem of disproportionality is especially apparent for African-American males in high-incidence categories such as MR/ID and ED. As a result of two comprehensive studies on disproportionality, Congress requires action to investigate and eliminate it.

Studies have documented apparent discrepancies in the levels of referral and placement of limited English proficient children in special education. Such discrepancies pose a special challenge for special education the referral of, assessment of, and provision of services for, our nation’s students from non-English language backgrounds. The limited English proficient
population is the fastest growing in our nation, and the growth is occurring in many parts of our nation. Studies have documented apparent discrepancies in the levels of referral and placement of limited English proficient children in special education.

African-American youth placed in special education programs experience fewer positive outcomes than their white counterparts. They are more likely to be assigned to segregated classrooms or placements; have limited access to inclusive and general education environments; experience higher drop-out rates and lower academic performance; are exposed to substandard and less rigorous curricula (Ferri & Conner, 2005); and (5) may be classified or inappropriately labeled.

The state must have in effect policies and procedures designed to prevent the inappropriate over identification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities, including children with disabilities. When there is a finding of significant disproportionality LEAs must provide for the review and revision (if appropriate) of policies, practices, and procedures to ensure compliance with requirements of IDEA; reserve funds to be used for coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) and publicly report on the revisions of policies, procedures, and practices.

Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) are new to IDEA 2004. CEIS is about catching problems early when children are struggling to learn—especially apparent in the early grades and in tasks like reading and math. Under IDEA 2004, school systems are required to use 15% of their Part B funds to develop and provide CEIS to children who are not already identified as children with disabilities but who need academic and behavioral support to succeed in the general education environment. CEIS are for children in kindergarten through 12th grade (with particular emphasis on students in grades K-3). CEIS are not services designated for children with disabilities—in fact, if a child has been determined eligible for special education and related services, that child would not be eligible for CEIS. However, a child who previously was identified as being a child with a disability but who currently does not need special education services would not be prevented from receiving CEIS. The rationale behind using IDEA funds to pay for CEIS is that the earlier that staff identify children’s learning difficulties, the quicker and less expensive the task of helping those children catch up will be. The longer a child goes without assistance, the longer the remediation time and the more intense the services must be. The U.S Department of Education believes that the use of Part B funds for CEIS has the potential to benefit children by reducing academic and behavioral problems in the regular education environment and reducing the number of referrals to special education that could have been avoided by relatively simple regular education interventions. Therefore it is important to provide timely and appropriate interventions in the general education program. Most of Alabama’s Part B funds are used for teacher salaries and benefits. A requirement to use 15% of that funding source could possibly result in the loss of teacher units.
Disproportionality Bibliography and Recommended References


19.15 Gifted Education

Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

Referral for Gifted Services

Each LEA must develop and implement procedures to ensure that students who exhibit gifted characteristics are referred for gifted services. Parents, teachers, and students must be informed of referral procedures. Efforts must be made to identify students among all populations and socioeconomic groups as well as students with disabilities and students who are Limited English Proficient (LEP).

Second Grade Child Find

All second grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist provided by the State Department of Education. A student may be referred for consideration for gifted services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student’s abilities. Standard referrals may occur at any time for students six years of age and older. Parents must be informed when
students are referred. Each LEA must establish a team(s) to review referrals to determine if further assessment is indicated. Each team should consist of at least three individuals including someone knowledgeable about the student and someone knowledgeable about gifted education.

The LEA must obtain written parental consent prior to administering individual assessments. An identified gifted student may be placed in a program for the gifted upon written approval of the parents. Participation in this program is not mandatory should the parent and/or the student choose not to participate. A copy of the rights pertaining to gifted education services must be given to the parents with the consent for screening and/or evaluation.

**Gifted Student Evaluation and Gifted Service Delivery**

Each LEA must develop and implement procedures to evaluate students referred for gifted services. Information must be obtained in the following areas: Aptitude should be assessed through an individual or group test of intelligence or creativity. Vision and hearing screening must be completed prior to completing individually administered aptitude assessments (not screeners). At least three examples of student performance that indicate the student is performing at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of his or her age, experience, or environment must be included. A behavior rating scale designed to assess gifted behaviors should be used.

Information must be gathered to determine if there are any environmental, cultural, economic, language differences, or a disabling condition that might mask a student’s true abilities and thereby affect student performance in the areas evaluated. Tests and evaluative materials selected and administered should be sensitive to cultural, economic, and linguistic differences and be administered by qualified personnel under the supervision of an LEA. For special populations such children with LEP, or sensory or physical impairments, assessments used must be appropriate for their special needs. For students who exhibit creative thinking abilities the *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking* (or other creativity assessment with prior approval) must be administered unless the student has been determined eligible with a verbal or nonverbal assessment. Each LEA must establish an Eligibility Determination Team (EDT) to implement procedures to determine eligibility of students for gifted services. Each team should consist of at least three individuals including someone knowledgeable about the student being assessed, someone knowledgeable about gifted students in general, and someone able to interpret the assessment information gathered. Eligibility must be determined within 90 days of receiving parental consent for standard referrals.

Referrals generated from the second grade Child Find activity should be completed by the beginning of the student’s third grade year. The LEAs must provide written notice to parents regarding the eligibility decision. Two methods of eligibility determination are available. The student may not be determined ineligible without having the matrix applied. A student may be
determined automatically eligible for gifted services when the obtained full scale/composite IQ score on an individually administered test of intelligence (NOT a screener) is two standard deviations above the mean or higher; or either the Verbal Average Standard score or Figural Creativity Index of the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking is at or above the 97th national percentile. The matrix of multiple criteria developed by the State Department of Education requires information in the areas described above.

LEAs must utilize a variety of service delivery options that may include but are not limited to resource room pull-out, consultation, mentorships, advanced classes, and independent study. Gifted students’ need for complexity and accelerated pacing must be accommodated for in the general education program. Accommodations may include strategies such as flexible skills grouping, cluster grouping with differentiation, curriculum compacting, subject and grade acceleration, dual enrollment, and advanced classes. Each LEA must establish and implement a procedure for considering any requests for subject or grade acceleration. The procedures must be approved by the State Department of Education and will be included in the LEA Plan for Gifted Education. Modes of service delivery may vary by grade and/or grade level cluster but must be consistent from school to school.

19.16 Migrant Students

Subpart C of Title I (NCLB) describes the local education agency’s (LEAs) responsibilities for education services to migrant students. This portion of the NCLB legislation (§200.81 through §200.87) provides the parameters for identifying and developing appropriate instructional programs for students meeting the Federal statutory definition as migrant. A migrant child is defined as one who is, or whose parent, spouse, or guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent, spouse, guardian in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment has moved from one school system to another.

Systems are directed annually to conduct surveys to identify migrant students and to submit reports of migrant students enrolled in the system. Federal funds allocated under Title I, subpart C may be used to provide supplemental educational and other services to migrant students and their families.

19.17 Homeless Students

School systems, as recipients of federal financial assistance and as public entities, must ensure that their educational programs for homeless children are administered in a nondiscriminatory manner. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces federal laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972); age (Age Discrimination Act of 1975); and disability (section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act). The most recent federal legislation describing local
school system responsibilities for the education of homeless students is found in the Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The McKinney-Vento program is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under this program, State educational agencies must ensure that each homeless student has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other students. Homeless children and youth should have access to the educational and other services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment. States and systems are required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth (twenty-one years of age and younger) as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:
  - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”);
  - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - living in emergency or transitional shelters;
  - abandoned in hospitals; or
  - awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Every local education agency (LEA) is required to designate a local liaison for homeless children and youth. The local liaison serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, system personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers. The local liaisons must ensure that

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other agencies and entities;
• Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA;
• Homeless children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services;
• Parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
• Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of any transportation services;
• Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act; and
• Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where children and youth receive services under the Act.

In meeting these responsibilities, local liaisons will assist homeless children and youth with activities such as the following:

• Enrolling in school and accessing school services;
• Obtaining immunizations or medical records;
• Informing parents, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children and youth;
• Working with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement; and
• Helping to coordinate transportation services for homeless students.

States and local systems may be eligible for federal grants to establish programs to assist in the identification and education of homeless children and youth. Such funds may be used to provide additional educational materials and supplies, student transportation, tutoring, medical services, or other activities to meet other demonstrated needs related to the academic achievement of the student. Additional information about best practices for educating homeless children and youth is available from the U.S. Department of Education website (www.ed.gov) and these publications:


19.18 Neglected and Delinquent Students

Title I, §1115(2)(D) of NCLB specifies as eligible to receive assistance with Federal funds, students who are neglected and delinquent. The law defines neglected and delinquent children as those children living in local institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth or attending a community day program for such children. Guidelines are provided to LEAs to assist in locating students who meet the definition of neglected and delinquent. Local schools are required annually to report the status and needs of neglected and delinquent students. When students in the system meet these definitions, plans for the use of federal funds to assist them are submitted to the Federal Programs Department of the Alabama State Department of Education for approval.

19.19 Homebound Students

The superintendent is responsible for appointing a qualified person(s) to provide homebound instruction for eligible special education students enrolled in the local school system. Any student diagnosed as having an exceptionality as defined by the Alabama Administrative Code, 290-080-090, Special Programs I, who cannot attend school because of a physical condition must be scheduled to receive instruction according to his/her individualized education program (IEP) within the home. Students eligible to receive homebound instruction for a disability other than physical are determined by the student’s IEP team. A homebound placement is a least restrictive environment (LRE) option.

The superintendent may provide homebound services, provided funds are available and upon approval by the Board, for any student with a medically diagnosed condition who may have an extended absence from school. Many school systems have formal application procedures for requesting homebound instruction and for documenting the condition necessitating the service.

Some course content or instructional activities may not be suitable for homebound instruction. For example, courses involving student interaction with classmates, presentations, laboratory experiments, or use of school equipment may require significant modification for homebound instruction or may not be suitable for such students. School system personnel may provide alternate assignments or may postpone the course requirements for eligible students.
20. SCHEDULING

20.1 School Day and School Year

The Alabama Administrative Code (§290-3-1-.02(2)(a)(1) [amended in March 2006], in accordance with the Code of Alabama (195), §16-1-1, specifies that the official school year shall consist of a minimum of 180 teaching days and that the school day shall be at least six (6) hours of actual teaching, exclusive of lunch and recess.

School systems and local boards of education may determine the local school calendar to meet community needs when the minimum number of instructional days, employee contract days, and instructional clock hours are included. However, the State Department of Education is considering the establishment of a uniform “opening of school” window during which all systems must begin school. This measure is being considered in light of federal mandates under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) to administer standardized tests and report results to parents 30 days prior to the opening of school. Having local schools adopt widely different calendars will make compliance with these federal mandates difficult, if not impossible.

With the passage of Alabama Legislative Act 2012-482 (also known as the Flexible School Calendar Act of 2012), rules about the school calendars adopted by local boards of education have changed for the 2012-2013 school year and for the first three months of the 2013-2014 school year. Features of this Act include the following:

- The first day for student instruction can be no earlier than the Monday two weeks prior to Labor Day – August 20, 2012.
- The last day for student instruction must be no later than the Friday immediately preceding National Memorial Day – May 24, 2013.
- The state-required student school year must include a minimum of 180 instructional days based on a minimum of six hours of instruction per day or its hourly equivalent of 1080 hours exclusive of lunch, recess, and class change.
- There are two (2) required holidays—Veteran’s Day and National Memorial Day—with no staff or students in attendance.
- There is one (1) required professional development day each year (Teacher Institute) for certified employees.
- All other holidays and professional development days are at the discretion of the local board of education.

20.2 Local Time Requirements and Homework

The total instructional time of each school day in all schools and at all grade levels shall be not less than 6 hours or 360 minutes, exclusive of lunch periods, recess, or time used for changing
classes (§16-1-1 Code of Alabama). The allocations below are based on considerations of a balanced educational program for Grades 1-6. Local school systems are encouraged to develop a general plan for scheduling that supports interdisciplinary instruction. Remedial and/or enrichment activities should be a part of the time schedule for the specific subject area. The suggested time guidelines below are found in the end sections of each Alabama Course of Study booklet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Grades 1-3</th>
<th>Grades 4-6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>150 minutes daily</td>
<td>120 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>60 minutes daily</td>
<td>60 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>30 minutes daily</td>
<td>45 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>30 minutes daily</td>
<td>45 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>30 minutes daily</td>
<td>30 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>60 minutes weekly</td>
<td>60 minutes weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Education</td>
<td>60 minutes weekly</td>
<td>60 minutes weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Education</td>
<td>10 minutes daily</td>
<td>10 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20.3 Class Size

The Alabama State Board of Education in a resolution on September 11, 1997 adopted class size standards to become effective for kindergarten through sixth grade in January 1998 and for seventh grade through twelfth grade in the fall of 1998. The standards include the following stipulations describing pupil-teacher ratios and maximum class sizes:

1. Pupil-teacher ratios in all kindergarten through third grade classes shall be limited to 1:18. The State Department of Education must approve any exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

2. Pupil-teacher ratios in all fourth through sixth grade classes shall be limited to 1:26. The State Department of Education must approve any exceptions on a case-by-case basis. This ratio does not include physical education and musical performing groups.

3. Pupil-teacher ratios in all seventh through twelfth grade classes shall be limited to 1:29. The State Department of Education must approve any exceptions on a case-by-case basis. This ratio does not include physical education, music performing groups, JROTC, or typing classes.

4. At the secondary level, the maximum number of student per teacher, other than band, choral, physical education, JROTC, and typing must not exceed 150 per day (750 per week) exclusive of study halls.

5. At the secondary level, the maximum number of student contacts per teacher each week for physical education, musical performing groups, JROTC, and typing is 1,000. High schools (grades 7-12), junior high schools (grades 7-9), middle
schools (grades 7-8), and area vocational centers shall also maintain the SACS standards of an overall student/total professional staff ratio of 21:1.

(6) At the secondary level, the maximum number of students enrolled in drivers’ education programs shall not exceed sixty (60) per teacher per semester.

The recommended pupil-teacher ratios and class size guidelines described above are not to be confused with the class “divisors”, used to calculate the allocation of teacher units and related funds to the LEAs.

20.4 Arts Education Scheduling

Daily instruction with Arts specialists in each of the Arts disciplines is the most desirable schedule. However, schools unable to provide daily Arts instruction in each discipline are encouraged to schedule in Grades 1 through 3 two 30- to 45-minute Arts instruction sessions per week and in Grades 4 through 6 a minimum of 60 minutes of instruction per week. Interdisciplinary instruction within the regular classroom setting is encouraged as an alternative approach for scheduling time for Arts instruction when Arts specialists are not available.

20.5 Kindergarten

In accordance with Alabama Administrative Code r. 290-5-1-.01(5) Minimum Standards for Organizing Kindergarten Programs in Alabama Schools, the daily time schedule of the kindergartens shall be the same as the schedule of the elementary schools in the systems of which they are a part since kindergartens in Alabama operate as full-day programs. There are no established time guidelines for individual subject areas for the kindergarten classroom. The emphasis is on large blocks of time that allow children the opportunity to explore all areas of the curriculum in an unhurried manner.

In accordance with Alabama Administrative Code r. 290-5-1-.01(6), the official guide for program planning in kindergarten is Alabama Kindergartens, Bulletin 1987, No. 28. Criteria to be used in scheduling are listed on pages 45-46 of this guide. The full-day program should be organized utilizing large blocks of time for large group, small groups, center time, lunch, outdoor activities, snacks, transitions, routines, and afternoon review. Individual exploration, small-group interest activities, interaction with peers and teachers, manipulation of concrete materials, and involvement in many other real-world experiences are needed to provide a balance in the kindergarten classroom.

20.6 Grouping for Instruction

A wide variety of instructional grouping strategies are available for public schools at every level. Schools today employ many varied schedules and class arrangements to accommodate the
varied learning styles of students, school system budget limitations, and the increased academic requirements.

Effective instructional practices involve assessing the needs of students at a particular age level, utilizing multiple teaching modes, and altering student grouping arrangements as the situation requires it.

Many secondary schools have used varied instructional day schedules to promote learning. Some common arrangements are:

- A six period day: Students attend six classes each day, four academic core courses and two others, for approximately 60 minutes each.
- A seven period day: Students attend seven classes each day, four academic core courses and three others, for approximately 50 minutes each day.
- A four period day (semester block): Students attend four classes each day for approximately 96 minutes each. Students take four classes first term and four classes second term, typically taking two academic core courses and two others each term.
- A four period day (alternating block): Students attend four classes each day with alternating classes every other day.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these and other scheduling plans. Schools and systems must study the student, personnel, and fiscal resources of the system to determine the best scheduling plan.

Most elementary schools use some variation of self-contained class schedules for the majority of the school day. Some, especially at upper elementary grades, have begun to departmentalize for all or portions of the instructional day.

20.7 Self-contained Classrooms

The majority of elementary school classrooms and some middle school classrooms are described as self-contained. In these settings a single teacher or team of teacher and instructional aide provide instruction for all students assigned to the room. Students in the self-contained classroom may be homogeneously grouped by ability or may be a heterogeneous grouping of students of different abilities. In self-contained classrooms, the teacher or instructional personnel provide learning activities on all the subjects in the curriculum for the majority of the student’s day.

Self-contained classrooms can provide students with a sense of identity in belonging to the group and allow students to establish familiarity with the teacher’s instructional techniques and the classroom resources. Recent additions of more specialists to the elementary schools program (certified physical education teachers, certified arts and music teachers, counselors,
etc.) provide opportunities for students in self-contained classes to socialize with peers and provide opportunities for teachers to engage in planning while students attend specialized classes weekly or daily.

Self-contained classrooms serve as the least-restrictive environment (LRE) for many students with special needs. Students who are not appropriate candidates for mainstreaming or inclusion may be in self-contained classes for all or part of the instructional day.

A disadvantage of self-contained classrooms is the limitation of the teacher in preparing a large number of in-depth study units as allowed in departmentalized classrooms. Self-contained classes may contain students of one chronological age group or grade level, or may be designed for multi-age groups spanning two or more years.

### 20.8 Homogeneous Classrooms

Homogeneous groupings of students for instruction most often involve assigning students based on their academic abilities or talents. Advanced levels of academic classes, musical or artistic performance classes, classes for English language learners, remedial classes, and gifted programs are all examples of appropriate homogeneous instructional grouping. Critics of homogenous classes site the tendency to limit student access to certain programs of study by “tracking” students into particular academic paths or sequences of study.

### 20.9 Heterogeneous Classrooms

Heterogeneous groupings of student for instruction place students with varying abilities and characteristics in the same classroom. Teachers of heterogeneous classrooms become proficient in differentiated instruction. Proponents of heterogeneous classrooms site achievement gains of struggling students who learn with able students. Heterogeneous classes reflect the real-world settings in which students will ultimately apply their learning. Development of student collaboration skills, increased tolerance for differences, and development leadership skills are but some of the positive outcomes sited by researchers as benefits of heterogeneous student groupings.

### 20.10 Looping

Looping is an educational practice in which a single graded class of children stays with a teacher for two or more years or grade levels. The children and the teacher remain together as the class is promoted. At the end of the second or third year in the pattern, the children move on to a new teacher while the looping teacher returns to the lower grade level to receive a new group of students.
For students, the benefits of looping include reduced apprehension at starting a new school year, increased continuity, and more in-depth relationships with teacher and with peers. For teachers, the benefits of looping consist of becoming familiar with other developmental stages of children, and working with students and parents for longer periods of time.

The long-term relationships established through looping have been shown to support student learning. For further information on looping, refer to the following sources: Looping: Supporting Student Learning Through Long-Term Relationships (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory, 1997) or Looping Through the Years: Teachers and Students Progressing Together (McClellan, 1995).

Looping at the Middle School Level
In the United States, looping is most often used at the elementary level of schooling. However, because early adolescence can be an especially difficult time, a fair amount of research has targeted this age group as one that could benefit from looping. Some of that research is published in an ERIC Digest titled Looping: Adding Time, Strengthening Relationships. A 1997 pilot program, sponsored by East Cleveland (Ohio) Schools and Cleveland State University, found students in a looping program exhibited substantially higher reading and mathematics achievement scores on standardized tests than did students in the traditional grade organization, even when both groups were taught by the same teacher. (Source: Looping: Adding Time, Strengthening Relationships.) A study in 1981 compared academic outcomes of students in two schools of similar socioeconomic levels, one with a traditional grade-level structure and the other a school in which the students remained with the same teacher for more than one year. Those in the extended-relationship school outperformed their counterparts in the traditional school on basic skills tests. In spite of these positive findings many of the studies that exist are not recent and many rely on personal evaluation. Additional high-quality empirical research not dependent on personal evaluation is needed in order to determine whether, as many contend, looping really has a positive effect on student performance.

Additional on-line resources about looping include:

What Does the Research Say? Maintaining Long-Term Teacher and Student Relationships This article from Schools in the Middle (November/December 1997), a publication of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, describes a recent study by educators at the University of Florida at Gainesville on the effects of looping.

Looping This URL will link to looping resources from TeachNet.com, including “Looping,” an article that offers research and information compiled by a Wichita school interested in instituting looping.
Teachers Plot to Give Students a Loop  A 12/28/98 Charlotte News-Observer article by Michele Kurtz describes a Durham (North Carolina) middle school’s idea of having the middle school teachers loop up to the high school with the students. It also decries the paucity and quality of research currently available on looping.

20.11 Block Scheduling

The traditional high school scheduling process remained unchanged for most of the 20th century. In 1994, the National Commission on Time and Learning issued a report (Prisoners of Time) encouraging the use of block scheduling to give teachers the time to engage students in learning. Various forms of block scheduling have been implemented.

Forms of Block Scheduling

- **4 x 4 Four**  Four 90-minute periods per semester
- **A/B or Eight Block**  A two day rotating system with students completing eight classes during the year
- **Modified Block**  Two to three 90-minute blocks couples with split 45-minute classes

Positive Outcomes of Block Scheduling

The evidence that block scheduling increases student achievement as measured by standardized test scores is inconclusive. However, Queen (2000) summarized the following positive outcomes of block scheduling:

- Students have access to a broader array of courses
- Fewer disciplinary referrals because of the reduced number of class changes
- Improved class attendance
- Increased numbers of students completing the Advanced Placement courses
- Advanced mastery of subject content
- Improved course grades
- More in-depth engagement of students
- More teacher/student interaction
- Reduced amount of instructional time spent on classroom administration
- Lessons extended and maintained with greater continuity
- Less fragmentation because students focus on fewer courses at a time
- Teachers have more planning time
- Absent students have fewer courses in which to make up work
- Students who need remedial assistance or who fail a course during the first semester have the opportunity to repeat the course during the second semester and still remain with their age mates, thus limiting the need for summer school, improving student self-esteem, and increasing the likelihood that students will graduate
• Advanced students have the opportunity for acceleration and enrichment
• Number of class preparations, record keeping, and grades by teachers reduced.
• Time available for extended laboratory investigation or classroom experiments
• Single-period field trips close to school possible
• Students have fewer homework assignments in one day
• Students suspended for a semester can still earn four credits for the year

Block scheduling has come under attack because the instructional time per class is reduced. The following demonstrates that the number of teaching minutes for the traditional two-semester approach to scheduling and the block approach to scheduling compare favorably.

Two-semester course-180 days-50 minutes each = 9,000 minutes instructional time
4x4 block course-90 days-90-minutes each = 8,100 minutes instructional time

However, if ten minutes of each class is devoted to administrative functions at the beginning of each period, 1,800 minutes are lost under the traditional schedule (180 days x 10 minutes) whereas only 900 minutes are lost under the 4x4 block (90 days x 10 minutes). Because of the reduction in administrative tasks associated with course delivery, the actual instruction time for both the traditional and the block schedule format is 7,200 minutes.

A major drawback to block scheduling during periods of declining funding for education is that it costs more to implement. On a four-period block schedule in a secondary school, 75% of teachers are available to teach students during each period rather than 86% during a 7-period day. Schools who are successfully continuing with block scheduling during economic downturns are using teachers efficiently for parts of traditional planning time to intervene with struggling students, for enrichment teaching of advanced students, or for collaborative planning and/or grant writing.

Block scheduling is more likely to achieve its promise when teachers use a variety of classroom strategies. Superintendents of systems where block scheduling is in use or being considered can increase the likelihood that block scheduling achieves its promise by assuring that teachers receive both initial and continuing training so they can master a variety of instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning, inquiry method, group discussion, concept development, simulations, and seminars.

20.12 Multi-age Classrooms

Multi-age educational practices are grounded in a philosophy that holds that every child can learn and has the right to do so at his or her own pace, that learning is a continuum rather than a series of steps, that diversity is not only a reality but is something to be embraced, and that a classroom is a family of learners. By purposefully structuring a class to include a span of ages and to take advantage of the resulting diversity, proponents of multi-age grouping believe that
students naturally become more accepting of one another’s differences. There is an atmosphere of nurturing rather than one of competition in which children pressure one another to fit an arbitrary norm. The teacher finds himself or herself supporting each individual child as to their own complex set of needs rather than trying to lead a group of students to complete an age-based step.

Multi-age classrooms are purposefully designed to contain students with similar academic needs but whose ages differ. It differs from the combination or split-grade class where the teacher works separately with the two different grade level groups housed in one room. The multi-age room teacher allows all students in the group to develop at his/her own rate and to support one another’s learning, much like a family with children of different ages.

Most often, multi-age classroom groups span two traditional grade levels with the students’ ages differing by two to three years. Rarely does a multi-age classroom contain students who ages differ by more than three years. Although most commonly found in elementary schools, multi-age groupings in middle and secondary schools can be found for some subject areas.

20.13 Departmentalized Classes

Many upper elementary grades and almost all secondary classrooms in traditional public schools are organized along department lines. The academic core areas (English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) and electives form the basis of the departmentalized school. In these instructional arrangements teachers specialize in a particular subject and grade level. They develop activities and learning experiences to present the designated curriculum in that subject or department and for the assigned grade level. Students rotate daily, or by some other time increment, through a series of classes taught by the departmentalized teachers.

Departmentalization in secondary school is most often dictated by the teacher certification requirements for secondary school teaching. Departmentalization in elementary schools results from the amount of preparation needed in some content areas. In-depth study in elementary school science and social studies sometimes cannot be accomplished without departmentalizing for some or all subjects to allow teachers to maximize resources and preparation time.

20.14 Four Blocks Literacy Model

The Four Blocks Literacy Model is a research-based, multi-level, balanced literacy approach to primary school language arts instruction that includes four basic components: guided reading, self-selected reading, working with words, and writing. It was developed by Pat Cunningham and Dottie Hall of Wake Forest University in 1989. It is now used in thousands of elementary school classrooms in grades 1, 2, and sometimes 3.
Four Block ensures that all children are exposed to all four components each day, allows all children to experience success at challenging levels within a variety of grouping structures, and provides a strong phonics component in an appropriate context. This model can be implemented with any reading/language arts materials and is designed for beginning readers in grades 1 and 2 or struggling readers in grade 3.

The major components of the program, called “blocks,” are:

1. **Guided Reading**: Children are exposed to a wide range of literature experiences with a focus on building comprehension using a variety of reading formats and before- and after-reading activities.

2. **Self-Selected Reading**: Children are provided with opportunities to become lifelong readers through teacher read-alouds and reading self-selected books at their own level.

3. **Working With Words**: Children are empowered to read and spell words through interactive experiences that build phonemic awareness and help children to apply phonics.

4. **Writing**: Children develop essential writing skills through mini-lessons, modeled writing, collaborative writing, and independent writing.

Training workshops for teachers, several “4 Blocks Literacy” websites, and numerous publications provide resources for teachers who use the 4 Blocks Literacy approach in primary classrooms. The original authors of the program have also developed a pre-school/kindergarten level of the program called Building Blocks. More information about the 4 Blocks Literacy Framework is available at [http://www.wfu.edu/~cunningh/fourblocks](http://www.wfu.edu/~cunningh/fourblocks).

### 20.15 Instructional Teams

Instructional teams or pods are a feature of many middle schools and some high schools. In these arrangements, large numbers of students enrolled in one school or one grade level can be divided into smaller learning communities or teams. Typically, a team or group of students is taught by one group of teachers (academic core subjects) so that teachers become familiar with students’ academic, social, and emotional needs. Using this method, a school of approximately 700 students could be divided into 6 instructional teams with each team of teachers teaching a group of approximately 125 students.

When the team of teachers for a particular group of students has common planning time, parents may schedule conferences conveniently, meeting with a students’ teaching team as a group of individually. Team teachers can compare student progress and coordinate instruction more effectively using the instructional team arrangement.
20.16 Electives

Course offerings beyond the required academic core are most commonly referred to as elective courses. In most schools, students may select from among elective courses designated for the grade level or diploma path. Graduation requirements now include courses previously designated as electives (a fine arts course, a computer course, a career/technical course for AOD students, foreign languages, etc.). However, schools may offer more than one course to meet the requirement in each category. Students must select from electives that meet the graduation requirements when more than one of these types of courses if offered.

Elective courses may pose the greatest challenge when developing the secondary school’s master schedule. When few students elect to take a particular course, one or few sections are needed. The placement of such “singleton” courses in the schedule needs careful planning to avoid conflicts with other courses.

20.17 Scheduling Access to Support Services

Library/Media Centers

The library/media center is a fundamental part of the educational program of any successful school. An effective school library/media program provides:

- Equal and maximum access to information resources that extend the limited content of textbooks.
- Instruction for students in acquiring the research skills necessary for independent learning.
- Motivation for students to read and enjoy good literature.
- Encouragement for students to use a variety of media for a lifetime of learning and pleasure.

Each school’s philosophy and goals help to establish direction and unique qualities and services for the school’s library media program. Therefore, schools’ library/media programs may vary somewhat in components, resources, and/or services. However, accreditation standards and system policies describe common elements of successful library/media programs. Those common elements include:

- Equal access to information in the school library/media collection.
- Provision of supplementary materials to enhance the school curriculum.
- Integration of information skills instruction with classroom activities.
- Assistance to teachers in using a variety of media formats to improve instruction.
- Motivation for students to enjoy good literature and other worthwhile resources.
- Access to the use of current technologies to improve instructional effectiveness.
Each local school system is responsible for establishing policies and procedures for the selection of library/media materials. Selection procedures are most effective when they are a cooperative process involving teacher, administrators, parents, students and professionally trained library media center personnel. The American Association of School Librarians recommends the following as valuable objectives in the process of evaluation and selection of school library/media materials:

- To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
- To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
- To provide information that will enable students to develop critical thinking skills and make intelligent judgments in an objective manner.
- To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that students may develop the practice of making critical analyses of all media.
- To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users.

Certification requirements for school library/media specialists are set by State Board of Education regulations and accreditation standards.

**Laboratories**

Equipped science laboratories are required for the full implementation of the Alabama Science Course of Study. Instructional design features of the science curricula for grades 7-12 call for laboratory experiments and hands-on application of learning. Guidance is available from SDE specialists for design and equipment specifications for science labs. The Classroom Improvement Section of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction of the Alabama State Department of Education

**Counseling/Guidance**

Accreditation standards and State Board of Education directives indicate that all students should have the benefit of a functional guidance program. The design and components of school guidance and counseling programs in Alabama public schools is described in *The Revised Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance State Model for Excellence in Alabama’s Public Schools (The State Plan).*

The rationale for the services provided by counselors in Alabama public schools is based on the following tenets:
Each student has the right to respect and dignity as a human being and to the counseling and guidance services described in the State Model without regard to person, character, belief, or race.

(2) Each student has the right to self-direction and self-development.

(3) Each student has the right of choice and the responsibility for choices made.

(4) Counseling and guidance programs are for all students and the purpose is to assist individuals in attaining their maximum potential in knowledge of self and others, as well as in educational and career planning.

A comprehensive counseling and guidance program is an essential component of the total instructional program through which the students have maximum opportunity for their development. In this regard, counseling and guidance involves a planned, purposeful, and sequential program of activities which begin in kindergarten and continue through the twelfth grade. Comprehensive counseling and guidance is intended to be habilitative as well as rehabilitative, active as well as reactive, preventive as well as remedial, and skill building as well as problem reductive.

The program components include:

(1) A guidance curriculum designed to facilitate the total development of the student in all areas - knowledge of self and others, the ability to develop an educational plan that supports a career plan.

(2) Individual planning with students and their parents to overcome difficulties in students’ personal and social effectiveness, educational progress, career planning competencies and individual planning for the next steps, educational and occupational development.

(3) Responsive services of counseling, consultation, and referral.

(4) System support activities that promote the effective delivery of guidance services.

Counseling and guidance services must be comprehensive. Counselors work with all students to help them acquire competencies in the knowledge of self and others, educational, and career planning domains as students progress through their school years and prepare to enter the world of work. School counselors have unique preparation, grounded in the behavioral sciences, with training in clinical skills adapted to the school setting. Services provided by the counselor in elementary, middle/junior high, and high school are differentiated by tasks necessary for different stages of student growth.

Comprehensive counseling and guidance programs in Alabama collaborate with other school instructional programs by providing comprehensive Guidance Curriculum, Individual Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support components designed to assist students to acquire competencies in the following domains: Knowledge of Self and Others, Educational Planning,
and Career Planning. The activities and services of the four program components should be comprehensive in nature and appropriate to the needs of the students. They may be delivered directly to students or indirectly through consultation and collaboration with other professional staff and/or with parents. The state Model recognizes the need for uniformity in basic student goals and competencies for all local education agency (LEA) programs in counseling and guidance. Local programs should include all of the elements, goals, and competencies recognized as essential in the total development of all students.

A complete compendium of the guidance and counseling program curriculum by grade level for K-12 Alabama schools may be found at the State Department of Education website.
21. SELECTED CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Educators are called upon to deal with a vast array of issues that impact teaching and learning in today’s public schools. Typically, these issues are controversial and involve competing interests and ideologies. What follows is a sample of contemporary issues about which today’s educators must be knowledgeable.

21.1 Bilingual Education

A growing number of non-English speaking students are entering public school; their learning is delayed by language barriers. Many view bilingual education, which provides instruction in a student’s native language if he or she not proficient in English, negatively because they see it as contributing to divisions in society; some point to continuing problems in French-speaking Quebec, as proof. The debate over bilingual education is rooted in the age-old controversy regarding what it means to be a U.S. citizen.

Assimilationists believe that the mission of public schools is to promote a common language and common national identity. Pluralists take the position that the U.S. society as a whole benefits from cultural and language diversity. From the perspective of pluralists, the development of a national identity in a democratic society is an ongoing process that permits individual groups to retain a connection with their cultural roots.

21.2 Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

BYOD is a trend that recognizes (a) the advantages of each student having his or her own device, (b) a large percentage of students own their own technology devices and are glad to be able to use them in school, and (c) allowing students to bring their own technology relieves schools of the burden to purchase and maintain devices for each student. This topic, along with policies and procedures for implementation, is discussed more fully in Chapter 17.

21.3 Bullying/Student Harassment Prevention

In 2010 Alabama became the most recent of 44 states to pass an anti-bullying law, which makes it illegal for students to harass, bully, intimidate, harm or threaten to harm fellow students. The law (Legislative Act 2009-571) required Alabama school systems to pass anti-bullying policies by July 1, 2010. Consequences for bullying behaviors must be added to codes of student conduct, and schools must incorporate anti-bullying and harassment prevention instruction into academic or elective courses or through guidance/counseling programs.
21.4 Class Size

Class-size reduction proponents reason that students get more one-on-one instruction which, in turn, leads to increased academic achievement. This argument is so convincing and sounds so logical and simple that nearly half of the states have enacted legislation and spent hundreds of millions of dollars a year to reduce the student-teacher ratio to 20 or fewer students per teacher. However, analysis of class-size reduction initiatives paints a confusing and contradictory picture.

- A recent study by the Heritage Foundation found that smaller class size did not boost achievement on the NAEP reading test.
- Small classes of first, second, and third graders performed better on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills than did students from larger classes.
- An analysis of 277 separate class-size reduction studies found that only 15 percent documented achievement gains.
- A long-term study on the effects of smaller classes found that students who spent the first three years of school in smaller classes had a greater increase in achievement, maintained those gains throughout their school careers, and were less likely to drop out. The study also found a decrease in the achievement gap between black and white students from smaller classes.

Some studies suggest that teacher training and preparation have more influence on student success than the size of the class. Other skeptics are concerned that reducing class size will increase costs without substantially increasing teacher effectiveness or that other less expensive approaches might achieve the same educational goals without costing as much as limiting class size. At times reducing class size has resulted in large numbers of new teachers being thrust into tough situations. Critics then question the educational outcome and quality of education provided. [http://www.naesp.org/comm/c1200.htm](http://www.naesp.org/comm/c1200.htm)

21.5 Commercially Produced Media

The increasing availability and variety of commercially-produced media to supplement classroom instruction create opportunities for enriched instruction and for abuse. Local school systems by policy and through the implementation of adopted practices should make every effort to ensure that audiovisual materials used in the schools are best suited to the educational needs, age, and maturity of students. Guidelines for review and use of materials to be used in school setting include the following considerations:

- Internal Materials
  When selecting library/media center acquisitions, an administrator or the administrator’s designee should work closely with teachers to choose appropriate instructional materials for the various grade levels and content areas. All books,
magazines, tapes, audiovisual materials, computer software, and other teaching aids located in the individual school libraries/media centers that are to be used by students should be examined and approved by the principal or designee before such materials are made available to students and teachers.

- External Materials
When materials are obtained from sources external to the school, standards to be met prior to use in the classroom should be established and published. Such standards may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The material should relate directly to the school system curriculum and serve as a means of teaching a specific objective(s).
2. The material should relate directly to the lesson or unit plan being taught.
3. The material should be previewed in its entirety by the teacher and receive written approval by the school principal prior to using the material in the classroom. It is recommended that commercial audiovisual materials with a uniform rating code of PG or PG-13 may be considered for showing in schools (PG rated material may be considered for use in grades K-12; PG-13 rated material may be considered for use only in grades 7-12)
4. Commercial audiovisual material with a uniform rating code above PG-13 should not be shown in K-12 schools.

21.6 Competitive Grading

Assigning grades to student work in any form (number, letter, points, marks) is so pervasive and routine, that teachers and administrators rarely contemplate their effect beyond ranking or classifying students. Attention should be given to the meaning of grades and the effect of grades on students. Authors Krumboltz and Yeh discuss the negative impact of competitive grading in their 1996 article in volume 76 of Phi Delta Kappan:

Students are not the only victims of the competitive grading system...it hurts teachers as well by skewing their values and ultimately robbing them of the satisfactions inherent in promoting student learning...to assign grades, teachers must become critics whose focus is negative, always seeking errors and finding fault with students’ work. Moreover, students must be compared with one another, because there is no accepted standard for a given letter grade.

While most educators consider reporting student progress a necessary and valuable component of accountability and responsibility, little thought or study has gone into the meaning of the grades assigned to report student achievement. A performance that earns an A in one classroom could earn a C in another classroom because of the differences in the teachers’ standards or in the composition of the two classes. Upon close examination of many grade
books or marking schemes, it can be argued that grades are assigned based on the students’ obedience to teacher instructions or compliance with teacher requests rather than on the students’ mastery of content standards.


### 21.7 Distance Learning

Distance learning involves taking classes in locations other than the classroom or places where teachers present the lessons. Distance learning uses various forms of technology, especially television and computers, to provide educational materials and experiences to students. Small high schools may arrange for their students to take courses, such as those for advanced foreign language instruction, by television. Many colleges and universities broadcast credit courses for students who live in isolated locations or who for other reasons cannot attend classes on campus.

### 21.8 Flipped Classroom

In the traditional classroom, the teacher provides instruction and the follow-up takes place after class in the form of homework. In the flipped classroom, lectures are prerecorded. Students view video content online at home. In class the following day, students engage in activities based on what they learned in the previous evening’s video. A key point is that the teacher is present as students engage in these activities, allowing the teacher to clear-up misconceptions and provide assistance as needed.

### 21.9 Freedom of Speech

In *Hazelwood School System v. Kuhlmeier* (1988), the Supreme Court allowed the school system to censor the school newspaper, thereby limiting the freedom of speech of the students. The majority opinion justified the ruling as a necessary means for ensuring that educators maintain control over the curriculum. However, critics of the ruling viewed the judgment as significantly curtailing a student’s right to free speech. Does the case work against effective curricular practices by working against learning responsible journalism?

### 21.10 Full-Service Schools

A growing number of students bring social, physical, and emotional problems to school that greatly impact their capacity to learn. Many schools have responded by increasing special
personnel (e.g., counselors, social workers) and programs (e.g., on-site medical clinics). Opponents of these services maintain that schools have a limited mission, that is, to teach academic skills. They are reluctant to fund additional operations that are seen as outside the scope of this responsibility.

21.11 Global Education

Over the past few decades, scientists, theorists, and lay people have come to realize that the human race can no longer afford to indulge itself in regional and nationalistic points of view. In an age of massive nuclear arsenals, conflicts between and within nations threaten the very existence of the planet. The National Council for the Social Studies state two reasons for Global Education:

(1) The growing interrelatedness of life on our planet has increased the need for citizens to possess the knowledge and sensitivity required to comprehend the global dimensions of political, economic, and cultural phenomena.

(2) Our nation’s security, prosperity, and way of life are dependent in large part on citizens developing the capacity to comprehend trans-national, cross-cultural interactions and to participate constructively in decisions influencing foreign policy (NCSS 1982).

With the possible exception of the far right, all mainstream components of the political spectrum embrace global education in some form or other. From the desire for security, through the need to compete on a global level, to the efforts for peace, understanding, and sensitivity towards the global ecosystem, all of the players on the political stage feel the need to understand and appreciate other cultures and the issues facing the globe.

21.12 Health and Wellness

Schools have increasingly been asked to assume responsibility for educating students about issues that once were relegated to the home (e.g., sex). In Alabama, schools are called upon to provide health education, sex education, and education about communicable diseases, all of which can be controversial.

Health Education: Section 16-40A-3 Code of Alabama (2001 Replacement) describes the minimum contents to be included in drug abuse prevention education curricula. This section (16-40A-4) also prohibits teaching students illegal conduct (e.g., under-age alcohol use, distribution of controlled substances, etc.).

Sex Education: Section 16-40A-2 Code of Alabama (2001 Replacement) describes the minimum contents to be included in sex education curricula. The Code of Alabama does not address
issues related to condom distribution or access to birth control information because these issues are more political than legal ones.

Communicable Diseases: Excluding students from school who have HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis B may be a form of discrimination. Determinations regarding the programming needs for such students should be made on an individual basis. For example, a student with a propensity for spitting on others may be excluded because of his or her behaviors rather than because of the condition itself. Medical conditions introduced in the student’s educational records become protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

21.13 Inclusion

Advocates of “mainstreaming” believe that students with disabilities have a right to and can benefit from inclusion in a regular educational environment whenever possible. Others wonder how likely inclusion is to bring special education and general education into synergistic alignment. A five-year government study released in 1994 found that special-needs students who spend all their time in regular classrooms fail more frequently than those who spend only some.

21.14 Challenges to Instructional Materials and/or Library/Media Resources

It is important that LEAs and Board of Education support the principles of academic and intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. In so doing, conflicts may arise when the teacher’s choice of instructional material or the library/media specialist’s choice of materials differs with the values or beliefs of students, parents, and/or community members. A system procedure should be established to allow for the fair and orderly review of print and non-print materials so that all involved parties would know that opinions will be considered and that appropriate educational materials will be used by the school system.

Typical policies and procedures to review print and non-print materials when challenges or complaints arise include the following components:

- The identification of personnel to receive complaints about materials
- The steps to be followed when materials are challenged
- The personnel to be involved in the review of the challenged material
- Criteria to be used in review of the challenged material
- How the decisions about the materials will be reported
- Procedures for appeal of a decision regarding challenged material

Consultation with board attorneys and/or other legal agencies is recommended when developing procedures for reviewing instructional materials and for handling challenges.
Professional development for teachers and school staff members should be provided on materials selection, appropriate instructional materials development, and how challenges to materials are to be handled in the school system.

21.15 Measuring/Testing/Assessment

In an age of standards and accountability, school systems are increasingly making decisions about educational achievement based on standardized test scores. Advocates of making decisions based on standardized tests contend that it is the most efficient, fair, and measurable way to measure how well a school is meeting its educational goals. Critics of standardized tests argue that these tests were never meant to be used in the manner in which they are currently being utilized. Others point out that standardized tests are culturally biased. Parents throughout the United States have organized resistance to the reliance on test scores by keeping their children home on these test dates.

21.16 Multicultural Education

How to address the unique needs of an ethnically diverse population of students has been a constant challenge to public schools. For the first 150 years of public education, the most common way of dealing with diversity was to require non-White students to assimilate into the culture and values of White America. However, during the 1960s a new model of education emerged, which suggested that non-White students would be better served if schools adopted a model of cultural pluralism. Supporters of cultural pluralism noted that potential success for ethnic and racial minorities in public education is often affected by racism and other forms of discrimination-conditions sustained by not understanding/appreciating other cultures. Hence, multicultural education began making its way into textbooks, school policies, and school practices. Advocates argue that multicultural education is beneficial for both White and non-White students. However, critics of multicultural education argue that this approach creates hostility and divisiveness.

21.17 One-to-One Initiatives (1:1)

A 1:1 initiative is similar to BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) in that in recognizes the possibilities unleashed when every student has his or her own technology device. It differs from BYOD in that the school owns (or leases) the equipment, maintains it, and issues it to students. The cost is greater for the school. One the other hand, the standardization of devices decreases issues with connectivity loading of software, etc. Another advantage is that the 1:1 initiative ensures all students, regardless of financial means, are using comparable devices.

A school instituting a 1:1 initiative will want to investigate the use of a Learning Management Systems (LMS) to handle the administrative functions of submission of electronic work products. The concept of LMS is discussed in Chapter 18.
21.18 Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning, or PBL (often "PjBL" to avoid confusion with "Problem-based Learning"), is the use of classroom projects, intended to bring about deep learning, where students use technology and inquiry to engage with issues and questions that are relevant to their lives. Students participate in interdisciplinary learning projects that promote inquiry and collaboration. The object of the project is to present solutions to real work problems. Such learning promoted the application of learned concepts and the creation of creative solutions.

Project-based learning (PBL) provides complex tasks based on challenging questions or problems that involve the students' problem solving, decision making, investigative skills, and reflection that include teacher facilitation, but not direction. Project Based Learning is focused on questions that drive students to encounter the central concepts and principles of a subject hands-on.

With Project-based learning students learn from these experiences and take them into account and apply them to their lives in the real world. PBL is a different teaching technique that promotes and practices new learning habits. The students have to think in original ways to come up with the solutions to these real world problems. It helps with their creative thinking skills by showing that there are many ways to solve a problem.

Project-based learning (PBL): is an approach for classroom activity that emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary and student-centered. This approach is generally less structured than traditional, teacher-led classroom activities; in a project-based class, students often must organize their own work and manage their own time. Within the project-based learning framework students collaborate, working together to make sense of what is going on. Project-based instruction differs from inquiry-based activity by its emphasis on collaborative learning. Additionally, project-based instruction differs from traditional inquiry by its emphasis on students' own artifact construction to represent what is being learned. Students can spend the entire length of the project involved or come in and out as they see fit.

The core idea of project-based learning is that real-world problems capture students' interest and provoke serious thinking as the students acquire and apply new knowledge in a problem-solving context. The teacher plays the role of facilitator, working with students to frame worthwhile questions, structuring meaningful tasks, coaching both knowledge development and social skills, and carefully assessing what students have learned from the experience. Advocates assert that project-based learning helps prepare students for the thinking and collaboration skills required in the workplace.

Rigorous and in-depth Project Based Learning:
• is organized around an open-ended Driving Question or Challenge. These focus students’ work and deepen their learning by centering on significant issues, debates, questions and/or problems.

• creates a need to know essential content and skills. Typical projects (and most instruction) begin by presenting students with knowledge and concepts and then, once learned, give them the opportunity to apply them. PBL begins with the vision of an end product or presentation which requires learning specific knowledge and concepts, thus creating a context and reason to learn and understand the information and concepts.

• requires inquiry to learn and/or create something new. Not all learning has to be based on inquiry, but some should. And this inquiry should lead students to construct something new—an idea, an interpretation, a new way of displaying what they have learned.

• requires critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication. Students need to do much more than remember information—they need to use higher-order thinking skills. They also have to learn to work as a team and contribute to a group effort. They must listen to others and make their own ideas clear when speaking, be able to read a variety of material, write or otherwise express themselves in various modes, and make effective presentations. These skills, competencies and habits of mind are often known as "21st Century Skills".

• allows some degree of student voice and choice. Students learn to work independently and take responsibility when they are asked to make choices. The opportunity to make choices, and to express their learning in their own voice, also helps to increase students’ educational engagement.

• incorporates feedback and revision. Students use peer critique to improve their work to create higher quality products.

• results in a publicly presented product or performance. What you know is demonstrated by what you do, and what you do must be open to public scrutiny and critique.

Project-based learning creates opportunities for groups of students to investigate meaningful questions that require them to gather information and think critically. Typical projects present a problem to solve (What is the best way to reduce the pollution in the schoolyard pond?); a phenomenon to investigate (Why is best way to stay on a skateboard?).

21.19 Promotion/Retention Decisions

School systems continue to deliberate over promotion criteria and the value of retaining students who fail to meet promotion standards. A 2005 study by C. Ryan Kinlaw for the Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University reported that 2.4 million students per year were retained in US schools during the late 1990s. Nagoaka and Roderick conducted a six-year study of Chicago’s efforts to end social promotion for the Consortium on Chicago School Research and reported their conclusions in March 2004. They found little evidence that low-performing 3rd-grade students who were retained did better than their counterparts who were promoted.
At the 6th-grade level, the study concludes that retention was detrimental to student achievement growth.

A digest of research findings about social promotion and retention may be found in the ERIC Digest No. 161 published in 2000. In its overall summary, it concludes that “neither social promotion nor retention is effective in boosting the achievement of low-performing students.” The digest stresses the importance of (a) ensuring that preschool programs prepare children to succeed in school, (b) closely tracking student progress through all grades, (c) providing swift remediation to students who are lagging, and (d) paying special attention to the transitions into middle and high school for student at risk of retention.

When one considers that retained students are 2 to 11 times more likely to drop out of school when compared to underachieving, but promoted, peers (Anderson, G. E., A. D. Whipple, & S. R. Jimerson (2002) “Grade retention: Achievement and mental health outcomes.” Position paper, National Association of School Psychologists. (http://naspcenter.org), education leaders must examine all alternatives if significant gains in graduation rates are to be accomplished. Behavioral and emotional difficulties evidenced by over-age students and their impact on non-retained classmates are also becoming increasingly difficult for schools to manage. Opponents of “no social promotion” policies do not defend social promotion so much as say that retention is even worse. They argue that retention is not a cost-effective response to poor performance when compared to cheaper or more effective interventions, such as additional tutoring and summer school.

Educators developing policies guiding promotion and retention decisions should examine the Meta-analysis of Grade Retention Research: Implications for Practice in the 21st Century by Shane R. Jimerson of the University of California, Santa Barbara for School Psychology Review, 2001 Vo. 30, No. 3. It may be found at http://education.ucsb.edu/jimerson/NEW%20retention/Publications/MetaAnalysis.SPR01.pdf.

### 21.20 Rigor/Relevance Framework

The Knowledge Taxonomy by Bloom was the first to define levels of cognition. Several revisions/adaptations of Bloom’s from Norman Webb, R. J. Marzano, and others have been used over the years. The Rigor/Relevance Framework is an approach to looking at curriculum standards and assessment. It is based on traditional elements of education, but encourages movement to the application of knowledge instead of maintaining an exclusive focus on the acquisition of knowledge.

The framework is based on four quadrants. **Quadrant A** is acquisition of knowledge, basically the teacher gives information and the student memorizes. **Quadrant B** refers to application in which students use acquired knowledge to solve a problem. **Quadrant C** is assimilation of knowledge in which students extend and refine their knowledge so they can use it.
automatically to analyze and solve problems and create solutions. **Quadrant D** is adaptation of knowledge in which when students are confronted with perplexing unknowns they are able to use their extensive knowledge base and create unique solutions and take action. In other words, Quadrant A is teacher driven and Quadrant D is student driven with teacher guidance.

Rigor refers to academic rigor – learning in which students demonstrate a thorough, in-depth mastery of challenging tasks to develop cognitive skills through reflective thought, analysis, problem solving, evaluation, or creativity. Rigorous learning can occur at any school grade and in any subject. Relevance refers to learning in which students apply core knowledge, concepts, or skills to solve real-world problems. Further information [http://www.leadered.com](http://www.leadered.com)

### 21.21 School Prayer

Perhaps one of the most controversial contemporary issues in public education in Alabama centers around whether or not prayer is allowed in schools. The Supreme Court has rendered several decisions that clearly spell out what is and is not permissible in schools in terms of prayer. In 1962, the Supreme Court ruled in *Engel v. Vitale* that school officials cannot offer audible and public prayer, even if it is a nondenominational prayer, in school. One year later in *Abington v. Schempp*, the Supreme Court ruled that Bible verses or the Lord’s Prayer cannot be publicly read or recited in school under official school sanction. The Supreme Court in 1985 rendered in *Wallace v. Jaffree* (a case originating in Mobile, Alabama) that a state cannot pass a law requiring voluntary prayer at the beginning of the school day.

In 2000, once again the US Supreme Court heard a case involving school prayer. In that case, *Santa Fe Independent School System v. Doe*, the Supreme Court ruled that students may not deliver prayers over the loudspeakers at high school football games. However, the Supreme Court has been careful to note in their judgments that a moment of silent meditation is permissible, and that their judgments should not be interpreted to mean that religion has no place in public schools.

In 1998, then Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, sent to every school system a statement of principles addressing the extent to which religious expression and activity are permitted in public schools ([http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/08-1995/religion.html](http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/08-1995/religion.html)). The letter notes that students may pray in a non-disruptive manner when not engaged in school activities or instruction. Public schools may teach about religion, and students may express their beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments. The Equal Access Act of 1984 ensures that public secondary schools with a limited open forum must allow religious clubs (e.g., F.C.A.) to meet in the same manner they allow other non-instructional clubs to meet. This means that if the chess club is allowed to advertise its meetings with flyers and over the loudspeaker during morning announcements, then religious clubs may do the same.
The Alabama Statutes related to school prayer permit student-initiated voluntary prayer, invocations and/or benedictions during compulsory or non-compulsory school-related student assemblies, school-related sporting events, school graduation or commencement ceremonies and other school-related events. (Section 16-1-20.3) and a teacher or principal initiated period of quiet reflection at the opening of school, the beginning of every school athletic event, and graduation ceremony (Section 16-1-20.4).

### 21.22 Tracking

The practice of tracking students based on ability began in the early 1900s. Since its inception, it has precipitated debate. Critics of the practice note that low-income students and students of color are disproportionately placed in the lower tracks, which often means they are subjected to boring, work taught by the least effective teachers. The note that student placements in tracks are often done using questionable criteria, and once placed in low tracks, students are rarely able to move to higher-level groups. Supporters of the practice contend that separating students on the basis of ability and achievement facilitates good education. They argue that tracking ensures that all students receive an education based on their individual ability. Further, they argue that it is impossible for teachers to meet all students’ needs if students are not grouped by ability.

### 21.23 Pre-K Programs

Pre-K Now, a Pew Charitable Trust, has been a forerunner in the quest to advance high-quality, voluntary pre-k-kindergarten for all three- and four-year olds. They have championed the nation’s policy makers to transform public education by moving away from the current K-12 system to Pre-K-12. In Alabama, the Department of Children’s Affairs (DCA) oversees various Pre-K programs including, Head Start, First Class, First Teacher, the Children Trust Fund and the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Pre-K programs are an effective means to ensure children enter school with:

- An enthusiasm for learning,
- An ability to function in a social setting,
- Age-appropriate communication and problem solving skills,
- Age-appropriate physical and emotional skills, and
- Optimal health.

Numerous studies have shown that students who have participated in high-quality pre-kindergarten programs:

- Are less likely to repeat a grade, require remedial education, or be placed in special education,
- Score higher on achievement tests,
• Are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college,
• Get higher paying salaries as adults, and
• Are more likely to stay out of prison and off welfare.

However, funding for voluntary Pre-K programs is not included in the state’s educational budget which leaves systems/schools to look for other sources of revenue. Federal funds may be allocated for programs, local funds and/or dollars from Title VI-B may contribute if students with disabilities are enrolled. Few municipalities have seen the need in their community and offered assistance; however, the best source of sufficient funding is through competitive grants. First Class provides funding and support for entities interested in adding Pre-K programs. Before embarking on a grant, it is advised the system read the guidelines for the agreement expects a close partnership with OSR to ensure the program is of high-quality. (http://children.alabama.gov/2013-2014-pre-k-guidelines/)

In 2005-06, Alabama OSR invested $4.3 million to provide funding for 57 classrooms. This year, 2014-15, $48.5 million serves 420 classrooms. A recent $17 million federal grant is paving the way to add 100 First Class Pre-K classrooms per year for four years. All types of programs in any Alabama county are encouraged to apply from childcare centers, faith-based centers, private schools, Head Start programs, military centers, and public school systems. Many systems simply do not have the space needed to expand programs to include Pre-K; however, joint partnerships with community-based entities is encouraged to ensure Alabama’s children have the readiness skills needed for success in school.
22. RESOURCES: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AAA:  *Alabama Alternate Assessment*; administered to a special education student whose IEP team determines the student is unable to participate in state assessments, with or without accommodations.

Advanced Placement (AP): Classes at the high school level that teach college-level material. General course descriptions are available from the College Board for high school teachers interested in such classes.

Annual Measurable Objective (AMO): state’s established annual requirement for the percentage of students scoring proficient or higher in a grade and subject.

Articulation: Describes course content and performance expectation linkages from one grade level or one school level to the next (Guthrie & Reed, 1991).

Assessment/Evaluation/Measurement/Testing (Oliva, 2001)

- **Evaluation**: A continuous process of collecting and interpreting information in order to assess decisions made in designing a learning system.
- **Assessment**: Frequently used interchangeably with evaluation to denote the general process of appraisal.
- **Measurement**: The means of determining the degree of achievement of a particular competency.
- **Testing**: The use of instruments for measuring achievement.

Authentic Assessment: (also called performance assessment, alternative assessment) Authentic assessment is any type of assessment that requires students to demonstrate skills and competencies that realistically represent problems and situations likely to be encountered in daily life. Students are required to produce ideas, to integrate knowledge, and to complete tasks that have real-world applications. Such approaches require the person making the assessment to use human judgment in the application of criterion-referenced standards Authentic assessment is a contrast to traditional educational testing and evaluation, which focuses on reproducing information such as memorized dates, terms, or formulas.

Authentic Learning: The curriculum goal in which students acquire real-world skills and knowledge by developing their abilities to read, write, solve problems, and apply concepts in a manner that prepares them for their lives beyond school (Strong, Silver & Perini, 2001).
AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress; used to describe if a school or system has met its annual accountability goal.

Baseline: state’s established beginning point for percentage of students that must be proficient

Bilingual Education: An educational approach involving the use of two languages of instruction at some point in the student’s schooling (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003).

Bilingual Education Act (1968): Also known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10), acknowledged that the educational needs of children who are LEP cannot be met effectively by traditional schooling in which English is the only medium of instruction. This landmark legislation was revised in 1974, 1978, 1984, and 1988 and was part of the Improving America’s School Act of 1994 (PL 103-382). This legislation provided for finding to state education agencies and local school systems to encourage the development and implementation of bilingual education programs designed to meet the needs of LEP students (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999, p. 19).

Brain-based Learning
Emerging insights from neuroscience regarding how the human brain functions are generating considerable interest among educators (see www.ascd.org for information about professional educators who have formed groups around this topic). For example, Given (2002) used the brain's natural learning systems (emotional, social, cognitive, physical, reflective) as a framework for educational practice. In general, however, translating findings from neuroscience into educational practice is spotty and many argue that such applications are premature.

Career Education (290-080-020-.01) The Alabama Career Education State Plan, 1978-1983, adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to P.L. 95-207, is hereby incorporated by this rule and made a part of the Rules of the State Board of Education. A copy of the state plan titled, "Alabama Career Education State Plan", may be obtained from the State Superintendent of Education, State Department of Education.

(1) Scope and Sequence: The depiction of curriculum as a matrix of objectives assigned to successive grade levels (i.e., sequence) and grouped according to a common theme (i.e., scope).
(2) Syllabus: A plan for an entire course, typically including rationale, topics, resources, and evaluation.
(3) Content Outline: A list of topics covered organized in outline form.
(4) Textbooks: Instructional materials used as the guide for classroom instruction.
(5) Course of Study: A series of courses that the students must complete.
Planned Experiences: All experiences students have that are planned by the school, whether academic, athletic, emotional, or social.

Planning Elements (Posner, 1995)

1. Objectives: What knowledge, skills, or attitudes should students acquire?
2. Rationale or educational philosophy behind the curriculum: Why should they learn this? What is the value of this?
3. Content: What content (i.e., what topics, concepts, skills, etc.) should be covered?
4. Characteristics of target audience: Who is this for? (consider interests, abilities, background knowledge.)
5. Activities: What should they do?
6. Materials: What resources will they need?
7. Sequencing principles: In what order should this be done?
8. Schedule: How long will each part take?
9. Teacher training and attitudes: What do the teachers need to know, be able to do, and be committed to?
10. Evaluation: How will success be determined? What will count as success?
11. Administrative structure, school facilities, and financial constraints: How will it be implemented in a school?
12. Other parts of curriculum: How will it related to other subjects?

Confidence Interval: a method of meeting AYP by testing whether or not a proficiency index is statistically different from the goal

Conventional Schools: Schools that tend to make improvements only after a majority of other schools have tested and demonstrated that the improvements work. Conventional schools seldom pioneer improvements.

Cooperative Learning: An instructional technique diminishing competition among students while increasing the use of democratic learning communities (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 2001).

Curriculum Alignment: Refers to the relationship among the written, taught, and tested curriculum. When curriculum is truly aligned, school systems define the curriculum and write it down; teachers use these curriculum documents to plan and deliver instruction; students are taught in a manner that enables them to reach mastery of the curriculum; and students are then able to demonstrate that mastery on teacher-made tests and system, state, and national assessments. (English and Larson, 1996 in Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 2001, p. 73).
Curriculum Compacting: The collapsing of time for sequenced material (and even the elimination of assignments and material), permitting students to master or demonstrate mastery in a much shorter time than usual. Curriculum compacting is often used with the gifted student in order to provide further, deeper enrichment activities (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999, p. 216).

Curriculum Development: The process of providing learning experiences that students encounter under the direction of the school.

Curriculum Diffusion: The spontaneous and unplanned spread of new ideas. Curriculum diffusion occurs when groups or individuals who know something about an innovation communicate about it.

Curriculum Dissemination: Curriculum dissemination refers to intentional efforts to inform individuals about an innovation and gain their interest in it.

Curriculum Evaluation: The phase of the development in which the results are assessed and successes of both the learners and the programs are determined.

Curriculum Goal: A purpose or end stated in general terms without criteria of achievement. Curriculum planners wish students to accomplish the goal as a result of exposure to segments or all of a program of a particular school or school system. A curriculum goal is derived from a statement of philosophy, defined aims of education, and assessment of needs.

Curriculum Implementation: The translation of plans into action, thereby transforming the realm of curriculum into the realm of instruction.

Curriculum Objectives: A purpose or end stated in specific, measurable terms. Curriculum planners wish students to accomplish it as a result of exposure to segments or all of a program of the particular school or school system.

Curriculum Planning: The preliminary phase of curriculum development when the curriculum workers make decisions and take actions to establish the plan that teachers and students will carry out. Planning is the thinking or design phase.

Curriculum Standards: During the last decades of the 20th century, a growing national consensus emerged regarding the need for state standards. By 1993, 45 states had developed or were developing curriculum frameworks (Pechman & Laguarda, 1993). The frameworks were moving from very general guidelines to more prescriptive mandates accompanied by state-developed tests. Glatthorn (2000) clarifies the language associated with state standards.
**Content Standard:** Statement of what the learner is expected to be able to do, in one subject. Example (Language Arts): Uses the reading process to analyze and understand types of literary texts.

**Benchmark:** A more specific component of a standard, usually for a particular grade or grade level. Example (Language Arts, Grades 6-8): Understands the features of myths.

**Objective:** A component of a benchmark, usually the focus of a given lesson. Example (Language Arts, Grade 6): Identifies the features of a mythical hero.

**Disaggregate:** breakdown by subgroup

**Displaced Student:** student who was displaced as a result of Hurricane Katrina or some subsequent natural disaster or disastrous event.

**Distance Education:** Any instruction delivered through television, videotapes, or computer (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999).

**Developmental Appropriateness** (Bredekamp, 1987)

**Age Appropriateness:** There are predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first 9 years of life. All areas of growth and development—physical, emotional, social, and cognitive—have been studied and knowledge of these changes “provide a framework form which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences (p. 2).

**Individual Appropriateness:** This includes variables such as personality, learning style, and family background. Knowledge of the individual differences regarding these variables, combined with the age variables of physical, emotional, social, and cognitive growth, should contribute to well-designed educational environments for children. Attention also needs to be paid to “tradition, the subject matter of the disciplines, social or cultural values, and parental desires” to plan developmentally appropriate practices (p. 2).

Characteristics of a developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children:
- Accommodates all areas of growth and development—physical, emotional, social, and cognitive—in an integrated manner.
- Bases curriculum development on teachers’ observations of children.
- Emphasizes active learning.
- Consists of activities and materials that are concrete, real, and relevant to the lives of young children.
• Provides a range of appropriate activities and materials wide enough to encompass the age and individual differences within the group.
• Includes robust activities and materials, that is, children can be engaged at difference levels of difficulty and complexity.
• Encourages children to choose from a variety of activities and materials.
• Provides multicultural and nonsexist activities and materials for children of all ages.
• Balances active and quiet activities.
• Includes outdoor activities as part of the regular program.

Disaggregated Data: Addresses gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status etc. in ways that help educators compare results across categories. A carefully examining ensures that educators understand the impact of any measure on various sub-groups of students (Hirsh, 2002).

Diagnostic Tests: Given to students, normally by highly trained professionals, in order to determine specific learning problems (Hoy & Hoy, 2003).

Effective Schools Research: Research conducted among inner city schools in the 1970s and 1980s proving that some inner city schools were more effective than others. Schools using effective schools practices (high expectations, time on task, frequent assessment and feedback, and instructional leadership) tended to produce students with better habits of attendance, behavior, and achievement. Effective schools research tended to disprove the long held 1960s’ theories of James Coleman that a major cause of poor students’ achievement was poverty, minority and inner city status (Kaiser, 1996).

Effective schools practices include:
• Decentralized school governance, often site-based management
• Shared decision-making among principal, teachers, and parents
• Principal serves as chief executive officer and instructional leader
• High parental involvement
• High expectations of student achievement by principal, parents, and teachers
• Increased time on task devoted to teaching and learning
• Orderly school climate and clean facilities
• Frequent evaluation of achievement and feedback to students, teachers, and parents
• Staff development closely linked to reform goals

Effective schools outcomes include increases in:
• Student attendance
• Teacher attendance
• Principal and teacher job satisfaction
• Student and parent satisfaction with school
• Better student behavior
• Better teacher performance
• Better student achievement
• Trust among principal, teachers, students, and parents

*Effective schools outcomes* include decreases in:
• Students misbehavior
• Graffiti and vandalism
• Violence
• Student failure and dropout

**ESL:** English-as-a-Second-Language; a systematic, comprehensive approach to teaching English to students whose native language is not English. It is usually an important component of a bilingual program, but it can also exist by itself (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003).

**Enrichment:** A qualitatively different set of additional educational experiences provided to gifted and talented students that typically broaden the area of study (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999).

**Inclusion:** The process of placing special needs students in the regular classroom in order to provide meaningful and substantive educational opportunities with dignity (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999).

**Individual Education Program (IEP):** The annual document that must be written to document the program of study for children classified as having special needs. Before a child can receive special education services, an IEP must be developed by the multidisciplinary team of individuals within the school, or other associated agencies that represent, for example, health, speech pathology, and psychological services (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999, p. 216).

**Interim 2% Flexibility for Special Education:** a method of meeting AYP by adjusting the percent proficient for the special education group if this group is the only group that does not make AYP for a school or system.

**Lau v. Nichols** (1974) U.S. Supreme Court decision requiring schools to provide English language instruction to non-native English speakers

**Mainstreaming:** A universal term to denote placement of exceptional students in the regular classroom. Where students with disabilities are placed in the general education setting
where students without disabilities receive their education. At the onset of the mainstreaming movement, special needs students typically spent a portion of their day in the special education classroom (resource room) and the other portion of their day, depending on the severity of the disability, in regular education classrooms (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999, p. 216).

**Mastery Learning:** An approach to accommodating students who have the ability to move quickly through material. It is less formal than curriculum compacting (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999).

**Multimedia:** Using audio, text, pictures, video and other media so that students with a variety of learning styles gain knowledge and apply it to solving problems (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 2001).

**N-2 Rule for Small Schools:** for schools and school systems that do not meet the minimum requirement of 40 in the aggregate; required to test at least two fewer students than their enrollment in order to meet the participation requirement.

**Norm-Referenced Tests:** Cover a wide range of general objectives in measuring overall student achievement across a large number of participants (Hoy & Hoy, 2003).

**Partially Proficient:** partially meets academic content standards (Level II).

**Participation Rate:** percentage of students participating in state assessments

**Policies:** Broad guidelines relied upon by organizations to direct individuals and groups toward goal attainment (Kowalski, 1999).

**Problem-Based Learning:** A four-step instructional strategy of engaging in problem solving: 1) forming a hypothesis, 2) collecting information to test the hypothesis, 3) drawing conclusions based on gathered information, and 4) reflecting on the process of drawing the conclusions (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 2001). This problem-solving model calls upon students’ skills in analysis, comparison, induction, and deduction and the higher-order thinking skills found in Bloom’s taxonomy.

**Proficient:** meets academic content standards (Level III)

**Proficiency Index:** reporting metric that allows test scores to be combined across grades in determining AYP.
Progressive Education: Early twentieth century educational reforms that created student centered rather than subject centered schools, experimented with activity-based core curriculum, and advocated interdisciplinary studies.

Pull-out Programs: Programs that pull special education children out from regular education classes. Pull-out programs are offered, more than likely, in a resource room where a child with special needs can receive more intensive services than would be available in a regular education classroom (Zepeda & Langenbach, 1999, p. 216).

Safe Harbor: a method of meeting AYP if a subgroup decreases by at least 10% from the preceding year those not proficient, meets the 95% participation rate, and makes progress on the additional academic indicator.

Scoring Rubric: A checklist or rating scale delineating specific feedback about elements to determine the quality of a performance (Hoy & Hoy, 2003).

School Improvement: used to describe whether a school or school system has met its accountability goals over time.

School Organization: Grouping and arranging curriculum, instruction, students, and staff for the purpose of educating students.

School Reform: Act of changing school procedures to improve student achievement by removing ineffective practices, faults, and abuses.

School Restructuring: Act of rearranging a school’s governance, curriculum, instruction, operations, communications, and organizational relationships among administration, staff, students, parents, central office, and community in order to implement school reform.

School Transformation: Act of making thorough changes in the external structure and operation of a school to create reform, for example site based management or developing schools within-schools.

School Transmutation: Complete change in the internal as well as external structure and operation of a school, for example, to create reform through core curriculum, interdisciplinary instruction, and team teaching as well as site based management or developing schools within-schools.
Subgroup: distinct group within a larger group; Alabama identifies the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged (free/reduced lunch), major racial/ethnic groups, special educational students, and limited-English proficient students

Tier I school: Lowest achieving five (5) Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring based on proficiency for past three years; and Title I high schools with a graduation rate below 60% for past three years; and Title I eligible elementary schools in the bottom 20% of all schools based on proficiency. The schools identified in this portion of the bottom 20% can be no higher achieving than the highest performing school in the lowest achieving five Title I schools.

Tier II school: Lowest achieving five (5) Title I eligible, but not served, secondary schools based on proficiency for past three years; and Title I eligible, but not served, high schools with a graduation rate below 60% for past three years; and Title I eligible secondary schools in the bottom 20% of all schools based on proficiency. The schools identified in this portion of the bottom 20% can be no higher achieving than the highest performing school in the lowest achieving five Title I eligible schools.

Tier III school: Remaining Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring and not in Tier I; and remaining schools (elementary or secondary) in the bottom 20% based on proficiency and do not qualify as Tier I or Tier II schools.

Uniform Averaging: a method of meeting AYP by averaging the proficiency index of the most recent three years, including the current year’s proficiency index
23. RESOURCES: PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ACTE -- Association for Career and Technical Education http://www.acteonline.org

The Association for Career and Technical Education is the largest national education association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for careers? This area offers information about the history, mission and structure of ACTE, as well as details on our annual awards program and information about how you can participate in the annual observance of Career and Technical Education Week.

AASA – American Association of School Administrators http://www.aasa.org/

AASA, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for over 14,000 educational leaders across America and in many other countries. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. The four major focus areas for AASA are:

- Improving the condition of children and youth
- Preparing schools and school systems for the 21st century
- Connecting schools and communities
- Enhancing the quality and effectiveness of school leaders

About 75 percent of today’s superintendents belong to AASA.

ASCD – Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development http://www.ascd.org/

Founded in 1943, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) is an international, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that represents 160,000 educators from more than 135 countries and 66 affiliates. ASCD was initially envisioned to represent curriculum and supervision issues. Over the years, the focus has changed. This organization now addresses all aspects of effective teaching and learning—such as professional development, educational leadership, and capacity building. About 40 percent of today’s superintendents belong to ASCD.


The National School Boards Association serves as the national voice for school board members and public school children. NSBA works closely with its Federation Member leaders in formulating its advocacy agenda and is positioned as a national leader in the formulation and implementation of federal and national education policy. NSBA's advocacy springs from one essential conviction: Education of public school children must be the nation’s top priority. This organization is committed to ensuring that the
local school board voice is heard in every public policy forum in which education decisions are made or influenced.

**NAEYC -- National Association for the Education of Young Children** [http://www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. NAEYC is committed to becoming an increasingly high performing and inclusive organization.

Founded in 1926, NAEYC is the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children with nearly 100,000 members, a national network of over 300 local, state, and regional Affiliates, and a growing global alliance of like-minded organizations.

**TESOL -- Teachers of English as a Second Language, Inc.** [http://www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)

TESOL is a global professional association for English language educators involved in the teaching of English as a second language. The organization establishes and publishes standards for English teaching, provides professional development for educators, and serves as a resource for educators.
24. RESOURCES: ADDITIONAL INTERNET SITES

AACTE:  (http://www.aacet.org)
The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and its Alabama affiliate provides research, publications, and networking information for teacher education and teacher preparation programs. An additional resource from this organization is their collection of education policies related to teachers and teacher education issues. It is available from AACTE Education Policy Clearinghouse at www.edpolicy.org.

ACTE -- (http://www.acteonline.org)
The Association for Career and Technical Education is the largest national education association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for careers? This area offers information about the history, mission and structure of ACTE, as well as details on our annual awards program and information about how you can participate in the annual observance of Career and Technical Education Week. The Alabama affiliate for this organization (Alabama ACTE can be contacted through www.alabamacareertech.org or Alacte@mingspring.com).

Alabama Educational Technology Conference -- http://www.aetc.cc
AETC is Alabama's annual Educational Technology Conference providing educators and administrators a myriad of professional development opportunities.

ALEX -- Alabama Learning Exchange http://www.alex.alsde.edu

Alabama PEPE Program -- http://www.alabamapepe.com/
This website contains manuals, forms, surveys, professional development modules, and other materials used in the Alabama PEPE program.

Alabama Renaissance Academy for School Leaders http://www.alarentech.org/
The Alabama Renaissance Technology Academy for School Leaders is a technology training program designed to prepare approximately 836 principals and superintendents in Alabama to provide leadership for integration of learning and administrative technologies in their schools and school systems. This training is co-sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Alabama State Department of Education and the Office of Technology Initiatives.

AVL -- Alabama Virtual Library -- http://www.avl.lib.al.us/
The Alabama Virtual Library provides all students, teachers, and citizens of the State of Alabama with online access to essential library and information resources.

Best Practices Center:  http://www.bestpracticescenter.org
The Best Practices Center was established in mid-1999 by A+ as a public/private partnership to focus on improving student achievement by raising the quality of teaching through professional
development. The concept of the Best Practices Center emerged during the work of the Task Force on Teaching and Student Achievement, organized by A+ to study and make recommendations about ways that the state could improve student achievement in Alabama. In the report, "Teaching and Learning: Meeting the Challenge of High Standards," the Task Force on Student Achievement recommended that a statewide "Teaching Innovations Center" be established to "help provide schools with the ready access they need to information, training and networking opportunities" to achieve high quality classroom teaching. The Best Practices Center publishes a quarterly journal “Working Toward Excellence (WTE)” that highlights successful programs and practices in Alabama school systems.

Classroom Improvement Curriculum and Instruction

ERIC – Educational Resources Information Center http://eric.ed.gov/

FindLaw -- http://www.findlaw.com/
Cases and Codes, legal subjects, legal forms, legal dictionary, U. S. Supreme Court, U. S. Code, Constitutional

IDEA Practices -- http://www.ideapractices.org/
Strategies to improve educational results for children and youth with disabilities

The Innovations in Education book series is published by the Office of Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. The books detail how school systems around the country have put the No Child Left Behind Act to work. Titles include Creating Strong System School Choice Programs, Successful Charter Schools, Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification, Creating Strong Supplement Education Services Programs, Creating Successful Magnet Schools Programs, Improving Teacher Quality, and Innovative Pathways to School Leadership.

Kids Count Data Book Online -- http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/kc2002/
10 measures of child well-being and supplemental data on education, health, and economic conditions of families are included in this report by Annie E. Casey Foundation

National Association of Elementary School Principals --
http://www.naesp.org/ContentLoad.do?contentId=48
Resources on inclusion and diversity, including teaching strategies
NBPTS is recognized for developing the professional standards that define what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. NBPTS also administers National Board Certification, a voluntary assessment program that certifies educators who meet those standards.

NCES is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data that are related to education in the United States and other nations

NCCSR – The National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform  
[http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/](http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/)


NSDC – National Staff Development Council  [http://www.nsdc.org](http://www.nsdc.org)


Southern Regional Education Board --  [http://www.sreb.org/](http://www.sreb.org/)
SREB helps government and education leaders work cooperatively to advance education and, in doing so, improve the social and economic life of the region.
25. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PRINTED MATERIALS


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