
PROTECTIVE LIFE
GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA | *Division of*
Student Life
Blackburn Institute

Spring 2018 Travel Experience

Preparatory Materials

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE



Contents

Trip Itinerary and Map	5
Panelist/Speaker Biographies and Readings by Session.....	
Session I - Overview of Legislative Session	7
Session II - State of State Education Panel	19
Session III - Overview of the Ethics Commission	37
Session IV - Memorial Preservation Act	45
Session V - Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council	51
Student Expectations.....	57
Dress Classifications.....	59
Suggested Packing List	61
Post-Trip Self-Assessment	63

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE



Trip Itinerary and Map

Thursday, January 11

- 3:00pm Meet at Blackburn Suite
- 3:15pm Depart Tuscaloosa for Montgomery
- 5:30pm **Session I** - Overview of Legislative Session and Dinner at Central with Rep. Anthony Daniels (D-Huntsville, Minority Leader), Sen. Gerald Dial (R-Lineville, Chair-Local Legislation) and Rep. Mac McCutcheon (R-Monrovia, Speaker), Blackburn Fellows and Advisory Board Members
- 8:30pm Check in at Embassy Suites by Hilton Montgomery - Hotel & Conference Center
- 9:00pm Preparation for Friday

Friday, January 12

- 6:30am Breakfast at Hotel
- 7:30am Depart Hotel
- 8:00am **Session II** - State of State Education Panel at Alabama Association of School Boards, moderated by J. W. Carpenter (Executive Director, Birmingham Education Foundation) with Thomas Rains (Vice President of Operations and Policy, A+ Education Partnership), Jeana Ross (Secretary, Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education) and Sally Smith (Executive Director)
- 9:30am **Session III** - Overview of the Ethics Commission with Thomas Albritton (Executive Director), Beverlye Brady (Commissioner) and Cynthia Raulston, (General Counsel)
- 10:45am **Session IV** - Memorial Preservation Act at State House with Sen. Gerald Allen (R-Tuscaloosa, Chair-Transportation and Energy), and Rep. Juandalynn Givan (D-Birmingham, Judiciary and Jefferson County Legislation)
- 12:30pm Lunch at RSA Plaza Terrace with Blackburn Fellows and Advisory Board Members
- 2:00pm Explore Montgomery Museums at the Alabama Judicial Building, Alabama State Capitol, Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, Dexter Parsonage Museum, or Museum of Alabama
- 3:30pm **Session V** - Panel with members of the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council at Alabama Association of School Boards with Dr. Susan Alverson (Executive Secretary, Alabama Board of Pharmacy), Dr. Scott Harris (Acting State Health Officer, Department of Public Health) and Steve Marshall (Attorney General of Alabama)

Friday, January 12 (Continued)

- 5:30pm Dinner at Jim 'n Nicks (Prattville) with Blackburn Fellows and Advisory Board Members
- 8:00pm Depart Prattville for Tuscaloosa
- 10:00pm Arrive at Blackburn Suite

Downtown Montgomery Locations for Friday, January 12

Protective Life Govern

3 views ☆

[SHARE](#) [EDIT](#)

Locations for Friday, January 12, 2018

- 1 Alabama Association of School Boards
- 2 Alabama Ethics Commission
- 3 Alabama State House
- 4 RSA Plaza Terrace
- 5 Alabama Judicial Building
- 6 Alabama State Capitol
- 7 Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Ch...
- 8 Dexter Parsonage Museum
- 9 Museum of Alabama

Made with Google My Maps

Map data ©2018 Google [Terms](#) 500 ft

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA | Division of
Student Life
Blackburn Institute

Session I

Below are biographies of the panelists for Session I, providing an Overview of the 2018 Legislative Session.

Representative Anthony Daniels

Representative Anthony Daniels (D-Huntsville) represents House District 53 in Madison County. He was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2014 and has served as Minority Leader since February 2017, leading the House Democratic Caucus. Daniels is both the youngest person and first African American to hold this position in modern state history. Within the legislature, he serves on the Education Policy, Rules, Insurance, and Madison County Legislation committees. At 23, he became the first African-American man elected chairman of the National Education Association Student Program and was later appointed chairman of the legislative committee for the Huntsville Education Association in 2009. In 2010, Daniels was elected to the State Board of Directors for the Alabama Education Association and later served as corporate and foundations relations officer for Alabama A&M University. A native of Bartow, FL, he was raised in Midway, AL (Bullock County) and is currently an elementary school teacher in Huntsville.



Daniels is an alumnus of Alabama A&M University (B.A. and M.A.)

Senator Gerald Dial

Senator Gerald Dial was born in Delta, AL and is serving his tenth term in the Legislature, having served two terms in the House and seven previous terms in the Senate. He currently resides in Lineville, AL and represents Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Lee, and Randolph Counties in Senate District 13. Dial also serves as a member of the Finance and Taxation Education, Health and Human Services, Rules, Transportation and Energy, Veterans and Military Affairs, and Local Legislation committees.



Dial is an alumnus of the University of West Alabama and Jacksonville State University, with additional graduate study at Auburn University.

Representative Mac McCutcheon

Representative Mac McCutcheon was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 2006 serving the communities of Madison City, Huntsville, Capshaw, Monrovia and East Limestone. He has served as Speaker of the House since 2016. A native of Madison County and resident of Monrovia, McCutcheon has been a farmer and is a retired law enforcement officer from the City of Huntsville. He is a member of the American Legion, Fraternal Order of Police, Alabama Peace Officers, North Alabama Emmaus Community, Tennessee Valley Smallmouth Bass Club and City of Madison Chamber of Commerce. McCutcheon serves as a member of the Madison and Limestone County Legislation Committees. He and his wife Debbie are the parents of two children and two grand children. McCutcheon is a member of College Park Church of God and enjoys fishing, camping, golf, spending time with his family, and traveling with his wife.



McCutcheon holds an A.S. Degree in Criminal Justice from Calhoun Community College and a B.S. Degree in Criminal Justice Administration from Trinity University.

Laws affect death penalty cases, historic structures, party primary voting

Alabama lawmakers introduced more than 1,000 bills during the legislative session that ended May 19. The vast majority did not pass, and many of those that did were local bills, affecting a single county, city or town. But some bills of statewide impact did pass, and will change the law on death penalty cases, health insurance coverage, voting in party primaries and other areas. Below are some of the new laws.

Faith-based adoption agencies

House Bill 24 says the state cannot refuse to license child adoption agencies for setting policies based on religious beliefs, such as not placing children with same-sex couples. The law does not apply to agencies that receive state or federal funding.

Teen drivers

House Bill 29 increases the penalties for teen drivers who hold restricted licenses and violate the restrictions, such as driving after midnight or with too many passengers. Parents who knowingly allow their teens to violate the restrictions can be fined if there are repeat offenses.

Excessive force by police

House Bill 50 requires the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center to collect information on allegations of the use of excessive force by state, county and city police, including the race of the officer and victim, and present annual reports to the Legislature on the information it collects.

Sky lanterns

House Bill 59 makes it illegal to release sky lanterns within 500 yards of a public gathering. Sky lanterns are free-floating and use an open flame to rise like a hot-air balloon.

Health care rights of conscience

House Bill 95 prohibits firing, demoting or otherwise penalizing a health care worker for refusing to participate in abortion, human cloning, human embryonic stem cell research or sterilization. The health care worker must provide written notice of their objection in advance. The law does not apply to abortion clinics.

Assisted suicide

House Bill 96 makes it a felony to deliberately assist someone in committing suicide. That includes a doctor who prescribes a drug or performs a procedure to aid in dying. The crime is a Class C felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Right to life of unborn

House Bill 98 is a proposed amendment to the state Constitution that says Alabama recognizes the right to life of the unborn and that nothing in the state Constitution provides the right to abortion. It will be on the

ballot for voters to approve or reject in the November 2018 general election. It would not have any direct impact unless Roe v. Wade is overturned.

Felons' voting rights

House Bill 282 defined what crimes are those of “moral turpitude” for the purpose of whether an offender loses voting privileges. The term “moral turpitude” is in the state Constitution but had no clear definition.

Insurance coverage for autism

House Bill 284 requires some health insurance plans to cover screening, diagnosis and treatment for autism for those 18 and younger. That includes coverage for applied behavior analysis, considered a vital therapy for many children with autism but one that is not affordable for many families without insurance.

Legalizing and regulating midwifery

House Bill 315 allows midwives with certain qualifications to practice in Alabama, sets up a licensing board and sets some restrictions and requirements.

Tax credits for historical preservation

House Bill 345 restarts Alabama’s program of providing income tax credits for the rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings. It runs from 2018-2022 and caps the total annual credits at \$20 million, with no more than \$5 million for any one project.

Drinks at brunch

House Bill 353 allows for the sale of alcoholic beverages in bars and restaurants as early as 10 a.m. on Sunday in cities and counties that authorize those sales. Lawmakers called it the “brunch bill.”

Residential youth facilities

House Bill 440 sets up state regulations of residential youth schools, including those that offer counseling and behavioral programs. The law applies to faith-based, nonprofit and for-profit facilities where children stay for more than 24 hours. Called the Alabama Youth Residential Facility Abuse Prevention Act, the bill came in response to abuses at some unregulated facilities.

Death penalty decisions

Senate Bill 16 gives juries the final say on whether a defendant convicted of a capital offense receives the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole. Previously, the jury made a recommendation but the judge was not bound to follow it.

Civics test for high school students

Senate Bill 32 requires high school students to pass a civics test made up of 100 questions taken from the tests given to immigrants applying for citizenship. Students must answer at least 60 correctly.

Protecting Confederate monuments

Senate Bill 60 prohibits the removal of statues and monuments on public property that are at least 40 years old and the renaming of buildings, schools and streets at least 40 years old. Those at least 20 years old cannot be moved or renamed without permission from a new state committee.

Sunscreen at school

Senate Bill 63 says students in public and nonpublic schools can apply sunscreen at school, exempting over-the-counter sunscreen from rules of the State Board of Education and State Board of Nursing.

Medicaid fraud

Senate Bill 85 strengthens the law against making false claims for payments from Medicaid. It includes businesses in the definition of person under the law and increases the statute of limitations on Medicaid fraud to six years.

Medical paroles

Senate Bill 87, called the Alabama Medical Parole Act, allows for medical paroles of geriatric, permanently incapacitated and terminally ill inmates. Those convicted of capital murder or sex offenses are not eligible.

Allocating judicial resources

Senate Bill 90 creates a new commission to reallocate district court and circuit court judgeships based on population changes, caseloads and other factors. Under the new law, judgeships can only be moved when a vacancy occurs or an incumbent is barred by age from seeking re-election.

Crossover voting banned

Senate Bill 108 prohibits voters from voting in a party runoff if they voted in the preceding primary of the opposite party.

Death penalty appeals

Senate Bill 187 requires people sentenced to death to file certain state appeals sooner and concurrently with other appeals. The law sets new deadlines for courts to rule on certain appeals. Proponents say the intent was to shorten the average time for state court appeals in death penalty cases.

Sex offenses

Senate Bill 301 created new sex offense crimes, some based on recent trends in the use of technology. The law bans nonconsensual pornography, sometimes called "revenge porn," and the use of threatening communications to induce a victim to engage in unwanted sexual activity, called "sextortion."

http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2017/06/alabamas_newest_laws_bills_tha.html

Montgomery – The Alabama House Republican Caucus on Thursday released its 2018 “Flag, Family, and Country” legislative agenda, a package of nine measures designed to provide protections for Alabama families, extend benefits to active duty soldiers and military veterans, and encourage respect for the U.S. Flag during the playing of the National Anthem and other patriotic displays.

The package also includes state budgeting reforms, efforts to address the opioid crisis in Alabama, and a call for Congress to speed construction of a secure wall across the U.S. – Mexican border.

“Rather than being considered as separate, stand-alone documents, the legislative agendas offered by the Alabama House Republican Caucus during the 2014 – 2018 quadrennium should be viewed as four pieces of the same puzzle – each fitting with the other and providing a full and vivid picture when completed,” House Majority Leader Nathaniel Ledbetter (R – Rainsville) said. “In previous years, we have focused upon protecting unborn life, attracting new jobs, improving public education, and fighting federal government intrusion. In 2018, our ‘Flag, Family, and Country’ agenda will focus upon other areas that are important to all conservative and patriotic Alabamians.”

Speaker of the House Mac McCutcheon (R – Monrovia) said he fully supports the measures in the “Flag, Family, and Country” agenda, and will prioritize their passage as they move through the legislative process.

“As soon as they are ready to come to the floor, the bills in the House Republicans’ ‘Flag, Family, and Country’ agenda will be given the attention of the body,” McCutcheon said. “It is my hope that we can quickly approve the important measures included in the agenda, fulfill our constitutional duty of passing balanced budgets, and provide the citizens of Alabama with the efficient and effective government they deserve.”

The bills, measures, and resolutions in the House Republican Caucus’ “Flag, Family, and Country” agenda are:

Childhood Trauma and Domestic Violence Prevention Bills

In order to protect against extreme trauma that can be experienced by children and family members who witness first-hand acts of domestic violence against a parent or guardian, two bills are proposed that would increase the penalties for domestic violence in the presence of a child.

The first bill would call for the death penalty or life in prison without parole for murder of a parent or guardian in the presence of a child. The second would dramatically increase the penalties for acts of domestic violence committed against a parent or guardian in the presence of a child.

The Veterans Employment Act

This bill expands the “Heroes for Hire Act” previously passed by House Republicans and provides incentives to businesses that hire honorably discharged veterans who are currently unemployed. The bill would ensure that the veterans covered by this incentive program would be hired for full-time jobs and earn

at least \$14 per hour. Because the program is modeled after the “pay as you go” method of awarding economic incentives, it would have no negative fiscal impact on the budgets. The previous program applied only to “recently deployed” veterans, but this package includes all currently unemployed veterans.

Parks for Patriots Act of 2018

This bill would provide free, year-round admission to all Alabama state parks for all active military personnel and veterans, including members of the National Guard and Reserves. Recently, the Department of Conservation commenced the Parks for Patriots initiative as an administrative pilot program at the suggestion of House Republicans, and this bill would permanently establish the program into state law.

Resolution urging respect to be shown for the U.S. Flag

This resolution would urge all Americans to show proper honor and respect to the U.S. Flag during the playing of the National Anthem, the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, and other displays of patriotic pride.

Resolution supporting construction of a U.S. – Mexican border wall

This resolution would urge Congress to fund and expedite the construction of a secure wall across the border between the United States and Mexico, which continues to be a cornerstone priority of President Donald Trump’s administration.

Consideration of proposals by the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council

Like other states across the country, Alabama has experienced a dramatic increase in the abuse of opioids among its citizens, and the epidemic of addiction has affected untold numbers of families, friends, co-workers, church members and others who just a few years ago thought they would never be touched by the problem. To combat the serious societal issue, Alabama House Republicans pledge to closely monitor the work of Governor Kay Ivey’s Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council and will quickly review and consider any suggested legislation that it may put before the body.

Prioritizing of rural development proposals and initiatives

Rural Alabama is the backbone of our state, and citizens who live outside major metropolitan areas need the same access to jobs, opportunities, and infrastructure as those in more populous regions. For those reasons, House Republicans pledge to focus upon and consider bills, programs, and initiatives intended to provide rural Alabamians with more economic development and quality of life resources.

Providing unprecedented amounts of budget and fiscal information to taxpayers

House Republicans understand Alabamians deserve more transparency and access to information regarding the taxpayers’ dollars they send to Montgomery, and while much progress has been made in this area, work remains to be done. Alabama House Republicans pledge to continue supporting the efforts of the Joint Legislative Task Force on Budget Reform and will work with our Senate colleagues and the staff of the Legislative Services Agency to immediately make public an unprecedented amount of information regarding state finances.

State Rep. Connie Rowe (R – Jasper) chaired the Caucus Agenda Committee and said the panel worked hard to select bills that both reflect the conservative values most Alabamians hold and also improve the lives of citizens across the state.

“As a former police chief, I am pleased that increased penalties for felony domestic violence will be considered this session, but all of the agenda’s measures are worthy of attention.” Rowe said. “Addressing the opioid crisis, focusing on development in the rural portions of our state, providing benefits to soldiers and veterans, and the other agenda items will all have deeply positive impacts on the lives of Alabamians.”

Agenda bills were proposed by Republican House members and were vetted by the Caucus’s Agenda Committee, which was chaired by Rowe and included State Rep. April Weaver (R – Brierfield), State Rep. Corey Harbison (R – Good Hope), State Rep. Alan Baker (R – Brewton), State Rep. Joe Lovvorn (R – Auburn), State Rep. Corley Ellis (R – Columbiana), State Rep. Dimitri Polizos (R – Montgomery, and State Rep. Steve McMillan (R – Bay Minette).

The full Caucus culled the committee’s suggestions and voted unanimously to adopt the measures included in the 2018 “Flag, Family, and Country” agenda.

The three previous House Republican Caucus legislative agendas that were proposed and passed through the body this quadrennium were:

The 2015 “Alabama First” legislative agenda was designed to combat the liberal mandates that were being handed down by the Obama administration, and it sought to put our state firmly on the road toward being first in education and first in economic development. It included bills that reduced government regulations, promoted religious liberties, provided school choice opportunities, and extended employment incentives to businesses in rural Alabama.

In 2016, the “Right for Alabama” legislative agenda placed a continuing focus on improving education, creating jobs, reforming government, and protecting unborn life. It included the “Alabama WIRED Act,” which ensures the poorest schools in Alabama have the same broadband access as the most well-funded schools, implementation of zero-based budgeting reforms, a “Right To Work” constitutional amendment that voters ratified by an overwhelming margin, and a generous but affordable pay raise for public school teachers.

The “Alabama Proud” legislative agenda, which was unveiled in 2017, sought to highlight, improve, and protect the aspects that make our state a special place to live, work, and raise children. It included increased funding for Alabama’s nationally-recognized “First Class” Pre-K kindergarten program, implementation of an electronic notification system for active shooter situations and other school emergencies, protections for long-standing markers and statues that preserve our history, and passage of a constitutional amendment declaring Alabama a pro-life state.

<http://alhousegop.org/house-republican-caucus-announces-2018-flag-family-country-legislative-agenda/>

Alabama lawmakers begin their annual session on Tuesday, less than five months before an election that figures to steer them away from major proposals and make them try to wrap up their work early. All 140 seats in the Legislature are on the ballot this year, as well as the governor's office, with the primaries on June 5.

Tuesday night, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey delivers her first State of the State address, nine months after Robert Bentley's resignation vaulted her from lieutenant governor to the state's top office. The speech gives Ivey a forum for setting her first legislative agenda as challengers from both parties gear up for campaigns to try to derail her bid for a full term in office.

Sen. Del Marsh of Anniston, leader of the 26 Republicans who control the 35-member Senate, said the looming election will influence how the session unfolds. By law, the session can last three-and-a-half months, but Marsh expects legislators to finish more quickly and try to avoid divisive issues. "The expectation is to get finished with the session as quickly as possible and allow people to get back to their districts, being an election year, so they can campaign and spend time in their districts," Marsh said.

Rep. John Knight, D-Montgomery, chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus, also said it will be difficult to address controversial issues during an election year. Knight, a former budget committee chairman, said lawmakers have familiar challenges this year, passing budgets that reflect the needs for services like public safety, corrections and mental health.

"The bottom line is, do you have the resources to provide the services to the people that's demanded by the people?" Knight said. "And in many cases, the answer to that is no." Knight said the Black Caucus will introduce an agenda within the next week. He said it would include a bill to repeal the state sales tax on food, a measure Knight has proposed for years.

The House Republican Caucus has introduced a "Flag, Family and Country" agenda. It includes bills to increase penalties for domestic violence committed in the presence of a child, incentives for businesses to hire veterans and a resolution supporting a wall on the Mexican border. Here are some key issues and what might happen with them this session.

Prisons

The Department of Corrections is requesting a \$30 million supplement to its \$413 million General Fund budget for 2018 and a \$50 million increase for next year. Most of the money would pay for expanded healthcare services prompted by a federal court ruling.

For the last two years, legislators considered but did not pass plans to borrow as much as \$800 million to build new prisons to replace most of the state's aging, crowded facilities. Ivey supports new prisons and has said she is exploring options. Department of Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn said he does not expect a prison-building proposal this session. DOC is hiring a company to develop a master plan.

Knight said the Black Caucus will propose more training and education in prisons. "Not a lock-'em-up program but a real corrections program," Knight said. "All of the things that's needed to make a person a better person when they come out of the system than when they went in."

Pay raises

Marsh said he expects the Legislature to consider cost-of-living raises for education employees and state employees. Education employees have received two cost-of-living raises in the last 10 years, while state employees have not had a cost-of-living raise since 2009.

Marsh said it appears the money is available but that could change if Congress fails to fully fund the Children's Health Insurance Program. "The CHIPs program plays into that," Marsh said. "But we're all optimistic and I think most conversations have been very positive based on the revenue that this could be the year we could do that." Knight said employee and teacher pay raises would be a priority for the Black Caucus.

Children's health insurance

CHIP, known as ALL Kids in Alabama, provides insurance for about 84,000 children up to age 19. Federal funds have covered the full cost the last two years but Congress has yet to reauthorize it. The Alabama Department of Public Health is asking the Legislature for \$53 million to use as matching funds if necessary to keep the program going. Congressional action on CHIP could be a key factor in whether lawmakers can fund the prison system's requested increases, House budget Chairman Steve Clouse, R-Ozark, said.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a \$6.5 billion program that provides various services to about one million Alabamians, mostly children, the disabled and low-income elderly residents. Federal funds cover about 70 percent of the cost. The Legislature has had to borrow and rely on one-time funds to cover the state share, like using \$105 million in money from a BP oil spill settlement to prop up this year's budget. But the outlook is better for 2019. Medicaid Commissioner Stephanie Azar said the agency expects to have \$53 million to carry forward, which would offset the need for an increase in state funding.

Gasoline tax

Republican leaders in the State House, business advocacy groups and county governments have supported an increase in Alabama's gasoline tax the last couple of years to help pay for highway and bridge construction and maintenance. Alabama hasn't raised its gasoline tax since a 5-cent increase in 1992. Revenues from the state gas tax, 18 cents per gallon, fall short of what's needed to maintain the road system because of inflation and higher-mileage cars, advocates for an increase say.

Ivey has been an advocate for more infrastructure funding. But when the gas tax bill failed last year, House Speaker Mac McCutcheon said the issue was likely dead for this four-year term, meaning it won't come up again until 2019. Marsh said the only way that might change is if Congress passes an infrastructure bill that requires state matching money. "But for right now, unless the feds do something, I don't see even infrastructure being addressed this session," Marsh said.

Child care center safety

Close to half of the child care centers in Alabama are exempt from state licensing, inspections, minimum staff-to-child ratio requirements and other safeguards because of an affiliation with a church. Advocates for repealing the exemption say it has creates a major gap in child protection. Last year, the House passed a bill by Rep. Peablin Warren, D-Tuskegee, that would have required inspections and other new rules for church-based centers. The bill died in the Senate but Warren plans to introduce legislation again this year.

Confederate monuments

Rep. Juandalynn Givan, D-Birmingham, has proposed a bill to repeal the Memorial Preservation Act, which prohibits moving or altering statues and monuments on public property that have been in place 40 years. Republicans passed the law over Democratic opposition last year mostly as a response to removals of Confederate memorials in other states. Knight said he expects the bill to be in the Black Caucus agenda, although it figures to face long odds.

http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/alabama_lawmakers_go_back_to_w.html

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA | Division of
Student Life
Blackburn Institute

Session II

Below are biographies of the panelists for Session II, discussing State of the State's Education.

J. W. Carpenter (Moderator)

J.W. Carpenter has served as Executive Director of the Birmingham Education Foundation (BEF) since September 2013. Before coming to BEF, Carpenter served as the founding Executive Director for Teach For America Alabama—a branch of the nationally-recognized organization committed to providing and advocating for high quality education for students in low-income communities. Prior to his role with Teach For America, Carpenter was a litigator for the Birmingham law firm of Walston, Wells, and Birchall, LLP. He serves on the boards of A+ Education Partnership, Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama, and Operation Hope-Alabama, and is also a member of the Kiwanis Club of Greater Birmingham, the PARCA Roundtable, and the GEAR UP-Birmingham Advisory Board. He was named Top 40 under 40 in Birmingham in 2010, and is an alumnus of Leadership Birmingham, Leadership Alabama, and Leadership UAB. In 2016, Carpenter was selected for a weeklong fellowship in Strategic Nonprofit Management at Harvard by the Alabama Association of Nonprofits and the Birmingham alumni chapter of Harvard Business School.



Carpenter is an alumnus of Boston College (B.A. in Political Science) and Georgetown University Law Center. He is a Blackburn Institute Advisory Board Member.

Thomas Rains

Thomas Rains is Vice President of Operations and Policy for A+ Education Partnership. He joined A+ in 2011 and promotes state education policies focused on ensuring all students graduate from high school ready for college and careers. Rains is currently vice chair of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission, and serves on the advisory boards for Teach For America-Alabama and the Family Guidance Center. He is also a member of the PARCA Roundtable and an alumnus of the Alabama Leadership Initiative and Leadership Montgomery's Torchbearers Class. Before joining A+, Rains taught middle middle school in Marks, MS, and also worked



as a journalist in New York and Washington, DC. Originally from Atlanta, he is a self-described “preacher’s kid” raised in Birmingham and Lanett, AL.

Rains is an alumnus of Boston University (Bachelor’s in history and journalism) and Columbia University (MPA).

Jeana Ross

Secretary Jeana Ross was appointed to lead Early Childhood Education in Alabama in 2012. Under her leadership, the Department of Early Childhood Education has maintained the highest quality rating for its First Class Pre-K program, based on the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) quality benchmarks, while the program underwent the largest growth in its history. Since Ross joined the department, the voluntary high-quality pre-K program has grown from 217 classrooms to more than 800 classrooms located in all 67 counties of the state. The state’s early learning home visiting and family support services have grown from serving 13 counties, to a total of 43 counties through Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grants and additional state funds. Ross has led the department in writing and receiving federal grant awards totaling over 100 million dollars. She focuses her leadership efforts on serving children and families while maintaining the highest levels of transparency and accountability.



Sally Smith

Sally Smith is Executive Director for the Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB). She joined AASB’s staff in 1986 and previously served as assistant executive director, director of public relations, director of communications and director of research and special projects. Smith was promoted to executive director in June 2007. She manages the association’s affairs, directs legislative efforts, advises the AASB membership and oversees efforts to build public support for schools and to expand learning opportunities and services for school board members. Smith represents school boards’ positions before the Alabama Legislature, the state Board of Education and Congress. She serves as treasurer of AASB’s risk management cooperative and is a graduate of Leadership Alabama. Smith served as a commissioner to the Education Commission of the States representing Alabama and on the Alabama Public Charter Schools Commission. A former newspaper reporter, she has received awards for her writing and publications from the National School Public Relations Association, the Public Relations Council of Alabama and the Alabama Press Association. Smith is a native of St. Louis and has a blended family of six children and seven grandchildren, with her husband, Tom.



Smith is an alumna of University of Missouri and the Birmingham School of Law.

Online public schools raising questions in Alabama

Trisha Powell Crain | al.com

May 26, 2017

Virtual public schools are still fairly new to Alabama, and state Superintendent Michael Sentance has questions. Sentance said this week that state educators have been "hearing things" about virtual schools operating in Alabama and he appointed a three-person committee to get some answers.

Asked about his concerns, Sentance said, "I have the same questions that others across the country are having: money and academics." Sentance said that no particular school district in Alabama was being questioned, but the overall way virtual education is delivered and how funding is distributed in Alabama needs clarification.

Two public school districts, Eufaula City and Athens City, have amassed a large number of virtual students, who attend classes online. More systems appear to be following suit. Limestone County Schools recently announced a partnership with education giant Pearson to offer virtual school through the Alabama Connections Academy.

Alabama's law governing virtual, or online, public education is unique in that virtual public schools cannot operate independent of a public school system. Online public charter schools are not authorized to operate in Alabama.

Research and media reports from across the country question whether virtual education, delivered online through public charter schools, is of a comparable quality to traditional schooling. Sentance's three-person committee to look into the matter in Alabama will meet for the first time this week, but Sentance gave no timeline for the scope of their work.

Virtual students interact with their education online and do not necessarily live in the school zone, or even anywhere near the school district. However, the local school boards receive the same state and federal tax support per enrolled pupil whether the enrolled student attends a local school or is at a computer several counties away.

Local tax money does not follow a student who enrolls in a virtual school outside of the zoned district. Eufaula and Athens were among the first school districts to offer virtual education to students living outside of their school district through flexibility, or innovation, waivers granted by the state department of education in 2015.

As a result, their enrollment numbers have risen dramatically. Eufaula's assistant superintendent, John Beasley, said nearly 1,200 students from across Alabama were enrolled in Eufaula City Schools' virtual school during the current school year. The school was so popular, Beasley said, that they had to restrict enrollment for the coming year to make certain they didn't grow too fast. Just last week, their first senior class of 16 graduated.

For Eufaula and Athens, the boon in enrollment has a funding boost, too. For example, according to state department of education enrollment figures, Eufaula enrolled 3,785 students this year, up more than 40 percent from the previous year's enrollment of 2,680. Funding is allocated on a per student basis, so Eufaula's overall budget stands to grow by 40 percent as well.

Athens' enrollment grew by nearly 30 percent, from 3,851 in the 2015-2016 school year, to 4,980 in the 2016-2017 school year. And while some believe online education costs less to deliver, Director of Innovative Programs Dr. Rick Carter at Athens said, "It takes every penny to educate those children especially when they're 200 miles or 100 or even 40 miles away." Students considered at-risk take three or four times the amount of funding the state provides, Carter said.

Carter and Beasley strongly believe their districts are delivering a high-quality online education. However, after both districts began enrolling students outside of their geographic zone, state legislators passed a law reining in the virtual world a bit, at least at the high school level.

That law required every school district to offer an online diploma for students in grades nine through 12 by the start of the 2016-2017 school year. There are a number of ways schools can offer that online diploma, including through the state department of education's long-distance learning program known as ACCESS.

If school districts want to do so, they can contract with other school districts who have the capability to offer online courses to students outside of their districts. Districts are also free to contract with third-party providers, like K12, Inc. and Pearson's Connections Academy.

Local school boards retain responsibility for the quality and outcomes. In other words, the local school to which the student is zoned is the school of record for that student. Virtual students are eligible to participate in extracurricular and athletic opportunities at the school of record.

Alabama Association of School Boards Executive Director Sally Smith said her organization worked hard on that law to ensure local school boards retained accountability for the students to ensure virtual students don't slip through the cracks as they had in other states.

Smith said tighter accountability exists "if students have a local nexus for testing and other provisions," such as special education services. So if a student begins to struggle in the online learning environment, the student can go back to attending the local brick and mortar school.

Smith is one of the three people who will serve on Sentance's committee on virtual schools. For schools offering virtual enrollment after the 2015 law was enacted, the virtual student remains on the books where the student is geographically zoned and the local school district contracts with and pays directly to whomever is providing the online education.

Each board of education makes that decision for their district, Smith said, ensuring the local board is accountable for the student living in their district. Eufaula contracted with K12, Inc., to deliver online

school to its students through the Alabama Virtual Academy, and students interact with teachers on a regular basis, Kayleen Marble said. Marble serves as head of Eufaula's virtual school for K12, Inc.

Athens City delivers virtual instruction through a few online platforms, including K12, and most of their students work with Athens City's teachers, Director of Innovative Programs Dr. Rick Carter said.

Athens offers both blended learning, which means students attend a brick-and-mortar school at times, and also learn online through the Athens Renaissance School. Carter defended the quality of instruction offered through online learning, saying, "Sometimes there's a misconception that we just stick them in front of a computer," and that's not true.

Both districts say the typical virtual school student is coming back to public school from homeschooling. Most of those families are seeking a strong curriculum, Marble said. Carter said the vast majority of the 900 to 1,000 students that enrolled in Athens virtual school this year came back to public school from private school or homeschool.

Virtual school students enroll for "pretty much any reason you can think of," Eufaula's Marble added, including students who are competitive athletes or musicians, and students whose families value traveling. Marble said they have seen an increase in enrollment from children who were bullied.

While students in other Alabama districts aren't a target for Athens, Carter said, "We have seen a few kids where their public school wasn't working for them." In one instance, a mother had been diagnosed with cancer and wanted to spend as much time with her children as possible, he said. The public school district where the family lived didn't offer a virtual program at the time, so the student enrolled through Athens City.

It appears more white students are enrolling in virtual schools, evident by the increase of white students enrolling in Athens and Eufaula. Athens launched their virtual school in 2015-2016, and since that time, has seen white student enrollment grow by 55 percent, from 3,360 in 2014-2015 (the year prior to launching the virtual school) to 4,980 in 2016-2017.

While Athens' enrollment grew equally across black and white students last year, Eufaula's white population grew by 75 percent, from 1,000 students in 2015-2016 to 1,750 white students in 2016-2017. Black enrollment grew by 18 percent, from 1,458 to 1,733 during the same time period. Both Athens and Eufaula said they have about 140 students receiving special education services through Individualized Education Programs.

Eufaula's Beasley said K12 serves students with IEPs just as if the students were attending brick and mortar schools. Carter says Athens is committed to fulfilling the obligations of their students' IEPs, too. Virtual students also count like any other student toward a district's academic accountability.

All virtual students had to take the ACT Aspire this past spring. Both school districts tested students statewide, sending faculty to locations around the state to conduct testing. "Virtual schools are here," Carter

said. "We want to make sure we're providing that quality education." "It's a choice and an option for what's best for some kids. It might not be for everybody, but it's the right choice for some kids across Alabama."

http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/05/questions_about_virtual_school.html

We're in big time trouble:' Charter schools, loss of accreditation possible for MPS

Andrew J. Yawn | Montgomery Advertiser

December 7, 2017

Interim State Superintendent of Education Ed Richardson has begun accepting applications for charter schools in Montgomery and said he has invited accreditation representatives to Montgomery to provide a status report on Montgomery Public Schools next month.

Those were the two most significant announcements made by Richardson who lambasted the lack of financial responsibility and academic progress at Montgomery Public Schools during a 30-minute intervention update in front of community business leaders at the annual Montgomery Chamber of Commerce meeting.

“If we do not make significant progress in finances and student achievement, we have to question whether or not Montgomery Public Schools can remain accredited,” Richardson said. “I’m not asking them to give me a report as to whether we want probation or whatever, but I hope it serves to send a message that has not been taken seriously at this point that we’re in big time trouble.”

MPS currently has district accreditation through AdvancEd, according to the school system’s website. The status report will determine MPS’ current financial situation, if the system has a continuous achievement progress model for students, and if “the board is interfering in the day-to-day operations of the schools.” “I can tell you they have been,” Richardson said. The minimum requirement for MPS’ reserves is one month’s operating budget. For MPS’ \$287 million budget, that minimum is just below \$19 million. MPS hasn’t met that minimum standard in the past five years and has met it only once in the past 10 years, Richardson said.

Academically, 80 percent of MPS schools did not meet the minimum state achievement threshold last year, and to be released from intervention, 70 percent of schools must meet that threshold, a dichotomy that Richardson said pointed to the “magnitude of the problem.” Richardson also cited MPS average ACT scores outside of magnet schools (14) and compared that to the state average (20).

“It’s clear to me the board of education, during that time, has not met their responsibility,” Richardson said. “In my opinion, the inaction of the board has been the overriding problem for Montgomery Public Schools. If we had more time, I would elaborate.” More: 'Our children have lost hope:' Pastors discuss ways to mentor MPS students Because of those problems, Richardson has invited applications from charter schools. Montgomery Mayor Todd Strange has long been an advocate for local charter schools and prior to accepting the interim state superintendent position, Richardson was chairman of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission.

Richardson said charter schools provide educational and financial accountability, although some are wary of them after charter schools in New Orleans and Detroit were exposed for cutting corners to meet financial and academic benchmarks. The problems for MPS go beyond student achievement. The district is losing \$1.5 million in state funds after losing 790 students this year.

That continues a trend of MPS losing approximately 500 students a year for the past five years, and a continuation of that trend means MPS will lose approximately \$3 million next year. In addition, MPS struggles with teacher absenteeism, student discipline problems and crumbling infrastructure.

“The demise of the system should not be a surprise to anybody. This has been going on for a long time,” Richardson said. Richardson acknowledged MPS is in need of additional resources but said, “For a system that has misused funds, to give them more money is often a mistake.” He also pointed to the low ad valorem taxes as a significant hurdle to MPS progress.

Richardson has instructed the state appointed MPS Chief Administrative Officer Reginald Eggleston and the Montgomery County Board of Education (MCBOE) to find a \$21 million reserve for the 2018 budget, which is currently nearly two months past due. In order to do that, MPS will have to close schools and most likely cut a combination of central office staff, principals, and teachers, cuts Richardson said will soon be made.

“I think we would agree that in terms of student achievement, cutting teachers and principals is counterproductive but that’s where we are. That will start this month,” Richardson said. Without the cuts, MPS would have a \$4.5 million deficit.

The board is currently meeting weekly to discuss possible cuts, but the board is not just tasked with plugging the 2018 hole. It must also plan for the loss of funds in 2019 and beyond. A facilities survey is expected to be delivered to the board Monday to break down the cost of each school closure, but board members such as MCBOE President Robert Porterfield and Mary Briers have questioned the need for a \$21 million reserve — or any budget surplus — multiple times.

“When have we ever had a surplus? Why is it so critical now that we have a surplus? Why so critical this year?” Porterfield said in October. MPS has been under state intervention since January. Former State Superintendent Michael Sentance initiated the takeover based primarily on MPS’ poor financial and academic standing, and Richardson took over after Sentance resigned amid clashes with the State Board of Education.

MPS’s magnet schools are obvious sources of pride and optimism. In order to improve the other schools, Richardson said the extra \$2 million in reserve will be used to put a combination of state and MPS employees in schools to monitor achievement with the state paying for the state employee salaries. In addition, Richardson said disruptive students will “receive their education in a constricted environment in another building,” and an effort is being made to involve more parents.

“Montgomery Public Schools is not a strong school system,” Richardson said. “We need to come to grips with that and stop making excuses. We need to take the steps to address the factors that contribute to that. “If you’re committed to strong public schools in Montgomery, now is the time for your last best chance.”

<http://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/education/2017/12/07/were-big-time-trouble-charter-schools-loss-accreditation-possible-mps/931754001/>

Higher Pre-K enrollment is improving Alabama's educational outcomes, report says

Jeremy Beaman | yellowhammernews.com

December 8, 2017

A report released this week by VOICES For Alabama's Children demonstrates that increased participation in Alabama's Pre-K programs has contributed to significantly improved education outcomes in recent years.

Why this matters: Alabama has been ranked as low as 42 in education nationally, an unfortunate statistic commonly repeated during local and state-wide election seasons. Legislators and educators have tried out a host of solutions to chip away at low performance, from new curricula to embracing technological innovation. While some new techniques have worked better than others, starting children early is having a unique impact. The details:

— According to the report, nine percent of students were required to repeat the ninth grade in 2009, while in 2015, only two percent were held back.

— The report attributes this improvement in large part to the more than 400 percent increase in enrollment that Alabama's First-Class Pre-K program has seen since 2008.

— The increase has affected performance in more grades than ninth.

— “The increased number of students entering school ready to learn has resulted in fewer students needing to repeat the first grade and more students reading on a proficient level by the fourth grade,” the report said.

— While higher Pre-K enrollment has benefited children, it still isn't a magic solution.

— “Alabama students have more opportunities for success today than in recent years,” said Rhonda Mann, deputy director of VOICES for Alabama's Children, “however, we are still lagging behind the rest of the country in improved education outcomes.”

<http://yellowhammernews.com/statepolitics/higher-pre-k-enrollment-improving-alabamas-educational-outcomes-report-says/>

10. Fallout continues from the 2016 superintendent search.

This one is tough to follow, but here's what's happening and how we got here.

Jefferson County superintendent Dr. Craig Pouncey was one of six finalists for the Alabama state superintendent position in August 2016. An anonymous allegation surfaced in July 2016, surmising Pouncey used his office for personal gain, an allegation Pouncey successfully debunked. The allegation was leaked to the press a couple of days prior to selection of the state superintendent, and Massachusetts native Michael Sentance was chosen for the position.

Pouncey sued state board member Mary Scott Hunter, R-Huntsville, former interim state superintendent Dr. Philip Cleveland, and three state department attorneys, including General Counsel Juliana Dean, alleging they mishandled the anonymous allegation and that cost Pouncey the job. In June, the state board heard the results of an internal investigation, conducted by a fourth state department attorney, Michael Meyer, at the request of Sentance, alleging the five named as defendants in Pouncey's lawsuit conspired to smear Pouncey to keep him from being appointed state superintendent.

In November two of the attorneys named in Pouncey's lawsuit filed suit against Meyer, claiming, among other actions, he defamed them for personal gain. Meyer, claiming immunity, filed a motion to dismiss. A hearing is scheduled in January in Montgomery. Meanwhile, Pouncey's lawsuit was ordered to mediation in October, with a Dec. 31, 2017, deadline. Pouncey was named Superintendent of the Year in October.

9. Alabama state board of education wrestles for control

It's been a busy year for the eight members of the elected state board of education. The year started with seating a new member, Jackie Zeigler, R-Mobile, a favorite of the Tea Party and the Eagle Forum. Zeigler defeated incumbent Matthew Brown in the April 2016 primary for the District 1 seat, and had no challenger in the general election.

State superintendent Michael Sentance took on a number of high-level reforms, and board members had a tough time keeping up with him. After chastising Sentance in March for making so many decisions without informing them, the board began holding additional work sessions and meetings where they questioned Sentance from every angle.

Board member Stephanie Bell, R-Montgomery, was elected Vice President at the July meeting, and by the next day, Bell requested fellow board members submit evaluations of Sentance's performance. As expected, most board members gave Sentance low marks, and though Sentance publicly stated he wanted to stick around long enough to see his efforts improve public education for Alabama's students, Sentance resigned on Sept. 13.

The board's ability to effectively govern K-12 public education has been called into question, and one state lawmaker has already filed a bill calling for a change in the way the board is chosen and giving the Governor authority over the department of education.

8. Governor Ivey steps up

Serving as president of the state board of education by virtue of her position as Governor, Ivey stepped up to the plate on Day One, attending the state board of education meeting in April, calling for improvements in public education and committing to working with multiple groups, including business, industry, and education, to raise achievement and student outcomes.

Ivey, a former schoolteacher, has attended every meeting since Sept. 14, where she formally accepted Sentance's resignation and presided over the appointment of former state superintendent Dr. Ed Richardson as interim. She has participated in meaningful discussions during those meetings and work sessions, and has been a strong supporter of Alabama's highly successful pre-K program.

Calling it her first formal initiative as Governor of Alabama, Ivey said "Strong Start, Strong Finish" calls for various existing education groups to work together in a collaborative way from pre-kindergarten through workforce development.

7. Ed Richardson is back at the helm

Former Alabama state superintendent Dr. Ed Richardson took the reins at the state department of education after Michael Sentance resigned in September. Ivey said she asked him to serve, and Richardson said he wanted to get the department back on track after a tumultuous year.

Richardson is no stranger to public education in Alabama, having served in every role from teacher to principal to superintendent to state superintendent in his 40-plus years in education. He was state superintendent from 1995 until 2004, when he was asked to fill in as Auburn University's president during a crisis where the university had been put on probation and was in danger of losing accreditation.

Richardson retired from Auburn University in 2007, but has served in multiple capacities since then, including his most recent role as president of the state's Alabama Public Charter School Commission. He resigned from the Commission upon his interim appointment. Richardson has not held back his dismay with the current state of public education in Alabama and publicly supports the release of controversial A-F report cards early next year.

6. State drops ACT Aspire with no replacement

The state board of education voted in June to drop the standardized test used to measure student achievement after months of discussions about poor scores. Questions also surfaced about whether the test was aligned well enough with what Alabama's students were being taught at each grade level. Though ACT, the creator of the ACT Aspire, conducted an alignment study, Alabama education officials should have sought an independent study, federal officials said.

Rather than spend the money to conduct the alignment study, Sentance and board members agreed they should either create an Alabama-specific test or use a test that already existed. Students in grades 3 through 8 and in grade 10 will be tested using Scantron testing, previously called GlobalScholar. About two-thirds of schools are already using Scantron, and additional support was given to schools not already using it.

ACT Aspire results from spring 2017 have not yet been released. Schools where student proficiency levels are in the bottom six percent statewide will be labeled “failing” as required by the Alabama Accountability Act. That list is expected to be released in January. Former state superintendent and Business and Education Alliance President Dr. Joe Morton is working with superintendents and other education officials to find a new test for Alabama’s students. If officials decide to create an Alabama-specific test, it could take two to three years to design, pilot, and implement in schools statewide.

5. High school graduation rate fallout

Federal education officials told Alabama state department officials in June they “misreported” graduation rates, counting students as graduates who hadn’t taken rigorous coursework in line with graduation standards which artificially inflated rates. Federal auditors also found the state department lacked the capacity to properly oversee local school districts’ proper awarding of high school diplomas. The department responded with a plan to correct the findings.

Though federal funding could have been withheld as a result of the findings, there has been no further indication of what action might be taken. However, federal officials declared graduation rates between 2010 and 2015 unreliable and require those rates to be noted as such when publicly displayed. In related turmoil, state education officials posted inaccurate 2016 graduation rates in April. Those inaccuracies arose from an improper determination of which courses counted toward graduation and which ones didn’t.

Former Jefferson County superintendent Dr. Phil Hammonds led the investigation into how those rates got posted online, and he determined it was a “perfect storm” of new requirements and insufficient protocol and said no one particular person in the department was to blame. A new protocol for reviewing and publicly releasing data was enacted as a result.

Accurate rates were published in August, showing only a slight drop in Alabama’s overall graduation rate from 89.3 percent in 2015 (where too many graduates were counted as having completed required coursework) to 87.1 percent in 2016. Alabama has the 16th highest graduation rate in the country, falling from third-highest in 2015 when the numbers were artificially inflated. Graduation rates for the class of 2017, which graduated in May, have not been released.

4. Federal education plan not winning over officials

Alabama’s federal education plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, received initial feedback from the U.S. Department of Education in December. Federal officials said they want more detail in a lot of areas.

The plan, under development for more than two years, changed hands from former Gov. Bentley to former state superintendent Michael Sentance, who resigned a few days before the federal filing deadline.

Education groups asked for a seat at the table to fix flaws in the plan, and officials were granted a one-month delay. Though education groups gave input, parents complained they were not asked for theirs. State officials said the plan wasn't perfect when it was filed in October, and federal officials apparently agree.

Former state superintendent and Business and Education Alliance President Dr. Joe Morton has been spearheading the effort for Richardson and has a meeting planned for Jan. 4 to bring those groups back together to fill in the gaps and strengthen the plan before a February deadline.

3. Charter school opens, two more approved for 2018

The Accel Day and Evening Academy in Mobile officially opened at the start of the 2017-2018 school year. It is the first public charter school to open in Alabama. State records show 245 students are enrolled in grades nine through 12. The Public Charter School Commission approved two charter schools to open in the 2018-2019 school year. One in Sumter County, and one in Birmingham City.

The Birmingham Board of Education sued the Commission in June to block the opening of STAR Academy, an applicant Birmingham had denied. That lawsuit is pending. Charter school applicants hoping to open a school in Montgomery County pulled their application from consideration. The Commission rejected an applicant hoping to open a charter school to serve students in prison.

Charter school operators can apply to the Commission beginning Jan. 1 to open in the fall of 2019. The deadline is Mar. 1. Alabama's four local board of education authorizers, Athens City, Birmingham City, Greene County and Macon County open application period was Nov. 1 through Dec. 1. Though the state law authorizing public charter schools to operate was passed in 2015, the state has seen few applicants.

2. School report cards coming in February

After many last-minute delays, it looks like the state department will finally issue long-awaited school-based report cards in February. Though the law was passed nearly six years ago and work to determine what measures will be used has been going on since 2013, educators are still concerned about the impact those report cards will have on schools earning low grades.

About the report cards, Alabama interim state superintendent Dr. Ed Richardson said public schools "don't deserve all A's and B's" and it's time to own Alabama's poor showing on student outcomes. Critics say the measures rely too heavily on test results and don't provide any additional resources for schools who earn low grades.

Proponents, including Gov. Ivey, say that in order to improve, schools need to have a baseline starting point and that's what these grades provide. Nationwide, 16 states assign A-F grades to schools, according to the Education Commission of the States. Some do so under state law or regulation, while others assign grades for federal accountability purposes.

1. Michael Sentance resigns, new superintendent search underway

To no one's surprise, Massachusetts native Michael Sentance resigned as state superintendent on Sept. 13, barely more than a year after taking the job, and a day before the board of education was expected to vote to

fire him. Sentance received low marks on an early evaluation and, admitting he made mistakes, asked board members to give him more time. Instead, the heat was turned up, and ultimately, Sentance chose to leave on his terms.

The timeline for the search for a new superintendent has been set, with board members optimistically looking toward April to interview finalists. Gov. Ivey has taken control of the search and has promised to include all board members in the search process. For his part, Richardson has lectured board members publicly about their proper role and how important it is for the board to get this next appointment right.

Dr. Tommy Bice resigned in March 2016, Dr. Philip Cleveland served as interim through August 2016, Sentance started the job in September 2016 and resigned a year later, making Richardson the fourth person to have held the job in less than two years. Richardson will serve as interim through June 30, 2018, or until a superintendent is seated.

The story no one is talking about

AL.com looked at a few different areas of school funding this year and found school spending in 2016 hadn't yet recovered to pre-recession levels. And while money isn't everything, a 2015 school finance study showed how a minimum level of funding must be in place to meet standards and concluded Alabama's state funding doesn't meet that minimum level. Whether lawmakers will take that up in the 2018 legislative session remains to be seen.

AL.com's recent school finance stories:

- Alabama K-12 education spending third worst catching up to recession cuts (http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/12/alabama_k-12_education_spending.html)
- Wealthier communities still spend more on Alabama students, data shows (http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/10/spending_on_alabama_students.html)
- Schools spending less on teaching, data shows. But how much does it matter? (http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/11/does_it_matter_how_schools_spend.html)

What's coming for 2018?

What kind of letter grades will Alabama schools receive on first-ever report cards?

Will lawmakers agree to changing how the state board of education is chosen?

Who will become state superintendent?

Which test will become the state's accountability test?

What impact will federal budget changes have on classrooms in Alabama?

http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/12/what_happened_in_k-12_education.html#incart_river_mobileshort_home

Mayor eyes charter school 'feeder system' as state prepares to accept applications

Andrew J. Yawn | Montgomery Advertiser

January 2, 2018

A feeder system of seven or eight charter schools occupying former Montgomery Public Schools buildings and ranging from elementary school to high school. That's the vision of Mayor Todd Strange, one he hopes will come closer to fruition as the state begins accepting Montgomery charter schools applications on Jan. 16.

The feeder system application is being submitted by the non-profit Education Foundation, which has hired an outside group to draft the application. The Education Foundation is independent of the city, but in a wide-ranging, end-of-the-year interview with the Montgomery Advertiser before Christmas, Strange spoke as though the city is directly involved in the formation of the feeder system and listed it as one of his top goals for 2018.

Interim State Superintendent of Education Ed Richardson, a charter school advocate and former chairman of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission, announced in December that the state would begin accepting charter school applications to provide more financial and academic accountability in Montgomery County, issues that also caused the state to intervene in MPS operations last January.

"We've been the ones in contact with Ed relative to the charter application," Strange said. "He knows we are putting in a charter application through the Education Foundation to do what I call a feeder system charter. In other words, not to start a high school or a grammar school but to put in a feeder system. Let's take a high school, a couple middle schools and two or three elementary schools that feed in and let's make that the charter."

Education Foundation Director Ann Sikes confirmed her organization's concept and plan to submit an application within the three-month window. "We are working on a larger concept," Sikes said. "We're working to help attract good quality charter leaders that want to work in the context of intervention."

Strange said Auburn University Montgomery, Faulkner University and Troy University have expressed interest in either actively leading or supporting charter schools. Strange also said another local group headed by a Montgomery doctor is mulling submitting a charter school application, but attempts to contact that person for confirmation were unsuccessful.

If approved and implemented, the feeder system would be a part of MPS, but Logan Searcy of the state's Office of Public Charter Schools said the "huge difference" would be the charter school having a governing body outside the Montgomery County Board of Education. That board will set academic and financial mandates and change school leadership if those are not met. "That board will have autonomy. And the money will still flow through MPS," Searcy said.

Charter schools have received criticism in larger cities such as Detroit and New Orleans after schools were caught cutting corners to reach those benchmarks. There have also been reports of charter schools removing low-performing students to maintain a higher grade average, but Alabama's school choice law says a charter

school must accept any student it has capacity for and any schools at capacity must select students via random lottery.

Sikes emphasized that charter schools in Montgomery are "a tool" and not the answer for a system that is losing students, losing funding and had 80 percent of its schools not meet the minimum state achievement threshold last year, according to Richardson. Sikes said charter schools can be incubators for new ideas that can eventually help the entire district.

"It drives home two things: autonomy and accountability," Sikes said. "Autonomy to have that flexibility to work on different types of ways of teaching our children. Not something bizarre but something like extending school year round or having different groupings by grade. But with that autonomy also comes accountability. Within the charter schools mandate, there are tangible targets to be made that, if they're not made, the school is not allowed to continue under that same leadership.

"We need our community to realize so much of our failing is not about our kids. They can learn and succeed." MPS is currently working with Richardson to finalize its 2018 budget. That budget does not include closing or selling schools, but the 2019 budget might as MPS continues to lose state funding due to declining enrollment.

Strange said the charter school plan would involve converting old schools for charter use. When asked if the charter plan involves the city or Education Foundation purchasing closed schools from MPS, Strange said, "That's just a negotiation," and that it's yet to be determined.

<http://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/education/2018/01/02/mayor-eyes-charter-school-feeder-system-state-prepares-accept-applications/975438001/>

Alabama Board of Education needs changes, lawmaker says

Trisha Powell Crain | *al.com*

January 6, 2018

Rep. Terri Collins, R-Decatur, has proposed a way to improve the way the elected state board of education functions. Collins said she started looking at ways to improve the board last summer. "I felt like we saw a lot of chaos," she said, at board meetings and work sessions. "We saw arguing [among board members]. We didn't seem to have a clear-cut vision."

Collins, who chairs the House Education Policy committee filed HB70 this week. The bill proposes to add four non-voting members to the nine-member state board of education. Of those additional seats, two would be filled by Alabama's Teachers of the Year, and two would be filled by students.

Additionally, Collins said state board of education members should "lead by example" and be subjected to the same annual training requirements and standards of board service expected of local school board members. Those training requirements and standards are a part of the School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012 and should apply to state board members, too, she said.

Alabama's Constitution requires the board to be elected, and Collins said she doesn't see the people giving up their right to elect board members, so she isn't proposing to change how board members obtain their seats. Sen. Greg Albritton, R-Atmore, recently filed a bill to change the board from being elected to being appointed. (http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/12/lawmaker_aims_to_shake_the_fou.html)

Collins credits Gov. Kay Ivey and interim state superintendent Dr. Ed Richardson with moving the board in a better direction in recent months, but said it's still a good idea to have teachers and students at the board table. Having teachers and students serve on the board isn't unusual, Collins said, as 19 states have students serving on the state education governing board in some capacity.

Under her proposal, both the current and immediate past Teacher of the Year would have a seat at the table, she said, and the students would be delegates from Boys State and Girls State. Boys State and Girls State are organizations sponsored by the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary that promote citizen involvement in government. Students in their junior year are recommended for participation in the organization by a school official.

AL.com was not able to determine how widespread participation in the organization is in Alabama's public schools. Collins said she had run the bill past many, but not all, state board members along with others in the education community and said she has received positive reactions to her bill.

State board member Betty Peters, R-Kinsey, had only just received the bill when contacted by AL.com. Peters was first elected to represent District 2 in south and east Alabama in 2002 and is not seeking re-election in 2018.

After a quick glance at the bill, Peters said, "I'd be happy to have [students'] input," but said she worries about taking students out of class to attend monthly board meetings. She said she would like to see the board find a way to incorporate student input on a regular basis, but isn't sure this is the best way.

Peters said she liked the idea of adding Teachers of the Year to the board table. Peters said she isn't surprised to see these bills filed as the state board's actions over the past year have likely brought the increased scrutiny. "I think we [board members] have been our own worst enemy," Peters said.

Collins said she expects to see other bills filed to change the way the board of education functions. "There'll be several others," she said, "because of the year that we've had."

http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/alabama_board_of_education_nee.html#incart_river_mobileshort_home

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA | Division of
Student Life
Blackburn Institute

Session III

Below are biographies of the panelists for Session III, providing an overview of Alabama's Ethics Commission.

Thomas Albritton

Tom Albritton serves as the Executive Director of the Alabama Ethics Commission, confirmed by the Alabama Senate in March of 2015, which is responsible for the enforcement of the state's ethics laws. He began his law career in his Andalusia family firm, where he spent over 23 years trying cases for and advising elected officials and other public sector clients. Albritton served as a municipal judge for over 17 years and was also an Assistant District Attorney for the 22nd Judicial Circuit. He has been admitted to practice before the United States Court of Federal Claims, United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, United States District Courts for the Northern/Middle/Southern Districts of Alabama, United States Bankruptcy Courts, Alabama Supreme Court, and Alabama Courts of Civil and Criminal Appeals. He has been very active in many professional and civic organizations throughout his career, graduating from Leadership Alabama in 2015.



Albritton is a two-time alumnus of The University of Alabama (B.A. in English and J.D.).

Beverlye Brady

Beverlye Brady, Esquire, was appointed by Lt. Governor Kay Ivey and confirmed by the Alabama Senate on March 9, 2017, to serve on the Alabama Ethics Commission effective immediately serving a term that began on September 1, 2016 and ends on August 31, 2021. Brady, a Lee County native, has more than thirty years' experience practicing law in Lee County, Alabama, including litigation and appeals, in civil, criminal and domestic relations. Although she practices predominantly in all Courts in Lee County and surrounding counties, her practice takes her throughout Alabama.



Brady is an alumna of Auburn University and Cumberland School of Law.

Cynthia Raulston

Cynthia Raulston is General Counsel for the Alabama Ethics Commission. Raulston was a prosecutor with the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office, Birmingham Division, for 14 years. Throughout her career, she prosecuted felonies and misdemeanors ranging from drug trafficking to capital murder to fraud and embezzlement.



For the last ten years, Raulston was specially assigned cases involving complex white collar crime, including public employees and prominent figures, in addition to her regular docket. In 2015, Raulston helped create a unit dedicated to the prosecution of White Collar Crime and Public Corruption. As a part of that unit, she participated in large-scale financial fraud investigations and the prosecution of hundreds of defendants.

Raulston holds a B.S. from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and a J.D. from The University of Alabama School of Law.

Alabama Ethics Commission levies more than \$100,000 in fines

Jeremy Beaman | yellowhammernews.com

June 19, 2017

The Alabama Ethics Commission sent notices to almost 5,000 public employees and public officials who did not file their statement of economic interests last year. Most responded by sending in their statements, but some did not or did not promptly, even after three notices.

The commission has assessed \$110,000 in fines against 166 non-filers and late filers, Ethics Commission Executive Director Tom Albritton said. The numbers are still being verified and could change, he said. In addition, fines against another group of non-filers and late filers are coming.

The enforcement action comes after the Ethics Commission voted to exercise its authority to levy the fines. Previously, the commission fined individual non-filers who were the subject of a complaint, but not all non-filers. That minimized the importance of the requirement, Albritton said. "I think it's our obligation to stay on top of who should be filing," Albritton said.

The state ethics law requires elected officials on the state, county and municipal levels, as well as public employees who make \$75,000 or more a year, to file a statement of economic interests by April 30 each year. The information is for the preceding calendar year.

Political candidates are required to file statements when they officially become candidates. Many other public employees fall under the requirement, including police and fire chiefs, county building inspectors, legislative employees and certain other categories. Albritton said the commission receives more than 50,000 statements a year, so the vast majority follow the law.

Statements of financial interests show sources of income, debts, real estate holdings and other information intended to disclose potential conflicts of interest between the filers' public job and their private financial interests. Information on income for spouses and dependents is included.

The law authorizes the Ethics Commission, at its discretion, to impose fines of \$10 a day for each day a statement is late after a 10-day notice, up to a maximum of \$1,000. The commission voted in February to exercise that authority against the municipal and county level non-filers.

In April, the commission voted to fine state level non-filers. Albritton said the goal is to encourage people to send in their statements, not to collect fines. That's why the commission sends multiple notices, he said. "Imposing these fines is simply the last resort," Albritton said.

In December, the commission sent letters to 1,149 non-filers at the municipal level and 548 at the county level. In February, when the \$10 daily fines took effect, the commission sent follow up letters to 320 remaining municipal non-filers and 151 county non-filers. Ultimately, 118 non-filers and late filers at the municipal level were fined a total of \$77,760 and 48 non-filers and late filers at the county level were assessed \$32,760 in fines.

In February, the commission sent notices to 3,225 state government level non-filers. In April, it sent a second letter to 598 remaining non filers. Fines against those who have still not filed or filed late will be assessed on Wednesday, Albritton said. In August, the commission plans to begin identifying those who failed to file their forms this year for the calendar year 2016.

http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2017/06/alabama_ethics_commission_fine.html

Alabama Ethics Commission revelations go 'Boom!'

John Archibald | al.com (Opinion)

August 4, 2017

What's happening at the Alabama Ethics Commission ought to be explosive. Mind-blowing. An outgoing member - Dr. Stewart Hill Tankersley - says a majority of his colleagues want to weaken the commission and see it fail. They are more interested, he says, in providing legal cover to powerful politicians than carrying a torch for what is right. For what is ethical.

It ought to be dynamite. Tankersley says three members -- Jerry Fielding, Frank "Butch" Ellis, Jr. and Charles Price -- see ethics as an obstacle to get around instead of a goal to reach. They bend over backward for the rich and powerful, hammer the average "Ricky Bobby from Talladega" for far smaller crimes.

"So," I asked, "They've been corrupted by the machine that corrupts the politicians?" "No!" he said. "They haven't been corrupted by it. They're a part of it." Boom. Fielding said he did not want to comment publicly about Tankersley's view. He said he would talk to him personally. Ellis is in Alaska, and has not yet returned messages. Attempts to reach Price failed.

Tankersley says he doesn't wish any ill on his colleagues, but he felt he could not leave without speaking his mind to all who will listen. Because the state depends on it. "We have a corrupt climate in the politics of our state and something needs to be done about it," he said. "I don't think they (other commissioners) believe that's the case."

Tankersley cited examples that troubled him. He was disturbed when Price - chairman-elect of the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce -- voted on an issue involving the chamber last year, even after he was questioned about it by another commissioner in an open meeting.

He said Ellis voted on an issue involving a state legislator that might have benefited Ellis' son. He said Fielding, as chair of the commission, violated rules of order by voting to create a tie in an issue involving Public Service Commission member Chip Beeker, who asked if he could lease land to a company that wanted to do business with Alabama Power (which the PSC regulates).

Tankersley argued that the job of the chair is to break ties, not make them. The bid eventually failed anyway, but it would have died that day if Fielding had stayed mum.

It ought to be a big old kaboom. Because Alabama should be shocked that its arbiters of ethics face their own ethical challenges. Alabama should be stunned that commissioners look at powerful offenders in a different light than the powerless ones. Alabama's minds should be blown that lawyers of powerful defendants, as Tankersley says, receive preferential - even deferential - treatment.

But our minds aren't blown. The boom is more of a pop. The earth doesn't shake because all who have watched this commission have seen the writing on the wall. Ever since the conviction of former House Speaker Mike Hubbard the push, by powerful politicians and the lawyers who feed them and feed off them,

has been to tear down the ethics law. Because the law put responsibility on lobbyists and those who pay them. The law has made it too hard to be a crook. (Though they still manage).

It's not a surprise. The real bomb here is that the Ethics Commission's own flaws - the examples Tankersley cited - make you want to throw up your hands. They give strength to those who would simply disband the commission altogether. And leave such decisions to - yikes! -- politicians themselves. That's what Tankersley is most afraid of. Because if that happens, "these guys are gonna win," he said. Boom.

http://www.al.com/opinion/index.ssf/2017/08/alabama_ethics_commission_reve.html

Alabama Ethics Commission sets aside fines for late campaign reports

Mike Cason | *al.com*

December 4, 2017

The Alabama Ethics Commission voted today to set aside fines against three candidates and three political action committees that were late in filing campaign finance reports this year. The Legislature passed a law in 2015 setting up the civil fines for late filers. This year is the first election cycle for the fines to be in effect.

After hearing descriptions of what happened in each of the six cases, the majority of the commission agreed that it was appropriate to drop the fines. "It seems like in all these cases a lesson has been learned," Commissioner Frank C. "Butch" Ellis of Columbiana said. Commissioner Charles Price said, "It's not like these folks are not trying to comply."

The commission voted 4-1 to drop the fines. Commissioner Beverlye Brady of Auburn voted against the motion. Brady said she considered the circumstances unfortunate but did not think the commission had the authority to step into the role of the Legislature and "contort or change the law."

"I find that it's an awkward position to be in," Brady said. Price noted that the Legislature included the right to appeal in the law. The PACs that filed late were the Shelby Dems PAC, the Shelby County Republican Party and AL Lenders PAC. The PACs eventually filed all the late reports.

http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/12/alabama_ethics_commission_sets.html

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA | Division of
Student Life
Blackburn Institute

Session IV

Below are biographies of the panelists for Session IV, discussing the implications of the Memorial Preservation Act.

Sen. Gerald Allen

Senator Gerald Allen is currently resides in Tuscaloosa, AL and represents Senate District 21, which covers Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa Counties. He is serving his second term in the Senate, after serving four terms in the Alabama House of Representatives. Allen is a member of the Confirmations, Finance and Taxation Education, and Transportation and Energy committees within the legislature. In addition to his time spent as a Senator, Allen is the owner of CASHCO Marketing and is a Deacon for the Gilgal Baptist Church.

Allen is an alumnus of The University of Alabama (B.S.).



Rep. Juandalynn Givan

Representative Juandalynn “Lee Lee” Givan is a current resident of Birmingham, AL and was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives on November 2, 2010. She represents House District 60, serving the people of Jefferson County. Rep. Givan is also a member of the Judiciary and Jefferson County Legislation Committees. In addition to serving as a member of the House of Representatives, she is the owner of Givan & Associates Law Firm, which includes governmental relations and program management consulting services. She is also a mentor and public speaker and was named professional woman of the year by the NAACP in 2010.

Givan is an alumna of Miles College and the Miles Law School.



Alabama legislature passes bill to protect historical monuments

Jordan Laporta | yellowhammernews.com

May 19, 2017

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — The Alabama Legislature took the final steps to pass Senate Bill 60 on Friday, which will make it significantly harder to remove historical monuments from government property. The so-called Alabama Memorial Preservation Act will protect monuments 50 years and older by prohibiting their relocation or removal, while the alteration of monuments less than 50 years old will require the permission of a permanent joint committee on Alabama Monument Protection.

Over the past month, the City of New Orleans, Louisiana has removed several confederate memorials from public grounds, leading to many protests and counter-protests at the sites. According to the mayor of New Orleans, the monuments were removed because they “failed to appropriately reflect the values of diversity and inclusion that make New Orleans strong today.”

The bill’s sponsor, Sen. Gerald Allen (R-Tuscaloosa), said the events in Louisiana prove exactly why such legislation is needed in the Yellowhammer state. “Unfortunately, in cities like New Orleans we are seeing a wave of political correctness wipe out monuments to historically significant, if often flawed, people,” Allen said. “Where does it end? Are all parts of American history subject to purging, until every Ivy League professor is satisfied and the American story has been re-written as nothing but a complete fraud and a betrayal of our founding values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?”

Dozens of cities across the state of Alabama contain their own Confederate monuments that were constructed post-reconstruction. Montgomery, for instance, has the Monument to Confederate Soldiers and Sailors on the grounds of the State Capitol. Partially funded with state grants, the monument has stood since 1886, and the person who laid the cornerstone was none other than CSA President Jefferson Davis.

Montgomery is also home to numerous civil rights movement monuments including the Civil Rights Memorial, located on Washington Avenue. The granite display contains the names of 41 people who died during the fight for civil rights.

“Let’s stop this absurd destruction of monuments that offend the tender sensibilities of any person, anywhere, and preserve our history – the good and the bad – for our children and grandchildren to learn from,” Allen said.

The bill now heads to Gov. Kay Ivey’s (R-Ala.) desk for her signature to become law.

<http://yellowhammernews.com/politics-2/alabama-legislature-passes-bill-protect-historical-monuments-jal/>

Democratic lawmaker seeks repeal of historic monuments law

Mike Cason | *al.com*

August 17, 2017

A state representative from Birmingham is seeking a repeal of the law that is blocking the city from removing a Confederate monument from Linn Park. Rep. Juandalynn Givan, D-Birmingham, sides with the city leadership in its dispute with Attorney General Steve Marshall. She wants to repeal the Memorial Preservation Act or give Birmingham and other cities the authority to opt out of the law.

Marshall filed a lawsuit against the city and Mayor William Bell because of a plywood covering the city placed around the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument, dedicated in Linn Park in 1905. The lawsuit claims the covering violates the Memorial Preservation Act, which prohibits moving, altering or renaming a historical monument on public property that has been in place 40 years or more.

The Legislature passed the bill this year with strong support by Republicans and nearly unanimous opposition from Democrats. Gov. Kay Ivey signed it into law. Givan said the Legislature has no business dictating to local governments about monuments on local government property.

"This is a city of Birmingham park, not a state of Alabama park," Givan said. "And I think that is overreaching for us to tell any governmental entity outside of the Legislature what they can and cannot do with regards to issues such as these." Givan said the monument is especially inappropriate in a part of the city known for epic struggles and events of the civil rights movement.

"We are only a few blocks away from where four little girls were killed during the 1963 bombing," at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Givan said. Givan said she's planning to sponsor three bills. One would simply repeal the Memorial Preservation Act. Another would allow Birmingham to opt out by a vote of the council or a referendum by voters. And another would allow that same option for other cities.

Givan acknowledges the legislation faces steep odds. Republicans hold 72 of 105 House seats and 26 of 35 in the Senate. "Whether it goes anywhere or not, the thing is I must continue to fight," Givan said. "I agree with Mayor Bell and his efforts, as well as the Birmingham City Council."

The city considered moving the monument two years ago. Last weekend's violence in Virginia renewed the calls for its removal. White supremacists gathered in Charlottesville to protest removal of a Robert E. Lee statue. A counter protester was killed and others injured. Givan said Alabama is "ripe" for similar violence.

"Alabama is still one of the most racist places in the South," Givan said. "That's just the truth of the matter. And these types of monuments breed troubled grounds." Birmingham City Council President Johnathan Austin called for the city to remove the Confederate monuments in defiance of the new state law. Bell disagreed, saying the right approach is to challenge the law in court. The mayor said the plywood covering was a protective barrier.

Sen. Gerald Allen, R-Tuscaloosa, who sponsored the Memorial Preservation Act, said Wednesday that Bell's actions were counterproductive. "It is unfortunate that Mayor William Bell has decided to elevate his own

personal preferences above the law in covering the monument at Linn Park," Allen said in a statement. The legislative session starts Jan. 9.

http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/08/democratic_lawmaker_seeks_repe.html

Senator wants school name changes removed from Alabama monuments law

Mike Cason | *al.com*

August 30, 2017

A state senator wants to change Alabama's new law on preserving historical monuments and buildings so that it does not restrict a local school district that wants to rename a school. The Alabama Memorial Preservation Act has drawn attention mostly because it restricts or blocks the removal of historical monuments, including Confederate monuments, from public property.

But the law, passed by the Legislature earlier this year and signed by Gov. Kay Ivey, also restricts the renaming of any "memorial school" on public property. Sen. Dick Brewbaker, R-Montgomery, said it should be up to local officials whether to change the name of a school. Brewbaker is working on a bill that he plans to pre-file before the legislative session, which starts Jan. 9.

"If there is a name of a school that's causing controversy in any community, you don't help anybody by making it a long, drawn out process, outside of local control, to change that name," Brewbaker said. The senator, who is not running for reelection next year, is chairman of the Senate's Education and Youth Affairs Committee. The Alabama Memorial Preservation Act defines a "memorial school" as any K-12 or two-year college facility named for a person, event, group, movement or military service.

Under the law, a local school board that wanted to rename a memorial school 20 years old or older would have to get a waiver from the Committee on Alabama Monument Protection, a new, 11-member group appointed by the governor, House speaker and Senate president pro tempore.

The law spells out minimum requirements and documentation to apply for a waiver, including written commentary from any "heritage, historical, genealogical, or preservation organizations" with an interest in a proposed name change. Brewbaker said schools that are named after a person will eventually need to be replaced because buildings age and become outdated.

He said school systems should have the option of renaming schools in those cases, if, for example, a local philanthropist offers to donate land or money to support that effort and wants to have a say in the name. Brewbaker said that's unlikely to happen if there's a "long, torturous process that might get the philanthropist's name dragged through the mud."

"All old brick schools are not necessarily worth saving," Brewbaker said. "They're expensive to operate. And if you tear one down and in the process are going to rename it, it just seems a little ridiculous that you have to treat it like you're taking down a statue of Lafayette that was put in the town square in 1801."

Four Montgomery public schools carry Brewbaker's family name. That's because of the philanthropy of Brewbaker's grandfather, William S. Brewbaker, who made donations in honor of his wife, Cassie Leta Brewbaker, a longtime Montgomery public school teacher. Brewbaker said there could be cases where changing a school name can be justified for educational reasons.

"On the educational side, one of the problems that we've got with certain groups of students is a real sense of alienation from the school as an institution," the senator said. "The research is pretty clear that if you're dealing with populations of students that don't feel connected to the school, it makes a difference if you do everything you can to make them feel like the school is a place they have a stake in.

"And so if communities think that school names are interfering with their educational mission or proving a distraction it makes sense that local boards ought to be able to change that not for historical reasons but for educational reasons."

Brewbaker notes that his bill does not change any school names, but restores the law to what it was a few months ago, before the Memorial Preservation Act took effect. The senator said public education has enough challenges already without more distractions caused by treating them as historical memorials.

http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/08/senator_wants_school_name_chan.html

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA | Division of
Student Life
Blackburn Institute

Session V

Below are biographies of the panelists for Session VII, discussing the opioid addiction in Alabama.

Dr. Susan Alverson

Dr. Susan Alverson (Pharm. D.) became Executive Secretary for the Alabama Board of Pharmacy on March 19, 2014 and is responsible for compliance of sterile compounding. Prior to joining the staff of the Board, Susan was the Associate Dean of Student and Alumni Affairs and Director of Continuing Education at Samford University, McWhorter School of Pharmacy in Birmingham.

Alverson holds a Doctorate of Public Administration and Master of Science in Public Administration from the University of Southern California, Master of Science Hospital Pharmacy from Virginia Commonwealth University Medical College of Virginia, and Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Wisconsin.



Dr. Scott Harris

Dr. Scott Harris is a native of Decatur, AL but currently resides in Montgomery, AL. He assumed the role of Alabama State Health Officer in 2017. Previously, Harris served as the Assistant Health Officer and has been a practicing medical professional in Alabama for more than 20 years. He also served as the head of the Morgan County Health Department. Additionally, Dr. Harris is one of the founding members of the Community Free Clinic of Decatur-Morgan County, a nonprofit that provides free medical care to the uninsured. Harris served as the clinic's medical director from 2004 until 2015 and continues to serve on the clinic's board.



Steve Marshall

Steve Marshall became Alabama's 48th Attorney General on February 10, 2017. An Atmore native, he served as District Attorney of Marshall County for 16 years, earning the reputation of a tough, hands-on prosecutor and a staunch advocate for crime victims.



As District Attorney, Marshall forged a strong record of fighting crime. He created a major crimes unit, a computer forensics lab and a crystal meth task force. He was also instrumental in promoting the passage of state legislation tracking the sale of ingredients used to manufacture crystal meth. He took a leading role in supporting the passage of the Brody Act which makes it possible to prosecute criminals for two crimes if they kill or injure an unborn baby in an attack on the mother. He also advocated passage of “Kelley’s Law” which makes it a capital crime to murder someone who has a protective order against the offender.

As Alabama Attorney General, Steve Marshall has continued his tireless work in pursuit of justice for all Alabamians. Upon taking office, he immediately began developing a strategic plan for addressing Alabama's increasing violent crime rates. He has expanded training opportunities for local law enforcement and is directing assistance to those areas in Alabama most plagued by violent crime. He has been recognized as a champion of victims' rights and, in 2017, spearheaded a major legislative victory for the families of capital murder victims with the enactment of a new law designed to ensure that capital offenders cannot avoid punishment through endless appeals.

Attorney General Marshall is also taking a leading role in addressing Alabama's ongoing opioid crisis by serving as co-chair of Governor Kay Ivey's Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council. Under his watch, the Attorney General's Office has also maintained its strong commitment to fighting public corruption. Steve and his wife, Bridgette, have one daughter, Faith. They are members of LifePoint Church in Albertville, Alabama.

Marshall is an alumnus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and The University of Alabama School of Law.

Time to fight the opioid crisis in Alabama

Senator Cam Ward | *al.com* (Guest Column)

August 22, 2017

In 2016, more Americans died from drug overdoses than were killed in the entire Vietnam War. Two-thirds of those overdoses were linked to opioids, a class of drugs that includes illegal substances like heroin, but which is primarily composed of legal painkillers like oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone.

Unfortunately, Alabama is center stage in the opioid crisis: according to the Center for Public Integrity, in 2015 Alabama had the highest per capita number of opioid prescriptions of any state in the country, with a rate of 1.2 prescriptions for every resident. Not surprisingly, for the past several years the number of persons dying from overdoses in Alabama has been climbing, with 282 people dying from opioid overdoses in 2015, per data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. According to the company's own research, 6.5% of BlueCross and BlueShield of Alabama's members were on a long-duration opioid regimen in 2015, compared to the 3.8% national average.

The numbers are grim, and will continue to get worse in Alabama and across the nation unless lawmakers, pastors, and community leaders band together to address the crisis.

What is driving the surge in opioid abuse? Some experts argue that drug manufacturers and doctors are to blame. In this narrative, during the 1990s doctors began to over-prescribe opioids as patients increasingly expected "pain-free" healthcare. Meanwhile, drug companies overhyped the safety of painkillers and ignored research indicating that some opioids were highly addictive.

Some writers and researchers, like Johann Hari, have pointed to increasing social isolation as the primary driver of the opioid epidemic. As Americans spend more and more time staring at screens and have fewer strong social ties with neighbors and relatives, a web of psychological problems arises. People, in this rendering, turn to painkillers to make up for frayed or non-existent social connections.

Additional academic studies will hopefully shed more light on the complex factors driving the crisis. But solutions, even provisional ones, are needed now. I think that at the least, more treatment centers are needed in Alabama for those struggling with opioid addictions. A central challenge is that these persons have few places to go for counseling and treatment. As public policy writer German Lopez puts it, "it is much easier to get high than it is to get help."

From a legal perspective, we need to give our law enforcement officers more tools to crack down on fentanyl, an opioid mix that is fifty times more powerful than heroin. Used as a pain reliever for patients, fentanyl is among the most powerful opioids prescribed by medical providers. Its street form is uniquely dangerous since the drug can be absorbed via the skin or inhalation. In next year's legislative session, I plan to sponsor a bill to make the illicit distribution of fentanyl a Class C felony.

We must see the opioid crisis in the context of broader social problems. As a conservative, I believe government programs are limited in their effectiveness at solving complex social challenges. We need churches, businesses, and community leaders to continue to form creative partnerships, like job-training

programs for recovering addicts. The social science publication STAT estimates that 650,000 Americans will die over the next ten years from opioid overdoses. Perhaps no other social crisis in America demands our attention with as much urgency.

http://www.al.com/opinion/index.ssf/2017/08/time_to_fight_the_opioid_crisi.html

Alabama's Opioid Addiction Council Meets for First Time

Daniel Bruce | yellowhammernews.com

September 7, 2017

According to a news release, Attorney General Steve Marshall hosted the first meeting of the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council earlier this week. Marshall is co-chair of the council along with Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health Lynn Beshear and Acting State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris.

The meeting focused on strategies to address the state's ongoing opioid epidemic. Marshall expressed his support for first responders who risk their lives to attend to victims of the opioid crisis. He announced that his office has reached an agreement to provide low-cost, life-saving medicine to local law enforcement to protect themselves and save the lives of those suffering from an overdose.

"I am pleased to announce that the Alabama Attorney General's Office has reached an agreement with Adapt Pharma to provide Alabama law enforcement officials, first responders, community-based organizations and state and local government with lower cost access to the lifesaving Narcan nasal spray for treatment of an opioid emergency. The agreement is in effect until the end of the year. I would like to thank Adapt Pharma for helping to safeguard the lives of Alabama residents and law enforcement."

According to WSFA, other topics that were discussed included the lack of scientific treatment programs, the role that insurance plays in acquiring treatment, and the outdated reporting databases used by doctors and pharmacists. Senator Jim McClendon weighed in on the problems that pharmacists face in fighting the crisis.

"The pharmacists know who the abusive prescribers are. However, what is a pharmacist to do? We don't have a clear-cut safe mechanism for reporting. The last thing a pharmacist needs to do is create a problem for someone who is sending them patients."

The council is tasked with creating a strategic plan of fight the opioid crisis. They must deliver their plan to the Governor by December 31. It is expected that the council will make recommendations regarding legislation, policy, and community action, in an attempt to offer a comprehensive approach to fighting the epidemic.

Marshall acknowledged that the opioid crisis is one of the biggest health problems facing our state and our nation. "We see that in the data when we lose 147 people nationally every day, when you hear the stories from law enforcement, when you talk to ER doctors about the people who are coming through their facilities. We know it is an issue, we know it is a problem."

<http://yellowhammernews.com/faithandculture/ag-marshall-oversees-first-meeting-addiction-council-dbruce/>

Alabama AG Marshall Among Others Seek Info From Opioid Manufacturers

Daniel Bruce | yellowhammernews.com

September 20, 2017

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall has announced that he has joined a coalition of 40 other state attorneys general seeking information from manufacturers of prescription opioids. The coalition is another step in the multi-state investigation into the impending nationwide opioid epidemic.

The attorneys general served Civil Investigative Demands on several opioid manufacturers, including Endo, Janssen, Teva/Cephalon, Allergan, and Purdue Pharma. The demands subpoena documents related to the marketing and sale of prescription opioids. The attorneys general also subpoenaed information from several opioid distributors, including AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, and McKesson.

Attorney General Marshall weighed in on the importance of the coalition in a press release on Tuesday. “Opioid abuse has reached a crisis level in Alabama and in many portions of the country, and earlier this year I joined with fellow attorneys general in investigating what role opioid manufacturers may have had in creating or prolonging the opioid abuse epidemic, and to establish the appropriate course of action to help solve this crisis. Our investigation continues as we seek information from drug manufacturers and distributors to help determine whether they engaged in unlawful practices in the marketing, sale, and distribution of opioids.”

Marshall was appointed by Governor Kay Ivey in August to serve as a co-chair on the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council. The council is charged with examining the opioid crisis and discovering ways to reduce its harmful impact on Alabamians. It held its first organizational meeting on September 5.

Opioids have become the main contributor to drug overdoses both nationwide and in Alabama over the past few years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 33,091 opioid related deaths in the United States in 2015, including 736 in Alabama. Opioid overdoses have quadrupled since 1999. These staggering statistics have led to unprecedented work by legislators and officials across the nation to curtail the harmful effects of this epidemic

<http://yellowhammernews.com/faithandculture/alabama-ag-steve-marshall-among-others-seek-info-from-opioid-manufacturers-dbruce/>

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE



Student Expectations

Each and every interaction with a Blackburn Student, Fellow, Advisory Board member, or friend of the institute provides you with a unique opportunity to build your personal brand through positive networking experiences. Be mindful that poor behavior reflects poorly not only on yourself, but your family, your region, your state, the Blackburn Institute, and The University of Alabama.

Broadening Horizons:

A primary mission of the Blackburn Institute is developing ethical, broad-thinking leaders. In order to become a leader of this caliber, individuals must be willing to entertain new ideas and expose themselves to new people and experiences.

- Have the courage to not only embrace, but to seek out, new experiences.
 - Show empathy and understanding for others in all that you do.
 - Tolerate and learn from differing viewpoints.
 - Develop a positive attitude towards interacting with people unfamiliar to you.
-

Professionalism:

As a leadership development organization, the Blackburn Institute places a heavy emphasis on professionalism. Ethical leaders should exemplify professional ideals and enact them in his or her daily life, but especially during Blackburn-sponsored events.

- Engage in meaningful dialogue aimed at increasing mutual understanding; never adversarial debate aimed at conquest or victory.
 - Respect every individual regardless of class, rank, title, or responsibilities.
 - Ask insightful questions in search of knowledge and understanding; never use questioning as a mechanism to trap or discredit someone.
-

General Decorum:

Ensure that you always use proper manners at Blackburn-sponsored events and please keep in mind the useful tips we learned from the Blackburn Essential Skills Workshops.

- Utilize appropriate dining etiquette.
 - Maximize networking opportunities.
 - Engage in civil discourse and dialogue.
 - Ask thoughtful and respectful questions.
 - Show respect and courtesy to members of the Blackburn Institute, speakers, invited guests, and all others.
-

Conduct:

As a member of the Blackburn Institute, you represent the Institute and The University of Alabama at all Blackburn events.

- Remember, you will be held accountable for all policies contained in the Code of Student Conduct when off campus representing The University and the Blackburn Institute.
- From The University of Alabama Alcohol and Other Drug Policy:
“The University of Alabama is an institution of higher education which seeks to create a community that promotes respect, responsibility for actions, civility, upholds state and federal laws, and fosters an environment conducive to learning for members of the academic community. The misuse of AOD can hinder the University’s mission and its role in preparing students for responsible citizenship through appropriately focused educational, environmental and enforcement activities related to student health, safety, and wellbeing.”
- Consuming and/or being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are strictly prohibited for all students in all Blackburn student programs. A limited exception for alcohol is made for students age 21 and over during institute-designated events with Fellows and Advisory Board members. Expectations of appropriate conduct, decorum, and professionalism remain in place at all times.

I, _____ (print), as a student member of the Blackburn Institute have read, fully understand, and agree to the Student Expectations.

Signature

Date

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE



Dress Classifications

The Blackburn Institute utilizes a standard dress classification system to help its community identify appropriate attire for a variety of events. Attire will be noted in all invitations for Blackburn Institute events. This system provides flexibility for personal style, while ensuring a consistent appearance and level of professionalism.

Business Formal

- Business-style dress
- Dress with a jacket
- Stockings (optional in summer)
- Heels, low or high
- Business suit
- Matching vest (optional)
- Dress shirt
- Conservative tie
- Dress shoes and dress socks

Business Casual

- Skirt, khakis, or pants
- Open-collar shirt, knit shirt, or sweater (no spaghetti straps or décolleté)
- Dress
- Flats or heels
- Seasonal sport coat or blazer with slacks or khakis
- Dress shirt, casual button-down shirt, open-collar or polo shirt
- Optional tie
- Loafers or loafer-style shoes with socks

Casual

- Anything in which you are comfortable!

If you want specific guidelines for this category, here are some suggestions:

- Sundress
- Long or short skirt
- Khakis or jeans (clean, no holes)
- Shorts (depending on occasion and climate)
- Plain t-shirt (no slogans), polo shirt, or turtleneck
- Casual button-down blouse or shirt and/or sweater
- Loafers, sneakers, or sandals

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE



Suggested Packing List

Toiletry Items

- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Brush/Comb
- Eye care (contacts and contact solution)
- Required medication (in original bottle, if prescription)
- Personal hygiene items

Clothing

- General Attire Guidelines (see attached for descriptions)
 - Thursday - Business formal for full day
 - Friday - Business formal for full day (note that we will be walking between sessions)
- Sleepwear
- Socks and appropriate footwear
- Belt

Miscellaneous

- Nametag - **required**
- Portfolio - **required**
- Cell phone / tablet and charger - **optional**
- Headphones - **optional**
- Games / books / movies for travel entertainment on bus - **optional**
- Petty cash for souvenirs and any additional personal needs (all meals are provided) - **optional**

Not Recommended - Students are strongly discouraged from bringing the following items.

- Laptops
- Excessive cash
- Large amounts of study materials
- Expensive jewelry

PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE



Post-Trip Self-Assessment

1. Name:

2. How would you rate your general level of knowledge of the following issues impacting the state of Alabama on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least knowledgeable and 10 being the most knowledgeable?

State Legislature
K-12 Education
Ethics Laws

Monument and Naming
History and Culture
Opioid Abuse/Addiction

3. How would you rate your personal level of empathy and appreciation for other people's perspectives on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least empathetic and 10 being the most empathetic?

4. How would you rate your ability to engage in meaningful discussions among the following groups on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being unable to have meaningful discussions and 10 being fully able to have meaningful discussions?

Your Blackburn Class
Your Class Small Group
All Blackburn Students
Blackburn Fellows

Blackburn Advisory Board
Blackburn Staff
Those Outside of Blackburn

5. What do you think are the biggest issues currently facing the state?

6. What do you think are the state's greatest resources/advantages?

7. What did you learn from this travel experience?

8. What content did you enjoy most about this travel experience?

9. What content did you enjoy least about this travel experience?

10. What statewide issues would you like to see next year's spring travel experience explore?

11. Do you have any concerns about the content or format of the travel experience?
