
PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA | Division of
Student Life
Blackburn Institute

Spring 2020

Montgomery, AL

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Meeting Itinerary & Map

Spring 2020

Travel and Meeting Itinerary

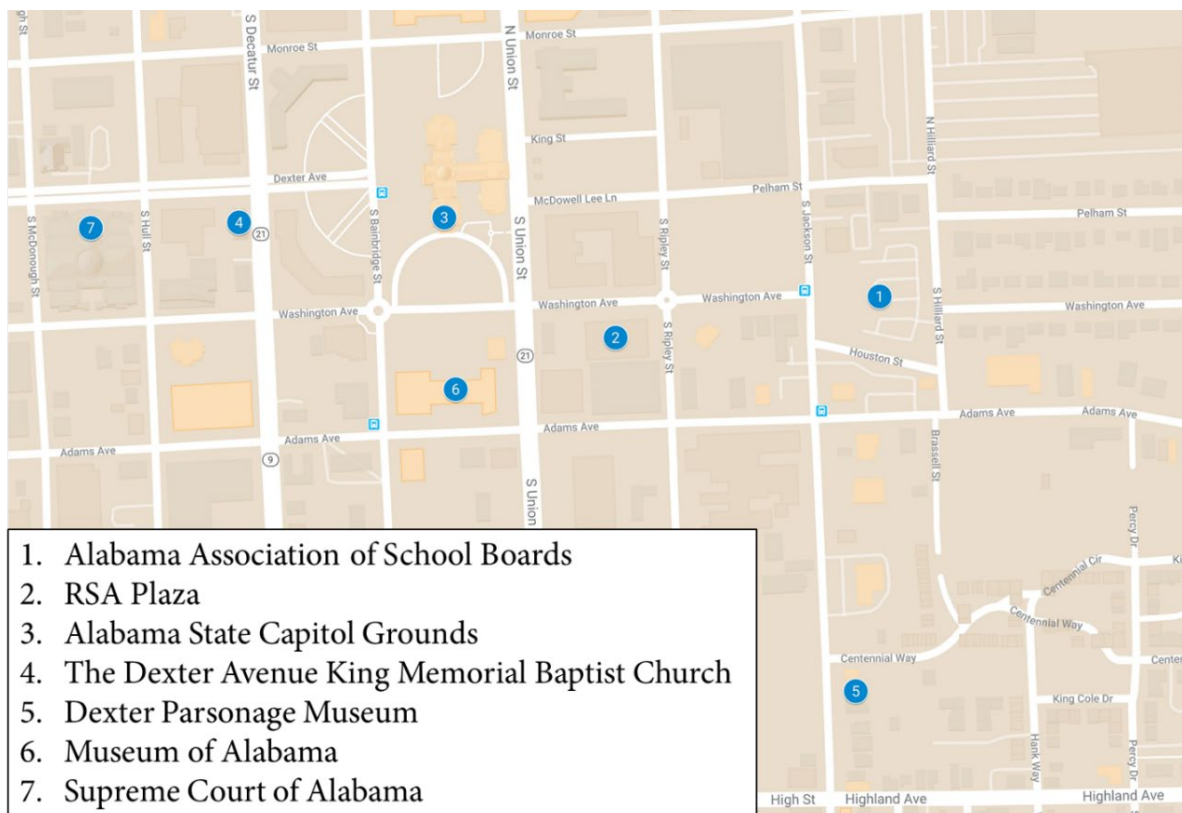
Thursday, January 16

- 2:45pm Arrive at Blackburn Office
- 3:00pm Depart Tuscaloosa for Montgomery
- 5:30pm Session I – Legislative Preview with Keynote Address by Gov. Kay Ivey, followed by a moderated discussion with Sen. Clyde Chambliss (Senate Majority Floor Leader, R-Prattville), and Democrat Legislator (TBD)
- 6:45pm Dinner at Central
- 8:15pm Depart for Hotel
- 8:30pm Hotel Check-in at DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Montgomery Downtown
- 9:00pm Evening Reflections and Preparation for Friday

Friday, January 17

- 7:00am Breakfast at Hotel
- 8:00am Depart Hotel
- 8:30am Session II – State of Healthcare in Alabama, Moderated by Kyle Buchanan (President, Hellen Keller Hospital) with Holly Caraway McCorkle (Director of Legislative and Constituent Affairs, Alabama Department of Mental Health), April Golson (Program Manager, Office of Telehealth, Alabama Department of Public Health), Danne Howard (Executive Vice President & Chief Policy Officer, Alabama Hospital Association), Dr. Cordelia Sterns (Medical Director, Medical Advocacy and Outreach), Sen. Larry Stutts (Healthcare Committee Vice-Chair, R-Sheffield) at the Alabama Association of School Boards
- 10:00am Session III – Public Education Forum at the Alabama Association of School Boards, Moderated by Whitney Miller-Nichols (Assistant Director of Leadership and Development) with Rep. Terry Collins (Education Policy Committee Chair, R-Decatur), Mark Dixon (President, A+ Education Partnership), Amy Marlowe (Interim Executive Director, Alabama Education Association), Nick Moore (Education Policy Advisor & Coordinator, Governor's Office of Education & Workforce Transformation), and Dr. Henry Nelson (Chair, Alabama Public School Charter Commission)

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|---------|---|
| 11:30am | Session IV – Lottery and Gaming Panel with Sen. Greg Albritton (Finance and Taxation General Fund Committee Chair, R-Atmore), Sen. Jim McClendon (Finance and Taxation General Fund Committee, R-Springville), Robbie McGhee (Tribal Council Vice-Chair/Governmental Relations Advisor, Poarch Creek Indians) and Sen. Bobby Singleton (Finance and Taxation General Fund Committee, D-Greensboro) at RSA Plaza |
| 12:30pm | Lunch at RSA Plaza Terrace |
| 1:30pm | Class Picture at the Capitol |
| 2:00pm | Session V - Explore Montgomery Museums |
| 3:30pm | Session VI – Revisiting Criminal Justice Reform with Sonny Brasfield (Executive Director, Association of County Commissions of Alabama), Justice Sue Bell Cobb (31st Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Alabama), Rep. Christopher England (Governors Study Group on Criminal Justice, D-Tuscaloosa), and Katie Glenn (Policy Associate, Southern Policy Law Center) at the Alabama Association of School Boards |
| 4:30pm | Reflections at Alabama Association of School Boards |
| 5:30pm | Depart for Prattville |
| 6:00pm | Dinner at Jim-n-Nick’s in Prattville |
| 8:00pm | Depart Prattville for Tuscaloosa |
| 10:00pm | Arrive at Blackburn Office |



Session I

Below are biographies of the speakers for Session I, detailing priorities for the upcoming legislative session from the executive branch as well as the senate's majority and minority parties.

Keynote Speaker: Gov. Kay Ivey

Growing up in the small town of Camden in Wilcox County, Alabama, and working on her father's farm taught Kay Ivey to value hard work and living within one's means. Her parents instilled values of faith, family, and community. Kay worked as a high school teacher and a bank officer. She served as Reading Clerk of the Alabama House of Representatives under Speaker Joseph C. McCorquodale and was Assistant Director of the Alabama Development Office, where she worked to spur job creation and economic development across the state. In 2002, Kay became the first Republican elected State Treasurer since Reconstruction and she was re-elected in 2006. As Treasurer, Kay was committed to making the office more open, transparent, and efficient. Kay was elected Lieutenant Governor in 2010, becoming the first Republican woman to hold the office in Alabama's history.



On April 10, 2017, Kay was sworn in as the 54th Governor of the State of Alabama in the Old Senate Chamber in the Alabama State Capitol by Acting Chief Justice Lyn Stuart. Following a successful nineteen months in office, the people of Alabama made history again in November 2018 by electing Governor Ivey to a full term. She is the first Lt. Governor of Alabama elected to a full term after taking over as governor due to a vacancy in the governor's office. On January 14, 2019, Governor Ivey was officially sworn in for her full term by Associate Justice Will Sellers. Kay will continue to bring conservative leadership with effective results to make this generation more productive and the next generation more prosperous.

She is a member of the First Baptist Church of Montgomery, the Montgomery Rotary Club, and the Board of Directors of the Montgomery YMCA. Kay is also the first Girls State alumna to be elected to an Alabama Constitutional Office.

Governor Ivey is an alumna of Auburn University.

Sen. Clyde Chambliss

Clyde Chambliss is the Principal Engineer for Chambliss Engineering (CE), which provides civil engineering services to local governments, developers and water systems primarily in Elmore and Autauga Counties. In 1996, Clyde was elected to his first of three terms on the Autauga County Commission, serving as the body's chairman from 2000-2008. In 1997, then-Commissioner Chambliss spearheaded Autauga County's participation in the financial commitment for construction of the Capitol Hill Robert Trent Jones golf course in Elmore County.



As an employee of Central Alabama Electric Cooperative, Clyde was instrumental in forging a partnership between Central Alabama Electric Cooperative, Autauga County, the City of Prattville, the Autauga County Industrial Development Board, Marshall Construction and the Chamber of Commerce for the creation of the Interstate Business Park.

Clyde was elected to the Alabama State Senate in November of 2014 and currently serves on the following committees: Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development; Finance and Taxation General Fund; Governmental Affairs; Children Youth and Human Services and is the Chairperson of the Local Legislation committee. Alabama Senate District 30 includes all or parts of Autauga, Chilton, Coosa, Elmore, and Tallapoosa Counties. Clyde has completed Leadership Autauga, Leadership Alabama and Leadership Elmore. He has sat on numerous regional boards including: Central Alabama Aging Consortium, Central Alabama Regional Planning Commission, and the Montgomery Metropolitan Planning Organization. Clyde has also served in leadership roles at at Heritage Baptist Church in Prattville including Deacon, Sunday School Teacher, and the Building Committee.

Senator Chambliss is an alumnus of The University of Alabama.

The Alabama Legislature declared abortion a felony, raised fuel taxes to pay for better roads, started responding to a prison crisis, and again failed to agree on a plan to allow voters to decide on a lottery.

It was a busy three months for lawmakers, who wrapped up their annual session on Friday. Some key legislation remained in play until the final day. A proposed constitutional amendment to replace the elected state Board of Education with a commission appointed by the governor passed Friday and goes on the ballot for voters in March.

This year's legislative session started with the gasoline tax for roads clearly established as the top priority for leaders in the Republican-controlled Legislature and Gov. Kay Ivey. The legislation quickly passed with bipartisan support during a special session Ivey called to focus on the issue. The tax on gasoline and diesel will increase by 6 cents a gallon after Aug. 31 and by 2 cents each of the next two years. The 10-cent increase is projected to raise more than \$300 million a year for roads. The state gas tax was last raised in 1992. Advocates for the increase said the state could not build and maintain a road system to handle traffic volume and economic demands without more revenue. Leaders from both parties joined the governor for a ceremony to sign the bill that Ivey called historic. House Speaker Mac McCutcheon said lawmakers did not turn their back on tough issues, like raising the fuel tax.

"The members in this chamber made some tough votes this year, very difficult votes," McCutcheon said. "And they were votes that will carry us into the future. We didn't just look at issues this year and put a Band Aid on it. We tried to look at things for the future, for my children, for my grandchildren down the road."

Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, who sponsored the constitutional amendment to replace the state board of education, said it was the most productive legislative session he could recall. "It started with a strong infrastructure bill," Marsh said. "It went on with education reform legislation, some prison reform legislation. Both budgets. Record education budget, largest that's ever been passed. I just thought that we addressed a lot of issues and handled a lot of issues."

Marsh said one downside is that legislation to give voters a chance to decide if they want a state lottery failed. The bill passed the Senate but stalled in the House. "I wish the people would have had that opportunity," Marsh said. "And it would have, in my opinion, eased some pressure on the state on the General Fund going forward had it passed."

Senate Minority Leader Bobby Singleton said it was a good session overall but said the abortion bill was a major misstep. "That was the ultimate low in the way it was pushed, and I think that inasmuch as it gave the state of Alabama a black eye across the nation in how we spoke to women in this state," Singleton said.

The bill to ban abortion, which came about two months after the bipartisan work on gas tax bill, caused a deep divide between the parties and drew national attention. The law, which is not in effect, seeks to ban abortion at any time during a pregnancy. It allows an exception to protect the woman from a serious health risk but no exception for pregnancies caused by rape and incest. Democrats opposed the law, which makes it a felony punishable by up to 99 years for a doctor to perform an abortion. The woman is not liable under the bill, sponsored by Rep. Terri Collins, R-Decatur.

Proponents of the law said their intent was to trigger a lawsuit in hopes of reaching the Supreme Court for a review of *Roe v. Wade*. Alabama's three abortion clinics, backed by Planned Parenthood and the ACLU, have sued to block the law, which was not scheduled to take effect until November. In the meantime, abortion remains legal in Alabama. Opponents of the bill argued, in part, that an abortion ban would deny access to low income women but that abortion would always be available to those who could afford to travel to other states for the procedure. The legislation sparked protests.

Collins sponsored another bill that drew less attention but that took aim at a fundamental issue in public schools, teaching children to read. The Alabama Literacy Act will require third graders to pass a reading test before being promoted to fourth grade and provide more instruction and specialists to help struggling students. Advocates for the change say that students who don't learn to read by third grade fall further behind in later grades.

A bill to make the executive director of the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles an appointee of the governor passed over opposition from Democrats, who said it would politicize the parole system. Ivey and Attorney General Steve Marshall backed the legislation, which came after a parolee with a long criminal record was charged with killing two women and a child in Guntersville last year. The bill puts limits on early parole consideration into state law.

Alabama's longstanding problems with crowded and understaffed prisons came to the forefront a month into the session. The U.S. Department of Justice alleged that conditions in men's prisons violate the Constitution because of the violence, sexual abuse, and other dangers. The Legislature passed a bill to increase pay and bonuses for correctional officers to help hire and keep more on the job. Prisons have about one-third the number of officers needed. The General Fund budget passed by lawmakers for next year includes a \$40 million increase for prisons. But those moves are only a start. Legislators have said they are expecting Ivey to call a special session on prisons later this year. Ivey has not committed to that but said she is working with legislators on the prison issues.

The Legislature passed an education budget that calls for spending \$7.1 billion from the Education Trust Fund, the most ever, although still short of pre-recession spending when adjusted for inflation. The budget includes a 4 percent pay raise for education employees. It raises spending on prekindergarten by one-fourth, to \$103 million. Besides the increase for prisons, the General Fund budget includes a 2 percent pay raise for state employees and a funding increase for the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to add 50 state troopers.

The Senate passed a bill to legalize medical marijuana but it stalled in the House. Proponents settled for a bill that will set up a study commission that will report to the Legislature by the end of this year.

A bill to change how law enforcement can take property connected to criminal activity drew opposition from law enforcement. Sen Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, initially sought legislation that would allow property forfeitures only when there is a criminal conviction. The Legislature passed a substitute version of that bill that requires law enforcement agencies to report forfeitures to a uniform data system and to account for any proceeds from forfeitures separately in their budgets. The Alabama District Attorneys Association had worked with state agencies to start a forfeiture reporting system earlier this year.

Lawmakers finally passed a bill that had been proposed annually since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in 2015. The bill by Sen. Greg Albritton, R-Atmore, repeals the requirement for a license to get married. Instead, couples will file an affidavit that a probate judge will record as the marriage certificate. Some probate judges in Alabama stopped issuing marriage licenses after the same-sex marriage ruling. Albritton's bill also eliminates the requirement that a minister or someone else "solemnize" the marriage.

Lawmakers passed a bill by Rep. Adline Clarke, D-Mobile, to prohibit employers from paying employees differently based only on race or sex. Alabama became the 49th state to pass an equal pay bill, a move praised by Lilly Ledbetter, who took her fight for equal pay to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Other bills that passed:

Legislation and funding for programs to promote the development of broadband access to rural and unserved areas.

A bill to allow hunters to buy licenses to use bait to hunt deer and feral hogs.

An "anti-road rage" bill to restrict driving in the left lane without passing other vehicles.

A bill to make fantasy sports contests legal in Alabama and charge the operators fees and taxes.

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/06/alabama-legislature-in-2019-abortion-ban-gas-tax-no-lottery.html>

Wednesday, Speaker of the House Mac McCutcheon (R-Monrovia) told a gathering of the Alabama County Commissioners Association in Auburn that the Alabama legislature will likely work on addressing rural healthcare in the 2020 legislative session.

McCutcheon said that the legislature is “Working on rural healthcare,” and is looking at rural clinics. “We need to provide healthcare services to people in rural areas that aren’t getting it,” McCutcheon said. We need to make changes that “Will steer those covered by Medicaid away from the emergency home [[room]].”

McCutcheon said that proper care for things like diabetes and pregnancy will avoid bad outcomes and costly emergency room care. McCutcheon said that there is a study underway and that, “The data we receive from this will become invaluable to us.”

“I have a battle ahead of us from the Hospital Association,” McCutcheon predicted. “If a hospital has twenty beds, you have to staff that hospital for all twenty beds,” McCutcheon explained. “Some of these hospitals don’t average seven patients a month. That is not cost effective.”

“The Alabama coordinated health network is going to move us in a good direction in rural healthcare,” McCutcheon predicted. This is one reason “Why rural broadband is so important.”

“If we move toward clinic type care in our rural areas we are going to need broadband to provide” a specialist or a nurse online to get instructions on diagnosing a condition. “We have had several pieces of legislation dealing with broadband,” McCutcheon said.

During the last session, “We just drew a line in the sand,” and told providers to deal with the unserved people in the state. “What I want to see is that people who are not being served at all,” get connected McCutcheon said. “We passed legislation dealing with electric coops getting some fiber and systems into the unserved.”

“We are going to look at where we are today,” McCutcheon said of the state’s rural broadband efforts. “Are we being effective or not? This is a priority for the legislature moving forward.”

“Medicaid expansion has become a political issue,” McCutcheon said. Medicaid is part of improving rural healthcare. The leadership in the House, in the Senate, and the Governor are all open to looking at it, McCutcheon said. “We need to sit down and talk about it.”

“Corrections comes with a price tag,” McCutcheon told the County Commissioners. “Bricks and mortar” will be a part of it. The U.S. Justice Department and a federal court have ordered the state to deal with the allegedly “inhumane” conditions in the state’s chronically understaffed, overcrowded, and underfunded Alabama Department of Corrections, which runs the state’s prisons.

McCutcheon said that the state will have to take over funding of the CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) in the coming year. "We have to pick up 100 percent of it \$100 million in the general fund," McCutcheon said.

"Let's address a lottery, the Poarch Creek Indians, and these counties that want a one armed gambling," McCutcheon said in a suggested revenue source. In the 2019 legislative session, a Senate bill to create a simple paper lottery failed in the House. McCutcheon said that is not on the table this year. "It would be ridiculous to sell us out for \$150 million when there could be \$700 million," McCutcheon said. "It is going to be hard to just pass a lottery."

"We are going to be addressing mental health," McCutcheon said. "We are looking at some crisis centers, but we have got to discuss mental health."

"We will be talking about school safety," McCutcheon added.

The Alabama Association of County Commissioners presented McCutcheon with an award for taking the lead on additional revenue for roads and bridges. "I have to give credit to the leadership in the Senate as well as the governor's level," McCutcheon said. "It would not have happened without all the work that those county commissioners did and for providing the boots on the ground."

The 2020 Alabama legislative session starts on Tuesday, February 4.

<https://www.alreporter.com/2019/12/10/mccutcheon-says-that-legislature-will-address-rural-healthcare/>

Legislative Preview

Discussion Questions

1. What was your signature accomplishment for the 2019 legislative session? What was your toughest setback?
2. What the top three legislative priorities for your caucus for the upcoming 2020 session?
3. How are your legislative strategies different as a member of the majority party or the minority party, respectively?
4. Is there any significant proposed legislation you foresee getting broad bi-partisan support?
5. With which other governmental and non-governmental leaders outside the legislature do you work most often and on what issues?
6. What's something your constituents don't understand about your role as a legislator, that you wish they did?
7. How would you advise students who want to be better informed/engaged in the legislative process?

Session II

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session II, exploring the state of healthcare in Alabama. Topics of discussion include mental health, Medicaid, telehealth, rural health and health disparities.

Moderator: Kyle Buchanan (Blackburn Fellow and Advisory Board Member)

Kyle Buchanan is President of Hellen Keller Hospital. A native of Tuscumbia, Kyle joined the Huntsville Hospital Health System as Vice President of Operations at Helen Keller Hospital in 2009. He served as Vice-President of Operations at Huntsville Hospital for Women and Children from 2018-2019. Kyle's previous roles include Chief Executive Officer of Lawrence Medical Center in Moulton and Executive Director for Alabama Community Care, all within the Huntsville Hospital Health System.



Buchanan is an alumnus of The University of Alabama (B.S. in Health Care Management), University of Michigan (Masters in Health Services Administration), and University of Alabama at Birmingham (M.B.A.).

Holly Caraway McCorkle (Blackburn Fellow)

Since 2017, Holly Caraway McCorkle has served as the Director of Legislative and Constituent Affairs at the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) since 2017. Prior to joining the team at ADMH, Holly served as Chief Counsel in the Office of the Senate Minority leader for more than five years. She is currently President for the Montgomery Museum of Art's Junior Executive Board, a Board Member for Bridge Builders Alabama, and a member of the Alabama Leadership Initiative's Class III. She resides in Montgomery with her husband, Thomson.



Caraway McCorkle holds a B.S. in Psychology, M.B.A. and J.D. from The University of Alabama.

April Golson

April L. Golson is the Program Manager for the Office of Telehealth at the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Golson is an alumna of the University of South Alabama.

Danne Howard

Danne Howard is the Executive Vice President/Chief Policy Officer for the Alabama Hospital Association. She is in charge of general administration, with specific responsibilities for state and federal advocacy efforts, including legislative, administrative and regulatory issues. She also coordinates emergency preparedness planning and response.

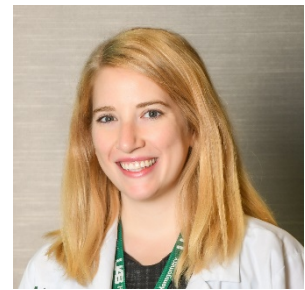
Howard is an alumna of Auburn University in Montgomery.



Dr. Cordelia Stearns

Dr. Cordelia Stearns completed her internship and residency in Internal Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and was in the Health Equity and Advocacy training program at San Francisco General Hospital. Cordelia then joined the core faculty of the county hospital in Oakland where she served as medical student clerkship director, before moving to Alabama with her husband in the summer of 2017. She was on faculty at UAB and served as Associate Program Director for Montgomery's Internal Medicine Residency until joining the staff of Medical Advocacy and Outreach as Medical Director.

Dr. Stearns is an alumna of Bryn Mawr College and the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.



Sen. Larry Stutts

Sen. Larry Stutts was elected to the Alabama Senate in 2014 and re-elected in 2018. Larry represents District 6 in Northwest Alabama which encompasses Colbert and Franklin Counties and portions of Lauderdale, Lawrence, and Marion Counties. He serves on the following senate committees: Children Youth and Human Services (Chair), Healthcare (Vice Chair), Agriculture Conservation & Forestry, Confirmations, Finance & Taxation General Fund, and Judiciary. He previously served on the Fiscal Responsibility & Economic Development and Health & Human Services Committees. Larry is an obstetrician/gynecologist in Sheffield and a Fellow of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. He is affiliated with Helen Keller Hospital, Shoals Hospital, and Hartselle Medical Center.

Senator Stutts holds a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Auburn University and an M.D. from the University of South Alabama.



The Alabama Medicaid agency now has contracts worth up to nearly \$89 million with seven private entities to manage the care of most Medicaid recipients under a new system the agency says will result in better care. The two-year contracts are for the new Alabama Coordinated Health Network, or ACHN, which begins Oct. 1. The program creates a coordination system that links patients, providers and community resources in seven regions, according to Medicaid.

Delivery of medical services is not part of the networks. Medicaid's stated goals for the ACHNs include making improvements to the quality of care and incentivizing the networks and providers to achieve "quality measures" in the areas of childhood obesity, infant mortality rates and substance abuse disorders. "Those are three very serious issues and we are really excited about this program," Medicaid Commissioner Stephanie Azar told members of the Legislative Contract Review Committee on Thursday.

Gov. Kay Ivey told Alabama Daily News her administration is constantly working to explore ways to make improvements to health care. "Through the Alabama Medicaid Agency, we will roll out a program, the Alabama Coordinated Health Network, that offers our higher-risk Medicaid recipients an even better quality of care by taking a more comprehensive approach to their health care," Ivey said. "I look forward to the positive impact this program will bring men, women and children in our state."

Medicaid recipients who have full Medicaid benefits, maternity care and family planning benefits will be in the networks. That's about 750,000 people, according to Medicaid. It may take several years before the agency experiences cost savings, spokeswoman Melanie Cleveland said. "The goal of the ACHN program is improved quality of care and appropriate utilization of services for Medicaid recipients in a cost-effective manner," she said.

Medicaid is expected to receive about \$7.1 billion in funds in 2019, most of those dollars are federal. After years of work and millions of dollars spent, the state in 2017 backed away from its proposed Regional Care Organization plan, which would have taken Medicaid from its fee-for-service model to a managed care model. It was expected to save the state money, but officials cited changing federal regulations as a reason to abandon it.

Sen. Greg Reed, R-Jasper, was involved in the Regional Care Organization plan. He said Thursday he's glad to see Medicaid expanding its managed care of recipients "Having healthier patients is beneficial for them, obviously, but also for the state in the cost of the care," Reed said. "It is better quality care and yields better outcomes."

A cut for 1 agency

The Alabama Department of Public Health currently provides care coordinators for some of the Medicaid recipients who will soon be under the care of the private entities. The change will mean a \$21 million revenue loss to Public Health, which is currently paid by Medicaid for the services of about 150 social workers, Public Health Officer Scott Harris said.

“I can understand Medicaid’s position, they are trying to save money by privatizing this, but it is a tremendous impact on our agency,” he said. Harris said the department is looking for other positions for the social workers. Some of that \$21 million is also used for other care and costs at Alabama Department of Public Health facilities, Harris said.

The department received about \$113 million in total state funds this year and \$686 million in federal and local funding. Some of the care coordination Alabama Department of Public Health has done is with family planning patients. They will continue to get medical care from the health department. “In some cases, we picked up on women in abusive situations or who were being trafficked,” Harris said.

Backed by Arise

Medicaid serves more than 1 million low-income Alabamians, most of them children. The new system has the support of the advocacy group Alabama Arise. Jim Carnes, Arise’s policy director, said each ACHN has a consumer representative on its board, as well as a consumer advisory committee. “We’re very encouraged for this opportunity for Medicaid consumers to have a voice in Medicaid policy,” he said. “It’s something new and we applaud Medicaid for it.”

Carnes said he is also hopeful the networks will be able to identify needs of recipients, like inadequate nutrition, transportation issues, or a need at their home like a lack of air-conditioning, and point them to help. “It will not be the job of Medicaid or regional organization to provide the services to address those problems, but the new factor will be to identify needs and connect to community resources,” Carnes said.

Three of the seven regional contracts were awarded to My Care Alabama, an affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. “We look forward to providing them with the high quality standards of customer service, efficiency, reliability and technical innovation already available to our commercial members,” said Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama President and CEO Tim Vines.

Sen. Larry Stutts, R-Tuscumbia, is aware of the pending change largely because his medical practice in Sheffield serves Medicaid recipients. He’s hopeful the managed care will help patients make better choices, take their medications, and reduce their visits to emergency rooms. “The E.R. is the most expensive place to enter the health care system,” Stutts, an obstetrician, said. “Hopefully, with the care coordinators, we’re going to change that.”

https://www.timesdaily.com/news/medicaid-moves-to-privatized-managed-care-of-recipients/article_f1edcdb6-29b6-5a4d-be37-ff65c33180f1.html

The Medical Advocacy and Outreach Selma clinic isn't the easiest place to find. A suite of offices and exam rooms is discreetly tucked upstairs and around a few corners in a medical building in Selma. Signage is vague.

But the discretion is by design: It serves HIV-positive patients, a condition rife with stigma and misconceptions. The Selma clinic is one of 10 e-Health satellite offices scattered throughout central Alabama and its Wiregrass region, connecting doctors to patients across hundreds of miles through teleconference and groundbreaking medical technology.

The state-of-the-art telemedicine clinics aim to help solve a litany of roadblocks in Alabama health care — hospital closures, a dearth of qualified practitioners, general patient poverty and lack of transportation — for its HIV and Hepatitis C patients. But MAO also believes its infrastructure can and should address primary care and mental health, as well.

Telemedicine is a tool to provide care, not a complete solution, its proponents stress. "We have a homegrown model that is at the national level of quality and other states are looking to it to learn. I think we have a great opportunity to build on this," said Jim Carnes, policy director for poverty nonprofit Alabama Arise, of MAO's work. "While telehealth and telemedicine capacity is a great way to serve communities and areas of the state that are not served adequately by provider presence, I would caution against considering telemedicine a substitute for addressing that. It's a way of mitigating the problem. But it's not a substitute for expanding our reach by tackling the chronic provider shortage that we've had."

But in a state with dwindling health care resources, it's a powerful thing to have in the toolbox. "This changes lives," Thomas Stephens, MAO's spokesperson, said. "It is the limitless potential to create opportunity for care in the most remote and rural places. People should haven't to relocate to access care, especially specialty care."

Trailblazers

MAO didn't set out to be pioneers in Alabama health care. It began as a group of Montgomery citizens in 1987 who, in the midst of the HIV/AIDS crisis, watched as loved ones suffered amidst misinformation and poor respite care. A handful of people began gathering in friend's apartments, cobbling together as much information as possible to offer to their communities.

Montgomery natives who had moved away were returning homesick, ostracized by family. According to archives on MAO's website, one member of the initial group installed a second phone line at his home that acted as a helpline for people desperate for information.

"We would take shifts taking calls and returning messages captured by a machine when we were at work," said Frank Gitschier, an original MAO board member. "We would gather information from every credible source available. We just wanted to get the facts out there and be part of the solution. We were not counselors, but we tried to help by educating ourselves; then, educating everyone we could reach. Reports were coming in daily from everywhere.

Honestly, there were times when I felt like I was standing in front of a tsunami and there was nowhere to run, but it was worse for those learning they were sick. ... With what was available to us, we tried to educate people and provide emotional support. We orchestrated a buddy program, transportation and meals, several different types of support groups, home health assistance and pastoral care."

MAO grew rapidly, moving into office space and hiring a first-time employee before the end of the decade and hiring social workers, nurses and doctors. The group spread south from Montgomery, finding patients out of a new Dothan hub by 1998. Initially funded by local benefactors, MAO's HIV services were approved for federal funding, which it continues to receive today. "This was a group of private citizens, and they were uniquely aware that the public had a need that was not being addressed," Stephens said. "Our willingness to be pioneers, because we had no choice. It's passion."

Over time, it has expanded its services into HIV prevention, Hepatitis C care and holistic general primary care for its patients. Eight years ago, it launched its first e-Health clinic in Selma, offering everything from post-diagnosis mental health care to prevention to specialized care for pregnant people. "There is an underpinning that still is inspired by the founders' original vision," Stephens said. "We have to embrace telehealth as the best interest of the population here."

You don't know until you try

In early September, Larry sits in MAO's Selma clinic, laughing and cutting up with his doctors, Dr. Marguerite Barber-Owens and Dr. Laurie Dill. Larry, whose last name the Advertiser agreed to withhold to protect his privacy, is an HIV-positive patient at MAO who travels regularly to Selma for health care. He's quick to laugh and has a joking rapport with both of his doctors.

But they're not in the room with him. Larry's clinic visits — facilitated by an in-room nurse, Rita Jennings — are done via teleconference with MAO's Montgomery office. Jennings, using digitized medical tools such as a stethoscope, is able to take Larry's vitals and give him a general check-up, all the while transmitting every piece of information back to Montgomery in real-time. Larry's HIV diagnosis several years ago was emotional.

"I ran the gamut. It was depression, anxiety, the feelings I was damaged goods that I was going to be alone forever," he said. But despite the physical distance of his doctors, he wasn't alone. Local nurses and social workers stay up-to-date with their patients' lives, doing whatever necessary to get them to appointments and on medication schedules. "They're emotional support. If they have to, they'll beat the streets to find you," Larry joked, laughing. "You're not treated like a number. ... You're treated like family."

"I was a little leery at first," said Dill of telehealth. "You don't know how things are going to be until you try them." For Dill and Barber-Owens, decades of face-to-face clinical interactions made them wary of new technology. What might be missed if you can't be in the room with your patient? "In primary care, we touch the patient," Barber-Owens said. "It was an adjustment for me. But then I saw the numbers. Selma has some of the most satisfied and [healthy] patients."

Billy Sample, MAO's program manager who manages all of its technology and looks to new methods to help the programs expand, says he watches every provider have an "Aha" moment when they're trained. Establishing an in-person rapport is important, first, but then technology can build on that relationship at subsequent visits.

Telehealth practitioners are quick to tell you that what they do is not the same as calling an insurance hotline for a sore throat diagnosis. Licensed medical providers are always with a patient, whose information is transmitted over secure connections. And it can't be used for everything. But gone are the days where MAO had to load up a van with a doctor, a nurse and a social worker to drive out to each and every patient in rural Alabama.

"Telemedicine has been a fabulous extra tool to help with provider shortage," Dill said. On-the-ground support like Nurse Jennings, as well as local case workers, help maintain relationships and traditional "bedside manner," and the doctors regularly make the rounds to see patients in person. But they're able to do more, faster and for more patients from the telehealth hubs.

Health care providers are being asked to do more with less statewide. Nearly 90 percent of Alabama rural hospitals aren't profitable, according to Alabama Hospital Association data. The state has watched 13 hospitals close in the last eight years. The death of rural hospitals exacerbates an already critical doctor shortage across the nation, a dire concern in rural Alabama, which sees statistically worse health outcomes than much of the nation. Issues such as poverty and a lack of public transportation further block.

"We have to accompany telemedicine with strong efforts to find incentives for rural practice, increasing our rural pipeline, medical school debt forgiveness," Alabama Arise's Jim Carnes said. "Another thing we need to look at long term is our reimbursement rate for public health benefits. We have to come to grips with the fact that Alabama underpays physicians we expect to carry the load of low-income Alabamians, many of whom are rural. There's a lot of competition out there. Alabama needs to become more competitive on that front."

Barriers to expansion

Telemedicine works for MAO's 2,000-plus patients, the group says. A quarter of their patients use its services for general primary care, in addition to specialized HIV or Hepatitis treatments. But it isn't widely utilized by other groups.

Staying up-to-speed on ever-evolving technology is a constant commitment, Sample said. It's also not cheap, and cost-effectiveness is a huge factor. Stephens said insurance companies have not evolved yet alongside the technologies, with reimbursements lagging for many services. There are also industry concerns about who or what organizations should act as the watchdog for emerging telemedicine services.

And in rural Alabama, appropriate internet access that is fast and secure enough to handle clinical visits is an issue. "We have to finish the job on broadband," Carnes said. "That's a huge thing, rolling out the infrastructure required for the full scope of telemedicine and telehealth. That falls in to the rural development track Alabama has talked about and invested in. We've come a long way, but there are gaps to remaining to be filled."

But while others play catch up, MAO has no plans to slow down. Sample predicts MAO will be poised to begin in-home care — bringing a nurse and the clinical technology to the patients, rather than patients coming to them — within 12 months.

"We may start doing it because it makes sense from a humanitarian perspective before it is a cost-effective one," Sample said. "We continue to be the golden standard when it comes to delivering care. I believe we will provide in-home care far before it's a reimbursable model because it is the right thing for our patients."

MAO also hopes to expand its primary care practice, focusing on everyday health issues such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease that often present with HIV diagnoses and also affect the general population at high levels.

"We have to address quality care in these rural environments," Stephens said. "We will find a way, because it is deeply rooted in the psychology and culture of this agency. The seed of the [original] mission permeates today."

<https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/local/solutions-journalism/2019/09/18/mao-pioneers-telemedicine-rural-alabama/2234526001/>

Alabama healthcare experts push for change as most rural hospitals operate in the red

Renata Di Gregorio | RocketCityNow.com

November 21, 2019

<https://www.rocketcitynow.com/local-news/alabama-healthcare-experts-push-for-change-as-most-rural-hospitals-operate-in-the-red/>

Rural healthcare isn't easy. Here's how one Alabama woman bridges gaps in the Black Belt

Anna Claire Vollers | AL.com

December 29, 2019

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/05/where-do-we-find-the-money-once-again-medicaid-expansion-stalls-in-alabama.html>

To Jeremy Blair, it only makes sense. If you have a minor physical health situation, you can get treatment almost immediately at walk-in clinics all over the state. But what if instead, you have a mental health situation. Where do you go?

Blair, the CEO at Wellstone Behavioral Health in Huntsville, envisions a walk-in clinic for those with mental health issues as readily available as those seeking medicine to fight the flu or an X-ray for a sprained ankle. The Alabama Department of Mental Health is seeking funding for a pilot program for such a facility and Blair said he believes Huntsville is uniquely prepared to be the site for it.

“What if we had a crisis center that law enforcement could bring that person to or the public could bring somebody to who was in a crisis?” Blair said. “Operates 24/7. That’s what we’re missing. If you think about on the physical health side, we’ve invested tons of resources in walk-in clinics, emergency rooms, primary care, etc. that’s everywhere. American Family Care out of Birmingham kind of pioneered that whole mode.

And as for mental health: “Why can't we do the same thing?” That’s what Lynn Beshear, commissioner of the state mental health department, is seeking. Blair said that through Beshear's guidance, money for a crisis center is included in Gov. Kay Ivey's budget that is now before the state legislature for approval. Until that budget is passed with those funds intact, the mental health community is sort of holding its collective breath.

“Our first budget priority is to fund and ensure compliance to the Home and Community Based Settings (HCBS) Rule, avoiding a loss of \$386 million federal dollars to the state and the people we serve,” the mental health department said in a statement to AL.com. “The Governor has included funding for HCBS in her budget. Until the session concludes, we are unable to weigh in on how additional priorities will be funded or what may be included in the final budget. However, we welcome the opportunity in the interim to educate the public on a full continuum of crisis care.”

Behind the scenes and beyond no-comment statements, a bevy of activity is taking place to make the crisis center a reality. Blair recently visited two of the 12 crisis centers in Georgia to learn about its state-funded program and said Beshear has also made visits to the Georgia centers. Blair has also studied a similar program in Tennessee that provides five centers across the state.

And Blair has met with Huntsville leaders to pitch the idea for bringing the crisis center to Huntsville and drum up support for some financial backing that would be packaged with state funding. The lack of mental health crisis centers in Alabama is a crisis unto itself and that void is a “glaring hole I don’t think we can ignore,” Blair said, in the state's care of its mentally ill.

In fact, Blair said he believed Alabama should immediately seek to start four crisis centers strategically located across the state and not just settle for one at the outset.

How does it work?

In most cases, Blair said, a person enduring a mental health crisis ends up in one of two places: Jail or a hospital emergency room. Neither place, he said, is appropriate. A mental health crisis center would be tailored to defuse that crisis. Georgia uses a three-tier system, Blair said, to treat patients at its crisis centers.

"It's initially triage and maybe that's as far as someone goes," Blair said. "They get referred to our outpatient services the next day or get an assessment or maybe they need medicine and that's all they need. The second tier is what they call temporary observation. That's kind of like a place someone can come for 23 hours. They are observed and case managers and social workers are working with them to get them linked with whatever service they need to be successful and still live in the community, which is the ultimate goal.

"The third tier is an inpatient unit where maybe someone needs a little longer to stabilize, say seven days. That's the tier system we would be looking at it." In Blair's mind, a model for a crisis center might look like this:

- Beds for children and adolescent patients, of which he said there is a shortage.
- About 8-12 beds for 23-hour-stay patients.
- About 24-32 inpatient beds for longer-term patients.
- About 100 employees to operate the center around the clock.

Such a facility could be in a retrofitted building, Blair said, but a lesson learned from Georgia is to build each center from the ground up. "What I learned from Georgia is to do it right, you probably need to build it ground up and design it in such a way that really addresses that tiered system," Blair said. Of course, the biggest question of all: How much will it cost?

Blair estimated one center would need about \$6-8 million annually, based on the Georgia system. It's not immediately clear how much money Beshear requested for the pilot program. "In 2009, we cut \$40 million out of the department of mental health budget that has never returned," Blair said. "Ten years later, we're in a much better financial state. Why don't we look at reinstating that \$40 million and putting a portion of it toward these facilities? It's that concept of let me look at your checkbook and I'll tell you what you value.

"For a system that has been starved of resources for a long time, putting some resources and investing in something like this, where it's not invest it for investment sake, you really are getting a return on your investment."

Why Huntsville?

Blair cited an example of such an investment paying dividends by pointing to the jail diversion program in Madison County and elsewhere around the state. Those funds are saved by not paying for those suffering from mental health issues to be in jail but are still meeting their obligations in the justice system while also diminishing overcrowding in jails.

"They are in there because they can't navigate the system and we're getting them out," Blair said. "Over the last 18 months, we've gotten 55 clients out of the jail and hooked up to whatever resources they need. Of those 55 over that 18-month period, only one has returned to the jail."

"You're spending (up to) \$200,000 on the front end but you're saving \$400,000-500,000 on the back end. Imagine then if you are doing the same thing with a facility like this." The jail diversion program in Huntsville emerged from an effort by late Madison County Commissioner Bob Harrison – a longtime mental health treatment advocate who brought renowned mental health crisis expert Leon Evans to the Rocket City to meet with law enforcement and other local leaders in 2016.

Huntsville is also uniquely qualified, Blair said, because of training received by law enforcement in Huntsville, Madison and Madison County. The training is funded after Huntsville police received one of only four federal grants awarded for the program. The first class of 20 officers from Huntsville police, Madison police and Madison County sheriff's department graduated on Feb. 22 and a second class is now in training.

The training "marks the beginning of a new initiative designed to improve the way law enforcement and the community respond to people experiencing a mental health crisis," according to Huntsville police. "What it does is it trains our officers who are so often on the front lines in encountering someone in a mental health crisis how to recognize signs and symptoms and recognize this is a mental health crisis," Blair said. "And gives them the skills to help defuse that mental health crisis."

Blair also commended the support system in Huntsville, including the North Alabama Mental Health Coalition. If funding for the pilot program passes the legislature and signed into law by Ivey, Blair said the next step would likely be for interested communities to submit a bid to bring that crisis center to their area.

"The commissioner's vision is this would be a blended effort between the Department of Mental Health, state legislators putting money in and local support as well. In my conversations, there is definitely local support for something like this. They understand it. Our police chief and our sheriff, they see the value in this facility. Even our local (legislative) delegation in the conversations I've had are supportive of this effort.

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/05/huntsville-pursuing-mental-health-clinic-pilot-program.html>

'Where do we find the money?' Once again, Medicaid expansion stalls in Alabama

John Sharp | AL.com

May 26, 2019

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/05/where-do-we-find-the-money-once-again-medicaid-expansion-stalls-in-alabama.html>

State of Healthcare in Alabama Panel

Discussion Questions

1. Where has Alabama made the greatest strides in improving healthcare outcomes in your area of expertise? What legislative change or innovation precipitated this improvement?
2. Identify a healthcare challenge in your sector, where Alabama has made little or no progress. What, in your opinion, are the obstacles and potential ways to overcome those obstacles?
3. State and federal Medicaid policies (expansion, transformation, audits, etc.) impact so many aspects of the healthcare system. Describe one Medicaid policy our students should be aware of and how it affects patients in Alabama.
4. Without violating confidentiality, describe one specific incident where you worked as a healthcare change agent for an Alabama patient or community.
5. How can our students become involved in either advocating for healthcare policies or direct service to communities in order to improve healthcare outcomes in Alabama?

Session III

Below is the biography of the panelists for Session III, discussing the current landscape of public K-12 education to include testing, educational achievement, charter schools, and statewide policy changes.

Moderator: Whitney Miller-Nichols (Fellow)

Whitney Miller-Nichols joined the Alabama Association of School Board staff in 2016. She is responsible for creating and managing online training for school board members, developing and delivering whole board training, administering the Poverty Simulation program and providing support for other leadership and development initiatives. Prior to joining AASB, Whitney taught English language arts in Alabama public secondary schools for more than five years. While earning her master's, Whitney served as the graduate teaching assistant for the University of Alabama Early College program, which gives high school students the opportunity to earn college credit online while still enrolled in high school. She also worked in commercial real estate in Birmingham between her undergraduate and graduate degrees.



Miller-Nichols holds a B.A. in Communications and a Masters in Secondary English Language Arts Education from The University of Alabama.

Rep. Terry Collins

Representative Terri Collins enjoyed 16 years in banking as Vice President of Marketing and Sales before election to the House of Representatives in 2010. Terri serves on the House Education Ways and Means Committee. She also serves as Chair of the Education Policy Committee and the Tennessee Valley Caucus. Terri sits on the Board of Directors for the Volunteer Center of Morgan County, Community Board of Princess Theatre, the Quality Education Committee with The Decatur Morgan County Chamber of Commerce, and Decatur Morgan Hospital Foundation. She was appointed to the Women's Commission, Chair of the School Safety Advisory Commission, and the Education Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) by the Speaker of the House. She was also appointed to serve on Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Chair of the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, and Alabama Workforce Development Board by the Governor. She is a founding member of the Women's Leadership Council with United Way.



Rep. Collins is an alumna of The University of Alabama (B.A. in Marketing).

Mark Dixon

Mark Dixon joined the A+ team on February 1, 2019. He spent five years as Education Policy Advisor to Alabama Governor Bob Riley and later as Policy Director. Mark held an Education Pioneers Fellowship with Teach for America where he continued his pursuit of education reform. Following business school, he joined General Electric (GE) where for the past six years he has held both corporate and business roles. A graduate of GE's Experienced Commercial Leadership Program, Mark helped build a commercial consulting organization, and led teams on strategic projects for senior leaders on five continents. Most recently, he led market development efforts for GE Power's steam unit in North and South America to develop projects and drive value creation for customers.



Dixon holds a B.A. in Political Science from Wake Forest University, and M.B.A. in Strategic Management and Public Policy from The George Washington University School of Business.

Amy Marlowe

Amy Marlowe is Interim Executive Director, Alabama Education Association.



Nick Moore

Nick Moore currently serves as Governor Kay Ivey's education and workforce policy advisor and Director of the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation. After graduating college in 2012, Nick received a Teach for America fellowship. He was a corps member in Lowndes County, Alabama, where he taught U.S. History, Government, and Economics for three years at Central High School. After his time in Lowndes County, Nick received a Teach for America Capitol Hill Fellowship. During and after his fellowship, he covered education, health care, and workforce development in the Office of Representative Martha Roby. Nick later served as Senator Luther Strange's Legislative Assistant for health care, education, and labor.



Moore is an alumnus of Enterprise State Community College and Harvard University.

Dr. Henry Nelson

Henry Nelson is Chair of the Alabama Public School Charter Commission. He was appointed in 2015, re-appointed in August 2019, and elected chair in September. Henry is a Portfolio Management Specialist for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Birmingham Office of Public Housing. His previous experience includes time as a staff manager for BellSouth and as Director for Institutional Advancement at The University of Alabama. Additionally, Henry served as Vice Chair of the Birmingham Board of Education and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Build UP.

Dr. Henry holds a Masters in Management from Samford University, a Masters in Finance from University of Alabama at Birmingham, a Master in Theological Studies from Emory University, and a doctorate in Education Policy from Vanderbilt University.



It was another busy year in education in Alabama. The good news? Graduation rates are up, more high school graduates meet the definition of "college or career ready," and letter grades on school report cards were higher overall in Alabama. Teachers in K-12 and community colleges received a 4% pay raise, and serious attention is being paid to a growing teacher shortage.

The bad news? Alabama's public schools landed in last place in math, and close to last in reading on the Nation's Report Card. Test scores on the state tests were flat. Depending on which side of the fence you sit, it's either good news or bad news that lawmakers will let voters decide whether to keep electing the state school board or hand over oversight of K-12 to the governor. Also, the Common Core crashed, at least in math, and champions for charter schools had a (mostly) good year.

Here's a closer look at what happened in 2019:

Third grade reading law will be game changer, supporters say

This is a really big deal. Alabama law now requires students not reading on grade level by third grade to be held back unless one of a few exemptions applies. The hold-back provision, passed in the spring, doesn't take effect until the 2021-22 school year, though, giving educators three years to prepare. A task force charged with implementing critical pieces of the law, including which tests and interventions schools can use, is still hammering out the details of the new high stakes hurdle.

Alabama finishes 52nd in math, way behind Mississippi

A real blow came in October when results of the Nation's Report Card were released, showing Alabama's 4th and 8th graders at the bottom of the pack nationally where math proficiency is concerned. The state ranked 52nd, behind every other state, Washington D.C. and Department of Defense schools. Reading results weren't much better, prompting calls from leaders for improvement. To add insult to injury, Mississippi's 4th-graders reached the national average in math and reading for the first time, while Alabama saw recent gains evaporate.

Many reasons for the slide have been suggested, but experts caution against blaming any one education reform (like new learning standards or curricular program) for the problem. It's likely a result of a combination of things, they say. But with the connection between education and economic and workforce development tightening, Ivey and other state leaders have made it clear that improving Alabama's performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress is a high priority. The next round of national testing will be in spring 2021.

Common Core math will be gone soon – but will it, really?

Common Core math has finally been "eradicated" from Alabama's classrooms, according to Gov. Kay Ivey. After an eight-month delay, the state board of education approved a new math course of study, to

take effect during the 2021-22 school year. Opponents of the new math course of study say it's still very similar to Common Core, and teachers say the way math is taught won't really change. The biggest difference, according to the folks who were on the course of study committee, is that the sequence of math courses in middle and high school has changed. AL.com plans to explore that more fully in the coming weeks, so stay tuned.

Teacher pay raise

Alabama paid for an additional 250 teachers in grades 4 -6, and gave a 4% raise for teachers in K-12 and community colleges. That raised starting salaries in Alabama public schools above \$40,000 for the first time. Plus, more than \$272 million - \$198 million for K-12 and \$74 million for higher ed - was handed out this summer for one-time expenses because last year's tax receipts topped expectations.

"I think we're clearly heading in a very positive trend right now. This is a very positive budget to address a lot of critical needs in education around the state in every area, every region on every level," House Education Budget Chairman Bill Poole, R-Tuscaloosa, said. The education budget this year made up ground lost since the recession, but still hasn't fully recovered.

Early childhood education had a good year, too

The state's prekindergarten program now enrolls more than 21,000 students in more than 1,200 classrooms statewide, serving about 37% of eligible four-year-olds. Lawmakers increased funding again, up \$27 million from last year to stand at \$123 million. The program continues to be recognized for its high-quality, and Gov. Ivey hopes to expand the program to serve 70% of eligible students.

To reach even younger learners, the Department of Early Childhood Education launched the "Born Ready" initiative in December. "Born Ready's goals are to inspire and empower every parent, and to ensure every child reaches their greatest potential," Early Childhood Education Secretary Jeana Ross said. "Our website, BornReady.org, is a game-changing resource for Alabama families. It will provide the resources needed to build successful and contributing citizens for the future." And the Department won a \$33 million federal grant earlier this month to continue supporting their work.

Alabama started and ended the year with the same superintendent

While that might seem like a given, this is the first time since 2015 that the K-12 system has started and ended the year with the same top educator in charge. The system has taken a lot of heat in recent years for failure to improve student achievement, but experts say stability in leadership – at the top levels – is key in making sustainable improvement.

Alabama State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey has a full plate, writing a new strategic plan, starting new state testing in the spring, and doing something to ensure Alabama has a better showing on the Nation's Report Card. The Department of Education is undergoing a full review, ordered by state lawmakers, with results due in late March.

And he's facing a statewide vote in March that could replace his bosses, the state board of education, and any new appointments by Ivey could then choose to replace him. His current contract runs through April 2021.

Here's what state board members thought of his first year running the show.

Voters to decide fate of the state school board

Gov. Ivey and state lawmakers have condemned the state board of education as dysfunctional and broken and are turning it over to voters to decide in March whether to allow them to appoint new state board members, rather than keep the statewide electorate voting on them. The bill allowing voters to make that change was passed with 78 votes in the House. (Most, but not all, Democrats voted “no.” and 30 votes in the Senate (five Senators didn’t vote). The Governor would be given the power to appoint new education commissioners and the Senate would have to confirm the appointments.

State Board member Jackie Zeigler, who is up for re-election in November, is pushing back, heading a campaign asking voters to reject the amendment. Other board members have said they’d like to keep their seats on the board, too. Meanwhile, eight Democrats will vie for state board member Ella Bell’s District 5 seat on the same ballot as the amendment. Bell died Nov. 3. Her seat remains vacant.

Teacher shortage hits Alabama

The teacher shortage, particularly in math, science and special education, is real, y’all. U.S. Sen. Doug Jones, D-Birmingham, introduced a bill in November, the “Classrooms Reflecting Communities Act of 2019,” to offer federal grants to districts in qualifying areas to help recruit and retain teachers, with an emphasis on recruiting teachers that reflect the diversity of the students they teach. No action has been taken on the bill.

The state board of education voted in November to accept the recommendations of a statewide teacher shortage task force but haven’t determined how to implement them. A bid to improve retirement benefits for teachers, which some say is substantially responsible for shortages since lawmakers cut the benefits in 2012, failed to pass during the legislative session, but the issue is expected to come back around when the new session starts in February.

Charter schools taking root

All signs point to more charter schools opening in Alabama. The number of public charter schools doubled in Alabama, from two to four, when school opened in August. More charter schools are scheduled to open in 2021, including one led by former state superintendent Dr. Tommy Bice.

New Schools for Alabama, an organization to help charter school organizers open in Alabama, brought in \$25 million in federal grants to grow more charter schools. The organization also received \$400,000 of the \$800,000 state lawmakers gave to the state's Public Charter School Commission.

School grades and grad rates improve, test scores don't

High school graduation rates were up as were the percentage of students exhibiting readiness for college and career, but test scores remained flat. For school officials whose districts are somewhere in the middle, like Pike County, the reaction goes like this, Superintendent Dr. Mark Bazzell said: "If you get a 'B', you pat each other on the back. If you get a 'C,' you breathe a sigh of relief. If you get a 'D,' you hope nobody notices."

Statewide, just 45.3% of students were proficient in reading, down half a percentage point from last year. In math, 46.5% of students reached proficiency, down slightly from 2018. And in science, 38.9% students reached proficiency, down half a percentage point from last year's 39.6%. Despite the drop in test scores, the number of schools making A's on the state report card has nearly doubled since grades were first issued in the 2016-17 school year. The number of schools making F's has dropped dramatically, down to 23 from a high of 100 two years earlier.

For more education coverage, go to <https://www.al.com/education/>

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/12/common-core-math-eradicated-ivey-says-after-alabama-school-board-vote.html>

Alabama lawmakers have approved a proposed amendment to the state constitution to replace the state's elected Board of Education with an education commission appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate. The House of Representatives passed the bill 78-21 today on what is expected to be the last day of the legislative session. Voters will have the final say on whether to approve the change in March.

Rep. Bill Poole, R-Tuscaloosa, handled the bill on the House floor today. Poole said there are strong arguments to give voters a chance to decide whether to change the way the state governs education. He pointed to the low rankings of Alabama students on national reading and math tests. Poole said the objective is to put in place a board of subject matter experts to craft education policy and reduce the influence of politics.

"Try to take the Rs and Ds and primaries and general elections out of it and let's just put qualified persons on the board and let them make good sound decisions based upon whether it's curriculum, teacher certification, so on and so forth," Poole said. "And make those decisions without the specter of politics and make those decisions that are best for the citizens and the children and the teachers in the state."

The bill was sponsored by Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, who said it was time to change education governance to help improve academic performance. The bill was a priority for Gov. Kay Ivey. Under the plan, the governor would appoint at least one member from each of the state's seven congressional districts and a total of nine members. The bill says the membership of the commission would reflect the diversity of the enrollment in state public schools based on race, gender and geography. Three of the nine members would be black based on current school enrollment, Poole said.

The commission would appoint a secretary of elementary and secondary education, a position that would replace the current position of state superintendent. Poole said Alabama's neighboring states all have appointed school boards. He said more than 40 states have appointed boards, including those that perform best on national tests. The bill would also require the commission to adopt course of study standards "in lieu of common core."

Several lawmakers objected to the Common Core language in the bill. Rep. Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa, noted that earlier in this session a bill requiring Alabama to repeal the use of Common Core standards passed the Senate but was blocked in the House. "Now all of a sudden nobody has anything to say about that," Rep. Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa said. "That's really odd to me."

England said he's expecting a campaign to convince voters to pass the amendment based on a promise they would be voting to end the use of Common Core. The Alabama College and Career Ready Standards used in Alabama schools were developed mostly from the Common Core but the state has modified the standards several times.

Rep. Pebblin Warren, D-Tuskegee, said educators have adjusted to the standards and it would cause a setback to change them. Rep. Juandalynn Givan, D-Birmingham, said she wasn't necessarily opposed to an appointed school board but said it's not the answer to failing schools. She said the way to improve schools is to put new books in schools, pay teachers more and promote parental involvement.

"Fix up these dilapidated schools," Givan said. "Give the kids something to do other than just go out and play football and baseball and hopefully they'll make it to one of these state schools." Most of the Republicans in the House supported the bill but three voted no -- Reps. Bob Fincher of Woodland; Arnold Mooney of Shelby County; and Andrew Sorrell of Muscle Shoals.

Sorrell said he was not convinced that changing to an appointed board would lead to improvements in learning. Sorrell said there are likely multiple reasons why schools in states with appointed boards perform better academically. Poole acknowledged that changing to an appointed board would not resolve all issues in Alabama schools, but said it's one way to bring potential change.

"Funding is a part of the puzzle," Poole said. "But there are lots of parts. We have lots of challenges in education around the state and in different parts of the state. There's no one silver bullet. Nobody is here to say that there is. But we need to incrementally try things. We cannot be afraid of change. We've got to be more flexible. We've got to be more innovative in our K-12 public school systems."

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/05/lawmakers-approve-plan-to-replace-elected-school-board-with-appointed-commission.html>

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission will look a lot different when it meets Tuesday in Montgomery. Half of its 10 members are new.

The commission's primary function is to consider startup charter school applications and to hear appeals from charter operators who were denied by a local board of education that serves as its own authorizer. Only five of Alabama's 138 school districts have become authorizers, so arguably, that makes the state commission the gateway to charter school operators wanting to open in Alabama.

And with New Schools for Alabama winning a \$25 million federal grant to recruit charter operators to open high-quality charters here, the commission's work becomes even more important. The commission meets for a work session Tuesday at 1 p.m. in the Gordon Persons Building in Montgomery. The agenda indicates the commissioners will be trained on Alabama's ethics laws and

Open Meetings Act and given an overview of the responsibilities of the commission.

The new faces on the commission are from across the state---one each from Birmingham, Montgomery and Morgan County, and two from Mobile, which had no representation prior to the new members being appointed.

The five new members are:

- Paul Morin – Birmingham, term ends 2021
- Sydney Raine – Mobile, terms ends 2021
- Marla Green – Montgomery, term ends 2021
- Kimberly Terry – Morgan County, terms ends 2021
- Jamie Ison – Mobile, term ends 2021

The five current members, including one reappointment, are:

- Henry Nelson – Birmingham, re-appointed, term ends 2021
- Lisa Williams - Montgomery, term ends 2020
- Ibrahim Lee - Montgomery, term ends 2020
- David Marshall - Auburn, term ends 2020
- Allison Hagood - Boaz, appointed in April, term ends 2020

Commissioners are appointed by the Alabama Board of Education from nominations---two for each commission position---sent by the Governor, Speaker of the House, Senate President Pro Tem, and the Lt. Governor. The terms are staggered, with five nominated every other year to serve two-year terms. A commissioner can serve up to three terms, or six years.

At their August meeting, the Alabama Board of Education replaced five of the six sitting charter commissioners, including chair Mac Buttram, who had previously indicated he hoped to be

reappointed. Gov. Kay Ivey, who serves as President of the state school board, did not nominate Buttram for the position but through a spokesperson said her decision was not related to the recent controversy over the Woodland Prep charter in Washington County.

While most of their work since 2016 has been under the radar, commissioners have come under fire in recent months because of their approval of an application and one-year opening delay for Woodland Prep. Public school supporters there claim the commission didn't follow the law, isn't needed, and will do financial harm to the current public schools in the county system.

The Alabama Education Association along with three Washington County employees filed a lawsuit--not against the charter commission, but against the charter management operator Dr. Soner Tarim and Woodland Prep's local board members. The suit, filed Aug. 2, alleges the charter applicants committed fraud by misrepresenting the facts in the application and have asked the court to invalidate the commission's approval.

AEA Associate Executive Director Theron Stokes said the AEA is pleased new voices will be joining the commission at its next meeting. "We are optimistic that the new commissioners will accept their duties and responsibilities of reviewing and approving only quality charter schools that will provide public school students in this state an excellent education."

"As time goes by, it is our hope that charter schools will not be a new fad, but an opportunity to provide students the education they need," Stokes said. "Charter schools should not be just another drain on already limited funds provided to the public schools in Alabama. AEA will continue to monitor every charter school application that is brought before the Charter School Commission and will continue to oppose those charter schools that are not in the best interest of Alabama students. We hope the new members of the Charter School Commission will do the same."

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools that are given flexibility in areas like length of the school day, hiring, and curriculum not afforded under state regulations governing traditional public schools in exchange for additional accountability. Charter schools in Alabama are initially given five-year contracts and can be closed if they don't meet goals set in their charter.

The commission's track record so far

With only four charter schools up and running, and with the big change in commission members, AL.com decided to take a look at their track record so far. The commission's record of approving charter school applications---both original and on appeal---shows a mix of approvals and denials. Overall, fewer than half of the charter operators that have come before the commission have been given the okay to open.

Of the 13 startup applications the commission has received since September 2016, it has approved six charters. A contract could not be agreed upon with one of those---Sports Leadership and Management in Huntsville---so that leaves five that received commission approval.

Of those remaining five, two are now up and running, two will open next year and one will open in 2021. Four applications were denied, and three more applications were withdrawn prior to the commission's consideration. On the appeal side, the commission has heard four appeals. They reversed two local denials and upheld two.

Five school districts---Athens City, Birmingham City, Montgomery County, Macon County, and Greene County---have become authorizers, meaning any charter that wants to open there must go first to the local board of education for approval.

Birmingham's school board has denied the three applications that it considered, and all three appealed to the commission. The commission overturned two----Legacy Prep and i3 Academy---but upheld the denial of a third. Athens City denied one application, and the commission upheld that denial.

While none of the five local boards serving as their own authorizers have approved any charter applications, Montgomery's board kind of did. A network of four conversion charter schools---which means they take existing non-charter schools and convert them into charters---was approved in Montgomery, but not by their local school board.

Montgomery schools are under state intervention, and state superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey made the decision to approve the network last December. But the board refused to take a vote on the contract before the deadline in February, meaning the plan is dead for now. The state commission has no authority in the area of conversion charter schools.

The commission contracts with an external group to review the charter applications as required by law. The commission initially contracted with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers to review original applications at a cost of \$81,400 for up to 10 applications.

When NACSA's two-year contract expired in 2018, NACSA said it would no longer be reviewing applications. The Auburn Center for Evaluation was chosen as it had already conducted an annual review of ACCEL Academy, the state's first charter school, according to Logan Searcy, the Alabama State Department of Education employee working with charter schools.

The contract with ACE runs for two years and costs around \$4,000 per review, Searcy said, and the evaluation tool ACE uses is based on NACSA's rubric adapted to the specifics of Alabama's law. The work of the commission doesn't end after the initial determination. Once the commission approves the application, the charter operator takes at least a year to plan for the opening. No state tax dollars are given to charter schools until they open the doors with students enrolled, Searcy said.

There are deadlines to meet during that planning year to ensure the charter operators are doing things on a timely basis, Searcy said. But if a charter operator needs more time, they can request that from the commission, she added. The commission is also charged with monitoring the progress charter operators make toward the goals stated in their contract, she said. Every open charter school also gets an annual review---that's what ACE will do, she said.

The commission is currently working to create procedures to revoke a charter contract, something not spelled out in the law. Lawmakers quadrupled the money given to the commission---from \$200,000 to \$800,000---for the new fiscal year, which Searcy said will help the commission oversee that monitoring.

Half of that money, \$400,000, will go to New Schools for Alabama, the organization that wrote and won the \$25 million federal grant to help start new charter schools in Alabama. The commission has not voted on how to spend the other \$400,000, which presumably will happen sometime before the new budget year starts Oct. 1.

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/08/alabama-charter-school-commission-remade-heres-their-track-record-so-far.html>

Report: Alabama Accountability Act scholarship students' test scores similar to public schools

Trisha Powell Crain | AL.com

September 7, 2018

https://www.al.com/news/2018/09/report_tax_credit_scholarship.html

Alabama's dead-last test scores wake-up call for officials

Trisha Powell Crain | AL.com

November 1, 2019

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/11/alabamas-dead-last-test-scores-wake-up-call-for-officials.html>

Common Core math 'eradicated,' Ivey says, after Alabama school board vote

Trisha Powell Crain | AL.com

December 12, 2019

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/12/common-core-math-eradicated-ivey-says-after-alabama-school-board-vote.html>

Alabama still hammering out details for third-grade reading hurdle

Trisha Powell Crain | AL.com

December 12, 2019

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/12/alabama-still-hammering-out-details-for-third-grade-reading-hurdle.html>

Alabama state superintendent's performance above average, school board says

Trisha Powell Crain | AL.com

December 15, 2019

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/12/alabama-state-superintendents-performance-above-average-school-board-says.html>

Public Education Forum

Discussion Questions

1. Alabama recently scored last in the nation on math and showed a significant decline in reading on the 4th grade NAEP test. How do you interpret these results and how are you responding through your work as an education stakeholder?
2. Alabama lawmakers have approved a proposed amendment to the state constitution to replace the state's elected Board of Education with an education commission appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate. Which type of school board do you think will be most effective in improving Alabama's education outcomes and why?
3. How has the advent of charter schools and the Charter School Commission shifted the landscape of public education throughout the state? What are some strengths and/or areas of improvement for the current process of authorizing charter schools?
4. Last year, the state board of education approved a new math course of study, and Alabama law now requires students not reading on grade level by third grade to be held back. How do you foresee either of these policies impacting K-12 educational achievement?
5. What bright spots do you see in Alabama's education system? Or what are you most hopeful about in Alabama's education system?
6. What is one other aspect of educational policy in Alabama that we haven't discussed which would be important for our students to consider?

Session IV

Below are the panelists for Session IV, providing various perspectives on proposed gambling legislation.

Sen. Greg Albritton

Senator Greg Albritton was elected to the Alabama Senate in 2014 and again in 2018. He previously served in the Alabama House of Representatives from 2002-2006. Greg is an attorney and a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Senator Albritton is alumnus of the Thomas B. Goode Jones School of Law at Faulkner University.



Sen. Jim McClendon

Senator Jim McClendon was elected to the Alabama Senate in the general elections held November 4, 2014 and again in 2018 after serving three terms in the Alabama House of Representatives. He served in the Navy Medical Service Corps in Viet Nam and afterwards taught clinical optometry at UAB. Jim was in private practice in Leeds and Moody for many years. Senator McClendon is a past president of the Alabama Optometric Association and a former board member of St. Anne's Home, and the Jefferson County Health Planning Commission. He was a founding director of the Davis Lake Fire Department and serves on several committees at First United Methodist Church of Springville. Jim is married to the former El Tate of Arab and they live on the family farm in St. Clair Springs.

Senator McClendon is an alumnus of Birmingham Southern College and the University of Houston.



Robbie McGhee

Robert McGhee has been involved in and an advocate for Native American issues at all levels of government. Mr. McGhee is currently serving his fourth term on the Creek Indians Tribal Council, where he serves as Vice Chairman. In this capacity Mr. McGhee is honored to represent his people “government-to-government” at the Local, State, and Federal levels regarding issues of Education, Health Care, Economic Development and Sovereign Immunity. Prior to moving back to Atmore, Robert McGhee worked in Washington, D.C. for approximately five years at the Department of Interior-Bureau of Indian Affairs, the United States Senate and Troutman Sanders LLP-Indian Law Practice Group. During his tenure in DC and here at the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Mr. McGhee has had the opportunity to serve on numerous White House Initiatives and boards. Currently he serves on the National Indian Child Welfare Board, Children First Alabama, Secretary’s Health and Human Services Tribal Advisory Committee, the Board of Advisors for the Center for Native American Youth, and the Native American Rights Fund. Before accepting the position of Governmental Relations Advisor for the Poarch Creek Indians, Mr. McGhee served in several capacities for the Tribe. He was employed by the Tribe as the Tribal Administrator, the governmental entity of the Tribe, and President of Creek Indian Enterprises (CIE), the economic development entity of the Poarch Creek Indians.



McGhee holds a M.S.W. from Washington University in St. Louis and an M.B.A. from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Sen. Bobby Singleton

Senator Bobby Singleton is serving his fourth term in the Alabama State Senate and is the current Minority Leader. He was first elected on January 25, 2005, to fill the unexpired term of former Senator Charles Steele. Bobby served in the Alabama House of Representatives for one term. He is a consultant, a member of Greenleaf Missionary Baptist Church, Greensboro Alabama and a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.



Sen. Singleton is an alumnus of Alabama State University (B.S. in Criminal Justice) and Miles College School of Law (J.D.).

The push for an Alabama lottery is now a competition. Sen. Greg Albritton, R-Range, filed a lottery bill this week that would establish a state lottery and limit it to paper-based games – a move that has drawn opposition in the past from senators who say it could give a major gambling entity in Alabama a unique advantage over others.

“It’s a simple lottery,” Albritton said on Wednesday afternoon. “It gives people the right to vote as to whether to have a lottery or not. Straight paper lottery. That’s it.” The bill will be in a Senate committee Thursday morning, along with other proposals filed by Sen. Jim McClendon, R-Springville, who has filed a bill that would give the state’s four dog tracks access to the same gaming machines that the federally recognized Poarch Band of Creek Indians, who operate casinos in Atmore, Montgomery, and Wetumpka could obtain if a lottery came to Alabama.

McClendon said in a phone interview Wednesday that the provision could help restore jobs at places like VictoryLand in Macon County, which shed employees in the face of raids. “Once we get my bill through, owners and operators will get the confidence to open tomorrow and next week and next year, there’s going to be job opportunities for Alabamians,” he said.

The paper-based game language has sunk previous efforts at bringing a lottery to the state. In 2016, an amendment to a lottery amendment turned Senate Democrats who had supported the measure against it. Senate Minority Leader Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro, whose district includes GreeneTrack in Greene County, said making the game paper-based would prevent dog tracks like GreeneTrack from installing video lottery terminals (VLTs).

But, he said, federal law considers lotteries Class III gaming, a category that includes slot machines and table games. Singleton said the Poarch Band, who operate under federal law, would have access to the machines. “The reality is a lottery is a Class III game,” Singleton said. “If we allow Class III gaming they will go full casino, as opposed to bingo,” Singleton said.

Robert McGhee, the director of government relations for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, said he hadn’t looked at all Albritton’s bill in detail, but said it would give “the people of Alabama what they want,” an opportunity to vote on a lottery. “The point is you still have to have a negotiated compact with the state,” he said. “We do not operate outside of a compact.”

Albritton’s district includes Atmore, where the Poarch Band operate Wind Creek Casino. “I speak to my constituents, the Poarch Band included, about this particular bill,” he said, adding that “I haven’t gotten a yes or a no.” Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, said there will be a public hearing Thursday morning but no vote. McClendon said he expects a vote on both bills on Wednesday. Marsh had expressed doubts about McClendon’s legislation, and seemed supportive of McClendon’s [[Albritton’s]] legislation.

“I take it to be the most straight, simple lottery bill there is,” Marsh said. “If that’s the case, I think it’s the one with the best case to get out of the legislature.” Both bills are constitutional amendments, which would need to be approved by voters if they pass the Alabama Legislature.

<https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/2019/04/03/2nd-lottery-bill-filed-alabama-senate/3358380002/>

Senate Bills 130 (Proposed Constitutional Amendment)

Senators McClendon, Holley, Livingston, Singleton, Smitherman, Beasley and Marsh | Alabama Senate

March 19, 2019

<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/ALISON/SearchableInstruments/2019RS/PrintFiles/SB130-int.pdf>

Senate Bills 220 (Proposed Constitutional Amendment)

Senators Albritton and Marsh | Alabama Senate

April 2, 2019

<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/ALISON/SearchableInstruments/2019RS/PrintFiles/SB130-int.pdf>

There are currently two lottery bills in the Alabama Legislature: SB220, sponsored by Sen. Greg Albritton, and SB130, sponsored by Sen. Jim McClendon.

While these two bills legalize a lottery in Alabama, they are remarkably different in terms of the games that are allowed, revenues generated and jobs created. Whenever the topic of a lottery, or gambling in general, pops up, things get complicated and people try to muddy the waters.

Here is a simple breakdown to get things straight.

WHAT THEY DO

Albritton bill: Would legalize only a paper lottery, eliminating all electronic games and also would make illegal pari-mutuel wagering (dog and horse tracks) that are currently operating in the state. It would also eliminate most charity bingo operations.

McClendon bill: Would legalize all normal lottery functions found in other states, including scratch-offs, electronic games and video lottery terminals (which are electronic versions made to look like slot machines that mimic scratch-offs). The VLTs would be placed four currently operating dog tracks — VictoryLand in Shorter, GreeneTrack in Greene County, The Birmingham Race Course and The Mobile Greyhound Park.

REVENUE

Albritton bill: Because this bill eliminates all electronic games, it also eliminates where the major portion of lottery money is generated in other states. Without those games, experts predict revenue estimates would likely be cut in half — going from \$300 million-plus annually to around \$150 million-plus annually. There would be no additional income from gambling at any other facility.

McClendon bill: Estimates from a comprehensive study from AUM three years ago, placed lottery revenue, including electronic games, between \$350 and \$400 million annually. Another study found that the use of VLTs, taxed around 20-25 percent, at four locations could generate another \$100 million annually. In addition, the legalization of the VLTs would push the Poarch Band of Creek Indians into compact in order to offer the same VLTs, which are Class III games, and could generate another \$30-\$50 million annually.

JOBS

Albritton bill: A paper lottery creates no more than a dozen jobs, mostly to administer the lottery throughout the state. At the same time, because Albritton's bill would shutter currently operating pari-mutuel locations, it would eliminate around 3,000 jobs.

McClendon bill: The same AUM study referenced above found that allowing for VLTs in the four racetracks would create between 10,000 and 13,000 new jobs within the first two years. Many of those jobs would be located in two of Alabama's poorest counties: Macon and Greene.

EFFECT ON POARCH CREEKS

Albritton bill: Would be the best possible scenario for the Poarch Creeks. Not only would the bill eliminate their current gaming competition (the racetracks), it would open the door for the tribe to install VLTs and force Alabama into a compact.

McClendon bill: It would cut into the Poarch Creeks' monopoly, but it wouldn't level the playing field. While the four tracks would operate the same games as the PCI casinos, one of those tracks is owned by PCI. Also, the tracks would pay a significantly higher tax rate — 20-25 percent— than the Poarch Creeks — around 5 percent. This bill would still allow PCI to force the state into a compact, securing the tribe's federally recognized status.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

Albritton bill: Puts half of all tax revenue first into the Alabama Trust Fund and the remaining half into the Alabama general fund. It also stipulates that proceeds must first go towards payback of money borrowed from the Alabama Trust Fund, which totals more than \$150 million currently.

McClendon bill: Splits revenue equally between the general fund and education trust fund. However, McClendon has encouraged his fellow lawmakers to offer suggestions for scholarship programs, pre-K programs and after-school programs that could be funded by his lottery bill.

<https://www.alreporter.com/2019/04/19/dueling-lottery-bills-a-simple-breakdown-of-what-they-do/>

Heated public hearing held on controversial bingo bill in committee

Brandon Moseley | Alabama Political Reporter

May 15, 2019

<https://www.alreporter.com/2019/05/15/heated-public-hearing-held-on-controversial-bingo-bill-in-committee/>

House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, R-Monrovia, said Wednesday that he is open to a deal on gambling. The speaker of the House was in Auburn for the Alabama Association of County Commissioners meeting.

“The lottery has been up for the last two years,” McCutcheon said. “Here is the bottom line in the (Republican) caucus. Out of the 77 members, 18 are not for any gambling at all. It takes 63 votes to pass a constitutional amendment. I needed votes from the (Democratic) minority, but because of some of their local concerns that didn’t happen. Unless their local bills with the bingo issues were passed they wouldn’t support it.”

McCutcheon said that some counties want their own bingo and some want to reopen their racetrack. “This is where we are. We have got a lottery over here that would generate \$150 to 180 million,” McCutcheon said. “We have got the Poarch Creek Indians” who have come and offered to enter into a compact.

McCutcheon said that the Indian proposal would allow them to continue doing what they are doing now with the possibility of adding some gaming facilities in other parts of the state. In exchange, they would bring revenue into the state.

“I am not a big gambling guy; but if you are going to vote for a lottery, that’s gambling, then don’t be a hypocrite and let’s get the biggest bang for the buck,” McCutcheon said. “Let’s address a lottery, the Poarch Creek Indians, and these counties that want a one-armed gambling. Put them all in a room and hammer out a deal.”

“It would be ridiculous to sell us out for \$150 million when there could be \$700 million,” McCutcheon said. “It is going to be hard to just pass a lottery.” The speaker warned though that if he cannot get a grand deal between all the parties on gambling then there likely would not be any gambling bill brought forward in 2020.

“If not let’s take it off the table,” McCutcheon said. In the 2019 Alabama legislative session, State Sen. Jim McClendon, R-Springville, introduced a lottery bill that would have created a statewide lottery but also included online gaming and video lottery terminals at the existing bingo facilities in Shorter, Birmingham, Greene County, and Mobile.

The Poarch Creek Band of Indians and a number of legislators found that bill objectionable. State Sen. Greg Albritton, R-Atmore, introduced a much more conservative lottery proposal for a paper lottery only, with no online lottery playing or video lottery terminals. This made the racetracks and a number of legislators angry.

The McClendon bill stalled in the Senate Tourism Committee, while the Albritton lottery plan passed out of the Senate. In the House of Representatives, Democrats demanded that video gambling in Macon and Greene Counties be legalized or they would not support the lottery bill.

There was also a great deal of discussion about where the money should go. The Albritton bill had originally earmarked all the money for the states beleaguered general fund budget. The House Tourism Committee gutted that proposal and shifted money to education, even though the education trust fund budget had a record surplus from the income taxes generated by the booming economy.

That still wasn't enough for House Democrats who then demanded gambling in both Macon and Greene Counties and that the money earmarked for the SGF go instead to Medicaid expansion rather than the construction of three proposed mega prisons. When the House Tourism Committee version of the bill finally got to the floor of the House late in the session, it died a quick death.

The Poarch Creek Indians have offered to a deal that they say will give the state one billion for exclusive gaming rights in the state and have begun advertising the deal that they have offered the state of Alabama.

The 2020 legislative session begins on February 4.

<https://www.alreporter.com/2019/12/05/mccutcheon-is-open-to-grand-deal-on-gambling/>

OUR \$BILLION PLAN FOR ALABAMA

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians has a **Billion-dollar package** to improve the quality of life of Alabama citizens.

This package is a **game-changer** for the state of Alabama. Our **Billion-dollar package** includes:

- **\$725 Million** in combined license and compact fees from existing properties and two new locations, **PLUS**
- **\$350 Million** in projected tax revenue and revenue share from gaming, including sportsbook and table games, **PLUS**
- A total of five **tourist destinations** with four-diamond hotels, first-class food offerings, and spas, **PLUS**
- A projection of **6,500 new jobs**

We also support:

- A **traditional lottery** featuring **Powerball, Mega Millions, and scratch-off tickets**, which bring even more revenue to the billion-dollar package
- A **regulatory body** to insure the integrity of the industry and provide clear rules that everybody follows

A billion-dollar plan, a billion reasons to say yes.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO WIN FOR ALABAMA

<https://www.winningforalabama.com/winning>

Poarch Creek Indians CEO touts \$1 billion' gaming package for Alabama

John Sharp | AL.com

November 16, 2019

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/11/poarch-creek-indians-ceo-tout-1-billion-gaming-package-for-alabama.html>

Lottery and Gaming Panel

Discussion Questions

1. What is the current landscape of gaming in Alabama, particularly as it impacts you and the constituents you represent?
2. We had two lottery and gaming bills originate in the senate last session. First, we'll start with the bill Sen. McClendon introduced in March (SBI30), which would have created a lottery, allowed electronic games at state dog tracks, and included sports wagering. Ultimately this bill did not make it out of committee. What are the implications for this bill? If it were reintroduced, what would you like to see changed?
3. In April, another lottery bill was filed by Sen. Albritton (SB220), which would create a paper lottery only. This bill passed out of the Senate but died in the House. What are the implications for this bill? If it were reintroduced, what would you like to see changed?
4. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PCI) recently released the Winning for Alabama Proposal. What are your thoughts on the proposal? From your perspective, does it represent a win-win for both PCI and the State of Alabama, why or why not?
5. The elephant in the room of course is the Alabama Constitution. Any lottery or gaming bill passed by the legislature would be a constitutional amendment requiring a vote of the people. What is your sense on the chances of any gambling legislation being approved by Alabama voters?
6. House Speaker Mac McCutcheon in meeting with the Alabama Association of County Commissioners suggested, "Let's address a lottery, the Poarch Creek Indians, and these counties that want one-armed gambling. Put them all in a room and hammer out a deal." In your opinion, is there a grand deal to be had? What would it take to make it work from your perspective? What would be a potential deal-breaker?

Session V

Below is contact information for museums and historical sites designated for student tours.

Alabama State Capitol Grounds (<https://ahc.alabama.gov/alabama-state-capitol.aspx>)

600 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-242-3935

The Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church (<https://www.dexterkingmemorial.org>)

454 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-356-3494

Dexter Parsonage Museum (<https://www.dexterkingmemorial.org/tours/parsonage-museum>)

309 South Jackson Street
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-261-3270

The Legacy Museum (<https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/museum>)

115 Coosa Street
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-386-9100

Museum of Alabama (<http://www.museum.alabama.gov>)

624 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-242-4364

Supreme Court of Alabama (<http://judicial.alabama.gov/Appellate/SupremeCourt>)

300 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
(334) 229-0700

Session VI

Below are the biographies for panelists, examining the work of the Governor's Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy and discussing the response of the legislature, courts, and counties to the current crisis.

Sonny Brasfield

Sonny Brasfield is Executive Director of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama. The Association represents Alabama's 67 county governments and provides a variety of services and programs that assist the counties in carrying out their duties to the residents of Alabama. Sonny represents county government before the Alabama legislature, state agencies and departments and the U.S. Congress. He oversees the Association's publications and public relations activities and works directly with county officials on programs on the local level.



Sonny has been employed by the Association since 1988, serving as Assistant Director, before assuming his current position. His public relations work has been honored with statewide awards for speech writing, editorial writing, newsletters, special and short - term public relation programs, low budget printing and external public relation programs. In 1993, 94, 95, 96 and 97 he was recognized as one of the outstanding meeting planners in the southeast by "Convention South" magazine. Sonny joined the Association after serving in a similar position at the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. He has served as the state political writer for The Huntsville Times and as a reporter for The Montgomery Advertiser.

Brasfield is an alumnus of The University of Alabama (Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Communication).

Justice Sue Bell Cobb (Advisory Board Member)

Sue Bell Cobb retired as Chief Justice of Alabama Supreme Court after serving 30 years on the bench. She served as trial judge holding court in almost 40 counties and 12 years on AL Court of Criminal Appeals. Sue Bell is a founding member and Chair of Alabama Children First Foundation, a nonprofit which shapes policy for the children of our state. She worked tirelessly on issues such as juvenile justice reform, replication of model drug courts throughout the state, sentencing reform, judicial selection reform, and access to justice. Additionally, during her tenure as Chief Justice, Sue Bell saved taxpayers millions of dollars by championing eFiling, making Alabama the first state in the nation to have statewide eFiling of all civil cases.



Justice Cobb is an alumna of The University of Alabama (B.A. in history and J.D. degree).

Rep. Christopher England

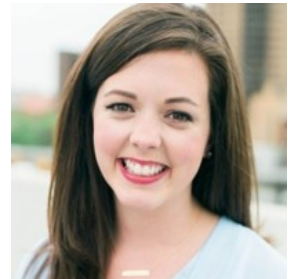
Christopher J. England was born and raised in Tuscaloosa. In 2002 he served as an Assistant District for Tuscaloosa County and in 2004, began working for the City of Tuscaloosa, where he currently serves as an Associate City Attorney. Christopher was first elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in November of 2006 at the age of 29. He is serving his fourth term and currently serves on the House Judiciary, Insurance, and Public Safety and Homeland Security Committees in the Alabama Legislature. Christopher also serves as the Caucus Chair of the Alabama House Democratic Caucus and Vice President of the Alabama Law Institute. Other Legislative committees and appointments include Vice Chair of the Tuscaloosa County Legislative Delegation, Governor's Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy, Energy Council, Contract Review Permanent Legislative Oversight Committee, the Joint Legislative Prison Committee, and Permanent Legislative Committee on Reapportionment. On November 2nd, 2019, Christopher became the first African American elected to serve Chair of the Alabama Democratic Party. Locally, he serves as a member of the Tuscaloosa Road Improvement Commission, Police Athletic League, Tuscaloosa Safe Center Board of Directors, and co-chair for the Elevate Tuscaloosa Advisory.



Representative England is an alumnus of Howard University (B.A.) and The University of Alabama (J.D.).

Katie Glenn

Katie Glenn is a Policy Associate at the Southern Poverty Law Center where she helps lead the Center's Alabama policy work, focusing on legislative advocacy, direct lobbying, coalition and relationship building, and community engagement.. From 2011-2013, she was a Truman-Albright Fellow for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and later served as executive Assistant to the President of Birmingham-Southern College. In 2016, Katie became Outreach Coordinator for Voices for Alabama's Children. She transitioned to Alabama State Director of Planned Parenthood Southeast, before joining the SPLC last year.



Glenn is an alumna of Birmingham-Southern College.

Alabama's prison population is dropping, and it's falling faster than the prison population in any other Southern state. Alabama had more than 32,000 prisoners in 2012, the state's peak year, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. A recent study by the Sentencing Project showed the prison population decreased by nearly a quarter by 2017. Alabama had the nation's eighth-highest reduction, behind Alaska, California and several states in the Northeast. Alabama decreased its prison population more than any other Southern state, but most of the region saw reductions.

South Carolina and Louisiana were the closest to Alabama with around 16 percent reductions each since 2012. Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee each increased their prison populations in recent years. They were among just 11 states that saw increases since 2012. Arkansas saw a 23 percent jump, the biggest in the country from 2012 to 2017. However, while working to relieve its overcrowded prisons, Alabama is also locking up thousands of residents in local jails, according to new estimates from the Prison Policy Initiative.

The PPI argues that local jails deserve more attention in the fight against mass incarceration. One reason they don't get the attention, according to the PPI, is because daily jail population numbers don't paint an accurate picture of local jails' impact on communities. "Because people typically stay in jail for only a few days, weeks or months, the daily population represents a small fraction of the people who are admitted over the course of a year," Wanda Bertram and Alexi Jones wrote in a piece last week unveiling the estimates.

They argue a more accurate statistic is the number of people who go to jail each year. For Alabama, that number is around 90,000 people every year, or roughly 1,850 people per 100,000. That rate is 11th highest in the country. Neighboring Mississippi had the second highest rate in the country with 2,814 people put into jail per 100,000 residents. North Dakota was the highest with a rate of 2,888.

Prisons and jails across the country show a steep racial disparity, and Alabama is no different. According to a 2016 study from the Sentencing Project, black people are incarcerated in state prisons at a rate five times higher than the rate for white people. In Alabama, the black incarceration rate is 1,417 per 100,000 black people. The white rate is just 425 per 100,000 white people.

The rate for black people in Alabama is 3.3 times higher than for white people. That's actually the fifth-lowest discrepancy in the country. The lowest is Hawaii, which has a small black population, followed by three other Southern states - Mississippi, Georgia and Kentucky. New Jersey, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and Vermont all have a black incarceration rate that is more than 10 times the white rate.

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/09/alabama-incarcerated-how-do-state-prisons-and-jails-compare-to-the-rest-of-the-nation.html>

Governor Kay Ivey on Thursday announced that by executive order, she has established the Governor's Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy. The primary purpose of this group is to receive and analyze accurate data, as well as evidence of best practices, ultimately helping to further address the challenges facing Alabama's prison system. The Ivey Administration inherited decades-old, systemic problems in the state's prison system, including overcrowding and understaffing. The governor has consistently reminded the people of Alabama that reforming the prison system is a matter of public safety.

"The people of Alabama are not unaware of the complexities that face our state's prison system, which take a toll on their hard-earned dollars and negatively impact public safety. The challenges we face are multifaceted, and in turn, a multifaceted solution, driven by data is necessary," Governor Ivey said. "In establishing the Governor's Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy, I am looking to see data driving us to even further reforms in the system. Thanks to my Administration and the Legislature, we are well on our way to making meaningful progress, and I am confident this group will help us dive even further into the facts to ensure the state's existing efforts lead us to an Alabama solution."

Governor Ivey also recognizes that success in achieving positive results requires continued collaboration between the executive and legislative branches of state government. To that end, the study group will consist of the governor, who will serve as the chair; the attorney general; three members of the Alabama House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House; three members of the Senate appointed by the president pro tempore; the commissioner of corrections; the director of finance; and additional individuals as the governor deems necessary. Members of the group may participate by proxy, and Governor Ivey has designated Justice Champ Lyons to serve in her place as chairman.

"The primary emphasis of Governor Ivey's new established study group is indeed to study. The Department of Corrections has important reforms underway, and we will be there to further analyze various areas of the justice system, ultimately helping our state to continue making informed, data-driven decisions," Justice Lyons said. "We will consider the problem of recidivism and steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of a released prisoner returning back to state custody. We will also look closely at data on the current sentencing laws. As Governor Ivey has made clear, addressing the challenges facing our state's prisons is multifaceted, and she is certainly helping bring various heads together to move the needle on this critical issue."

From the Legislature, members of the study group include: Senators Cam Ward, Bobby Singleton, and Clyde Chambliss, as well as Representatives Jim Hill, Connie Rowe and Chris England. Additional members from the executive branch include: Attorney General Steve Marshall, Finance Director Kelly Butler and Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn. The Governor's Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy will convene for the first time Monday, July 22, 2019. Executive Order 718 states that the group will be dissolved effective the first day of the Legislature's 2020 Regular Session.

governor.alabama.gov/press-releases/governor-ivey-establishes-study-group-on-criminal-justice-policy/

Alabama counties say prison reforms placed burden on them

Mike Cason | AL.com

December 5, 2019

Officials have credited the 2015 reforms with helping to reduce the prison population, although the number of inmates has climbed in recent months because fewer inmates are being granted parole. The ACCA report comes as state officials consider more changes to criminal justice policies. Violence, crowding, and under-staffing have plagued Alabama prisons to the extent that the U.S. Department of Justice alleged in April that conditions in men's prisons violate the Constitution. Gov. Kay Ivey appointed a study group to make recommendations to the Legislature.

The ACCA passed a resolution urging lawmakers to re-examine the 2015 reforms before passing new ones. Today's report says the number of state inmates held in county jails longer than a 30-day limit established by the Alabama Supreme reached more than 140 a week this year, adding to the costs and pressure on county jails. The report says the cost of operating jails rose 14.2 percent between 2014 and 2014, more than twice as much as inflation.

Sen. Cam Ward, R-Alabaster, who sponsored the 2015 criminal justice reform law, said today he would consider supporting changes to the policies on handling parole technical violators, acknowledging that they have placed a burden on counties. On the other hand, Ward said he hears from county sheriffs who want tougher sentencing laws to keep repeat offenders off the streets. Ward said he believes counties should bear part of the burden of any such changes that keep more people locked up.

<https://www.al.com/news/2019/12/alabama-counties-say-prison-reforms-placed-burden-on-them.html>

'American horror story': The prison voices you don't hear from have the most to tell us

Melissa Brown | Montgomery Advertiser

November 15, 2019

<https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/in-depth/news/2019/11/13/alabama-department-corrections-prison-inmates-describe-horrid-conditions/2234480001/>

Family members urge policy makers to implement prison reforms

Lydia Nusbaum | WSFA-12 News

December 4, 2019

<https://www.wsfa.com/2019/12/05/family-members-urge-policy-makers-implement-prison-reforms/>

McCutcheon: Brick and mortar will be part of state's prison reform

Brandon Moseley | Brandon Moseley

December 6, 2019

<https://www.alreporter.com/2019/12/06/mccutcheon-brick-and-mortar-will-be-part-of-states-prison-reform/>

Revisiting Criminal Justice Reform

Discussion Questions

1. Rep. England: Tell us about the work of the Governor's Criminal Justice Study Group. How do you understand your charge? How has the group gone about the process?
2. Justice Cobb, Mr. Brasfield and Ms. Glenn: Tell us about your interactions with the study group. What are you most pleased with regarding the study group's work so far? What concerns, if any, do you have about the process?
3. From your perspective, what effect has the legislature's previous sentencing reform of 2015 had on the criminal justice system, courts and local jurisdictions?
4. How do we balance the drive to limit the prison population with the need to protect citizens from offenders who pose a threat to public safety? In your opinion, which policies and/or programs are most effective at achieving both of these ends?
5. How do you view the Alabama Department of Corrections response to Judge Thompson's ruling and the U.S. Department of Justice's report released last year? How important are new facilities to improving conditions within Alabama prisons?
6. How are the state and local communities addressing the reentry and reintegration of former inmates? What strategies are in place to reduce recidivism?
7. How would you encourage students interested in criminal justice reform to get involved in the process?

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

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

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 previous page for descriptions)
 - Thursday - Business formal for full day
 - Friday - Business formal for full day

Note: There will be short walks outdoors (up to four blocks) between sessions, so consider footwear and outerwear appropriate for the weather.
- 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
- Large amounts of study materials
- Excessive cash
- Expensive jewelry

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

Healthcare System

K-12 Education

Lottery and Gaming

History and Culture

Criminal Justice Reform

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?
