

---

# PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

---

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA**<sup>®</sup> | *Division of*  
Student Life  
Blackburn Institute

## Spring 2019

Preparatory Materials



# Contents

<b>Trip Itinerary/Map</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Biographies and Readings</b>	
Session I – General Fund Budget Presentation	7
Session II – Economic Development Panel	15
Session III – Exploring Educational Achievement in Public, Private and Charter Schools	21
Session IV – Lobbying Panel	33
Session V- Explore Montgomery Museums	39
Session VI – Prison Reform Panel	41
<b>Student Expectations</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Dress Classifications</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Suggested Packing List</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Post-Trip Self-Assessment</b>	<b>63</b>



# Meeting Itinerary & Map

## Thursday, January 17

- 3:00pm Meet at Blackburn Office
- 3:15pm Depart Tuscaloosa for Montgomery
- 5:30pm Session I - General Fund Budget Presentation at Central with Senator Clyde Chambliss (R-Prattville, Alabama Senate), Kirk Fulford (Deputy Director of the Fiscal Division, Alabama Legislative Services Agency), and Representative Pebblin Warren (D-Tuskegee, Alabama House of Representatives)
- 6:45pm Dinner at Central
- 8:30pm Depart for Hotel
- 9:00pm Hotel Check-in at Hampton Inn-Prattville
- 9:30pm Reflections and Preparation for Friday

## Friday, January 18

- 6:30am Breakfast at Hotel
- 7:30am Depart Hotel
- 8:00am Session II - Economic Development Panel at the Association of School Boards moderated by Warren Matthews (Montgomery Office Managing Partner, Burr & Forman LLP) with Blair King (Manager, Economic Development & Existing Industry, Alabama Power Company), Mayor Dexter McLendon (City of Greenville), and *Taylor Nichols\* (Former General Counsel, Business Development Division, Alabama Department of Commerce)*
- 9:30am Session III - Exploring Educational Achievement in Public, Private and Charter Schools at the Association of School Boards with Dr. Mark Bazzell (Superintendent, Pike County Schools), Jada Jones (Instructional Coach, Valiant Cross Academy), and Dr. Jeremiah Newell (Superintendent/Head of School, ACCEL Academy)
- 11:00am Session IV - Lobbying Panel at RSA Plaza moderated by Bill O'Connor (President, Results LLC) with Mary Margaret Carroll (Lobbyist/Attorney, Fine Geddie & Associates), Christy Cain DeGraffenried (Executive Director, Alabama Children First), *Ted Hosp\* (Executive Director of Governmental Affairs, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Alabama)*, and Michelle Roth (Executive Director, Alabama Cable and Broadband Association).

- 12:30pm Lunch at RSA Plaza Terrace

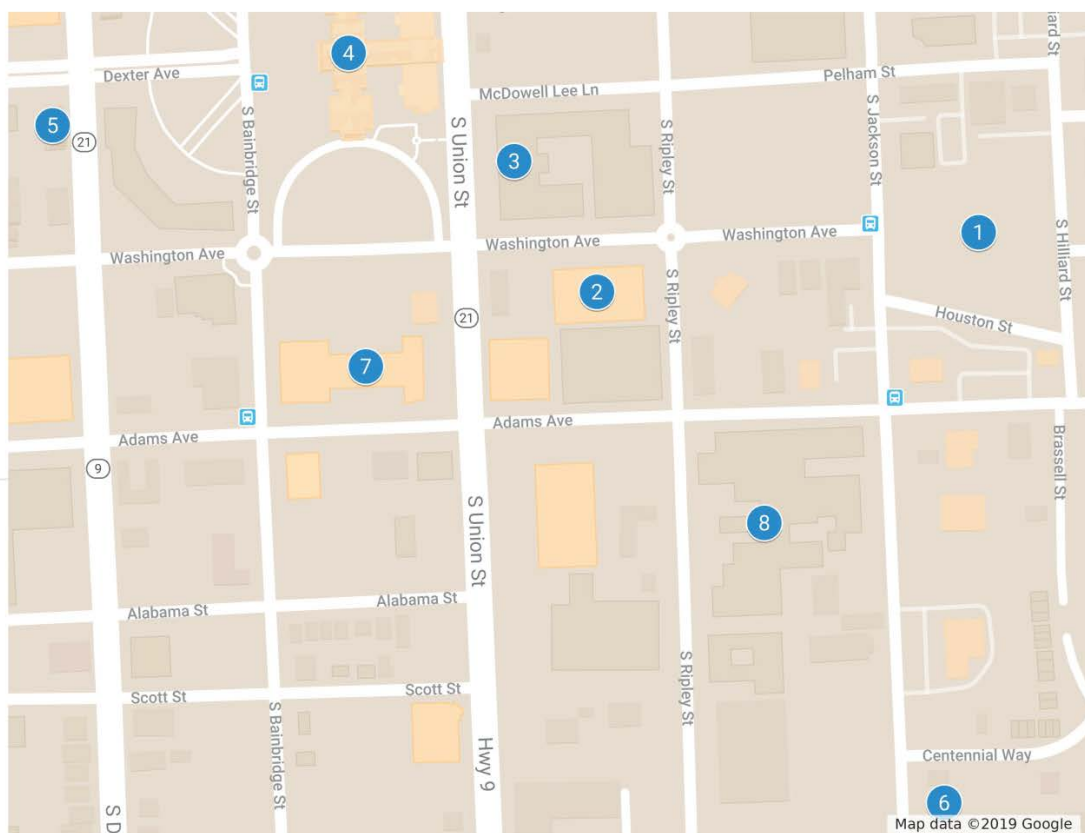
*\*Tentative*

- 2:00pm Blackburn Class of 2018 Photo at Alabama State House
- 2:30pm Session V - Explore Montgomery Museums
- 3:45pm Session VI - Prison Reform Panel at RSA Criminal Justice Center or RSA Plaza with Charlotte Morrison (Senior Attorney, Equal Justice Initiative), Jeff Dunn (Commissioner, Department of Corrections), Carol Potok (Executive Director, Aid to Inmate Mothers), and Senator Bobby Singleton (D-Greensboro, Alabama Senate)
- 6:00pm Dinner at Jim-n-Nick's in Prattville
- 8:00pm Depart Prattville for Tuscaloosa
- 10:00pm Return to Blackburn Office
- 

### Map of Downtown Montgomery Meetings

Locations for Friday, January 18

- 1 Alabama Association of School Boards
- 2 RSA Plaza Terrace
- 3 Alabama State House
- 4 Alabama State Capitol
- 5 Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church
- 6 Dexter Parsonage Museum
- 7 Museum of Alabama
- 8 RSA Criminal Justice Center



# Session I

Below are biographies of the speakers for Session I, providing an overview of the General Fund Budget, the portion budget that funds all state government activities except education.

---

## Senator Clyde Chambliss

Senator Clyde Chambliss was first elected to the Alabama State Senate in November of 2014, representing District 30 which includes all or parts of Autauga, Chilton, Coosa, Elmore, and Tallapoosa Counties. He has served on the following committees: Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry; County and Municipal Government; Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development; Finance and Taxation General Fund; and Transportation and Energy. In 1996, Clyde was elected to his first of three terms on the Autauga County Commission, serving as chairman from 2000-2008. He is also the Principle Engineer for Chambliss Engineering and is a former employee of Central Alabama Electric Cooperative. Clyde is a graduate of Leadership Autauga, Leadership Elmore and Leadership Alabama and has sat on numerous regional boards including: Central Alabama Aging Consortium, Central Alabama Regional Planning Commission, and the Montgomery Metropolitan Planning Organization. He has been recognized “Leading 40 under 40” by the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce and the Montgomery Advertiser in 2002. Clyde was selected as the Business Leader of the Year in 2009 by the Chamber of Commerce Farm-City Committee. Clyde has served three terms as a deacon at Heritage Baptist Church in Prattville and has helped missionaries in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Micronesia to locate and disinfect water for their personal use as well as the people in their communities. He has made numerous trips to Nicaragua to assist Evangelism Missions, Inc. and Global Impact in installing piping systems, water storage tanks, and ultraviolet filters into rural schools that otherwise would have not had running water. Clyde and his wife Tara are the proud parents of three daughters – Kristen (Blackburn Class of 2016), Lauren, and Madison.



Senator Chambliss is an alumnus of The University of Alabama.

## Kirk Fulford

Kirk Fulford is the Deputy Director of the Legislative Services Agency Fiscal Division (formerly Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO)), a nonpartisan office established to provide independent, accurate, and objective information to members of the Alabama Legislature with respect to historical, current, projected and proposed appropriations, expenditures, taxes and revenues, as well as any other information requested. The LFO became the Fiscal Division of the newly created Legislative Services Agency on October 1, 2017, and Mr. Fulford became the Deputy Director of the Fiscal Division at that time. Kirk has worked in state government with the Legislative Fiscal Office for over twenty-two years. Employed by the Legislative Fiscal Office as a fiscal analyst in September 1996, he worked his way up the ranks to serve as senior fiscal analyst from July 1999 through June 2012, Senate Fiscal Officer from July 2012 to December 2012, House Fiscal Officer from January 2013 through June 2015, and Deputy Director/House Fiscal Officer from July 2015 through September 2017.



Fulford is an alumnus of Auburn University at Montgomery (B.S. in Business Administration and MBA).

---

## Representative Pebblin Warren

Representative Pebblin Warren was first elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in a special election held on March 8, 2005. She has been recently selected as Chair of the Consent Calendar Subcommittee of the House Rules Committee and has also served on the Health, Ways and Means General Fund, Commerce and Small Business, Insurance and Lee County Legislation Committees. Pebblin serves on the board of directors of the following organizations: Aid to Inmate Mothers, Macon-Russell Community Action, and is a member of the Tuskegee Area Chamber of Commerce, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Tuskegee Alumni Chapter and numerous professional associations. She is an elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tuskegee.



Representative Warren holds a B.S. in Business Administration and a M.Ed. Degree in Personnel Administration from Tuskegee University.



## Links for the General Fund Budget Session

- General Fund Budget Presentation: <https://blackburninstitute.sa.ua.edu/generalfund>  
Prepared by Kirk Fulford, Alabama Legislative Agency, January 2019
  - Second Interim Report on Budget Reform: <https://blackburninstitute.sa.ua.edu/jointtaskforce>  
Prepared by the Joint Task Force on Budget Reform, January 2018
- 

### Alabama budget chairman says smooth year was 'reprieve'

*Mike Cason | AL.com*

*April 3, 2018*

Even after a substantial increase for state prisons, Alabama lawmakers had enough left in next year's budget to add new money for mental health, law enforcement and other programs and cover the first cost of living raise for state employees in a decade. The 2019 General Fund budget passed with little disagreement during the abbreviated, election-year session that ended last week.

It was much different than 2015 and 2016, when lawmakers took multiple special sessions to reject an assortment of tax increases and lottery bills intended to close a yawning gap between needs and available revenue. One bill approved during the 2016 special session, a plan to allocate most of a \$1 billion oil spill settlement from BP, has helped close that gap. It allowed legislators to carry over \$93 million from the 2018 budget to next year.

But Rep. Steve Clouse, R-Ozark, chairman of the House General Fund budget committee since 2013, said this year's relatively straightforward budget approval is not about to become the norm. Clouse said the state still has a fundamental problem in paying for essential services. "We just had this little two-year reprieve here because of the BP money," Clouse said. "But we've got huge challenges facing us next year with the recurring cost of the prisons which we allocated \$80 million more this year."

The 2019 budget, for the year that begins Oct. 1, allocates \$2 billion from the General Fund, \$167 million more than this year. The largest increase will go to the Department of Corrections, which will receive \$472 million next year, \$56 million more than this year. The Legislature also approved a \$30 million supplement to this year's prison budget.

The increases are mainly to expand mental health care for prisoners after a federal judge ruled it does not meet constitutional standards. The money will also be used to address a chronic shortage of correctional officers. Prisons are the second largest spender of General Fund dollars. The largest, the Alabama Medicaid Agency, will get \$755 million next year. But that's a net reduction for Medicaid, which also got a \$105 million one-time supplement from the BP settlement this year.

"We benefited from two things in Medicaid," Clouse said. "Drug costs were down from what we projected and enrollment was down slightly. That helped a little bit vs. the last 10 years just skyrocketing." Many agencies will get about the same amount as last year from the General Fund, while some got targeted increases.

- The Legislature was essentially level-funded, receiving \$33 million.
- The state court system will receive about a 2 percent increase, to \$127 million.
- Mental Health will get a \$9 million increase, to \$118 million.
- The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency will get a \$3.2 million increase, to \$51.8 million, to fund a new class of at least 30 state troopers.
- Public Health will get a \$2.4 million increase, to \$34.9 million, including \$1.1 million for a prescription drug monitoring program to help address the rampant opioid addiction problem.
- The Department of Youth Services will get a \$1 million increase, to \$6.7 million, to implement recommendations from a juvenile justice task force.
- Economic and Community Affairs will get a \$4.9 million increase, to \$12.6 million, including \$2.5 million to support rural broadband service.
- The Emergency Management Agency will get a \$1.3 million increase, to \$4.1 million.
- Forensic Sciences will get a \$1.9 million increase, to \$11.7 million.
- The Ethics Commission will get a \$166,000 increase, to \$2 million.
- The Governor's Office on Minority Affairs will get a \$300,000 increase, to \$500,000.
- The budget includes an early debt payment, \$13.5 million to the Alabama Trust Fund, part of the money transferred from the ATF to support the General Fund from 2013-2015. The payment was not due until 2020.

This is election year for the Legislature and the new class of lawmakers who assemble next year in Montgomery will be faced with passing the 2020 budget. Clouse expects a much tougher year without the \$93 million carryover and with some known increases coming. For example, Clouse said the state will have to pay about \$30 million to support the Children's Health Insurance Program, which Congress fully funded this year.

"So that's going to be a hit to us, but at least it's something we know going forward," Clouse said. With this year being an exception, the Legislature has used transfers and one-time funds to keep the General Fund afloat. That includes \$600 million transferred from the Alabama Trust Fund from 2010 to 2015. Proceeds from the BP settlement were used to pay back \$400 million of that to the ATF. Clouse said a sustainable source of more money is needed. "To get where we need to be to have adequate funding, we really need a couple of hundred million more dollars in the General Fund," Clouse said.

Legislative leaders, including House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, have praised the work of a budget reform task force created during the special session in 2016. An interim report from the task force found that state government spending, contrary to some perceptions, is not "out of control" but has grown at the same rate as gross domestic product over the last 40 years. It found that the tax burden in Alabama is the lowest in the nation and has declined slightly as a percentage of household income since the 1970s. And it recommended a review of state tax credits, exemptions and other preferences that reduce revenues by about \$4.5 billion a year.

Clouse said the report could be a good starting point for returning legislators, incoming legislators and candidates for governor as they look for ways to adequately fund state government. "It would be well worth their time to read it," Clouse said."

<https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/04/alabama-budget-chairman-says-s.html>

## Mark Tuggle, Ed Oliver, Clyde Chambliss give insight on statewide lottery, gaming bill in legislature

*Jimmy Wigfield | The Outlook*

*December 8, 2018*

One of the most influential men in Montgomery said he expects a statewide lottery and gaming bill to be considered when the Alabama Legislature convenes March 5. “The speaker is on record as saying a lottery bill won’t come from his office but I fully anticipate a gaming and lottery bill to come up,” former House District 81 Rep. Mark Tuggle — a Republican from Alexander City who is now the chief of staff for House Speaker Mac McCutcheon — said Thursday during a meeting of his hometown Alexander City Chamber of Commerce at Central Alabama Community College.

Newly-elected District 81 Rep. Ed Oliver and District 30 Sen. Clyde Chambliss joined Tuggle at the forum and diverged in their judgment of a lottery. As McCutcheon’s chief of staff, Tuggle wields considerable power in shaping the committees, which will consider the historic legislation. “The chief of staff has influence on what we do and don’t do,” Tuggle said. “(McCutcheon) was told he needed a horse’s ass up there and my name kept coming up.”

Tuggle said he could support a statewide referendum on a lottery if it is well-crafted and clearly defined. Alabama voters rejected a lottery in 1999, and an attempt to get a lottery bill out of a special session failed in 2016. Tuggle said his standard for defining a lottery is “join Powerball, maybe the pull-off tickets you buy at stores. Define where the money is going — split it between the general fund and the education trust fund. What the ratio would be is up for debate. The rules should be written where the constituents know exactly what they are voting on. The bill two years ago was not written that way.”

While Tuggle seeks clarity on a lottery, he isn’t convinced it will inject as much money into the state’s bank accounts as many believe. “You don’t pay sales tax on a lottery ticket, so that’s money right off the table,” Tuggle said. “You join Powerball, you have to sell \$900 million to clear \$300 million. The best estimates I’ve seen (on what Alabama would gain) are \$200 to 300 million net. But it’s got to be the right bill and, so far, we haven’t been able to put the right bill together. But it is problematic that so many people drive to Florida and Georgia to buy lottery tickets. You can’t argue that.”

Tuggle acknowledged religious opposition to a lottery and denied accusations the legislature is protecting the Poarch Creek Indians, which as a federally recognized sovereign nation operates three legal gaming facilities in Alabama, including one in Wetumpka. “I think the opposition is more from the clergy,” Tuggle said. “We also get accused that we’ve been paid off by the Poarch Creeks to not pass a lottery. The problem is finding 63 members of the House who are agreeable on it and the clergy is not swinging that.”

Oliver didn’t hesitate when asked his stance on a lottery. “If you want to buy a lottery ticket, I’m all for it,” he said. But he isn’t sure the proceeds would or should go entirely to bolster the education budget, particularly the state’s colleges. “The states around us use it for their post-secondary education but I don’t know if that’s the right approach for Alabama because we have so many other needs,” Oliver said. “When you’re talking about (that much money) coming in, you’ll have folks lined up for it.”

Chambliss knows the public wants the chance to vote on a lottery again but doesn’t support it personally. “The populace says they want to vote on a lottery, probably 60 to 70 percent,” he said.

“But on the other side, you have two or three years of increasing revenue, then in the out years you don’t have it. Then there are the social ills that come with it. It will not solve our problems.” Aside from the lottery, Tuggle said he supports the public deciding if it wants to legalize gambling in Alabama, again if the proposal is clearly understood.

“I have no issue with a voter referendum on gaming,” he said. “But two years ago, the legislature was being asked to change the constitution for gaming and just write the rules later. I voted against that piece of garbage because you’d only be able to game at the four dog tracks. There is a dark side to gaming. It’s a diminishing revenue stream, believe it or not. Talk to the Poarch Creek Indians about that — they’re investing in hotels and cattle. We’ve got to pursue a compact with the Poarch Creek, then pursue gaming. We’re not idiots.”

<https://www.alexcityoutlook.com/2018/12/08/mark-tuggle-ed-oliver-clyde-chambliss-give-insight-on-statewide-lottery-gaming-bill-in-legislature/>

---

## Ledbetter: Around a '75 percent' chance higher gas tax passes

*Dale Jackson / Yellowhammer News*

*December 11, 2018*

The gas tax may be a foregone conclusion if you listen to the leadership of the Alabama legislature. Infrastructure needs are undoubtedly a priority heading into the next legislative session; how they get addressed is the battle we will see fought out.

A gas tax of up to 12 cents a gallon has been discussed, but according to Alabama House Majority Leader Nathaniel Ledbetter, the target for a tax increase in Alabama is more likely to be in the six to 10 cent range, which could raise between \$180 million and \$300 million dollars a year.

While appearing Tuesday on WVNN’s “The Dale Jackson Show,” Ledbetter was optimistic about the chances of the tax passing legislation. Without any particular promises made, he referred to the need for a “clean bill” that he believes makes the passage easier.

In spite of that desire, there are pressing needs in every part of the state and constituents will want their needs addressed, but he agreed that every caveat carved out weakens the bill and makes it less likely to pass.

In the interview, Ledbetter signaled a strategy that will be unveiled to convince Alabama voters that a gas tax increase isn’t that bad and surrounding states have higher taxes so we should increase ours as well, arguing it would be a “reasonable” tax. Ledbetter stated, “You know Georgia did 26 on gas, 29 on diesel with a five dollar lodging fee.”

“We’re not gonna do that,” he added. Ledbetter then continued to point out Alabama’s higher tax neighbors, “Tennessee put 10 cents on, Louisiana put 18 cents on. I think we’re going to be more reasonable with what we do and we need to do it for the right reasons.”

A strategy for the gas tax is being unveiled before our eyes: using county commissioners to lobby legislators for a higher gas tax and compare Alabama’s taxes to our neighbors. Will it work? Ledbetter said there is around a 75 percent chance it will.

<https://yellowhammernews.com/ledbetter-above-75-percent-chance-higher-gas-tax-passes/>

## As lawmakers consider new gas tax, Alabama remains last in per capita state, local tax collection

*Chip Brownlee | Alabama Political Reporter*

*December 12, 2018*

As state lawmakers prepare to consider a gas tax increase during the next legislative session, a new report from the Public Affairs Research Council shows Alabama's state and local governments collect less in taxes per capita than any other state in the country. Alabama has been behind in tax collection since the early 1990s, according to the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, which has produced an analysis of Alabama's tax revenues since 1988.

"This is not a new finding," the PARCA report says. "This has been true since the early the 1990s. And it underlies the difficulties we face when trying to provide to our citizens the level of government services enjoyed by citizens in other states." Lawmakers have flirted with a gas tax increase in recent years, and proponents say it is imperative to raise revenues to invest in Alabama's aging infrastructure.

In Alabama, the gas tax hasn't been increased since 1992, when lawmakers added 5 cents to the gallon, and the state ranks 35th in per capita state and local collections on motor fuel. It isn't just the gas tax that hasn't really been adjusted in years. Alabama's low taxes — while they may be a positive for your pocketbook — are often the single largest contributor to near-perpetual budget crises in Montgomery, placing a significant barrier for lawmakers as they balance the two state budgets every year. It's a constitutionally mandated requirement.

While budgeting over the last two years in Alabama has been a smoother process — largely because the state has had billions on hand from a settlement with BP Oil over the 2011 Deepwater Horizon oil spill — Alabama is expected to face another budget shortfall this year. The last major budget shortfall in 2015 led to an increase of some taxes, including the cigarette tax and taxes on nursing home beds — but property and income taxes haven't moved much in years. Alabama's extremely low property taxes are the main reason tax collections fall below other states.

If Alabama's per capita property tax collections matched the average of other Southeastern states, state and local governments would have an additional \$2 billion — yes, billion with a "b" — to spend on services and education, and the overall tax revenue per capita would be in the middle of other Southern states. Though Alabamians are some of the most averse to taxes, the meager tax collections result in a strained pool of money for popular public services like schools, roads, courts, health care and public safety.

While Alabama has avoided passing general tax increases, it has turned to selective sales taxes. Alabama ranks high in per capita collections on alcoholic drinks (No. 3 in the U.S.) and on public utilities (No. 5) in the U.S. PARCA conducted the analysis of Alabama's tax revenues by relying on the U.S. Census Bureau and its annual survey of state and local governments across the country. The Census Bureau data makes it possible to compare the finances of state and local governments across the 50 states.

This year's data is from 2016, the latest available, and tax rates haven't changed much at all since then. State and local spending are considered together because states vary in how they decide to divide up the taxation and collection responsibilities for funding public services and government. Alabama has the lowest property taxes, both state and local, in the country, ranking 50th of the

states. Alabama's property taxes fund education, state and county general funds and county road and bridge funds.

The base of wealth in Alabama is also smaller than most other states, which also contributes to lower taxes. In Alabama, taxes amount to 8.2 percent of the total personal income earned by state residents, when comparing total personal income to total state and local taxes collected. Tennessee and Florida have lower tax rates as a percentage of personal income, and Georgia and Florida have lower taxes as a percentage of GDP.

Alabama and its local governments have developed a reliance on the sales tax and already has some of the highest sales tax rates in the country, ranking 29th in the U.S. And unlike other states, our sales tax applies to groceries and medications.

Sales taxes are often considered regressive because they more heavily affect low-income individuals than high-income individuals. Alabama is one of three states that continue to apply sales tax fully to groceries without providing offsetting relief for low- and moderate-income families. At the same time, Alabama's sales tax is not as broad as other states and doesn't apply to most services. Despite higher taxes, Alabama's sales tax isn't as productive as other states.

Alabama sales tax applies to almost all sales of goods, but it does not apply the tax to most kinds of business, professional, computer, personal or repair services. And in recent years, the economy has moved more toward the consumption of those services, lessening the effectiveness of Alabama's sales tax. In 2016, the last year the Census Bureau performed its analysis, state and local governments collected a total of \$15.6 billion in taxes or \$3,203 per resident. Across the U.S., the median per capita value for state and local taxes was more than \$1,281 higher at \$4,484.

If Alabama collected taxes at the per capita rate of the median state, local and state governments in Alabama would have an additional \$6.2 billion to spend on building roads, providing public safety protection, operating courts, supporting schools and colleges and maintaining parks and libraries. Even if national comparisons are ignored, Alabama stands out among other Southern states when it comes to revenue.

Arkansas, North Carolina, Louisiana, Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee all collect significantly more taxes per capita. If Alabama collected taxes at the same rate as Louisiana, for example, the state would have about \$3.2 billion more in tax revenue. If it collected the same amount of revenue as Arkansas, it would have \$3.7 billion more.

<http://www.alreporter.com/2018/12/12/parca-alabama-is-last-in-state-local-tax-collection/>



# Session II

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session II, discussing the lifecycle of an economic development project.

---

**Moderator: Warren Matthews (Blackburn Advisory Board Member)**

Warren Matthews was born and raised in Ozark and currently resides in Greenville. Since 1991, Warren has practiced law with Burr & Forman LLP. He opened the Montgomery Office in 2000 and now also works out of the firm's Mobile office. Warren's legal practice centers on economic development and he has been involved with start-up and expansion projects representing over 28,000 new jobs and an estimated \$20 billion of capital investment including work for Mercedes-Benz, Honda, ThyssenKrupp, Ipsco Steel, Hyundai, Kia, Kronospan and Brown-Forman. Warren has been named to Best Lawyers in America in the fields of Economic Development, Nonprofit and Tax Law. He has over 25 years of experience representing a myriad of nonprofit entities including the Alabama Basketball Foundation (Final Four Tournament), Alabama Prep Football Foundation (Super Six Championships), Birmingham Zoo, Birmingham Bar Foundation, Greenville YMCA and numerous private foundations. Warren is serving, or has served, the following nonprofits: Greenville YMCA (Chairman), Fort Dale Academy (Chairman), Montgomery Area YMCA, United Methodist Children's Home, First United Methodist Greenville, Alabama Bar Association (Chairman, Bar Examiners), and the Blackburn Institute (Advisory Board).



Matthews is an alumnus of The University of Alabama, the Vanderbilt University Law School, and New York University.

## Blair King

Blair King joined Alabama Power Company in 2009 as a project manager and economic development representative. In this role, he served on notable economic development projects throughout the state including Shipt, Yorozu, Gerhardi and Golden State Foods. Blair currently leads Alabama Power's economic development Existing Industry and Expansion team. Prior to joining Alabama Power, Blair served as a Financial Incentives Specialist for Operation New Birmingham (now REV Birmingham), a downtown redevelopment organization focused on the revitalization and growth of downtown Birmingham. Blair is an active participant in developing and growing the state's tech ecosystem, including IT and life sciences. He serves on the boards for BIO Alabama, a statewide organization representing Alabama's bio-related industries, research scientists, clinicians and business professionals in the life sciences field, and Alabama Germany Partnership, which works to support relationships between organizations in Alabama and Germany. Blair was honored by Birmingham Business Journal as a "Top 40 under 40" professional in 2017. Other honors include Consultant Connect – North Americana's Top 50 Economic Developers (2016) and Economic Development Association's Young Professional of the Year (2014).



King is an alumnus of Auburn University (B.S. in Human Resource Management).

---

## Mayor Dexter McLendon

Mayor Dexter McClendon has led the City of Greenville since 2000. He was unopposed in 2016 for his most recent electoral victory, to serve a fifth term.



## *Taylor Nichols (Blackburn Fellow and Advisory Board Member, Tentative)*

Taylor Nichols was appointed Deputy Attorney General for the Office of Information Technology on November 1, 2017, and brings extensive governmental and legal expertise to the agency. Taylor previously served as Policy Analyst for Governor Bob Riley and Deputy Chief of Staff to Lieutenant Governor Kay Ivey. Prior to joining OIT, he served as counsel for the Alabama Department of Commerce. A native of Tuscaloosa, Taylor is a Blackburn Fellow and Advisory Board member. He and his wife Whitney, also a Blackburn Fellow, have two children.

Nichols holds a B.S. in Economics, M.B.A. and J.D. from The university of Alabama.





## Alabama gets Silver Shovel award for economic development

*William Thornton | AL.com*

*June 8, 2018*

Another banner year for economic development in Alabama means another Silver Shovel Award from national publication Area Development.

Alabama has won one of the awards every year since 2006, when it won a Gold Shovel. It won another Gold in 2012 and Silver awards in other years, including last year.

"It was a good year for manufacturing in Silver Shovel recipient Alabama, with major investments in a diverse collection of projects, most of them brand-new. Additional jobs are driving in by way of logistics and distribution," Area Development stated.

Among the big projects cited by the publication were:

Autocar's \$120 million Birmingham truck manufacturing plant, creating more than 700 jobs.

Two huge projects for Bibb County involving Mercedes-Benz - a new Global Logistics Center and an after-sales North American hub in Bibb County. The projects create more than 500 jobs.

Aerospace manufacturer Blue Origin's \$200 million Huntsville project, creating 342 jobs.

It also included big-ticket rural projects, such as the \$110 million John Soule Food project in Valley.

"More manufacturing projects reflect growth in the food and poultry, aluminum, paper, and fiber cement industries, and Walmart has promised delivery of 550 distribution jobs," the article continued.

Area Development's Gold and Silver Shovel Awards recognize state economic development efforts for their level of success.

"The business world has discovered that Alabama is one of the most attractive locations in the U.S. to make new investments, and this Silver Shovel award confirms that," Governor Kay Ivey said, in a statement. "I will continue to work to position Alabama for economic growth that creates jobs and opportunities for our hard-working citizens."

Greg Canfield, secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce, said the win is "another affirmation that our team is consistently executing our strategy and achieving positive results."

"The mission of Alabama's economic development team is to facilitate the creation of high-caliber jobs in strategic industry sectors that will flourish in the future," he said.

[https://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2018/06/alabama\\_gets\\_silver\\_shovel\\_awa.html](https://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2018/06/alabama_gets_silver_shovel_awa.html)

## Canfield says Trump tariffs slowed timeline on big manufacturing investments in the state

*Brandon Moseley | Alabama Political Reporter*

*July 5, 2018*

Tuesday, Alabama Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield (R) told Bloomberg's John Lippert that the state of Alabama is seeing delays in big manufacturing investments in due to President Donald Trump's (R) trade policies and is urging a more conciliatory approach.

"We've seen a couple of projects that we've been actively working where their timeline has slipped," Greg Canfield, the state's secretary of commerce, said in an interview. "The longer this drags out, the more danger there is that we'll see a real drag on our economy. We're going to see Alabama lose jobs, and that's not acceptable."

Alabama is increasingly reliant on foreign manufacturers such as: Mercedes, Honda, Hyundai, Airbus, Toyota, etc. and those manufacturers have to import parts, components, as well as steel and aluminum. Tariffs that the U.S. has placed on those imports, particularly steel and aluminum have made the cost of manufacturing increase. Meanwhile threats of retaliatory from trading partners means an increasing likelihood that they will impose tariffs on our exports.

Since the Mercedes investment in Vance in 1997 the state now has 57,000 autoworkers building about a million cars and light trucks per year.

Canfield would not name the companies that have put their investment plans on hold.

Canfield said that Trump's tariffs on imported cars and auto parts will raise the price of every U.S. vehicle, since they all contain foreign components.

"Uncertainty equates to risk, and risk is a very chilling factor when it comes to investing your money. You either invest it somewhere else or you hold on to it until the situation becomes more certain. I want to make it clear we're not fighting President Trump on this. We're trying to raise awareness and educate the administration — the U.S. Department of Commerce in particular — and urge a more measured approach."

Governor Kay Ivey (R) has also expressed concerns about the Administration's trade policies.

"Import tariffs and any retaliatory tariffs on American made goods, will harm Alabama," Ivey said in a statement. "Alabama has a rich history as a leader in manufacturing, a legacy which continues in large part, through our five automotive original equipment manufacturers and our over 200 supporting suppliers that have helped establish "Made in Alabama" as an internationally-respected brand.

Last year proved to be a banner year for auto industry growth in Alabama, with nearly \$3 billion in automotive-related investments. Before the recent announcement of a new Mazda-Toyota plant, and other automotive-related growth, more than 57,000 Alabamians were already employed by our auto manufacturing sector, a number which is expected to increase. However, this growth could be stymied if tariffs are imposed on the goods we export around the world."

"In 2017, Alabama reached a record high of \$21.7 billion in exports, with our auto industry accounting for \$10.9 billion of those exports," Ivey concluded. "The largest importers of Alabama

made goods and services were Canada, China, Germany, Mexico and Japan – all countries which may be forced to reciprocate in response to any new import tariffs.”

“Import tariffs and any retaliatory tariffs on American made goods, will harm Alabama.” Ivey said in a statement critical of proposed new tariffs on foreign imports by the Trump Administration.”

Donald J. Trump (R) was elected President of the United States vowing to fight what he called one sided trade deals.

Retaliation against our trade policies have also begun to affect the market price of some commodities. China purchases 30 percent of the U.S. soybean crop; but has been accused of dumping steel and aluminum on the global market.

The Chinese have put in place tariffs on a range of U.S. agricultural products, including 15 percent tariffs on: fruit, nuts, and wine, and a 25 percent tariff on U.S. pork. Trump retaliated by threatening to target an additional \$50 billion in Chinese goods. China responded by threatening to impose 25 percent tariffs on: soybeans, corn and corn products, wheat, sorghum, cotton, beef and beef products, cranberries, orange juice, tobacco and tobacco products.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue wrote on June 25, “President Donald Trump is standing up to China, which wrongly believes it can bully our farmers to get America to back away from defending our national interests. The president understands that our farmers feed, fuel and clothe this nation and the world, and he will not allow U.S. agriculture to bear the brunt of China’s retaliatory tactics.”

“American producers have benefited from the policies of the Trump administration, including historic tax reforms and reduced regulations,” Perdue continued. “And farmers know that 20 cents of every dollar of their income relies on trade, which is why they are watching the situation with China closely. The simple truth is that when trading partners break the rules, there must be consequences.”

“We have the worst trade deals in the history of the world,” President Trump said in Duluth on June 21. “We gave away our country, but we’re taking it back for our workers, for our companies, for our jobs, for our money, for our taxes. It’s incredible. And you know, we have a lot of friends. But our friends, in many respects, Kevin, treated us worse on trade than the enemies. And we are doing a lot of things about it. We’re renegotiating trade deals left and right, and they’re all coming back.”

“You know, we have, I want to say, right on our side,” Pres. Trump said. “We also have the fact that we have been taken advantage of for many, many years, and it’s not happening anymore. Not happening anymore. And you see it. And you see it going on. And it’s not happening anymore.”

(Original reporting by Bloomberg News, Civil Eats, Fox News, and NBC News contributed to this report.)

[https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/05/reform\\_commission\\_to\\_consider.html](https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/05/reform_commission_to_consider.html)

## Economic Development Panel

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Briefly describe the lifecycle of an economic development project and your role in the process.
2. At what point during the development cycle do you seek community input? How do you incorporate feedback from various stakeholders such as local residents, environmental advocates, neighboring industries, and other interest groups?
3. What is the process for calculating the economic impact of a proposed project? What's involved in the cost/benefit analysis that balances the positive economic impact with financial concessions from state and local governments?
4. What role does the state play in local development projects? How do government leaders ensure the process is fair and equitable when deciding to offer incentives/subsidies to some projects and not others?
5. What are the major challenges/obstacles that can derail a potential project?
6. What, if any, impact do you see the recent economic developer exemption having on new projects? Where do you see the tension in the public's interest in transparency with commercial interests in protecting proprietary information?
7. How do you evaluate a region's ability to supply the necessary workforce before looking to bring in a particular industry? Does human capital drive the development or vice versa?
8. How should communities invest responsibly in infrastructure for future growth, considering the risk and reward associated with proactive site development?

# Session III

Below is the biography of the panelists for Session III, exploring educational achievement in public, private and charter schools.

---

## **Dr. Mark Bazzell**

Dr. Mark Bazzell has over 30 years of experience in K-12 education and currently serves as Superintendent of the Pike County Schools. He has extensive classroom experience having taught Biology, Zoology, Botany, AP Biology, Chemistry, Anatomy and in the Pike County Schools and Bay County Schools, Florida. Mark has also served as a principal (K-9 and 7-12) and Assistant Superintendent in Pike County. In higher education, he has served as an Adjunct Professor/Instructor at Troy University, Trenholm Technical College and Lurleen B. Wallace Community College.

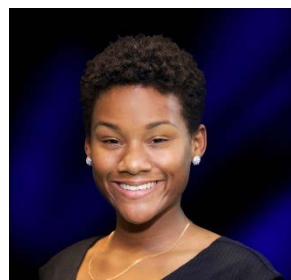


Dr. Bazzell holds an A.A. from Gulf Coast Community College, a B.S. and M.S. from Troy University, and a doctorate from Auburn University.

---

## **Jada Jones**

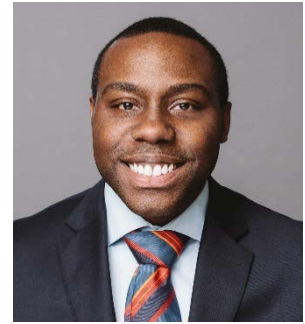
Jada Jones is an instructional coach at Valiant Cross Academy in Montgomery. Jada has an attachment to the ministry of serving our kings and queens in the education realm; this calling drives her every day to coach, instruct, and mold our scholars to God Fearing Men!



Jones holds a B.S. in Rehabilitation Services with a Maternal and Child Homes minor from Alabama State University.

## **Dr. Jeremiah Newell**

Dr. Jeremiah Newell is the Chief Operating Officer of the Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF) and Co-founder/Superintendent of MAEF Public Charter Schools, a newly launched charter management organization, which has opened ACCEL Day and Evening Academy, the first public charter school in the state of Alabama. Most recently, Jeremiah served as a Harvard Fellow at the Rhode Island Department of Education. In this capacity, he facilitated the 2015-2020 PK-12 Strategic Planning Process for the state and served as chief of staff for the Division of Accelerating School Performance, which directed charter schools, low-performing schools, and federal programs. In his previous experience, Jeremiah taught at the middle and high school levels, launched and led innovative secondary school models, and directed secondary school turnaround efforts in Mobile.



Dr. Newell holds a B.S. in Secondary Education/Language Arts and graduate level training in Instructional Design and Development from the University of South Alabama, and a Doctorate of Education Leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## ACCEL Day and Evening Academy

Acceleration (ACCEL) Day and Evening Academy is Alabama's first tuition-free public charter school. ACCEL serves high school students in grades 9-12 from Mobile, Baldwin, and Washington Counties. It provides a challenging college-preparatory curriculum, individualized instruction, small class sizes, and engaging use of technology in a safe, supportive environment to ensure students graduate college and career ready.

<https://www.accelacademymobile.com/>



## Pike County Schools



The Pike County School system serves 2310 students in grades K-12. The school system's attendance zone encompasses all of Pike County including students residing in the cities of Goshen, Banks, and Brundidge. School age students residing within the city limits of Troy are zoned for the Troy City Schools. The school system manages five schools; two high schools, two elementary schools, one K-8 unit school, and the Troy-Pike Regional Center for Technology. One elementary school and one high school each is located in Goshen and in Brundidge. The K-8 unit school is located in Banks, Alabama. The Troy-Pike Regional Center for Technology is located in Troy, Alabama and serves both county high schools as well as, Charles Henderson High School. The school system employs 188 professional staff members. Sixty percent (60%) have advanced degrees (Masters and above); eight percent (8%) have advanced degrees above the Masters level. The school system also employs 17 instructional aides, 20 custodial workers, 37 bus drivers, 3 maintenance workers, 2 mechanics, 17 secretarial/bookkeeper workers, 23 child nutrition workers, and five under the category of other. These include three school nurses, a job developer/job coach, and a Community Outreach Specialist.

<http://www.pikecountyschools.com>

## Valiant Cross Academy

Valiant Cross Academy is an all-male school that started its first year, in 2015, with sixth grade and will add one grade per year until it reaches twelfth grade. Currently, Valiant Cross Academy serves 6th-9th grades and 140 scholars. It is predicted that by the year 2021 we will have 210 scholars. Valiant Cross Academy is a private school with a Christian emphasis and an intentional culture of structure and discipline. The school has distinct uniforms, an effective consequence and award system, and an intense focus on the academic success of our scholars. The academic program consists of small class sizes, double the math and triple the literacy time, differentiated instruction, aggressive tutoring, a daily after-school program, and a weekly chapel service.



<http://valiantcross.org>



## Alabama school has 10-hour days to keep students focused on learning

*Amber Sutton | AL.com*

*November 13, 2015*

While the majority of students in Alabama spend eight hours at school each day, a new academy in Montgomery has initiated a 10-hour day in hopes of keeping students focused on learning.

Principal Anthony Brock said Valiant Cross Academy is the dream of many hoping to create a school that helps young men learn the skills needed to become educated, productive citizens. In order to do so, the academy keeps its students in class from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. each day.

Thirty sixth-graders currently attend the Christian all-boys private school, which opened in August at River City Church in downtown Montgomery. Brock, who has a Master's Degree in Administrative Supervision and more than 16 years education experience, said the school plans to add an additional 30 students and another grade each year until it becomes a sixth through 12th grade academy.

In addition to more time spent on core curriculum subjects, such as math, science and social studies, Brock said the the additional hours at school allow students to take part in developmental programs. During the day, the sixth graders participate in devotions, Bible courses and remedial tutoring in addition to weekly enrichment classes like karate, choir and public speaking.

"We definitely wanted to have more time on task with our students," said Brock. "One of our goals is to be consistently in their lives. We want to level the playing ground by exposing these young men to as much as possible."

In its first year, the school's focus is on academics in hopes of communicating how important education is in the minds of its students. Instead of athletic programs, Brock said they created reading and literacy programs for students to participate in.

"We don't have athletics, and that's on purpose," said Brock. "We are focused on academics first, and then we'll add on athletic programs. Every second of the day when scholars finish their work, they are taught to read. You're taking young boys who probably before did not do a lot of reading, and now it's promoted as the cool thing here."

Brock said parents have been receptive to the academy's structure, and that there is already a long waiting list for enrollment next year with five to 10 names being added each week.

While Brock said tuition for each student is around \$10,500, this year the school is operating on donations. Valiant Cross Academy is seeking accreditation and to become involved in the Alabama Accountability Act in hopes of helping parents with the cost.

"We felt compelled to start this school for males to address some of the clear challenges that plague our city and our nation," the school's website says. "We believe with love, discipline, and a dedication to high expectations, that all scholars can achieve."

[https://www.al.com/news/montgomery/index.ssf/2015/11/valiant\\_cross.html](https://www.al.com/news/montgomery/index.ssf/2015/11/valiant_cross.html)



## Alabama's first public charter school opens, plotting its own course

*Jeremy Beaman | Washington Examiner*

*September 6, 2017*

School is back in session and Jeremiah Newell, principal of ACCEL Day and Evening Academy in Mobile, Ala., has been working 12-hour days. "It'll settle down after a while," Newell said in an interview. ACCEL opened August 21 as Alabama's first public charter school, and its schedule has been jam-packed with class introductions, meetings, and a visit from Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

"The big story has been students having hope," Newell said, just hours after DeVos came through. "Our school model is totally designed to provide flexibility so that students can make progress." ACCEL is run by the Mobile Area Education Foundation, a non-profit organization which has been developing programs and promoting innovation within the Mobile County Public School System for many years. ACCEL is one of those many projects.

Though pitched as a high school serving students in grades 9-12 who have struggled in traditional public schools, ACCEL is not so strictly defined. It has open enrollment, meaning that all students, if they meet the minimum age requirement, may apply. "The idea that charter schools cherry-pick students is not accurate in Alabama," said Logan Searcy, who serves as education administrator for the Alabama Department of Education and oversees the implementation process for charter schools.

ACCEL also does not have a typical grade model, instead using competency-based stages. Once students show mastery, they can move up to the next stage. This model allows students a chance to graduate more quickly than if they were in traditional public schools.

Flexibility, such as a typical 8:00-4:00 p.m. schedule offering or a 4:30-8:00 p.m. offering, is ACCEL's strength. These innovative techniques are more than neat new tricks, though. They're designed to really benefit students. "Charters are not just about people having a vision and a passion. They're also about having the capacity to enact that in real life, because children are not experiments in a lab," Newell said.

"As a school, we are a first in the state, and we are doing pioneering work so it's a hard row to hoe," Newell explained. "One of the biggest [challenges] is the political perspective around charter schools." Newell understands that many people don't support charter schools, but that even those who don't ought to support ACCEL's vision.

"What we want to be best at in our sector is taking and working with young people who need that individualized attention, need to get back on track, and getting them to a college- and career-ready level. That is, in my opinion – as educators, as citizens, as community soldiers, as political animals, whatever your perspective – that is something that shouldn't be argued about. That part has to happen. The charter design allows us the maximum flexibility to do things and help young people in ways that common [methods] are not able to do. Period."

For Newell, what's at stake is these children's futures. Without more options, too many will fall by the wayside. "The traditional systems that have existed for well over a century are just not going to cut it for this generation of young people."

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/alabamas-first-public-charter-school-opens-plotting-its-own-course>

## How one rural Alabama district is closing the gap, raising scores for all children

Trisha Powell Crain | *AL.com*

January 24, 2018

This is the final piece in AL.com's Tackling the Gap (<https://topics.al.com/tag/Tackling%20the%20Gap>) series. In this article, AL.com used test score data to find schools where black children and white children are showing success, looking for examples where the stubborn gap in proficiency levels between black and white students was narrowing or even erased.

Honestly, those places are hard to find in Alabama. But Pike County is one of those places. Initially, it looked like an anomaly. How could a small Alabama rural school district be successful in educating all of its students, black and white, when the wealthiest districts struggle to do so?

In that analysis of test scores, Pike County stood out, both for the high level of poverty---three out of four students qualify for free or reduced-price meals---and the high levels of proficiency for both groups of students. Something was going on in Pike County, and when I emailed Superintendent Mark Bazzell to ask him if I could visit his district to help me understand what they were doing, he put together an ambitious agenda to not only tell me what they were doing, but also to show me.

What I found was a surprise in many ways, but not so much if you understand what Bazzell says really makes education work: the people.

Mark Bazzell has been superintendent of Pike County Schools in southeastern Alabama for 15 years. And he has demonstrated he knows how to raise the bar in this rural district. During the 1990s, Bazzell said, two of Pike County's five schools "were on just about every list you didn't want to be on." When Bazzell was appointed superintendent of the district in 2003, he knew something had to change.

"We had students that don't believe in themselves," he said. "To some extent, the parents don't understand the possibilities that exist for their kids. We had faculty members that we weren't sure completely believed in the kids."

### Rural Alabama

Farm land and abandoned homes line Pike County's winding roads. And though it was late November when I visited, cotton was still visible along the roadside. Pike County is part of Alabama's Black Belt, named for the fertile soil that enriched the area before the Civil War, and now known for its continued decline and dwindling population. On paper, it's not much different from many rural areas in Alabama. The median household income within the Pike County school district is \$36,700, about \$8,000 below Alabama's median income. One in four residents live in poverty here, compared with 17 percent statewide.

Student enrollment in Pike County has been about the same for the past twenty years. The six school campuses there have right at 2,100 students enrolled this year, and the student population is diverse: just under 50 percent African-American, and 43 percent white. Four percent of students are Hispanic, and 3 percent are of two or more races. So how did Bazzell get started turning Pike County's schools around more than a decade ago? "We just started from scratch," he said, "and have been plugging away for ten, twelve years."

## **Homegrown leaders**

Bazzell and his leadership team, which includes Dr. Donnell Carter, Dr. Mark Head, and Jeff McClure, spoke about the many efforts they've undertaken to change the culture of the schools. Carter and Head are both graduates of Pike County's system, and each served as principals there before advancing to the central office. Carter is head of instructional services and Head oversees prevention and support services, including special education. Bazzell is a product of Pike County schools, too.

McClure is the director of alternative learning, which includes distance learning, which is fast becoming a way to help students find what makes them successful in the future, "whatever that looks like," McClure said. The leadership team is largely homegrown, which certainly influences their investment in the success of the children in their community.

## **Getting started**

"We started out from the very get-go raising the bar," said Bazzell. "One of the things we say is that we're not going to accept excuses." Bazzell said he used to get frustrated with leadership in his school system when report cards would come out and blame for low test scores was placed on kids and their families. Bazzell asks: When school leaders blame kids, how can teachers be expected to believe anything different? In those early days, he said, building-level administrators weren't always great instructional leaders.

Instead, they were mostly facility managers, he said. He knew he needed the focus to be on instruction. "It took a little while to get the right people, I'll say that." As an example of what it took to get those right people, Bazzell said 18 faculty members at Pike County Elementary were "turned over" within the first 18 months after he was appointed. Pike County Elementary has historically had a larger black student population than Goshen Elementary and was one of the schools that earned a spot on those lists no one wants to be on.

"What we've tried to do is change the entire culture. Not just within the school, but in some places within the community," he said. "You've got to have parents who are proud of their school, believe in their school, believe in their kids. You've got to have faculty buy into it. You've got to have leadership that will push the initiatives forward, and it's a lot of work and it takes time to do those things." Throughout my day in Pike County's schools, principals, teachers and faculty used various words to say the same thing these administrators were saying: believe in students.

My idea for the story about how Pike County is narrowing the achievement gap began to look less like a laser focus on raising black students' achievement and more like a story about opportunities for all students. Asked where he got the idea that all kids can achieve if given opportunities, Bazzell said he didn't know. "We understand the challenges that come with having a student population that is at-risk," he said. "We know that and accept that and understand we've got to address those barriers when they show up. "We're not going to allow [barriers] to be used as an excuse. We just can't. That's the very first thing that we've tried to communicate from day one," Bazzell said.

## **Taking care of teachers**

The good stuff happens in the classroom, between the teachers and the students, Bazzell said. "We protected instructional time. We started trying to align our instruction to the standards." Not all

teachers made the transition, he said, and "some people chose to go other places where they could be more comfortable." Carter said one early example was Eleanor Rodriguez's book, "What Is It About Me You Can't Teach" which addressed a lack of cultural understanding about poverty. "We do a lot on the front end, and we lay out what the expectations are for teachers in the system."

"And that's even if a teacher may come to us with 15 years' experience," Head said. "[Because] it's different [here]. The word is getting out that Pike County takes care of its teachers. Pike County Elementary Principal Tracy Arnold said Troy University provides preservice teachers, what used to be called "student teaching." Arnold said she has noticed recently that more preservice teachers are asking to be placed at her school, an indicator that new teachers like what they see.

Pike County High School's Vice Principal Shondra Whitaker said teachers now call the school looking for job openings. That, too, is an indicator that Pike County is doing something right. And having a good reputation among teachers is important in a rural area, where schools face some of the greatest teacher shortages.

### **Taking care of data**

Another important ingredient for improvement is monitoring data. Bazzell said it isn't enough to break down test scores by subgroups, the typical way the public looks at results. "I think what has made a difference for us is disaggregating the data all the way down to the student level," Head said. "Our data meetings need to be about kids, not subgroups. What do we need to do to move this student? Where is this particular student deficient? What does this student not know?"

Bazzell pointed out the district's 84 percent 2016 high school graduation rate as an example of one of the numbers they worry about. Bazzell said, "If you have 100 kids and you save three [from dropping out], you've just increased your graduation rate by 3 percent." "Our goal is to move one student at a time," he said.

Understanding what the data tells you is something that has to be learned, too, Head said. Teachers aren't learning how to interpret data in their teacher preparation programs, he said. So Pike County took that on. Getting down to that granular level, looking at data for each individual student, is something I would see up close and personal in Pike County's schools later in the day.

### **The data that made Pike County stick out**

Test results, particularly the narrowing black-white achievement gap, are what called my attention to Pike County. Not only is the gap in proficiency levels smaller than it is statewide, it continues to narrow. In recent years, Pike County's ACT Aspire results have shown not only high proficiency, but improvement in most grades and subjects. And that's with more than 77 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, a measure of poverty.

Bazzell was a fan of the ACT Aspire, the annual test given to students in grades 3 through 8 and also grade 10 to measure student outcomes. So when the state board of education voted in June to drop the test, Bazzell used local money to pay for his students to take the Aspire in the spring of 2018. Keeping up with growth measured by the Aspire, and using that data to drive instruction, was worth the \$25,000 investment.

Here's a look at Pike County's ACT Aspire results in recent years, compared with statewide results: [https://public.tableau.com/views/PikeCounty\\_0/PCandAL?:embed=y&:display\\_count=yes](https://public.tableau.com/views/PikeCounty_0/PCandAL?:embed=y&:display_count=yes)

Though proficiency levels for black students are not as high as in suburban school districts like Vestavia Hills, Homewood City, and Madison City, a higher percentage of Pike County's black students reach proficiency than in other high-poverty districts. Suburban school districts raise substantial amounts of local tax dollars to add to state and federal education dollars. Those local dollars matter, experts say, because they help lower class sizes, purchase additional curricular materials above and beyond what the state provides, and provide additional learning and professional development opportunities for teachers to improve their skills.

Pike County spent \$10,527 per student in the 2015-2016 school year, the 19th highest amount spent in Alabama. Of that amount, nearly \$2,400 per student was collected locally, mostly from sales taxes allocated for the schools. Bazzell said securing an extra penny in sales tax a short time after he became superintendent was a turning point for Pike County schools. "It put us on a level playing field with [Troy] city schools," he said.

### **Taking care of students**

Carter said students don't always have opportunities to experience new settings, "So we're real big on field trips." Vocabulary lessons are built in to lessons throughout schools, Carter said, because exposure to new words is a must to improve learning. Teachers use district-wide lesson plan templates to ensure adherence to principles of teaching, Carter said. "We know that strategic teaching works. We know that explicit instruction works. Those things are just not optional in our approach," Carter said.

Taking care of students requires knowing what's going on their lives, McClure said. "From the top down, these folks know these kids," he said. "They know their families. They have connections with them. They see their struggles." Beginning in the tenth grade, students can enroll in two-year colleges through one of nine of Pike County's academies ranging from arts to flight to business to agriscience, a combination of agriculture and science helping those who want to follow their families in farming.

Because the coursework is difficult, Bazzell said, admission requirements are, too. Students must have a 3.0 GPA and have scored a 20 on the ACT college entrance exam or reach a benchmark score on the COMPASS, also a college entrance exam. Those can be barriers for students, Bazzell said, but he is committed to helping students get in, and stay in, the district's academies.

### **A day in Pike County's schools**

#### **The STEM initiative**

Early in the day, we visited the district's central technology center where fifth- and sixth-grade students worked together in what officials called the STEM initiative. STEM is short for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Inside, teacher Amy Garrett was leading a group of "makers" learning to code inputs to make outputs. From snowmen whose faces light up, to a sign crawl reading "Welcome to STEM Academy" to Rudolph's lighted nose, to a police car that had working lights on top, one by one the students explained how they made their projects work.

Some used pressure sensors---"it's like an iPhone button, push it!"--- and others used on and off buttons.

One pair of students coded the musical notes in "The Star-Spangled Banner," which started at the push of a button. This type of work is important, Garrett said, because students learn how to solve

problems when projects don't work as planned. "Sometimes it's a little hard," one fifth-grader said, "but then you get the hang of it."

### **The distance learning center**

Down the hall, in another building on the same campus, in what McClure referred to as a "swing space," was an open area housing the district's non-traditional online high school programs. Around 30 students were sitting in three groups: dual enrollment courses, credit recovery, and accelerated high school classes not offered in the district's classrooms.

Teacher Jodie Jefcoat's job is monitoring students' progress in those online courses and helping them stay on task. "With teenagers, the biggest problem they have is learning to manage their time," she said. "Procrastination becomes their biggest problem." One of three sophomores enrolled in the Health and Information Academy and taking online courses from Enterprise State Community College said, "At first [taking college-level coursework] was overwhelming, but as time passes by, I've kind of caught on to the vibe of this."

She and her classmates are learning medical terminology. Jefcoat said if they stick to and pass the sequence of courses, they are on track to graduate with both a two-year associate's degree and a high school diploma, the goal of all the districts' academies. That two-year college degree comes at no cost to parents or students. Bazzell uses a combination of workforce development funds, scholarships, and local tax dollars to pay for tuition, books and other curricular materials the students need.

Tierra and Janyriah are juniors working in the same academy. When asked why they're willing to work so hard, Tierra said, "It gets us ahead of the game." Both young women are interested in the managerial aspect of a medical practice and plan to use their associate's degree as a stepping stone to a four-year business administration degree. They said participating in dual enrollment makes them want to come to school. "It's fun," Janyriah said.

On the way out, I met Lane, a high school senior who earned his pilot's license through the district's First in Flight and Leadership Academy. Lane plans to be a pilot in the Air Force after he graduates high school with his associate's degree and high school diploma. Lane said he recently flew a 180-mile, 2-hour solo flight around Georgia. He knows how lucky he is to find this program in Pike County schools. "It is a very unique opportunity," he said. "I know that most people in most places don't have the opportunity to do this sort of thing." The opportunity to earn a college degree at no cost to their families was not lost on Pike County's students. It was a phrase I heard over and over again.

### **The agriscience academy at Goshen High School**

The five seniors graduating from the agriscience academy were, at first, short on words that morning. Turns out my visit interrupted a test they were taking. But when asked why they want to work extra hard taking college courses, senior Laken said, "I want to say I did it. I want to graduate," pointing out this group will be the first group to graduate with associate's degrees and high school diplomas in this field.

Joseph, a junior, said one of the benefits of an academy is it gives you "a two-year head start in your college after high school" toward a four-year degree. And if all else fails, he said, the associate's degree can serve as a backup plan.

An energetic junior named Genelynn offered to show me around the school's three greenhouses. One was full of ferns, grown from cuttings to be sold in the spring as a fundraiser for the academy, she said. It's a hands-on activity that all students in the program participate in and one that she enjoys, she said. "That's what I like about the program," she said. "We're not cooped up inside all day long." Genelynn said she became interested in the academy as a ninth grader when Dr. Bazzell spoke with students about the academies. She said she grew up on a farm and plans to attend Auburn University to become a large-animal veterinarian, but is open to the idea of a career in agriculture.

Earning college credit at no cost will help her family, she said, "and that's why I'm taking the opportunity to do it." Neither of her parents attended college, and the fact that she's already enrolled in college is great, she said. Genelynn said she's talked with students in nearby school districts who don't have academies like Pike County's and realizes how special her district is.

### **Pike County High School**

As we entered Pike County High School, five young women, all seniors in the business and finance academy, greeted us. Their interests range from ROTC to cheerleading. All participate in community service, competitions related to their studies, and are leaders in their school, according to their teacher, Jon Sonmor. They, like those in the agriscience academy at Goshen High School, appreciate the no-cost head start on college provided in Pike County.

Pike County High School's leadership team of Principal Willie Wright and Vice Principal Shondra Whittaker met with us over lunch. Whitaker said three years ago, after digging into a drop in seventh- and eighth-grade test scores ("these are the same kids, why did they drop so far," Whitaker asked), they decided to move those two grades into their own wing in the building. "That totally changed the culture," Wright said.

Wright said that big change was an example of the team's willingness to make substantial changes to meet students' needs "We came to the point where we said we really need our best teachers teaching the middle grades," Whitaker said. One teacher took the invitation to teach middle schoolers, she said, and has become a leader in changing the atmosphere among teachers about how they can best use their teaching skills.

Head said when individual students fall behind, administrators and faculty confront the problem, not in an adversarial way, but in a way that forces teachers to take ownership. "Ownership's the big thing," Head said. "This is my kid. This is a direct reflection on what I'm doing [in the classroom]."

### **Data diving at Pike County Elementary School**

Pike County Elementary's test scores were what pulled me down to Pike County in the first place. And it was the last school we visited. I asked second-year principal Tracy Arnold why her elementary school appeared to be closing the achievement gap. "I call it the buy-in," she said. "Teachers are vested in the school. And they want what's best for the kids here and not just here, but also in the community."

"And the kids? The kids are just going to reach for whatever you set the limits to if they know you believe in them," she said. Arnold took us to the data room, what she called "the situation level two

room." In that room, Arnold and Assistant Principal Rodney Drish tracked how well students were learning standards. Every standard. For every tested grade: third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades.

Standards were printed on giant sheets of paper, laminated, and carefully pieced together lining up columns and rows. The charts stretched around the entire classroom. Students take periodic tests measuring mastery, and score a 1, 2, or 3. Those scores are then posted on those giant charts. Teachers aren't teaching the test, they're teaching the standards, Arnold said, adding that teachers have embraced this method, recognizing knowing where each child stands allows them to adjust teaching methods to reach each child.

And student outcomes, measured by tests, continue to improve in Pike County schools. Here's a look at the progression of both test results and the gap between proficiency levels of black students and white students since the ACT Aspire has been taken.

[https://public.tableau.com/views/PikeCountyprogression/PCprogress?:embed=y&:display\\_count=yes](https://public.tableau.com/views/PikeCountyprogression/PCprogress?:embed=y&:display_count=yes)

### **What's in the future**

As Bazzell looks toward the future, he shared plans for the Advanced Academics and Accelerated Learning Center. Officials broke ground in August. It is a multipurpose facility that will house the county's virtual high school and credit recovery programs, the dual enrollment programs aligned with the nine academy offerings, and the elementary and middle school STEM initiatives. Bazzell said he hopes 35 to 40 percent of the districts' 175 to 200 graduates will graduate with associate's degrees. The remainder will be work-ready, he said, through a program that will start next semester.

### **The achievement gap doesn't have to always be there**

I came to Pike County to find out what educators were doing to improve test scores for their African-American students. What I found instead was equity in action. It wasn't a focus on one group or another that was improving learning. It was a unique focus on all students at the individual level, to help them find their way toward their own futures. Culture, leadership, taking care of students, teachers, and data are a few of the pieces Bazzell said matter. And, he said, a strong belief that all students can learn at high levels when given the right supports. "I don't think that what we're doing is magical," Bazzell said. "It's not about any of us".

"It's about what happens between that teacher and those 20 kids every day. Day in and day out," Bazzell said. Those efforts are paying off. Though not every number shows improvement, Pike County no longer has schools on those dreaded lists, and Bazzell is confident they're headed in the right direction.

[https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2018/01/how\\_one\\_small\\_alabama\\_district.html#incart\\_river\\_home\\_pop](https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2018/01/how_one_small_alabama_district.html#incart_river_home_pop)



# Session IV

Below are the panelists for Session IV, providing an overview of the state's lobbying industry.

---

## **Moderator: Bill O'Connor (Blackburn Advisory Board Member)**

O'Connor is a public affairs consultant from Montgomery, Alabama. In the past he has served as the Director of Public Information for the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Executive Director with the Alabama Press Association, Assistant to the President of The University of Alabama as Director of Legislative Relations, Associate Professor in the Department of Advertising and Public Relations in UA's College of Communication, Vice Chancellor for External Affairs at The University of Alabama Systems, President and CEO of the Business Council of Alabama, and Managing Director for the Campaign for Alabama. Currently, he is an independent communication and business consultant.

---



## **Mary Margaret Carroll (Blackburn Advisory Board Member)**

Mary Margaret, a native of Ozark, was born and raised in the Wiregrass region of Alabama. As an undergraduate student, she interned for U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions, served as Student Government Association President, and was the student representative to The University of Alabama System Board of Trustees. While in law school, she worked part-time for a law firm focused on banking, creditor's rights, and corporate law; and performed pro bono legal work through the law school's Public Interest Institute and clinical program. She received the Dean Nathaniel Hansford Award for Leadership in 2010. Mary Margaret was the Assistant to the Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator Richard Shelby in Washington, D.C. from 2006 – 2007 and, during law school, worked for two federal judges on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama. Prior to joining Fine Geddie, she served as a staff attorney for Judge Craig S. Pittman on the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals for two years. Mary Margaret is on the Britton YMCA Board of Directors, serving as an advisor for both the Youth Judicial and Youth Legislature programs; a member of the Montgomery Junior League; and a member of the First United Methodist Church of Montgomery. She is also a member of the Alabama State Bar, to which she was admitted in September 2010.



Carroll is alumna of The University of Alabama (B.A. in English and J.D.).

## Christy Cain deGraffenried

Christy Cain deGraffenried has been Executive Director of Children First since March 2006. Her hope and the hope of Children First board is that substantive change can be made in the lives of Alabama's children by helping to shape legislative policy and by insuring that monies designated towards children's programs are well-spent. Christy grew up in LaFayette, and her first job after college was Lead Teacher in a Head Start program. She has held numerous positions within the field of education and has taught or interacted with students from 6 weeks old to college age. Christy is married to Ryan deGraffenried, III and they have two daughters.

deGraffenried is an alumna of Auburn University and Troy University.

---

## *Ted Hosp (Tentative)*

Ted Hosp was named executive director of governmental affairs for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. Previously, Ted served as chair of the governmental and regulatory affairs practice group at Maynard Cooper & Gale and was legal adviser to the governor of Alabama from 1999 to 2002. Ted chairs the Alabama Access to Justice Commission, serves on the Alabama State Bar Committee on Volunteer Lawyers Programs, and sits on the board of the Middle District of Alabama Federal Defender's Program. He also has served on the boards of the Birmingham Volunteer Lawyers Program and the Montgomery Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program.



Hosp is an alumnus of Brown University and Fordham University School of Law.

---

## Michelle Roth (Recent Blackburn Advisory Board Member)

As Executive Director of the Alabama Cable and Broadband Association, Michelle Roth is responsible for Legislative Affairs, Public and Community Relations and Statewide Advocacy efforts supporting Alabama's cable industry. Prior to her role with ACBA, Michelle was Leadership Alabama's Program Manager, where she had the opportunity to coordinate 7 outstanding classes of Alabama leaders from 2008-2015. From 2003-2008, Michelle led MSR Consulting, and assisted small businesses and non-profit organizations in all phases of Human Resources. Roth previously served as HR Manager and other related positions with a regional bank in Montgomery and Birmingham. She has served on the Board and Executive Committee of several charitable and community organizations, including the Blackburn Institute, The Governor's Broadband Advisory Council, First United Methodist Church Board of Trustees, Staff Parrish Relations, Mary Ellen's Hearth, 100 Women Strong (Ambassador for the Family Sunshine Center), The Montgomery Education Foundation, VOICES for Alabama's Children, the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the Alabama Dance Theatre and various community and social organizations. A native of Lakeland, Florida, Michelle and her husband, Toby, have three daughters and reside in Montgomery where they are active members of First United Methodist Church.



Roth is an alumna of the University of Alabama, with a B.S. in Marketing.

## Reform commission to consider changes to Alabama ethics law

Mike Cason | *AL.com*

May 16, 2018

A 23-member panel that includes legislators, lawyers, prosecutors, state, county and city officials and others meets for the first time on Thursday to consider changes to the Alabama ethics law.

The Legislature created the Code of Ethics Clarification and Reform Commission during the legislative session that ended in March.

Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, who sponsored the resolution setting up the commission and is a member, said his preference would be a fresh look at the entire law, including a look at what other states are doing.

"My personal opinion is we need to start from scratch," Orr said.

Attorney General Steve Marshall and Ethics Commission Executive Director Tom Albritton will serve as co-chairmen.

Marshall's office drafted a 119-page bill earlier this year to overhaul the ethics law, which was originally written more than 40 years ago and substantially changed in 2010. Marshall said some people covered by the law wanted more clarity in certain areas and that other areas needed to be tighter.

But lawmakers declined to tackle the reforms during what turned out to be an abbreviated election-year session that ended in March.

They did pass one ethics bill on the last day of the session to exempt economic development consultants from a requirement to register as lobbyists with the Ethics Commission unless they seek special incentives for their clients.

Supporters said disclosure requirements for lobbyists could jeopardize the state's efforts to recruit employers who want to keep their project site searches confidential.

Opponents said the exemption created a loophole in the ethics law.

The bill squeaked through the Senate on a 15-14 vote. The lobbying registration exemption will expire in April 2019, so it's likely that will be a topic for the Ethics Clarification and Reform Commission.

The panel is scheduled to report its recommendations to the Legislature by the first day of the 2019 session.

[https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/05/reform\\_commission\\_to\\_consider.html](https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/05/reform_commission_to_consider.html)

## What Is Lobby or Lobbying?

As Defined in Section 36-25-1(20) **Lobby or Lobbying** is:

“The practice of promoting, opposing, or in any manner influencing or attempting to influence the introduction, defeat, or enactment of legislation before any legislative body; opposing or in any manner influencing the executive approval, veto, or amendment of legislation; or the practice of promoting, opposing, or in any manner influencing or attempting to influence the enactment, promulgation, modification, or deletion of regulations before any regulatory body. The term does not include providing public testimony before a legislative body or regulatory body or any committee thereof.”

Also stated in Section 36-25-1.1:

“Lobbying includes promoting or attempting to influence the awarding of a grant or contract with any department or agency of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of state government.

No member of the Legislature, for a fee, reward, or other compensation, in addition to that received in his or her official capacity, shall represent any person, firm, corporation, or other business entity before an executive department or agency.”

Lobbyist Code of Ethics adopted by the House of Representatives in the 2000 Regular Session

### Lobbyist Code of Ethics

#### General Principles of Conduct.

A lobbyist shall abide by the rules of the House and Senate, as well as instructions directed at lobbyists by the House and Senate.

A lobbyist shall be courteous and respectful to legislators and legislative staff.

A lobbyist shall adhere to the highest standards of honesty.

A lobbyist shall not attempt to influence any legislator or legislative employee by means of deceit or by threat of violence or economic or political reprisal against any person or property.

A lobbyist shall not knowingly provide false or misleading information to, or knowingly withhold critical information from, any legislator or legislative employee as to any material fact pertaining to legislation.

A lobbyist shall not knowingly omit, conceal, or falsify any information required through lobbyist registration and disclosure.

A lobbyist shall not cause or influence the introduction of any bill, substitute or amendment for the purpose of becoming employed to secure its passage or defeat.

A lobbyist shall not remove or attempt to remove any document from a legislator's or legislative employee's office, desk, file cabinet, reproduction machine, facsimile machine, computer, or any other place without explicit permission.

A lobbyist shall not engage in sexually harassing behavior or behavior that violates the Legislature's sexual harassment policy.

A lobbyist shall not offer employment to any legislator or legislative employee that impairs the legislator's or legislative employee's independence of judgment as to their official duties.

A lobbyist shall not induce or seek to induce any legislator or legislative employee into committing a violation of any statute or the rules of the House or Senate.

A lobbyist shall not accept or be compensated for services based on the passage or defeat or the approval or disapproval of legislation.

## Who **IS** and **IS NOT** a Lobbyist?

As Defined in Section 36-25-1(21)(a)(1-4) a **Lobbyist** is:

“a. The term lobbyist includes any of the following:

1. A person who receives compensation or reimbursement from another person, group, or entity to lobby.
2. A person who lobbies as a regular and usual part of employment, whether or not any compensation in addition to regular salary and benefits is received.
3. A consultant to the state, county, or municipal levels of government or their instrumentalities, in any manner employed to influence legislation or regulation, regardless whether the consultant is paid in whole or part from state, county, municipal, or private funds.
4. An employee, a paid consultant, or a member of the staff of a lobbyist, whether or not he or she is paid, who regularly communicates with members of a legislative body regarding pending legislation and other matters while the legislative body is in session.”

As Defined in Section 36-25-1(21)(b)(1-8) a **Lobbyist** is NOT:

“b. The term lobbyist does not include any of the following:

1. An elected official on a matter which involves that person's official duties.
2. A person or attorney rendering professional services in drafting bills or in advising clients and in rendering opinions as to the construction and effect of proposed or pending legislation, executive action, or rules or regulations, where those professional services are not otherwise connected with legislative, executive, or regulatory action.

## Section 36-25-1(21)(b)(1-8), cont.

3. Reporters and editors while pursuing normal reportorial and editorial duties.
4. Any citizen not expending funds as set out above in paragraph a.3. or not lobbying for compensation who contacts a member of a legislative body, or gives public testimony on a particular issue or on particular legislation, or for the purpose of influencing legislation and who is merely exercising his or her constitutional right to communicate with members of a legislative body.
5. A person who appears before a legislative body, a regulatory body, or an executive agency to either sell or purchase goods or services.
6. A person whose primary duties or responsibilities do not include lobbying, but who may, from time to time, organize social events for members of a legislative body to meet and confer with members of professional organizations and who may have only irregular contacts with members of a legislative body when the body is not in session or when the body is in recess.
7. A person who is a member of a business, professional, or membership organization by virtue of the person's contribution to or payment of dues to the organization even though the organization engages in lobbying activities.
8. A state governmental agency head or his or her designee who provides and/or communicates information relating to policy and/or positions affecting said governmental agencies which they represent.



## Lobbying Panel

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Briefly describe your unique role as a lobbyist. For whom or what do you advocate and who primarily are you trying to influence?
2. How does the new quadrennium – with changes in elected officials, government agencies and legislative committees – impact your lobbying strategies? Specifically, how do you build relationships with new policy makers?
3. What are your priorities for the upcoming legislative session? What potential bills would your clients like to see passed and which others would not be in your client's best interests?
4. What impact, if any, have the state's ethics laws, passed in 2010, had on your work? Are there any suggestions you would like the current Ethics Clarification and Reform Commission to consider?
5. With one party holding a monopoly on constitutional officers and a supermajority in both houses of the legislature, what challenges or opportunities does that present in persuading elected officials to support a particular issue?
6. What are the major obstacles that can derail favorable legislation? How do you regroup?
7. What are some practical steps you would suggest to students who are interested in lobbying as a career?

# Session V

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

---

**Alabama State Capital 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

---

**Rosa Parks Museum** (<https://troy.edu/rosaparks>)

252 Montgomery Street  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
334-241-8615





# Session VI

Below are the biographies for the prison reform panel, exploring the current conditions in correctional facilities including funding, staffing, overcrowding, health care and reentry programs.

---

## Jeff Dunn

Jeff Dunn was appointed Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) on April 1, 2015, after serving 28 rewarding years in the United States Air Force and retiring at the rank of Colonel. Commissioner Dunn leads Alabama's largest law enforcement agency, managing an inmate population of more than 20,000 offenders in 26 correctional institutions; employs a workforce of over 3,300 correctional officers, correctional supervisors and support staff; and operates on an annual budget exceeding \$500 million.



Commissioner Dunn's vision for the department is embodied in four strategic focus areas: staffing, infrastructure, programming, and culture. The staffing focus area addresses the hiring, training, developing, and retaining of the ADOC's most valuable resource - its people. The infrastructure focus area recognizes the important role adequate facilities play in building a positive work environment and in ensuring the ADOC's mission to safely and securely confine and rehabilitate offenders is carried out. A renewed focus on programming results in treatment, vocational, and educational opportunities needed to better serve the inmate population during incarceration while also resulting in lower recidivism and increased opportunities for inmate success upon release. Finally, a healthy department culture provides the firm foundation upon which the other three focus areas rest and is essential for the ADOC to best protect and serve the citizens of Alabama.

In addition to advocating for this vision, Commissioner Dunn has established an Inspector General Division to improve operational readiness, built an Anti-Corruption Task Force to promote public accountability throughout the ADOC, created the Alabama Correctional Leadership Academy to provide leadership and professional development, and obtained federal PREA compliance in all ADOC institutions to include the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women, a nationally recognized model for the effective management of female inmates.

Commissioner Dunn is a graduate of Birmingham Southern College where he earned a degree in English and a commission through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. He holds a Master of Arts in Non-Profit Management from Regent University, a Master of Science in Transportation & Logistics from the Air Force Institute of Technology and dual Masters in Operational Design and Strategic Studies from the Air University, Maxwell AFB AL. He and his wife, Susan, have been married for 32 years and have two grown children, Shaw and Morgan. They reside in Montgomery, Alabama.

## **Charlotte Morrison**

Charlotte Morrison is a senior attorney at the Equal Justice Initiative, where she has litigated capital and non-capital criminal cases and civil rights cases in state and federal court since 2001. Charlotte manages EJI's criminal justice reform work in Alabama, and in that capacity, has made presentations to state legislators and other public officials on various reform initiatives. Charlotte also coordinates EJI's reentry program for recently released prisoners and has extensive experience working with prisoners to develop constructive reentry plans.

Morrison is a former Rhodes Scholar with degrees in Philosophy from Oxford University and the University of Montana, and graduated from New York University School of Law in 2000.

---



## **Carol Potok**

Carol Potok joined the staff of Aid to Inmate Mothers in 1997 as Executive Director, and during her 21 years as Director has expanded the agency's services from solely visitation to offer rehabilitative education and reentry assistance to women leaving prison, as well as a Montgomery based transitional home for women leaving prison. Carol is an advocate for expanding programs for women in prison and helping the disenfranchised regain their voices.

Potok holds a degree in Psychology from The College of Wooster (OH).

---



## **Senator 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.

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



## How has prison reform impacted Alabama?

*Andrew J. Yawn | Montgomery Advertiser*

*December 9, 2016*

The criminal justice system has historically relied on human judgment for sentencing, but Alabama's recent criminal justice reforms are attempting to equate human error to a quantifiable number. Crimes now equal a score that effectively decides an offender's punishment. A similar score sheet labels parolees as high, medium or low risk. Alabama is a bit of a trendsetter — for better or for worse — on the criminal justice front, said Bennet Wright, executive director of the Alabama Sentencing Commission tasked with both implementing the 2013 and 2015 reforms as well as crunching the data.

"With the passage of the 2015 reforms, I think you're seeing Alabama acknowledge for the first time that data driven decisions need to be the driving force of all criminal justice policy," Wright said. "That's a huge shift in policy. Obviously that's not something everybody will jump on board with, but I think it's important to make decisions, particularly ones that have huge price tags attached to them, to much more of a data driven process."

The reforms are not without controversy. Attorneys remain critical of the sentencing guidelines, and judges are split on whether or not the score sheets rob them of their ability to adjudicate, but the reforms have shown promising returns in popping the balloon on Alabama's prison population and the data collected over the next few years could continue to spur progressive criminal reform.

### **Numbers game**

The two-pronged reform began with the implementation of presumptive sentencing guidelines in 2013 that essentially reduced sentencing decisions to a score sheet in an effort to be more selective and consistent about who gets locked away. For drug offenses, eight or more points — perhaps a distribution of marijuana charge (6 points) and a possession with intent to distribute charge (5 points) — will land that person in prison barring mitigating factors. For property crimes, 15 points is required for a prison sentence. Both sheets also add points for prior adult convictions, incarcerations, probation revocations and juvenile delinquencies, but the idea was — and still is — to send fewer non-violent offenders to prison to relieve the burden on a prison system that, at the time the guidelines were implemented, housed nearly twice the inmate population (25,299) than it was designed for (13,318).

The guidelines also made sentencing consistent across the state. A possession of marijuana charge, for instance, no longer relies on the presiding judge's views of the drug. "Some judges are heavy on possession of marijuana. They detest it and (before the guidelines) would give harsher sentences than other judges would," said former Montgomery County Circuit Judge William Shashy who retired this past month.

The 2015 prison reform, also known as Senate Bill 67 sponsored by Sen. Cam Ward, R-Alabaster, focused more on fighting the bloated prison system. A new class of felony, Class D, was created for sentencing guidelines to include non-violent offenses such as minor drug possession and third-degree theft. Those crimes now carry the lowest point totals as legislators are more concerned with locking up violent offenders.

"They're focused on felony offenses the Alabama Legislature has deemed non-violent. Mostly drug and property offenses," Wright said. If fewer non-violent offenders are going to prison, more are

naturally going to parole and probation. The bill accounted for that by injecting funding into the state parole system to hire 100 more parole officers.

Darrell Morgan, assistant executive director of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, said they have hired 71 additional parole officers as of the end of October. Seventeen more are currently being interviewed, and Morgan said more officers will be added using their general fund in an effort to reduce parole officers' caseloads.

"When this began we were around 200 cases per officer. Our target is to have everybody down to 100 offenders per officer by the end of the fiscal year (Sept. 30)," Morgan said. "That was one of the biggest issues with previous parole boards was we didn't have the adequate staff. Now that these numbers have increased we're able to better manage our caseloads and we can manage more people."

Also implemented this year was the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS). The risk assessment is filled out in the pre-sentencing investigation and assigns scores based on severity of the offense, institutional behavior, and what risk-reducing programs that offender will attend. Wright said the sheet not only helps parole officers manage their caseload better, but it also will give him hard, objective data on offenders across the state.

"For the first time, we're going to be able to say X amount of the probation population has this need or X percent of the population is at this risk level. Right now it's just anecdotal," Wright said. "If you talk to the district attorney and the defense lawyers, you'll probably wonder if you're talking about the same people. Now for the first time you'll have an empirical objective tool that we're going to actually measure that on. For the first time, we'll be able to see how many people test out as high risk."

## **Beyond the numbers**

It's a logical move to combat unsightly statistics by gathering new data, but local attorneys say the reforms have had an impact on how they defend or prosecute offenders who they say have been reduced to a number. Montgomery County Deputy District Attorney Ben McGough said the sheets and implementation of Class D felonies have incentivized crime and taken the teeth out of the justice system.

"When a defendant looks at their sheet and their score is two and it takes 15 to go to prison, they're guaranteed from the beginning. You're not going to prison no matter what happens," McGough said. "Then they look at the sheet and think, 'I've got 13 points to burn.' they can look at the sheet, do the math, and think, 'I can do four more non-violent offenses before the judge even has the option to send me to prison.' And we're literally giving them the figures."

On the defense side, Public Defender's Office Director Aliya McKee said the sheets reduce her clients to a figure instead of treating each case as a unique situation. "Our clients, from my perspective, get reduced to a number," McKee said. "I'm somewhat comfortable with that being the starting point, but it's not the solution. We want the court to see the person behind the charge. The name, not the case number."

The guidelines do offer judges opportunities for discretion. Defense attorneys can argue mitigating factors to reduce a sentence and prosecutors can argue aggravating factors to increase it. Some of the biggest holes in the one-size-fits-all sentencing sheet concern number of counts against a

person and whether or not an offense is on the sheet. If a person is charged with 14 counts of third degree theft and has no prior record, that's only eight points on the sheet, a score that will not get that person to prison.

Then again, much of the point of the guidelines is keeping offenders out of the engorged prison system. Judges such as Shashy and Montgomery Circuit Judge Truman Hobbs Jr. have no problem with the guidelines, but said some judges take umbrage with the reduced sentences.

"It's not with its detractors but on the whole it's served its purpose," Hobbs said. "The guidelines gave shorter sentences closer to what was served, but the reality is the prison is so overcrowded that before a five-year sentence would be reduced to three, and now it's a three-year sentence and they're getting out in less than a year. We're giving shorter sentences, but they're still getting out pretty quickly. That bothers some judges, but for the most part it's served a good purpose."

Besides keeping offenders out of prison, the goal for most involved is to find a better way to rehabilitate the offenders. The reforms put in place foster a good environment for rehab programs, but the funding remains lacking in many areas, according to Wright and McKee. The reforms did allow the Board of Pardons and Paroles to institute rehabilitation programs in counties lacking community corrections services, Morgan said.

"We've partnered with the Department of Mental Health to obtain contracts with local community service providers to do drug treatment and mental health counseling for offenders under our supervision. Right now those are the 22 counties that don't have community corrections services," Morgan said. Still, Wright and others would like to see more investment in rehabilitation programs. Lowering the prison population doesn't matter if the cause of the behavior is not being treated.

"I think one of the things the state of Alabama has always struggled with is enough investment into community alternatives. The state has always had a difficult time funding substance abuse treatment, drug treatment and more recently mental health treatment," Wright said. "Those options have to be fully funded if we are going to divert more people from prison and jail to give them a chance to succeed in the community. The latest prison reform legislation is an effort to do that, but we need to remain vigilant in making sure these alternatives are properly funded and make sure we're measuring results to make sure the outcomes desired are being achieved."

## **Early results**

As judges and attorneys feel their way through the reforms, all eyes are keen to judge what impact reforms have had on key statistics such as prison population, crime rate, parole caseload and recidivism. It's still too soon to make definitive claims, but Wright said some early data returns are promising. State prison population, for example, has dropped from 25,299 in 2013 (189.9 percent capacity) to 23,318 this year (175 percent).

"I think the initial results of the presumptive sentencing standards are promising," Wright said. There has been a steady decrease in the prison population averaging 80-100 fewer inmates per month." State crime rate has also dropped during the period going from nearly 174,000 total crimes in 2013 (about 3,586 crimes per 100,000 people) to just over 162,000 this year, however, that rate was already falling from 191,318 in 2011 and 181,752 in 2012, according to Alabama Law Enforcement Agency.

Parole caseload has also begun to dip slightly. Morgan said it took longer than expected to hire new officers but active caseload is down to about 145 cases per officer. When adding inactive cases, that decline looks much smaller (about 215 per officer to about 195), but Morgan said the reform has had a noticeable impact.

“(Adding inactive cases) makes the numbers still look high, but the hiring of the officers have gotten our active caseload down to a manageable level, which is lower than it was. But we still have to hire more people,” Morgan said. The risk assessment and recidivism data will take longer to gather with Wright saying, “a lot of the big data prizes won’t be coming in for four to five to six years,” but some usable risk assessment results will become available in the next 12 to 18 months.

On a local level, one particular statistic has the District Attorney’s Office concerned that the guidelines may be doing more harm than good for public safety. Montgomery has seen 530 more thefts this year than last year, and many in the DA’s office, including Chief Deputy District Attorney Lloria James, see the lenient sentencing guidelines as the blame.

“Those statistics don’t surprise us at all. It’s almost like a revolving door,” James said. “The problem is sort of like word travels fast on a college campus or neighborhood or things like that, in the criminal community word travels fast, and I think it’s gotten out there that pretty much if it’s non-violent — thefts, burglaries things like that — there’s almost zero chance you’re going to see some prison time, so it’s worth it to them.”

Whether or not there is a connection remains up for debate, but that hasn’t stopped District Attorney Daryl Bailey from reaching out to Sen. Ward in recent weeks about possibly making some changes. “We’ll continue looking at it, but we’ve done a lot of reform already,” Ward said. “Obviously that’s a point being made by the district attorneys, but if there’s any changes needed to be made in the guidelines we need to do that. We need to make sure it’s prudent for the safety of the public.”

The full impact of the prison reform remains unclear, and whether or not there is a next phase that supports post-sentencing rehabilitation remains to be seen. The reforms have shown themselves not to be perfect, but Wright said that should engender further study and support in his ideal scenario. The reforms were put in place after studying prison reform in other Republican states such as Texas and North Carolina, but implementing front-to-back change is “trendsetting,” Wright said. For now, the state must wait and see what the numbers hold.

“It’s a little daunting, but that’s trendsetting to have this big of a process going on at one time,” Wright said. “That’s also why I tell people both for it and against it to take a deep breath and let’s do our best to implement it. I think with a lot of things, people get in the way of things before they implement it. We owe it to ourselves to embrace what the Legislature passed and what the intent was. Let’s give it our best good faith effort, wait a while and then sit around the table and talk about it then.”

<https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/crime/2016/12/09/how-has-prison-reform-impacted-alabama/95100682/>



## Alabama prison protest organizer held in solitary during national strike, advocates say

*Connor Sheets | AL.com*

*September 10, 2018*

An incarcerated Alabama prison protest organizer and inmates' rights advocate was involuntarily moved into solitary confinement last month in advance of a high-profile national prison strike, according to other advocates who have recently spoken with him or otherwise have knowledge of his treatment.

The Alabama Department of Corrections moved Robert Earl Council - founder of the influential Free Alabama Movement grassroots advocacy group - from his general-population cell at William E. Donaldson Correctional Facility to a solitary confinement cell "right before" the national strike began, according to an incarcerated inmates' rights advocate who goes by the nickname Swift Justice.

Two members of the Free Alabama Movement's Queens Team who are not incarcerated said that they had received word that Council - who goes by the moniker Kinetik Justice - was released from solitary on Monday, one day after the strike officially ended. The advocates said they did not know the exact day the DOC moved him into solitary confinement.

Bob Horton, a spokesman for the DOC, emailed a brief statement in response to a series of questions about the strike and Kinetik Justice's placement in solitary confinement.

"There were no reports of inmates of the Alabama state prison system participating in an alleged national prison work strike during the period as reported by national media and AL.com," Horton wrote. "The management of the ADOC prison system is always in the best interest of its employees, those who are in the department's custody, and the public it serves."

Dara Folden, one of the two Queens Team members, said that though the group is "excited to see that he has been removed from these conditions," the problems with the prison system that Kinetik Justice has worked to illuminate continue to negatively impact inmates' lives.

"Simply put, Kinetik being held in solitary was due to him exposing the ADOC for all its corruption. Solitary is used against political prisoners and prisoners who speak up on inhumane treatment with the intentions of silencing prisoners," Folden said Monday.

"His protest and refusal to be silent has been nonviolent but has been met with brutal retaliation and without warrant."

Swift Justice said that Melvin Ray, a Free Alabama Movement member who is incarcerated at Limestone Correctional Facility in northern Alabama, has been held in solitary confinement since 2014, when he helped lead a previous prison strike in the state. Swift Justice contends that cases such as Council's and Ray's show that the DOC too often relies on unfounded concerns about inmate safety and security threats to impose unjust punishments on inmates who dare to speak out about prison conditions and maltreatment of inmates.

"ADOC as well as other agencies across the country are given way too much leeway and they're given way too much of a loophole to use the words 'security risk,'" Swift Justice told AL.com Monday.



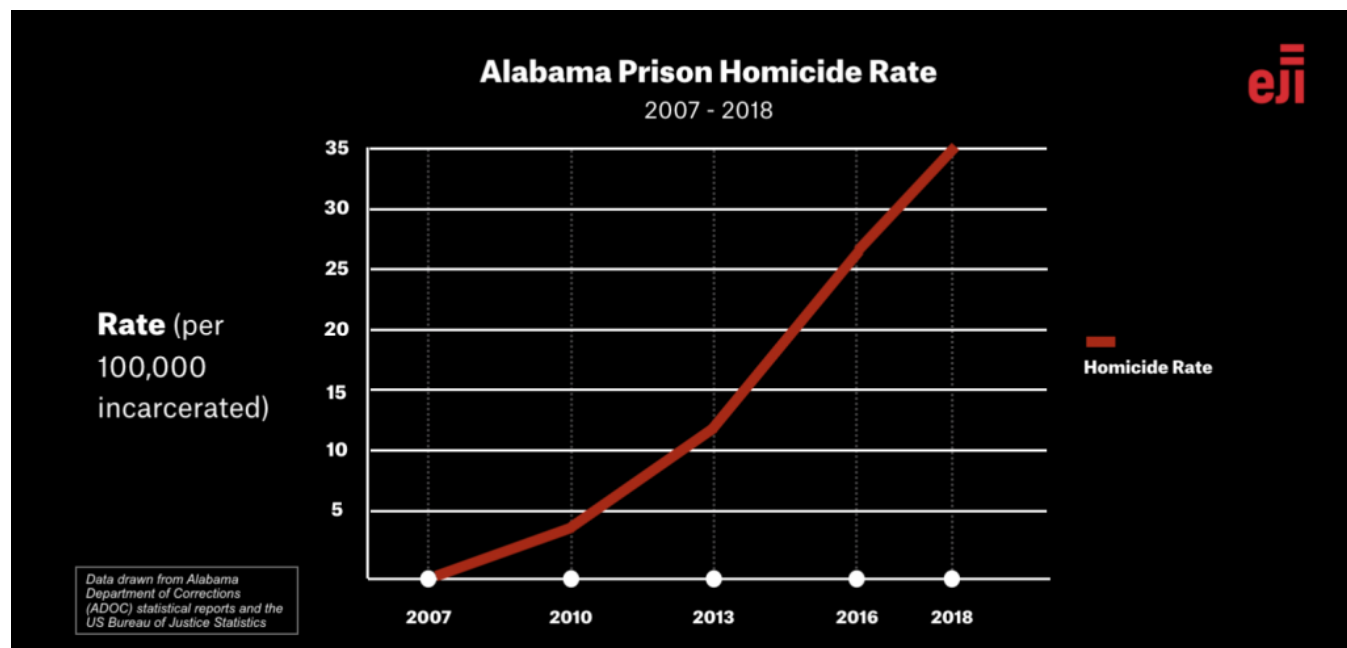
"But in today's prison strikes and past prison strikes, nothing violent has come about and there have been no security issues whatsoever. And all because these individuals might teach the truth. They're being punished because they're being able to organize, which is a violation of their constitutional rights."

The Free Alabama Movement was instrumental in organizing the well-publicized strike that took place in prisons across the nation from Aug. 21 and Sept. 9. The work stoppage and related protests were aimed at raising awareness of exploitative inmate labor practices, poor prison conditions and other concerns. Organizers say the strike was launched in response to an April riot at South Carolina's Lee Correctional Institutional during which seven inmates died.

"For those of you who haven't thought about this brother during the #PrisonStrike2018 you should know that he was snatched up and placed back into solitary right before #PrisonStrike2018 began," Swift Justice wrote of Kinteik Justice's in a Monday Facebook posting.

"His leadership in birthing the very movement that is happening today should not go unnoticed."

[https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/09/alabama\\_prison\\_protest\\_organiz.html](https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/09/alabama_prison_protest_organiz.html)



On Monday, Vaquerro Kinjuan Armstrong, was murdered at Holman Correctional Facility. It follows the stabbing death of James Lewis Kennedy at Elmore Correctional Facility on November 18, 2018. This violence reflects new findings which show that Alabama's prisons are the most lethal in the nation. With 19 homicides in the last two years, and nine homicides in 2018, Alabama's rate of over 34 homicides per 100,000 people incarcerated is more than 600 percent greater than the national average from 2001 to 2014.

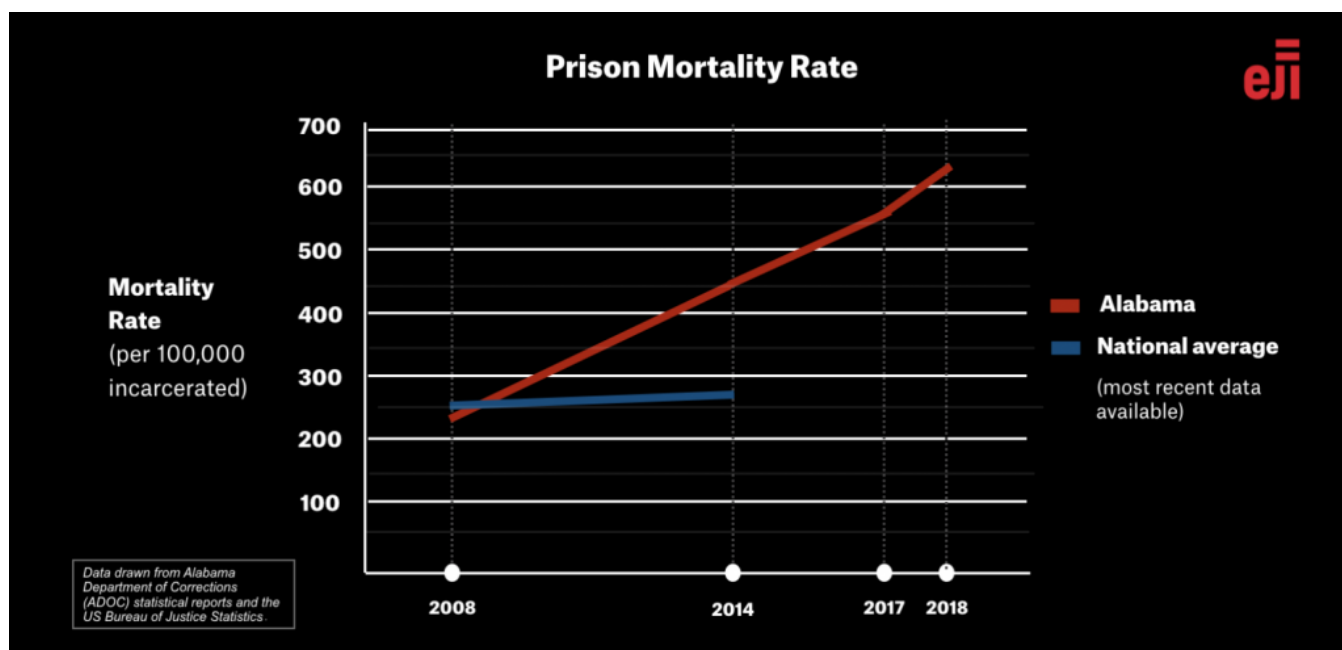
Over the last decade, there has been a dramatic increase in the level of violence in Alabama state prisons. Serious understaffing, systemic classification failures, and official misconduct and corruption have left thousands of prisoners vulnerable to abuse, assaults and uncontrolled violence.

St. Clair Correctional Facility witnessed three homicides this year alone. In 2018, the homicide rate at St. Clair is set to exceed 300 homicides per 100,000 incarcerated people.

Thirty-five prisoners have been murdered in ADOC facilities in the past five years. Nine of the homicides occurred at St. Clair. Twenty-one of the homicides occurred at medium security facilities: seven at Elmore, four at Bullock, four at Bibb, and four at Staton, one at Ventress and one at Kilby. This week's violence at Holman along with violent incidents at Elmore and St. Clair have created an unprecedented crisis in Alabama prisons with regard to the safety of prisoners and staff.

The mortality rate within Alabama prisons is at a record level. The number of deaths in Alabama prison, many of which are from non-natural causes including homicide, suicide, and drug overdoses greatly exceed what other states are seeing. The mortality rate in Alabama's prisons has more than doubled over the past 10 years. Between 2008 and 2014, Alabama's prison population decreased by 2 percent from 25,303 to 24,816 while mortality in Alabama prisons nearly doubled, going from 61 deaths in 2008 (241 per 100,000 people incarcerated) to 111 in 2014 (447 per

100,000 incarcerated). This trend continued in 2017 as the prison population fell 14 percent to 21,213 even as 120 people died in ADOC facilities, for a mortality rate of over 565 per 100,000 incarcerated people. This is more than double the national mortality rate of 275 deaths per 100,000 incarcerated people in 2014 (the most recent year in which data is available) and makes Alabama an outlier among its neighboring Southern states of Georgia, Tennessee, and Mississippi.



Documented instances of abuse by correctional staff have aggravated the culture of violence within state prisons. EJI filed a complaint with the Department of Justice in 2013 after an investigation revealed a pattern of excessive physical violence at Elmore, where correctional staff at the highest levels have been found to have engaged in extreme and excessive violence against inmates. In multiple incidents, correctional officers at Elmore illegally stripped and beat inmates while they were handcuffed and shackled, and have punched, kicked, and struck them with batons and other objects.

"The conditions are getting worse, and state officials must act now," said EJI Attorney Charlotte Morrison. "This epidemic of violence has once again created a crisis that requires a more committed and effective response from state leaders."

EJI re-initiated its investigation at Elmore this year after receiving dozens of reports of stabbings, assaults, extortion and excessive use of force. Inadequate staffing has created serious security conditions where prisoners are at risk of unprecedented levels of violence. According to multiple sources, a single officer is typically assigned to a dorm of 198 prisoners and there are periods at the prison where a total of eight officers are responsible for managing the entire prison with a population of over 1200 men. As a result of the freedom of movement and absence of staff, stabbings, assaults, and extortion are regular features of daily life.

The data on violence in Alabama's prisons makes clear that the security crisis in state correctional facilities is worsening and needs an urgent and immediate response from elected officials.

<https://eji.org/news/alabamas-prisons-are-deadliest-in-nation>

## Could leasing be the answer to new prisons?

*Bill Britt | Alabama Reporter*

*December 19, 2018*

Some lawmakers expressed alarm when Department of Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn revealed at a recent Contract Review meeting that the state was looking to spend \$1 billion to build three new mega-prisons.

Less than two years ago, the Legislature rejected a plan by then-Gov. Robert Bentley to spend approximately \$850 million on four mega-prisons. Now it seems the prospects of securing funding for a smaller project with a higher price tag is being met with skepticism if not outright revolt.

But there is another way Gov. Kay Ivey's administration can acquire new prisons without legislative approval.

State governments increasingly are turning to private companies for new prison facilities through a build and lease agreement.

Kansas is moving forward with plans to have CoreCivic Inc., the nation's largest private prison corporation, to build its new correctional facility and then lease it back to the state. CoreCivic announced it has similar projects in California and Oklahoma and is pursuing partnerships in other states.

CoreCivic and its rival, GEO Group Inc., are seeing windfall profits under new tax rules enacted by President Donald J. Trump's administration.

According to a report in Finance & Commerce, "CoreCivic and GEO, the biggest U.S. prison companies, are classified as real estate investment trusts. That means almost all their profits from property-related operations are tax-free as long as they're distributed to shareholders through dividends."

Finance & Commerce also found, "The tax rules incentivize CoreCivic and GEO to build and lease detention facilities rather than only manage them."

Dunn's appearance at this month's Contract Review hearing was to receive approval for an extension to a nearly \$11.5 million contract with Birmingham-based Hoar Program Management, LLC, to complete a study that would result in a request for proposal to build the three facilities.

Under a lease agreement, a company like CoreCivic will build prisons to the state specifications which is why even under a lease contract, the Ivey administration would need RFP which Hoar is tasked with delivering.

Two lawmakers who spoke with APR on background think that leasing prisons may not be the ideal solution, but it avoids much of the legislative in-fighting that doomed new prison construction in the past.

As one of the lawmakers explained, "During the Wallace era prisons and community colleges were built in specific locations as a sort of patronage system for the Governor's buddies."

Gov. George Wallace was known for generous hand-outs to his cronies, and in some cases, this meant building a community college campus or a correctional facility.

“Once a community has a college or a prison they are not going to want to give it up because it means jobs and votes for legislators, county commissioners, and profits for those up and down the food chain,” another lawmaker said.

Also convincing a supermajority of Republican lawmakers to approve a billion dollar bond offering seems unlikely with the Governor simultaneously pushing for a fuel tax increase.

One of the most significant and rarely mentioned accomplishments of the Legislative agenda enacted by the Republican supermajority has been the passage of prison reform bills, which have dramatically reduced prison overcrowding from 198 percent capacity in 2013, to 153 percent in 2018.

A report by the Council of State Governments found, “Alabama state leaders have appropriated \$26.5 million in the FY2019 budget to support justice reinvestment legislation enacted in 2015. This includes \$18.5 million to hire probation and parole officers and staff and expand behavioral health community-based treatment and services, as well as \$8 million to support community corrections programs (CCPs). This appropriation brings Alabama’s total reinvestment between FY2016 and FY2019 to \$95.6 million.”

Another result of Legislative intervention is the number of non-violent offenders has been reduced dramatically, going from a prison population of 35 percent non-violent to now under 14 percent. An unintended consequence of not locking up non-violent offenders is a very violent population inside the prisons, making it more dangerous for correctional officers.

While prison funding is up, and the overall population is down over the last four years, the aging facilities and understaffing is a persistent issue of concern.

In Nov. 2017, Gov. Ivey floated the idea of leasing built-to-order prisons. Now, at least a few of her supporters think it’s the time to utilize that option rather than trying to corral lawmakers into supporting a billion dollar bond to built three mega-prisons.

<http://www.alreporter.com/2018/12/19/could-leasing-be-the-answer-to-new-state-prisons/>

## Lawyers for Alabama prison system, inmates tentatively agree on mental health staffing

Mike Cason | AL.com

January 7, 2019

The Alabama Department of Corrections will have more time to meet a court order to expand mental health staff in prisons if a federal judge approves an agreement between lawyers representing the state and lawyers representing inmates. The two sides reached an agreement Friday on how to calculate and report staffing levels and resolve disputes. They appeared in court today.

U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson had scheduled today's hearing for the ADOC to show why it should not be held in contempt of court for failure to meet benchmarks for mental health staffing set in a court order in February 2018. That order required all the mental health positions in the ADOC's contract with its mental health provider to be filled by July 2018. The ADOC has acknowledged its mental health provider, Wexford Health Sources Inc., has not been able to fill all the positions. But the ADOC says it and Wexford have made all reasonable efforts to do so. The ADOC had asked Thompson to modify his order.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs had asked Thompson to order the ADOC to show why it should not be held in contempt. After Friday's agreement, Thompson went ahead with today's hearing to ask the lawyers questions about their agreement and other issues in the lawsuit over mental health care in Alabama prisons. The judge said he would need more time to study the agreement.

Maria Morris, an attorney from the Southern Poverty Law Center who represents the inmates, said the agreement means plaintiffs won't seek a contempt finding against the ADOC based solely on the staffing levels until at least the end of June. After that, staffing below 85 percent of the requirements would trigger a warning and mediation process that could lead to another motion for contempt. Morris said the most recent quarterly report shows 201 positions are filled out of 263.

Bill Lunsford, a lawyer for the ADOC, said the agreement clarifies the reporting process and facilitates communication with the two sides in disputes over mental health staffing. Lunsford said the realities of employing psychiatrists and other upper level mental health professionals in prisons has to be considered. He said the field has a high turnover. The ADOC has said hours worked by mental health providers is a better way to measure the staffing level than positions filled. Lunsford said the new agreement gravitates more toward reporting the staffing level by the hours worked method.

Morris said the agreement is a hybrid of the two approaches. Today's hearing was the latest development in a case that started in 2014, when lawyers from the SPLC and the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program sued the ADOC over health care, mental health care and accommodations for inmates with disabilities.

In June 2017, Thompson ruled that mental health care in Alabama prisons fell short of standards required by the U.S. Constitution and called that care "horrendously inadequate." Thompson said a shortage of mental health staff and correctional officers was an overarching cause of the poor care.

<https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/2018/12/11/splc-adoc-continue-testimony-alabama-prison-trial/2282545002/>



## Aid to Inmate Mothers



(AIM)

*Mission: To provide services to Alabama's incarcerated women with emphasis on enhancing personal growth and strengthening the bonds between inmate mothers and their children.*

### Visitation

Since 1987, AIM has provided visitation for mothers who have no transportation for their children to visit them. We provide monthly transportation through a network of volunteers in regions across Alabama. We bring toys and educational projects for the children and mothers, and provide a hot meal for them to share together. A volunteer takes photos of the children with their moms, which we print with a photo printer and they take home with them. **79 children and 42 mothers participated in this program in 2017.**

### Storybook Program

Each month, AIM brings over 200 children's books and fifteen flip cameras to help more than 125 women record bedtime stories for their children. Fifteen community volunteers participate in the program, operating the camera for the women, while they read the book. Over 400 women are signed up for this program--most get to participate three times a year. **601 mothers and 1385 children benefited from the Storybook Program in 2017.**

### Classes: General Population

Since 1997, AIM has been working with the prison administration to design classes that would have a positive impact on incarcerated women. We currently offer Life Skills and Job Readiness, Parenting Education, Domestic Violence Education, Women's Health Seminars, Pre-release training and two Book Clubs. **443 unduplicated women attended classes in 2017.**

### Project Reconnect

This program was created in response to the tremendous need for post-release guidance. A year before parole, AIM interviews each participant to determine their needs and discuss Life Goals. In addition to classes, and in the Pre-Release Program. When they leave prison, we provide them with interview outfits and other essential clothing, help them create a resume and obtain documents (birth certificates, social security cards, state ID), help them find a job and affordable housing. We provide supportive counseling and crisis intervention and continue to follow up with them for a year after their release from prison. *Project Reconnect* is coordinated by a former inmate who has gained the respect of the prison administration and has been allowed to re-enter the prison to interview and conduct programs. Almost 200 women are currently enrolled in *Project Reconnect*. **251 unduplicated women participated in Project Reconnect during 2017.**

### GENESIS Transitional Home

In May 2012, AIM opened a transitional center in Montgomery for women leaving prison. Women stay in the program for one year, and receive individual case management, participate in life skills classes, 12-step groups and case managers help them with their job search. GENESIS can house up to 12 women, and also offers a clothes closet and computer lab on site. A portion of their rent is set aside for them to use as a deposit on an apartment when they are ready to move to permanent housing. **In 2017, AIM had 18 residents.**



### Contact us at:

Carol Potok, Executive Director  
334-262-2245

[carol@inmatemoms.org](mailto:carol@inmatemoms.org)

[www.inmatemoms.org](http://www.inmatemoms.org)

### Offices:

660 Morgan Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36104

*We're on Facebook: Facebook/Aid to Inmate Mothers*

Mailing address:  
PO Box 986  
Montgomery, AL 36101





## Prison Reform Panel

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Last year the legislature approved an additional \$86 million for the Department of Corrections in FY-19 (a \$56M increase and a \$30M one-time supplement). What should the priorities be for these funds?
2. How do current infrastructure issues impact safety, overcrowding, and limited amenities within the state's correctional facilities? Since Alabama Prison Transformation Initiative has failed to gain legislative approval, what are the current options to address aging correctional facilities?
3. What measurable impact has the legislature's sentencing reform bill (SB 67) in 2015 had on the prison system?
4. How has the Department of Correction's contract with Wexford Health Sources helped to provide additional mental health staff in Alabama's prisons in compliance with standards established in court? What specific resources and types of personnel are needed to improve the quality of mental health access to inmates?
5. What programs have Department of Corrections and its partners put in place to rehabilitate inmates and prepare them to reenter society? Are recidivism rates for former inmates who have completed these programs similar or different from those who do not participate?
6. What rights, if any, do inmates have to protest work conditions? How does ADOC manage and investigate inmate complaints pertaining to abuse and retribution based punishment?

# 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 casual for full day

*Note: There will be short walks outdoors (up to four blocks) between sessions, so consider footwear and coats 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?

General Fund Budget \_\_\_\_\_  
Economic Development \_\_\_\_\_  
Educational Achievement \_\_\_\_\_

Lobbying & Ethics \_\_\_\_\_  
History and Culture \_\_\_\_\_  
Prisons Conditions \_\_\_\_\_

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?

---

---

---

---

---

---