May 1, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Eric G. Mackey
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: Alabama’s Future Educators’ Signing Day

Across the state, local systems will be empowered to host their own Future Educators’ Signing Day on May 7, 2019. Similar to athletic signing events, students will be recognized for their commitment to the field of education. This initiative will provide the opportunity to recognize high school students who will dedicate their service to educating Alabama’s future youth. Alabama’s Future Educators’ Signing Day will emphasize the positive highlights of the education profession.

The event is supported by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and the Alabama Education Association (AEA). According to research, 60 percent of teachers work within 20 miles of where they went to high school. However, only five percent of students indicated on the ACT® that they plan to pursue a career in education as stated on the Educators Rising website at https://www.educatorsrising.org/the-challenge. To encourage more students to become educators, the event will serve as a catalyst to spark conversations with students about the benefits and rewards of becoming an educator.

Make plans to have business and industry partners, mayors and government officials, education leadership, parents, and the press participate at each local system’s Future Educators’ Signing Day Event, drawing attention to the positive aspects of the education profession. For questions or concerns, please contact Ms. April Shrader, Education Specialist, ALSDE, by email at ashrader@alsde.edu or Dr. Pamela Fossett, Education Policy and Professional Practice Manager, AEA, by email at pamelaf@alaedu.org.

The Alabama’s Future Educators’ Signing Day Tool Kit is attached and can also be found on the ALSDE website in the Education and Training Section under the FTA tab at https://www.alsde.edu/sec/cte/Pages/teachingandtraining-all.aspx.

EGM/SJS/AS

Attachment

cc: City and County Career and Technical Education Administrators
    High School Counselors and Career Coaches

FY19-2081
Dear Future Educators' Signing Day Coordinator:

On behalf of the Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Education Association, and Future Teachers of Alabama, thank you for hosting a Future Educators' Signing Day on May 7, 2019, at your school. We hope the event will help encourage students to pursue a career in the field of education.

The purpose of Future Educators' Signing Day is to build statewide excitement about reducing our teacher shortage in Alabama. Not only are we celebrating those seniors who are ready to take on the challenge of educating the future youth of Alabama, but we are also working to inspire younger students to choose education as a meaningful career. Additionally, schools that partner with local higher education institutions to implement a Future Educators' Signing Day have the opportunity to grow the relationship between local colleges and universities, their school, and their students.

Please contact Dr. Pamela Fossett at pamelaf@alaedu.org or Ms. April Shrader at ashrader@alsde.edu if you have any questions about planning and/or implementing Alabama's Future Educators' Signing Day.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this important event.

Sincerely,

Eric G. Mackey  
State Superintendent of Education

Amy Marlowe  
Alabama Education Association, Interim Executive Director
INTRODUCTION

Alabama's Future Educators' Signing Day is an event designed to promote becoming an educator to students in Alabama public schools. It is sponsored by the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Education Association, and Future Teachers of Alabama. The event is a time for the education community to celebrate those students ready to take on the challenge of educating the future youth of Alabama.

ABOUT FUTURE TEACHERS OF ALABAMA AND THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING CLUSTER

What is Future Teachers of Alabama (FTA)?
Future Teachers of Alabama (FTA) is an organization within the Aspiring Educators/Student Division of the Alabama Education Association (AEA). It is for middle and high school students who have expressed an interest in the field of education as a career choice. To learn how to start an FTA chapter in your school, contact Dr. Pamela Fossett at pamelaf@alaedu.org.

What is the "Grow Our Own" initiative?
"Grow Our Own" is a collaborative initiative of the Alabama Education Association and the Alabama State Department of Education. It is designed to promote teaching in the state of Alabama, to focus on the importance of being an educator, and to encourage more students to consider education as a career choice. It is also designed to promote AEA's Future Teachers of Alabama organization that provides experiences to allow students to learn more about the education profession.

What is the Education and Training Cluster?
The Education and Training cluster prepares high school students for careers in the education and training field in three pathway areas: Administration and Professional Support Services, Early Childhood Education, and Teaching and Training. Rigorous instruction is provided to equip students with knowledge and skills needed in preparation for credentials, articulated credit, and/or further education.
ABOUT FUTURE EDUCATORS' SIGNING DAY

What is Alabama's Future Educators' Signing Day?

Alabama's Future Educators' Signing Day is a collaboration between the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Education Association, and Future Teachers of Alabama. It is an event designed to celebrate graduating seniors who have decided to become an educator and an opportunity to encourage other students to choose education as their future career path.

With recent attention brought to the teacher shortage in Alabama, Future Educators' Signing Day is an opportunity for local school systems to "Grow Their Own," and celebrate those students who are choosing the field of education. By implementing the statewide event, Future Educators' Signing Day will bring attention to becoming an educator and help create a pipeline of students in teacher education preparation programs to fill the needs of Alabama schools.

What Does Future Educators' Signing Day Look Like?

Each school should design the event to fit the needs of its school community. For some schools, it might be a large event with a pep rally and assembly, but for others it might mean a smaller event, such as a table signing in the library. The event can start small and grow year-after-year. As long as the event celebrates high school graduating seniors who have chosen to pursue education as a career, the day will be successful no matter the structure.

When is Future Educators' Signing Day?

Alabama's Future Educators' Signing Day will be May 7, 2019, during Teacher Appreciation Week.

What is the Purpose of Future Educators' Signing Day?

The purpose of Future Educators' Signing Day is to promote education as a career choice. We need to celebrate becoming an educator so that we can fill the needs of Alabama school systems.
SUCCESS GUIDE FOR PLANNING YOUR FUTURE EDUCATORS' SIGNING DAY

EVENT IDEAS:

- Partner with College Signing Day and/or Career Signing Day: Make special recognition to those students who are planning to become future educators.
- Pep Rally: Organize a pep rally to celebrate graduating seniors who have committed to becoming an Alabama educator.
- Banners: Create a banner to be displayed in the halls for underclassmen to see the seniors' signatures on it who have committed to becoming an educator.
- Signing Ceremony: Much like a signing ceremony for sports, invite college representatives, parents, community members, student mentors, etc., and have students sign the certificate of commitment. Invite the media to cover your ceremony.
- Red Carpet Event: Host a red carpet event where students walk the red carpet and invite the school newspaper or media class to interview students as they walk the red carpet.
CHECKLIST

PLANNING PROCESS:

- Create a committee to discuss the event. Your team might include Education and Training teacher(s), Future Teachers of Alabama adviser(s), school counselors, career coaches, teachers, administrators, parents, PTA/PTO, and/or other community members or organizations.
- Evaluate current resources and budget.
- Determine the type of event and schedule.
- Confirm location and time. (Date should be Tuesday, May 7, 2019.)
- Plan and prepare efforts to publicize the event in the community. Create invitations (paper and/or electronic) to send to teachers/staff, parents, community members/partners, alumni, etc.
- Reach out to graduating seniors to identify which seniors to include in the event.
- Contact higher education institutions, local businesses, or other community organizations for donations and/or sponsorship for t-shirts, etc.
- Distribute information to faculty and staff and request their assistance in promoting the event.
- Finalize arrangements for the event.
- Communicate logistics with seniors participating in the event.
- Purchase decorations and supplies for the event.
- Distribute media advisory to the media. We recommend sending this at least one to two weeks prior to the event and follow up with media outlets prior to the event.
- Confirm all graduating seniors who are participating in the event and send them a reminder in the days leading up to the event.
- Ensure your supplies are ready the day before your event.
DAY BEFORE AND DAY OF THE EVENT:

- Follow up the day before the event with any invited media outlets.
- Set up decorations and music.
- Print enough of the included certificate to be presented to each student.
- Check in with volunteers to ensure they know where to go and what to do.
- Take pictures during the event and upload them to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter using hashtag #ALFutureEdSigningDay.
- Use sample Signing Day Script for teacher or administrator to read as students sign commitment certificate as follows:

  By signing this letter of commitment, you are committing to improve the quality of education for students in the state of Alabama. On behalf of Dr. Eric G. Mackey, State Superintendent of Education, and Ms. Amy Marlowe, Interim Executive Director, Alabama Education Association, your local administrators, community members, and teachers, we commend you on making an honorable decision to improve the quality of education for Alabama’s students. You will be an integral part of helping "Educate Alabama's Future." Please sign the commitment certificate.

SAMPLE AGENDA:

- Remember that each school's event will look different. Below is just a sample agenda for an event.
- Principal welcomes audience, shares a few teacher shortage statistics, information about the seniors that are signing, and recognizes special guests.
- Words of encouragement given by an inspirational speaker.
- The Future Teachers of Alabama Adviser, the Education and Training teacher, and/or Career and Technical Education Director highlights the Education and Training Program at the school and Future Teachers of Alabama.
- Signing seniors come to the stage or front of the room individually and introduce themselves with "why they want to be an educator" and "their future plans."
- Signing ceremony. Seniors will sign the included certificate of commitment.
- Closing remarks.
FOLLOW UP:

- Share your successful event by sending/posting an article with pictures on your school/system website, social media, local television stations, local radio stations, school/system newsletters, and/or local newspapers.
- Keep a list and plans of the students who committed to allow you to support them through their future endeavors and "Grow Your Own."
- Submit data from your event using the following link: http://tinyurl.com/future-ed-sign-day
PROMOTING YOUR EVENT:

IN-SCHOOL PROMOTION IDEAS:

- Use your school's daily announcements to generate awareness at your school.
- Feature student editorials in the school newspaper.
- Create a Future Educators' wall. Ask seniors to write why they want to be an educator and what college they plan to attend, along with their signature on the wall.
- Involve teachers and other educators. Ask educators in the building to put a statement on their door about why they chose to be an educator and include the college attended.
- Send letters or email reminders to all parents, students, and school staff.
- Post flyers and banners in the school hallways.

PROMOTING ALABAMA'S FUTURE EDUCATORS' SIGNING DAY TO THE MEDIA:

- Write a media advisory: Write a brief media advisory/press release with information about your Future Educators' Signing Day event.
- Distribute the media advisory: Send your media advisory to local media outlets approximately one week in advance. If you email a copy of the advisory, send it directly in the body of the email rather than in an attachment. This will help avoid spam filters.
- Follow up after you send the advisory: After sending the media advisory, follow up by telephone to make sure it was received.
- Designate a media point-of-contact: Choose one person to be the key person for any members of the media who may attend.
- Follow up the day before your big event: The day before the event, follow up with your media targets by telephone or email to remind them of the event and/or to confirm attendance. Give them the contact information for the media point-of-contact.
- On Future Educators' Signing Day: Make sure parking is available for media and that the school's front office is aware of who will be arriving.
- Send a thank you: Send thank-you notes to members of the media who attended your event. This will help to maintain a good relationship with local media outlets.
ALABAMA FUTURE EDUCATOR

I, ____________________________,

Am committing to be a successful

Alabama Educator

on this day,

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

I understand that this is not a legal, binding agreement, but a GREAT way to express my commitment to “Educating Alabama’s Future” through my future career pathway!

STUDENT SIGNATURE

TEACHER SIGNATURE
Sample Media Advisory
Send this sample media advisory to local news organizations. Update the bold pieces with your school’s event information and add any other relevant event details.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
For more information, please contact:
Name, Phone, E-mail Address

SCHOOL NAME HOSTS FUTURE EDUCATORS’ SIGNING DAY

CITY, AL (DATE)- In an effort to promote a “Grow Our Own” culture in our school and to help fill the teacher shortages in Alabama, Name of Your High School will participate in Alabama’s Future Educators’ Signing Day, a statewide initiative sponsored by the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Education Association, and Future Teachers of Alabama, on Date of Event.

What: Name of Your High School is hosting a Future Educators’ Signing Day to celebrate graduating seniors from the class of 2019 that are making the important decision to take on the challenge of educating the future youth of Alabama. This celebration will continue to create excitement for those students who are willing to step up and take on the challenge of becoming an educator to fill many needed educator positions in the state of Alabama.

When: Insert Date from Insert Time

Where: Insert location

RSVP: Name, Title, Contact Information

Press: This event is open to the media. We ask that you RSVP in advance. If you are unable to RSVP, please check in at the school’s main office.

Event Highlights:
- Speaker Names and Information
- Plans
- Announcing graduating seniors who will be signing the Future Educator Commitment Certificate.

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THANK YOU FOR PROMOTING THE EDUCATION PROFESSION!

For more information, please contact:

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