

**MINUTES OF THE ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE STATE OF ALABAMA
AUGUST 13, 2026
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA**

The Alabama State Board of Education met for its regular meeting of Elementary/Secondary Education matters on Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., in the Alabama School of Cyber Technology and Engineering, Huntsville, Alabama. The meeting was called to order by the Vice President of the Board in accordance with *Alabama Code* (1975), §16-3-7, as amended.

PRESIDING: MRS. KELLY MOONEY, VICE PRESIDENT

The invocation was done by Reverend James B. Mackey, Minister to Students and Families, First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama, and Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag that was done in unison.

The following members were present:

Present

Dr. Tonya Chestnut in person
Dr. Allen Long in person
Mrs. Marie Manning in person
Mrs. Kelly Mooney in person
Dr. Wayne Reynolds in person
Dr. Yvette Richardson in person
Mrs. Tracie West in person
Mrs. Jackie Zeigler in person

Absent

Governor Kay Ivey

Dr. Eric G. Mackey, State Superintendent of Education, was also present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

On motion by Dr. Wayne Reynolds and seconded by Mrs. Tracie West, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE JULY 14, 2025, MEETING

On motion by Dr. Yvette Richardson and seconded by Dr. Tonya Chestnut, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the meeting of July 14, 2026.

On motion by Dr. Wayne Reynolds and seconded by Dr. Yvette Richardson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 2026 AS
ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH IN ALABAMA**

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Board of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education accepted the National Attendance Challenge to reduce chronic absenteeism by 50% over five years, and Alabama is committed to dedicating resources and attention to reducing chronic absenteeism rates—starting as early as kindergarten—recognizing that good attendance is essential to student achievement and graduation; and

WHEREAS, Alabama reduced chronic absenteeism by 2.8 percentage points, from 14.84% to 12.05%, on the 2025 State Report Card, which is a required reporting metric under the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act*; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Department of Education has developed the *2026-27 Alabama Attendance Manual*, to support school systems by providing consistency in policies and procedures related to school attendance; and

WHEREAS, chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 18 or more days of school for any reason—including excused and unexcused absences—or just two or three days a month, which is a proven predictor of academic difficulty and increased dropout rates; and

WHEREAS, the definition of attendance has expanded beyond the physical classroom to include virtual and remote learning; and

WHEREAS, improving student attendance and reducing chronic absences requires commitment, collaboration, and tailored approaches that reflect the unique challenges and strengths of each community; and

WHEREAS, chronic absenteeism affects vulnerable students differently, particularly those facing systemic barriers that make regular attendance difficult; and

WHEREAS, chronic absenteeism exacerbates the achievement gap often associated with struggling students; and

WHEREAS, student absenteeism undermines efforts to improve struggling schools, as it is difficult to measure instructional improvement when students are not present to benefit from instruction; and

WHEREAS, schools and communities must increase commitment to identifying, analyzing, projecting, and sharing data on chronically absent students to ensure appropriate interventions and services align with student needs; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Department of Education works collaboratively with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and other state agencies and organizations to provide support services that increase attendance for all students; and

WHEREAS, chronic absenteeism can be significantly reduced when schools, parents, and communities work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address barriers that keep students from attending school; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education encourages all local communities, school systems, and civic organizations to join in this laudable effort to reduce chronic student absenteeism and hereby encourages all Alabamians to participate in activities recognizing September 2026 as *Alabama Attendance Awareness Month*.

Done this 13th day of August 2026

On motion by Dr. Wayne Reynolds and seconded by Mrs. Tracie West, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION HONORING WILLIAM “TRAVIS” STEVENS AND ZACHARY “ZAC” HOLT
SCOTTSBORO HIGH SCHOOL, SCOTTSBORO CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM
FOR THEIR HEROIC RESPONSE AND LIFESAVING SERVICE TO A STUDENT**

WHEREAS, the safety, health, and well-being of Alabama’s students depend upon dedicated professionals who stand ready to act with courage, compassion, and sound judgment in times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, when a student at Scottsboro High School suffered a serious medical emergency, School Resource Officer William “Travis” Stevens and Principal Zachary “Zac” Holt immediately recognized the gravity of the situation and responded without hesitation to ensure the student received urgent medical attention; and

WHEREAS, through their calm demeanor, decisive leadership, and coordinated efforts, Officer Stevens and Principal Holt facilitated the student’s prompt transportation to a medical facility, where lifesaving treatment was successfully administered; and

WHEREAS, their actions exemplify the highest standards of public service and demonstrate the critical role that educators and school safety professionals play in protecting and caring for students beyond the classroom; and

WHEREAS, William “Travis” Stevens is a committed public servant with more than a decade of distinguished experience in law enforcement, leadership, and community service, having begun his career with the Scottsboro Police Department in 2012 before serving in a supervisory capacity with the Jackson County Sheriff’s Office and as Chief of Police for the Hollywood Police Department; and

WHEREAS, Officer Stevens has earned numerous professional honors, including multiple Employee of the Year awards and recognition as the 2023 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year by the local Veterans of Foreign Wars, while also serving his community as President of the Jackson County Chapter of the Huntsville Area Association of Realtors; and

WHEREAS, Zachary “Zac” Holt is a respected educator and servant leader entering his twenty-third year in education and thirteenth year in administration, having served as principal of Caldwell Elementary School, Scottsboro Junior High School, and Guntersville High School before returning to Scottsboro City Schools in June 2026 as principal of Scottsboro High School; and

WHEREAS, Principal Holt was named the 2023 Scottsboro City Schools Administrator of the Year and has distinguished himself through exemplary leadership at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels, bringing extensive expertise in instructional leadership, school improvement, athletics, and personnel management; and

WHEREAS, Officer Stevens and Principal Holt demonstrated extraordinary courage, preparedness, compassion, and devotion to duty when a student’s life was at stake, and their actions are worthy of special recognition and the sincere gratitude of the citizens of Alabama:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education do hereby honor and commend William “Travis” Stevens and Zachary “Zac” Holt for their heroic response to a student’s medical emergency and for helping ensure that the student received lifesaving medical care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution serve as an expression of profound appreciation for their outstanding service, their unwavering commitment to the students of Scottsboro City Schools, and the example of leadership and selfless dedication they have provided to educators, law enforcement officers, and communities throughout the state of Alabama.

Done this 13th day of August 2026

EXECUTIVE (INCLUDES LEGAL AND PUBLIC INFORMATION)

Dr. Mackey shared updates regarding the Bessemer City, Dallas County, and Sumter County School Systems. He reported that the Bessemer City School System has had a remarkable start to the school year. Dr. Daniel Boyd currently serves as the Chief Administrative Officer for both the Bessemer City and Dallas County School Systems. Dr. Mackey noted that substantial improvements have been achieved in Bessemer City, though additional efforts are needed to further advance the school system’s goals.

Dr. Mackey stated that Dr. Corey Jones, Superintendent of the Dallas County School System, is beginning his second year in the role. He reported that the school system has strengthened its overall financial position through several strategic measures, including the closure of two schools, careful management of personnel costs, and improved operational efficiency within the Child Nutrition Department, among other initiatives.

Dr. Mackey reported that the Sumter County School System recently experienced a setback when an elementary school principal resigned on the first day of school. He noted that Mr. John Heard currently serves as the school system’s Chief Administrative Officer. As part of the intervention efforts, one school was condemned and another was at risk of being condemned. Dr. Mackey explained that the Department partnered with Sumter County to construct a new school, the school system’s first new school facility in many years. He also stated that the district is leveraging local and Career and Technical Education funds to develop a new Career and Technical Education Center. Overall, Dr. Mackey emphasized that the Sumter County School System has made substantial progress in governance, academic achievement, financial management, facilities, transportation, and organizational effectiveness.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Mackey recognized School Resource Officer William “Travis” Stevens and Principal Zachary “Zac” Holt of Scottsboro High School, Scottsboro City School System, and expressed his appreciation for their heroic actions and lifesaving response in assisting a student. The honorees were joined by their spouses and Superintendent Jennifer Williams. Dr. Mackey asked Officer Stevens and Principal Holt to remain after the meeting for photographs.

Dr. Mackey noted the large number of students in attendance and thanked Mr. Matt Massey, President of the Alabama School of Cyber Technology and Engineering (ASCTE), for hosting him and the Board Members. He shared that President Massey had assured him that students would have an opportunity to speak with Board Members. Dr. Mackey explained that ASCTE serves students from counties across Alabama and has a goal of enrolling at least one student from every school system in the state. He noted that some students reside on campus, while others commute from throughout the Tennessee Valley region.

Dr. Mackey stated that he and the Board Members recently began holding January and August Board meetings and retreats in various State Board Districts across Alabama. He added that Dr. Wayne Reynolds played a key role in working with Mr. Massey to organize the meeting and retreat.

Dr. Mackey explained that following the meeting, Board Members would convene for the Work Session to discuss upcoming initiatives, break for lunch, tour the school, and then participate in activities led by President Massey and his team. He also noted that the Board would later reconvene to discuss the Fiscal Year 2028 budget request, which must be submitted to the Legislature by November 1, 2026.

There being no other business before the Board, on motion by Dr. Yvette Richardson and seconded by Dr. Allen Long, Board Members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m. The next Alabama State Board of Education Meeting for Elementary and Secondary Education will be held on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 10 a.m. in the Auditorium of the Gordon Persons Building followed by the Work Session.

Vice President

Secretary and Executive Officer