

**MINUTES OF THE ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE STATE OF ALABAMA
SEPTEMBER 10, 2026
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**

The Alabama State Board of Education met for its regular meeting of Elementary/Secondary Education matters on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., in the auditorium of the Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery, Alabama. The meeting was called to order by the President of the Board in accordance with *Alabama Code* (1975), §16-3-7, as amended.

PRESIDING: GOVERNOR KAY IVEY, PRESIDENT

The invocation was done by Brother Gerald Romine, Roanoke Church of Christ, Roanoke, 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
Governor Kay Ivey in person
Dr. Allen Long in person
Mrs. Kelly Mooney in person
Mrs. Tracie West in person
Mrs. Jackie Zeigler in person

Absent

Mrs. Marie Manning
Dr. Wayne Reynolds
Dr. Yvette Richardson

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

On motion by Mrs. Jackie Zeigler and seconded by Mrs. Tracie West, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE AUGUST 13, 2026, MEETING

On motion by Mrs. Kelly Mooney and seconded by Dr. Tonya Chestnut, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the meeting of August 13, 2026.

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

**RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING OCTOBER 5-9, 2026, AS
ALABAMA COLLEGE APPLICATION CAMPAIGN WEEK**

WHEREAS, Alabama is committed to helping students prepare for meaningful postsecondary options and future career opportunities; and

WHEREAS, educators, employers, and business leaders continue to emphasize the importance of strong academic preparation, career development, and workforce readiness; and to remain competitive in today's global economy, Alabama's students must continue to have access to high-quality educational experiences; and

WHEREAS, this October, for the twelfth consecutive year, Alabama will celebrate the Alabama College Application Campaign, an annual initiative of the Alabama State Department of Education that encourages students to pursue education and training beyond high school; and

WHEREAS, schools and communities across the state will recognize Alabama College Application Campaign Week through special activities, official proclamation ceremonies, and other events that highlight college and career readiness and support students as they transition from high school to postsecondary education, training, employment, or military service; and

WHEREAS, increasing awareness of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other financial aid resources helps students and families make informed decisions about postsecondary learning opportunities, including associate and bachelor's degrees,

professional licenses, industry-recognized credentials, specialty certifications, and advanced degrees:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education does hereby proclaim October 5–9, 2026, as Alabama College Application Campaign Week.

Done this 10th day of September 2026

On motion by Mrs. Jackie Zeigler and seconded by Mrs. Kelly Mooney, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING OCTOBER 12-16, 2026
AS “NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK” IN ALABAMA SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Board of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education has annually acknowledge the National School Lunch Program for its vital role in supporting the health and educational development of Alabama’s children by providing nutritious meals to students in public and private schools, as well as Residential Child Care Institutions participating in the program; and

WHEREAS, each October, the School Nutrition Association and the U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly celebrate the National School Lunch Week—established in 1962 to highlight the importance of healthy school meals and the impact of balanced nutrition on student achievement both inside and outside the classroom; and

WHEREAS, the theme for National School Lunch Week 2026 (#NSLW26) is “*Cafeteria Circus: Where Nutrition Takes Center Stage!*”; and

WHEREAS, research shows that participation in school lunch programs supports obesity prevention, improves overall student health, enhances dietary quality, and helps reduce food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, during the 2025-2026 school year, the School Lunch Program served more than 86,137,379 lunches to Alabama students—an increase of 1,160,178 meals over the previous year:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education expresses its sincere appreciation to the dedicated school nutrition professionals whose efforts ensure the success of the School Lunch Program across 1,454 school sites statewide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education encourages all Alabama schools to participate in National School Lunch Week activities and hereby designates October 12-16, 2026, as “**National School Lunch Week**” in Alabama public schools.

Done this 10th day of September 2026

On motion by Dr. Allen Long and seconded by Dr. Tonya Chestnut, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING OCTOBER AS
DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH**

WHEREAS, dyslexia is defined as a language-based learning challenge or disability that is neurological in origin and characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities; and

WHEREAS, dyslexia impacts approximately one out of five children in Alabama schools; and

WHEREAS, through effective dyslexia screening, students with dyslexia can be identified as early as kindergarten, long before their learning challenges have resulted in learning disabilities; and

WHEREAS, early identification and intervention will equip many students with dyslexia for success in school and in life; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Board of Education has specifically addressed dyslexia within the *Alabama Administrative Code*; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Board of Education has committed itself to supporting Alabama schools and teachers with resources, materials, and professional development; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Board of Education has committed to the goal that every child will read on grade level; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama Legislature has passed, and Alabama's Governor has approved the *Alabama Literacy Act* to support all struggling readers and has demonstrated this commitment through ongoing financial support:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education recognizes October as Dyslexia Awareness Month and encourages school systems to engage their schools, families, and communities in activities that create a culture of understanding, support, encouragement, and learning for students having dyslexia.

Done this 10th day of September 2026

On motion by Dr. Allen Long and seconded by Mrs. Kelly Mooney, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING OCTOBER 2026 AS
STATEWIDE PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MONTH
IN ALABAMA**

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Education strongly support parent and family engagement in the education of Alabama students, and parent and family engagement is critical to student and school success; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Board of Education is committed to parent and family engagement in our schools as it strives to provide all public-school children with the opportunity for a quality education, high academic standards, and the skills necessary for success; and

WHEREAS, more than 30 years of research identify parent and family engagement as a key component in ensuring a child's academic achievement, and a successful partnership between educators and families is one of the most crucial factors influencing positive student outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Statewide Parent and Family Engagement Month provides parents and families with the opportunity to learn how they can become more actively engaged in their children's education by visiting their children's schools, learning about the curriculum, consulting with their children's teachers, and participating in school activities; and

WHEREAS, Statewide Parent and Family Engagement Month is an excellent opportunity for Alabama's public schools to emphasize and increase parent and family engagement, and to partner with communities to raise awareness and support for public education:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education proclaims October 2026 as Statewide Parent and Family Engagement Month in Alabama and designates this year's theme as **Building Bridges Across Alabama: Connecting Families, Schools, and Communities**. This theme encourages educators, communities, parents, and families to participate in this observance and challenges educators to promote sustained, year-round parent and family engagement.

Done this 10th day of September 2026

On motion by Mrs. Jackie Zeigler and seconded by Mrs. Tracie West, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING OCTOBER 2026 AS
MANUFACTURING MONTH**

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Department of Education has proclaimed October 2026 as Manufacturing Month; and

WHEREAS, recognizing October 2026 as Manufacturing Month in Alabama is an effective way to raise awareness of modern manufacturing, inspire the next generation of workers, and promote educational pathways aligned with industry needs; and

WHEREAS, Alabama has prioritized bold initiatives to support and expand manufacturing through robust workforce development programs, strategic infrastructure investments, and a steadfast commitment to fostering a pro-growth business climate; and

WHEREAS, Alabama's manufacturing sector contributes approximately 16 percent of the state's gross domestic product, generating 50 billion dollars in annual economic output; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alabama stands tall among America's manufacturing leaders, ranking in the top five nationally for manufacturing job concentration and producing a diverse array of high-quality products ranging from automobiles and aerospace components to ships and advanced materials; and

WHEREAS, manufacturing companies directly employ more than 280,000 individuals in Alabama, which signifies 13 percent of the workforce; and

WHEREAS, these ongoing efforts have resulted in significant job creation, the recruitment of global industry leaders, and enhanced prosperity for Alabama families and communities; and

WHEREAS, manufacturing is a pathway to lifelong careers with advancement opportunities, and the continued growth of this sector depends on a skilled and educated workforce; and

WHEREAS, high schools and career technical centers across Alabama play a vital role in preparing students with the academic knowledge, technical skills, and career readiness necessary for success in manufacturing and related fields, with 103 local education agencies offering manufacturing-related programs that accounted for 13,931 students enrolled during the 2025-2026 school year, and 1,524 career readiness indicators were earned; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between high schools and career technical centers, local industries, and community partners strengthens career and technical education programs, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities that connect students to real-world experience; and

WHEREAS, celebrating Manufacturing Month in Alabama's high schools and career technical centers will help students, families, and educators better understand the exciting opportunities available in the manufacturing sector; and

WHEREAS, the State Superintendent of Education recommends approval:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education does hereby proclaim October 2026 as Manufacturing Month and encourages local boards of education, schools, business professionals, and local educational organizations to participate in this celebration through activities that demonstrate the importance of Alabama's education programs in preparing students for great career opportunities and academic excellence.

Done this 10th day of September 2026

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

ADOPT AMENDED ALABAMA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE RULE 290-2-1-.01, PERTAINING TO ANNUAL APPORTIONMENT OF FOUNDATION PROGRAM FUNDS

On motion by Dr. Tonya Chestnut and seconded by Mrs. Kelly Mooney, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

ADOPT AMENDED ALABAMA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE RULE 290-2-1-.06, PERTAINING TO ANNUAL APPORTIONMENT OF RAISE ACT FUNDS

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

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2027 OPERATING BUDGET

EXECUTIVE (INCLUDES LEGAL AND PUBLIC INFORMATION)

Dr. Mackey stated that there was no report necessary for the month of September.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Mackey noted that attendance at the meeting was lighter than usual, both among those on stage and in the audience. He mentioned that some Board Members were unable to attend, including some who experienced last-minute travel delays due to interstate accidents. He expressed hope that those members would be able to join the Board during the Work Session.

Dr. Mackey highlighted several recent Board actions and upcoming events. First, he reminded everyone that the Board had adopted a resolution designating October as Dyslexia Awareness Month. He shared that special guests will join the Board in October to help celebrate the month and to recognize the important work being done through Alabama's reading initiatives to increase awareness and support for students with dyslexia. He encouraged everyone to wear red in observance of the occasion. Dr. Mackey also noted that attendance by members of the dyslexia community is expected to increase this year because the Alabama Dyslexia Association's annual meeting will take place the week after the Board's October meeting rather than during the same week, as it has in recent years.

Dr. Mackey also reminded everyone that October 5-9, 2026, will be College Application Campaign Week. During that time, all public colleges and universities, along with some private institutions across Alabama, will waive application fees. He encouraged high school seniors and other eligible students to take advantage of the opportunity and submit their college applications during that week. Public awareness efforts will be conducted statewide to promote participation and emphasize that this is an ideal time for students to begin the college application process.

Dr. Mackey expressed his appreciation to Governor Kay Ivey, the Alabama Legislature, and the members of the Board for supporting the *Administrative Code* rule that implements teacher pay raises and funding for the Public Education Employees' Health Insurance Plan (PEEHIP) for the upcoming year. He explained that while the Legislature authorizes these provisions through the budget process and Governor Ivey signs them into law, they become actionable through the Board's adoption of the corresponding rule. It becomes an actual actionable rule once the Board adopts it. Dr. Mackey noted that teachers and education employees will benefit on October 1, 2026, through both salary increases and efforts to maintain affordable health care costs.

Dr. Mackey also reminded attendees that September 11, 2026, marks the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He reflected on the significance of the day and noted that many adults can remember where they were when the attacks occurred. Dr. Mackey shared that while attending the opening of the new Academy of Craft Training in Montgomery the previous day, alongside Dr. Tonya Chestnut and Mrs. Kelly Mooney, he spoke with several students and realized that none of them had been born when the attacks took place. He emphasized the importance of remembering the lives lost on September 11, honoring the sacrifices made by victims and their families, and recognizing the ongoing efforts to protect freedom and democracy. He encouraged continued education of students about the value of freedom and the sacrifices required to preserve it.

Finally, Dr. Mackey thanked Brother Gerald Romine of the Roanoke Church of Christ for providing the invocation. He noted Brother Romine's longstanding service to the community as a cattle farmer, contractor, former construction manager for Roanoke City Schools, and a member of the Randolph County Board of Education for 14 years. Dr. Mackey also acknowledged his current role as pastor of the Roanoke Church of Christ and recognized his connection to Mr. Chuck Marcum, Chief of Staff for the Alabama State Department of Education. He thanked Mr. Gregory Foster, Superintendent of the Roanoke City School System, for bringing Brother Romine to the meeting and noted that Brother Romine will soon celebrate 69 years of service as pastor. Dr. Mackey concluded by expressing appreciation for Brother Romine's service and influence within the community.

There being no other business before the Board, on motion by Dr. Allen Long and seconded by Dr. Tonya Chestnut, Board Members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 a.m. The next Alabama State Board of Education Meeting for Elementary and Secondary Education will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2026, at 10 a.m. in the Auditorium of the Gordon Persons Building followed by the Work Session.

Vice President

Secretary and Executive Officer