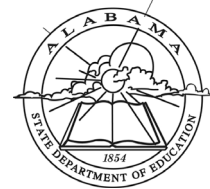




STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Education

October 8, 2026

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** City and County Superintendents of Education

**FROM:** Eric G. Mackey   
State Superintendent of Education

**RE:** Ten Commandments Displays

In accordance with Act 2026-428, beginning January 1, 2027, and subject to the availability of donated funds or displays, certain schools must display an 11-inch by 14-inch poster that includes required historical information and has been approved by the State Superintendent.

This poster must be displayed in:

- An entry way or other common area, such as the cafeteria or school library.
- Every school within the jurisdiction of each local board of education, unless that school serves kindergarten through 4th grade exclusively.
- Every 5th through 12th grade classroom where United States history is routinely taught pursuant to the Alabama Course of Study.

**Attached is the only approved image for compliance with this Act.** As provided by law, printed copies will be available at no charge for distribution to the schools. Additional information about distribution of the printed copies will be forthcoming.

If you have any questions regarding implementation of this Act, please contact your school board attorney. You may contact Connor Johnston, by email at [connor.johnston@alsde.edu](mailto:connor.johnston@alsde.edu) or by telephone at (334) 694-4897 with other Act-related questions.

EGM/PR/RE

Attachment

cc: Mr. Chuck Marcum  
Mr. Jason Swann

FY27-1001

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of Education

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Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.  
Secretary and  
Executive Officer

# HISTORICAL TRUTHS: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND AMERICA'S FOUNDING DOCUMENTS

The Ten Commandments are a key part of the Judeo-Christian religious and moral tradition that shaped Western Civilization and ultimately the founding of the United States. There are many versions of the Ten Commandments. The one that follows is a common translation but not the only translation:



*You shall not have other gods before me*

*You shall not make idols*

*You shall not take the name of the Lord  
your God in vain*

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*

*Honor your father and your mother*

*You shall not murder*

*You shall not commit adultery*

*You shall not steal*

*You shall not bear false witness  
against your neighbor*

*You shall not covet*

In 1813, future U.S. President John Quincy Adams wrote in a letter to his son that, "The Law given from Sinai" – in other words, the Ten Commandments – "was a civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious Code." He noted that many of its provisions "*were of universal applications – Laws essential to the existence of men in Society*, and most of which have been enacted by every Nation which ever possessed any Code of Law."

The Alabama Constitution provides that "no religion shall be established by law," and the State of Alabama specifically respects the rights of its public school students to be free from state-established religion. Recognizing that personal choice about matters of faith is left to students and their families, the purpose of this poster is simply to acknowledge the historical role of the Ten Commandments, and the broader Judeo-Christian tradition, in shaping American civil society.

- **The Mayflower Compact of 1620**, America's first written constitution, contained a "covenant with 'Almighty God'" by pilgrims to America to "form a civil body politic."
- **The Northwest Ordinance of 1787** "extended the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty" to the western territories becoming states and provided that "[r]eligion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."
- **The Declaration of Independence (1776)** described all men as being "created equal" and acknowledged that they are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights."
- **The United States Constitution (1787)** in its preamble stated one of its purposes to be securing "the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."



FROM THIS TRADITION EMERGED THE  
**ONE NATION**  
★ *under God* ★  
THAT WE HAVE INHERITED TODAY

Displayed as Required by  
Alabama Act No. 2026-428