



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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State Superintendent of Education

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ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED TODAY –
AUBURN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL’S KIMBERLY CHRISTIAN JOHNSON
SELECTED AS THE 2021-2022 TOP EDUCATOR

*“Shades Cahaba Elementary Teacher Alli Cahill Phelps
Named State’s Alternate Teacher of the Year!”*

Montgomery, Ala. – A special event was held at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts this evening. The Alabama State Board of Education officially announced this year’s *Alabama Teacher of the Year* and *Alternate Alabama Teacher of the Year*. This exciting event narrowed the list of 17 finalists announced earlier this year to our state’s two most outstanding educators.



Mrs. Kimberly Christian Johnson, who teaches at Auburn Junior High School, has been named the 2021-2022 Alabama Teacher of the Year (TOY). She will serve as the state’s official ambassador for public education and the teaching profession. As an accomplished educator in the Auburn City School System, Mrs. Johnson inspires every student to achieve. Her background is in English Language Arts, K-12 Reading, and Communication.

Alabama Teacher of the Year Kimberly Christian Johnson is a top educator and a great professional inspiration for teachers statewide.

“My mission is to motivate, encourage, and enrich the lives of students,” said Johnson. “Our students challenge us (educators) to

be difference-makers. I embrace the notion that I am preparing my students for experiences that are unprecedented and unpredictable. Their priorities and needs change, and my goal is to facilitate and encourage independence, confidence, and the ability to understand their worth and ability to make a contribution to our community, state, and world.”

As a returning second year teacher in 1999, Alabama Teacher of the Year Kimberly Christian Johnson spent that entire summer in Alabama Reading Initiative training, which resulted in her earning the responsibility of teaching remedial reading to at-risks youth in her community.

It was challenging but, ultimately, so rewarding. That same summer she committed to using a student-centered approach to teaching, which has truly shaped her 23-year career as an educator. She has grown to understand exactly how important *consistent support* is to a student’s academic and emotional growth.

She is an author and a *National Board Certified Teacher* (NBCT). She earned an Education Specialist degree and works to develop authentic classroom approaches to help all students. She has been a *U.S. Space Academy Counselor*, presented for the National Council of English Teachers, and is a member of the International Honorary Organization for Women Educators.

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Alabama Teacher of the Year Officially Announced – 2021-2022

Tonight, *Shades Cahaba Elementary School* teacher *Alli Cahill Phelps* was also named *Alabama's Alternate Teacher of the Year* during this special award ceremony.



On any random afternoon, when she was a student, you would find Alternate Alabama Teacher of the Year Alli Cahill Phelps reading a book or learning new things on her own.

She knew that she wanted to teach others about the benefits of reading and the importance of writing.

She worked two part-time jobs as a full-time college student to save enough money to teach at a prestigious Australian boarding school well-known for its large and diverse international population.

After this wonderful professional experience, she returned to the United States and began teaching at Alabama's Homewood High School while pursuing a master's degree in English as a Second Language (ESL) studies.

Mrs. Phelps began teaching at Shades Cahaba Elementary School in 2009.

Now an outstanding and highly respected educator, Alternate Alabama Teacher of the Year Alli Cahill Phelps is a member of the Homewood City Schools Superintendent Leadership Team, is a College Choice Foundation Scholar mentor, an Assistance League of Greater Birmingham Operation Literacy Liaison, and serves as a great example for educators statewide.

"I try to connect my students and their families to the world around them by being culturally responsive in my teaching and in my life," said Phelps. "I feel it is my duty, and great privilege as a teacher to help strengthen both home and school connections for students. We (educators) are fortunate to be part of school systems that respect and honor the *whole* student."

Additional Information

After being selected, the Alabama Teacher of the Year spends a majority of the school year serving as an official spokesperson for education.

The Alabama Teacher of the Year presents professional workshops and information to various groups throughout the state and nation. Additionally, our state Teacher of the Year is also our official candidate for the National Teacher of the Year Award.

State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Eric Mackey, said it is exciting to recognize these great educators. "Alabama Teacher of the Year Kimberly Christian Johnson and Alabama Alternate Teacher of the Year Alli Cahill Phelps truly exemplify the professionalism and great personal commitment of Alabama's educators," said Mackey. "Both of these outstanding teachers embody classroom excellence, and we are proud to have them representing our state."

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