

**MINUTES OF THE ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
THE STATE OF ALABAMA  
DECEMBER 12, 2024  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**

The Alabama State Board of Education met for its regular meeting of Elementary/Secondary Education matters on Thursday, December 12, 2024, 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 Reverend Shane Isner, Pastor, First Christian Church, Montgomery, Alabama, and Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag that was done in unison.

The following members were present:

**Present**

Mrs. Stephanie Bell in person  
Dr. Tonya Chestnut in person  
Governor Kay Ivey in person  
Mrs. Marie Manning in person  
Mrs. Belinda McRae in person  
Dr. Wayne Reynolds in person  
Dr. Yvette Richardson in person  
Mrs. Tracie West in person  
Mrs. Jackie Zeigler in person

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

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE NOVEMBER 14, 2024, MEETING**

On motion by Mrs. Stephanie Bell and seconded by Dr. Yvette Richardson, the Board voted 8-0-1 to approve the minutes for the meeting of November 14, 2024. Mrs. Marie Manning abstained.

**PUBLIC HEARING TO DISCUSS THE RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES  
EDUCATION STATE COURSE OF STUDY**

At this time, Dr. Jada Kohlmeier, Program Coordinator of Secondary Social Studies Education at Auburn University; Dr. Nefertari Yancie of The Coalition for True History; Dr Dan Puckett, Chair of the Holocaust Commission; Megan Zamora, Director of Internal Communications Citizen, Poarch Creek Indians; and Dr. Lamont Maddox of the Alabama Council for Social Studies, who registered to speak prior to the Alabama State Board of Education meeting on agenda item G.2.d (Resolution for Adoption of Social Studies Education State Course of Study), did so individually via in person. Their speeches may be viewed in full, as well as the complete Board meeting, at <https://www.alabamaachieves.org/state-board-of-education/meeting-videos>. The Board Members and State Superintendent thanked the members of the public for providing their input and sharing their views.

On motion by Mrs. Yvette Richardson and seconded by Dr. Tonya Chestnut, the Board voted 7-0-2 to approve the following. Mrs. Stephanie Bell and Mrs. Jackie Zeigler abstained.

**ADOPT AMENDED ALABAMA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE RULE 290-3-1-.02, PERTAINING  
TO REGULATIONS GOVERNING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

On motion by Mrs. Marie Manning and seconded by Mrs. Belinda McRae, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION  
ALABAMA GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPLARY SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

**WHEREAS**, the Alabama State Board of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education encourages exemplary school librarians and school library programs in the state's public school systems; and

**WHEREAS**, school library programs are constantly changing and evolving to enhance the learning environment and contribute to student achievement; and

**WHEREAS**, research indicates a high correlation between quality library media programs and increased student achievement; and

**WHEREAS**, library media professionals, district and school administrators, and educators throughout the state provided input into the development of *Alabama Guidelines for Exemplary School Libraries*, a revision of *Alabama's School Library Media Handbook for the 21st Century Learner* (2008); and

**WHEREAS**, *Alabama Guidelines for Exemplary School Libraries* focuses on the role of the school library program as an integral component in the teaching and learning process and is designed to be used collaboratively by the learning community to improve student achievement in academics through integration of school library services; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Superintendent of Education has been presented with the Alabama Library Media Task Force's report on Alabama school libraries and advances the Task Force's recommendation of its adoption:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the attached report by the Alabama Library Media Task Force is approved by the Alabama State Board of Education on December 12, 2024.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

On motion by Mrs. Belinda McRae and seconded by Mrs. Stephanie Bell, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION OF  
ARTS EDUCATION STATE COURSE OF STUDY**

**WHEREAS**, Title 16, Chapter 35, Section 3 of the *Code of Alabama*, 1975, requires the State Courses of Study Committee to prepare the contents of the courses of study for each grade of the elementary and secondary schools; and

**WHEREAS**, the report of its recommendations with respect to the compulsory minimum content of courses of study and of recommended revisions of courses, materials, subject content, and treatment in specific courses in such areas are required; and

**WHEREAS**, said law requires that the reports be submitted to the State Superintendent of Education and to members of the State Textbook Committee for separate written recommendations to the State Board of Education; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Superintendent of Education has reviewed the State Course of Study Committee's report on Arts Education and recommends its adoption:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the attached report by the State Course of Study Committee on Arts Education is approved by the Alabama State Board of Education on December 12, 2024.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

On motion by Mrs. Stephanie Bell and seconded by Mrs. Tracie West, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following:

**RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION OF  
SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION STATE COURSE OF STUDY**

**WHEREAS**, Title 16, Chapter 35, Section 3 of the *Code of Alabama*, 1975, requires the State Courses of Study Committee to prepare the contents of the courses of study for each grade of the elementary and secondary schools; and

**WHEREAS**, the report of its recommendations with respect to the compulsory minimum content of courses of study and of recommended revisions of courses, materials, subject content, and treatment in specific courses in such areas are required; and

**WHEREAS**, said law requires that the reports be submitted to the State Superintendent of Education and to members of the State Textbook Committee for separate written recommendations to the State Board of Education; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Superintendent of Education has reviewed the State Course of Study Committee's report on Social Studies and recommends its adoption:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the attached report by the State Course of Study Committee on Social Studies is approved by the Alabama State Board of Education on December 12, 2024.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

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

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
STATE TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE FOR ADOPTION OF TEXTBOOKS  
FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION CLUSTERS  
(Arts, A-V Technology, and Communications; Health Science; and Human Services)**

**WHEREAS**, the Alabama State Textbook Law provides for the adoption of textbooks by the Alabama State Board of Education, the same to be adopted from recommendations made by the State Textbook Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Textbook Committee has made its recommendations in keeping with said law; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Textbook Committee has worked long and hard hours in making such recommendations; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with said law, the Alabama State Board of Education received the recommendations at its November 14, 2024, meeting and 30 days prior notice of the date of consideration by the Alabama State Board of Education was given to news media:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Board of Education extends thanks to the State Textbook Committee and to all those who have worked to prepare the attached recommendations; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the attached recommendations for the adoption of textbooks for Career and Technical Education are approved.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

On motion by Dr. Yvette Richardson and seconded by Mrs. Marie Manning, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following:

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE TEXTBOOK  
COMMITTEE FOR ADOPTION OF TEXTBOOKS FOR SCIENCE, GRADES K-12**

**WHEREAS**, the Alabama State Textbook Law provides for the adoption of textbooks by the Alabama State Board of Education, the same to be adopted from recommendations made by the State Textbook Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Textbook Committee has made its recommendations in keeping with said law; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Textbook Committee has worked long and hard hours in making such recommendations; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with said law, the Alabama State Board of Education received the recommendations at its November 14, 2024, meeting and 30 days prior notice of the date of consideration by the Alabama State Board of Education was given to news media:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Board of Education extends thanks to the State Textbook Committee and to all those who have worked to prepare the attached recommendations; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the attached recommendations for the adoption of textbooks for Science are approved.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

On motion by Dr. Yvette Richardson and seconded by Mrs. Stephanie Bell/Mrs. Belinda McRae, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING DR. WALTER B. GONSOLIN, JR.  
AS THE 2025 ALABAMA SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR**

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Walter B. Gonsoulin, Jr., currently serves as the Superintendent of the Jefferson County School System, where he has effectively led the district since 2020, fostering an environment that prioritizes academic excellence and holistic student development; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Gonsoulin has dedicated over three decades of exemplary service to the field of education, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to student achievement; and

**WHEREAS**, under Dr. Gonsoulin's leadership, the Jefferson County School System has implemented innovative programs that have significantly improved educational outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, with advanced degrees including a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, a Master of Education in Administration and Supervision, and a strong background in both teaching and administration, Dr. Gonsoulin embodies the qualifications and leadership necessary for transformative educational practices; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Gonsoulin has played a vital role in numerous professional organizations, including School Superintendents of Alabama, where he served as President, District Five President, and currently sits on the Board of Directors; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Gonsoulin's military service as a Specialist during Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield exemplifies his commitment to service and leadership beyond the educational realm; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Gonsoulin's passion for education, coupled with his strategic vision and collaborative approach, has earned him the respect and admiration of colleagues, students, and community members alike:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Board of Education, do hereby recognize Dr. Walter B. Gonsoulin, Jr., as the 2025 Alabama Superintendent of the Year and commends his outstanding contributions to education as well as his unwavering commitment to fostering a brighter future for all students in Alabama.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

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

**RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF  
BROOKWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, ENTERPRISE CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
AS A NATIONAL *ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT* (ESEA)  
DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL**

**WHEREAS**, the National *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) Distinguished Schools Program is a project of the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators and provides an opportunity for Title I schools from every state to be recognized for their positive educational advances and the outstanding academic achievement of their students; and

**WHEREAS**, schools nominated for the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program have high levels of poverty, demonstrate high academic achievement, and meet or exceed state-determined accountability criteria; and

**WHEREAS**, through the state selection process, Brookwood Elementary School in the Enterprise City School System was selected for Category 3 of the Distinguished Schools Program that is awarded for excellence in serving English learners; and

**WHEREAS**, Brookwood Elementary School Principal, Dr. Nathaniel Martin, and select school staff will have the opportunity to represent Alabama at the National ESEA Conference in Austin, Texas, in February 2025:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Board of Education does hereby commend and congratulate Brookwood Elementary School upon the honor of being selected to receive recognition as a National ESEA Distinguished School.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

On motion by Mrs. Belinda McRae and seconded by Mrs. Stephanie Bell, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following.

**RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF  
HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MARION COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
AS A NATIONAL *ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT* (ESEA)  
DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL**

**WHEREAS**, the National *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) Distinguished Schools Program is a project of the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators and provides an opportunity for Title I schools from every state to be recognized for their positive educational advances and the outstanding academic achievement of their students; and

**WHEREAS**, schools nominated for the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program have high levels of poverty, demonstrate high academic achievement, and meet or exceed state-determined accountability criteria; and

**WHEREAS**, through the state selection process, Hamilton Elementary School in the Marion County School System was selected for Category 1 of the Distinguished Schools Program that is awarded for excellence in student performance and academic growth; and

**WHEREAS**, Hamilton Elementary School Principal, Mr. Gary McCarley, and select school staff will have the opportunity to represent Alabama at the National ESEA Conference in Austin, Texas, in February 2025:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Board of Education does hereby commend and congratulate Hamilton Elementary School upon the honor of being selected to receive recognition as a National ESEA Distinguished School.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

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

**RESOLUTION HONORING MR. GARY WATSON, AS THE  
“BARBARA FANNIN MEMORIAL EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER”  
OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024**

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Gary Watson, Accounting Manager in the Alabama State Department of Education, Division of Administration and Finance, SDE Accounting Section, exhibits a consistent, positive attitude, and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Gary Watson has worked for the Alabama State Department of Education for over 25 years and clearly believes in and has a passion for public education; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Gary Watson exhibits a level of knowledge and problem-solving skills, which is an enormous asset to our Department’s SDE Accounting Section; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Gary Watson provides technical support and collaborates professionally with all stakeholders to ensure that SDE Accounting operates smoothly and reliably; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Gary Watson maintains a positive image, communicates with the public in a professional manner, and represents the department well; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Department of Education and the SDE Accounting Section specifically, hereby express its gratitude to Mr. Gary Watson for his dedication and caring service:

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Board of Education does hereby commend Mr. Gary Watson for his commitment to the Alabama State Department of Education and does hereby express its sincere congratulations by recognizing him Employee of the Quarter for the fourth quarter of 2024.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

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

**RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF JANUARY 2025 AS  
“GIFTED EDUCATION MONTH” IN ALABAMA SCHOOLS**

**WHEREAS**, the Alabama State Board of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education recognize and support the special needs of students in gifted education; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alabama Association for Gifted Children has designated January as “Gifted Education Month”; and

**WHEREAS**, gifted children can be found in all ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural groups and provide our state with a vast resource for potential leadership and innovation in all areas of society; and

**WHEREAS**, gifted students have special needs in the following areas: intellectual, academic, and creative; and

**WHEREAS**, providing rigor, challenge, and acceleration in the classroom for Alabama’s gifted students is vital to ensuring their intellectual, affective, and academic development for college and career readiness:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That gifted programs are an essential component of K-12 public education in Alabama; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Board of Education does hereby express its appreciation to gifted coordinators, gifted specialists, classroom teachers, counselors, administrators, and superintendents for their efforts to support gifted education programs in Alabama public schools; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Alabama State Board of Education does hereby designate January 2025 as “Gifted Education Month” in the public schools of Alabama.

Done this 12th day of December 2024

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

**APPROVE THE 2024-2025 STATE SUPERINTENDENT’S EVALUATION**

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

<b>ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION K-12 MEETING AND WORK SESSION DATES SCHEDULE</b>			
<b>2025</b>			
<b>MEETING DATES</b>		<b>WORK SESSION DATES</b>	
January 9	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	January 9	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
January 29	State Board Retreat Location: TBD		
February 13	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	February 13	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
March 13	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	March 13	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
April 10	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	April 10	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
May 8	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	May 8	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
June 12	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	June 12	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
*July 8	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	July 8	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
August 14	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	August 14	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
August 27	State Board Retreat Location: TBD		
September 11	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	September 11	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
October 9	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	October 9	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
November 13	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	November 13	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103
December 11	Gordon Persons Building Auditorium	December 11	Gordon Persons Building Plaza 103

**EXECUTIVE (INCLUDES LEGAL AND PUBLIC INFORMATION)**

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

**STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Mackey stated that a lot of action was on the agenda, but the Board moved through it swiftly. He reminded everyone that hundreds of hours went into the rigorous work. Dr. Mackey stated that Board Members have collectively responded to hundreds, if not thousands of emails and messages regarding the two state courses of studies and library standards. It takes a team to get this hard work done. He gave a big thank you to the Board Members for helping to design a system that he thinks the Board Members are more comfortable with. Dr. Mackey stated that when he became the state superintendent in 2018, the committee was half finished with developing new math standards that he thought caused everyone a little anxiety. One issue, to no one's fault, the process was considered nontransparent. Dr. Mackey stated that it took two years to get through that process. The Department received feedback from some of the attendees sitting in the audience today and worked persistently on a better system that was approved for the next courses of studies. The last few courses of studies were science, social studies, arts, and career and technical education. Dr. Mackey thanked the Board Members for helping to

design a better process. Dr. Mackey gave a big thank you to Mrs. Angela Martin, Deputy State Superintendent, Division of Instruction; Dr. Melissa Shields, Assistant State Superintendent, Office of Student Learning; Mr. Sean Stevens, Program Coordinator, Instructional Services; Mrs. Cristin Dillard, Education Administrator, Instructional Services; Mr. Andy Meadows, Arts Education Specialist II, Instructional Services; Dr. Blake Busbin, K-12 Social Studies Specialist, Instructional Services; and Mrs. Cathy Jones, Coordinator, Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative.

Dr. Mackey acknowledged Mr. Gary Watson, Accounting Manager, SDE Accounting Section, who was honored as the Barbara Fannin Memorial Employee of the Quarter for October-December 2024. He said that Mr. Watson works super hard processing over ten billion state and federal dollars for local education agencies.

Dr. Mackey acknowledged Dr. Walter B. Gonsoulin, Jr., Superintendent of the Jefferson County School System, who was honored today as the 2025 Alabama Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Mackey stated that he was glad Alabama inherited Dr. Gonsoulin from our neighbors in the West. He thanked Dr. Gonsoulin for migrating to the East. Dr. Mackey stated that Jefferson County School System is shared by state school board districts three (Mrs. Stephanie Bell), four (Dr. Yvette Richardson), and seven (Mrs. Belinda McRae).

Dr. Mackey acknowledged representatives in attendance from Brookwood Elementary School in Enterprise City School System and Hamilton Elementary School in Marion County School System by asking them to stand. Both schools were awarded as National *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) Distinguished Schools. Dr. Mackey asked all honorees and representatives to remain for portraits after the meeting.

There being no other business before the Board, on motion by Mrs. Stephanie Bell and seconded by Mrs. Marie Manning, Board Members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:28 a.m. The next Alabama State Board of Education Meeting for Elementary and Secondary Education will be held on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 10 a.m. in the Auditorium of the Gordon Persons Building followed by the Work Session.

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Vice President

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Secretary and Executive Officer