

# CLAS School Leader

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See page 29 for details.

The Official Publication of CLAS

Fall Issue 2018

Volume 46, No. 4

Fall

into

CLAS





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Fall Issue 2018

# CLAS School Leader

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools is to coordinate and facilitate the resources of all members for the advancement of public education.

## Acknowledgments

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## About CLAS

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- 
- 6 Director's View: "As the Weather Cools Down, CLAS Heats Up!"
  - 8 Affiliate Feature: "Have You Considered ACTA?"
  - 10 Upcoming Events
  - 12 Affiliate Feature: "This is How We Roll" (AASPA)
  - 14 Special Feature: "It's All About Choices"
  - 15 Membership Recruitment Rewards
  - 16 Legal Forum: "Protective Order on a Protesting Parent"
  - 18 Special Contribution: "Training in Data Use and Analysis for Instructional Leaders"
  - 21 Affiliate Feature: AAMSP
  - 24 2018-2019 CLAS Board of Directors
  - 26 Special Education Update: "Discipline for Students with Disabilities"
  - 29 Membership Brochure: Join or Renew Now!
  - 33 SDE Spotlight: "NAEP: Seldom Can So Few, Impact the Reputation of So Many"
  - 35 2019 CLAS Annual Summer Convention Information
  - 38 Professional Learning Update: "Invest in Yourself"
  - 40 Legislative Update: "Looking Ahead to the Upcoming Legislative Session"
  - 42 CLAS Partnership Directory

# As the Weather Cools Down, CLAS Heats Up!

Happy Autumn,

Isn't it great to know that fall has arrived? When I first sat down to write this article, I intended that first question to be filled with levity. Since then, Hurricane Michael tore through the southeast and left catastrophic destruction and fall weather behind. Please keep those affected by the hurricane in your thoughts and prayers as the recovery process is a daunting one.

Many of us love to feel that nip in the air that has just recently arrived. Hopefully, the fall weather will stay around for a little while, and we can enjoy the wonderful events like fall festivals, cross-country events, football games, and marching festivals that we love in our great state. Go ahead and break out the fall sweaters, the light jackets, and the blankets for outdoor activities. Notice, I said, "Break them out." I did not say use them.

As you know, October is National Principals Month, and we at CLAS are honoring the great work our principals do every day. We encourage you to honor principals and let us know when you do so. If you tweet, use the hashtag #thankaprincipal, and make sure you tag @clasleaders in the tweet. We will retweet all we can. Additionally, we had a photo opportunity with Governor Ivey in recognition of National Principals Month, and we have resolutions that will

be read at the November 8, State Board meeting. Join me in congratulating our 2018 Principals of the Year one more time. Dr. Brian Clayton, from James Clemens High School is our Alabama High School Principal of the Year; Courtney Wilburn, from White Plains Middle School is our Alabama Middle School Principal of the Year; and Waller Martin from Enterprise Early Learning Center is our National Distinguished Elementary Principal. The Alabama Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year is Laura Tate from Edgewood Elementary, and the secondary Assistant Principal of the Year is Jennifer Hogan from Hoover High School. Jennifer was also named one of three finalists for the National Assistant Principal of the Year. All have done a fabulous job of representing public education in Alabama throughout their careers.

We will be recognizing our district principals of the year for 2019 in the coming weeks, and we naming the 2019 state winners. I know we will have a great pool of candidates again, and I look forward to continuing to honor the work our principals do.

We have presented our Legislative Platform to the CLAS Board, and will be sharing it with you in the coming weeks. As you know, the most important factor in the legislative process is to have school leaders engage with legislators in your home district. Legislators work hard and are asked to make deci-



sions on important topics on a regular basis. Every legislator is a professional in his or her chosen career, and that career is not usually politics. When a legislator is asked to make a decision on educational matters, who better to help inform the decision-maker than an educator? If we don't engage our legislators, someone else will. I encourage you to become familiar with the CLAS Legislative Platform and use it when possible. Also, I encourage you to reach out to CLAS Legislative Coordinator Susie Ellison, if you have any questions about legislative issues. Of course you can always email, text, call, or yell at me if I can help in any way.

We have had a great first two months of professional learning. Our New Principals Institute was fabulous with 120 new principals and mentors learning together. We had great speakers, great content, and great learning by all. We have also had a successful start to our Lunch and Learns and our Leadership Institutes, and we are gearing up for exciting affiliate fall conferences. I hope you will take the time to avail yourself of the professional learning opportunities available at CLAS. Feel free to reach out to Demica Sanders or check the CLAS website for information about professional learning opportunities.



**Vic Wilson, Ed.D.**

*Vic Wilson is the Executive Director of the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools. He joined the CLAS staff in July of 2017.*

*Vic has 26 years in public education as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, superintendent, and now as the executive director of CLAS.*

*Vic is married to Felecia Dailey Wilson, and they are the parents of Dailey (22), Emma (18), and Paul (15).*

*Aside from spending time with his family, Vic loves reading, sports, and the arts.*

I want to thank you for the job you do each day for those under your care. I always end the Friday Update with that statement, but I want to make sure you know why. Every person who comes to your school or district depends on the leadership therein to ensure that his or her needs are met. The parent who drops a student off daily, does so with the understanding that whatever needs exist will be met by those in the building. The student who arrives early and often stays late does so because he or she wants to be at school around people who care for him or her. The teacher who may be struggling with any number of issues still comes to school and does his or her best to meet the needs of their learners. Each of these people and many more rely on the job being done by leaders in our schools and systems, and I thank you all for the job you do every day.

As always, I am here for you if I can help in any way.

Sincerely,

*Vic Wilson*  
Vic

 @Othell



**CLAS**

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Visit us online for program details and application information

[www.clasleaders.org/awards](http://www.clasleaders.org/awards)

SUCCESS

POTENTIAL



OPPORTUNITY

DIRECTION



# Have you considered ACTA?

The Association of Career Technical Administrators (ACTA) is the premier CLAS affiliate for administrators working in and interested in Career Technical Education. Career Tech is evolving at an incredible pace, and it has become an extremely important part of K-12 education in Alabama. Career Tech has connections and relationships with industries across the state, workforce development, state lawmakers, the two-year college system, economic development leaders, federal Perkins law policy-makers, and, of course, the state school board and department of education. ACTA is the best organization to help administrators stay up to date on the critical issues concerning Career Tech and all the moving parts associated with CTE leadership roles. In addition, ACTA has proven to be a powerful voice in the state as economic development and workforce development become larger players in the structure of the education community.

In many ways, local Career Tech presence and strength can be the driving force or deciding factor for helping industry decide where to bring jobs in Alabama, and ACTA is the leading organization for ALL school administrators to stay on top all of the fast-moving information. ACTA is directly affiliated with the Alabama Association of Career Technical Educators (AACTE), the state association for all career technical educators; and with the national organization, the Association of Career Technical Educators (ACTE). In addition to your CLAS membership, you can join ACTA/AACTE (\$125) and ACTE (\$80) for a total of only \$205. With memberships in these organizations, members will receive frequent updates on everything from federal policy development that directly impacts career tech to info regarding local workforce development issues and everything in between.

Moreover, there are some outstanding professional development opportunities made available through ACTA. Each spring, in late April, ACTA has an annual conference that takes place at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach Alabama. This conference is great mixture of opportunities to network with other directors and key vendors as well as

take part in outstanding presentations on a wide range of career technical topics – all while enjoying some of the most beautiful scenery and weather in the entire southeast. In addition, the AACTE Summer Conference that is hosted in Birmingham in late July is equally as informative, but includes all career technical educators and proves to be a great kickstart to the beginning of the school year for everyone that attends. Finally, ACTE offers an outstanding national conference in wonderful cities across the country (San Antonio this year) that provides members with opportunities to learn more about national trends in career technical education and offers ways to implement them back in local systems.

It is important for everyone to realize that career technical education is not a stand-alone program that the state offers for only certain students. Career Tech is an important part of the K-12 education process and offers programs and courses that can help all students. As educators, I would hope that all of us have goals for our students, and I also hope that one of those goals is that all our students are able to work in careers as successful adults. Career Tech is a common thread that can tie K-12 educators of all levels to helping students achieve this goal. ACTA is the best organization for administrators, regardless of grade level, to stay tuned in to Career Tech. In ACTA, we welcome administrators from elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and any alternative program levels to participate in the development of quality Career Technical Education programs through our ACTA affiliate.

## Jimmy Hull

*Dr. Jimmy Hull has been the Career and Technical Education Director for Elmore County Public Schools Since July 2013. As Career Tech Director, Dr. Hull has led the charge to transform Career Tech in Elmore County to create opportunities for all students. Prior to this position, he served as Principal of Holtville High School from 2004 to 2013. During his leadership, Holtville High School was awarded the National Blue Ribbon School Award. Dr. Hull has been an active member in CLAS and held leadership positions in AASSP and is currently serving as the president of ACTA.*





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# Upcoming Professional Learning Opportunities

Information and registration is located at [www.clasleaders.org/PL/events](http://www.clasleaders.org/PL/events)

-  AASSP/AAMSP Fall Conference  
Perdido Beach Resort  
Orange Beach, AL
-  AAESA Fall Instructional Leadership Conference  
Perdido Beach Resort  
Orange Beach, AL
-  Leadership Institute: Hot Topics in Special Education Law/  
Preventing Legal Troubles: Effective Instruction for Students  
with Disabilities  
Mobile, AL
-  Leadership Institute: Hot Topics in Special Education Law/  
Preventing Legal Troubles: Effective Instruction for Students  
with Disabilities  
Auburn, AL
-  Leadership Institute: Hot Topics in Special Education Law/  
Preventing Legal Troubles: Effective Instruction for Students  
with Disabilities  
Florence, AL
-  Secretaries Conference  
Hyatt Regency Birmingham - The Wynfrey Hotel  
Hoover, AL
-  Lunch & Learn  
It's Your Story: Tell It Or Someone Else Will  
Webinar
-  Leadership Institute: Motivate and Manage a  
Differentiated Classroom  
Mobile, AL
-  Leadership Institute: Motivate and Manage a  
Differentiated Classroom  
Montgomery, AL
-  Leadership Institute: Motivate and Manage a  
Differentiated Classroom  
Jacksonville, AL
-  Assistant Principals Conference  
Orange Beach, AL
-  Aspiring Administrators Conference  
CLAS Office  
Montgomery, AL
-  AASCD Winter Conference  
Birmingham, AL
-  AASPA Winter Conference  
Montgomery, AL
-  Culture Change: Lead the Way (2-Day Training)  
CLAS Office  
Montgomery, AL
-  Assistant Principals Conference  
Huntsville, AL
-  Lunch & Learn  
Accountability and Why It Matters  
Webinar
-  Leadership Institute: Improving Parental Involvement  
in Schools  
Mobile, AL
-  Leadership Institute: Improving Parental Involvement  
in Schools  
Prattville, AL
-  Leadership Institute: Improving Parental Involvement  
in Schools  
Huntsville
-  Assistant Principals Conference  
Prattville, AL
-  Law Conference  
Prattville, AL
-  Aspiring Administrators Conference  
Birmingham, AL
-  Lunch & Learn  
Cyber Security in Education  
Webinar
-  Leadership Institute  
Mental Health in Schools: The Hidden Crisis  
Mobile, AL
-  Leadership Institute  
Mental Health in Schools: The Hidden Crisis  
Auburn, AL
-  Leadership Institute  
Mental Health in Schools: The Hidden Crisis  
Birmingham, AL
-  Leadership Institute  
Mental Health in Schools: The Hidden Crisis  
Huntsville, AL

**APR 4 2019**  
Lunch & Learn  
Understanding Dyslexia: Signs and Treatment  
Webinar

**APR 16-20 2019**  
ACTA Spring Conference  
Orange Beach, AL

**APR 16 2019**  
Leadership Institute  
Poverty: The Effects on Student Engagement  
Mobile, AL

**APR 17 2019**  
Leadership Institute  
Poverty: The Effects on Student Engagement  
Prattville, AL

**APR 18 2019**  
Leadership Institute  
Poverty: The Effects on Student Engagement  
Huntsville, AL

**MAY 7 2019**  
Lunch & Learn  
Solutions for Summer Learning Loss  
Webinar

**JUN 9-12 2019**  
CLAS Annual Summer Convention  
Montgomery, AL



## PLUs Expiring Soon

Check your PLU Status ASAP!



PLUACLD461 - Expires April 15, 2019  
Coaching Leaders to Build Strong Cultures



PLUACLD462 - Expires March 1, 2019  
Building Strong Supports for Teaching & Learning



PLUACLD654 - Expires April 11, 2019  
Partnerships to Improve Pre-K-3 Principal Leadership



PLUACLD689 - Expires June 4, 2019  
Supporting Instructional Leaders (CIL Cohort)



PLUACLD464 - Expires March 1, 2019  
Expanding Opportunities to Address Diverse Needs of Students



PLUACLD491 - Expires March 1, 2019  
Linking Stakeholders to Student Success



PLUACLD693 - Expires June 1, 2019  
Developing Ethical Leaders

### Select Affiliate PLUs



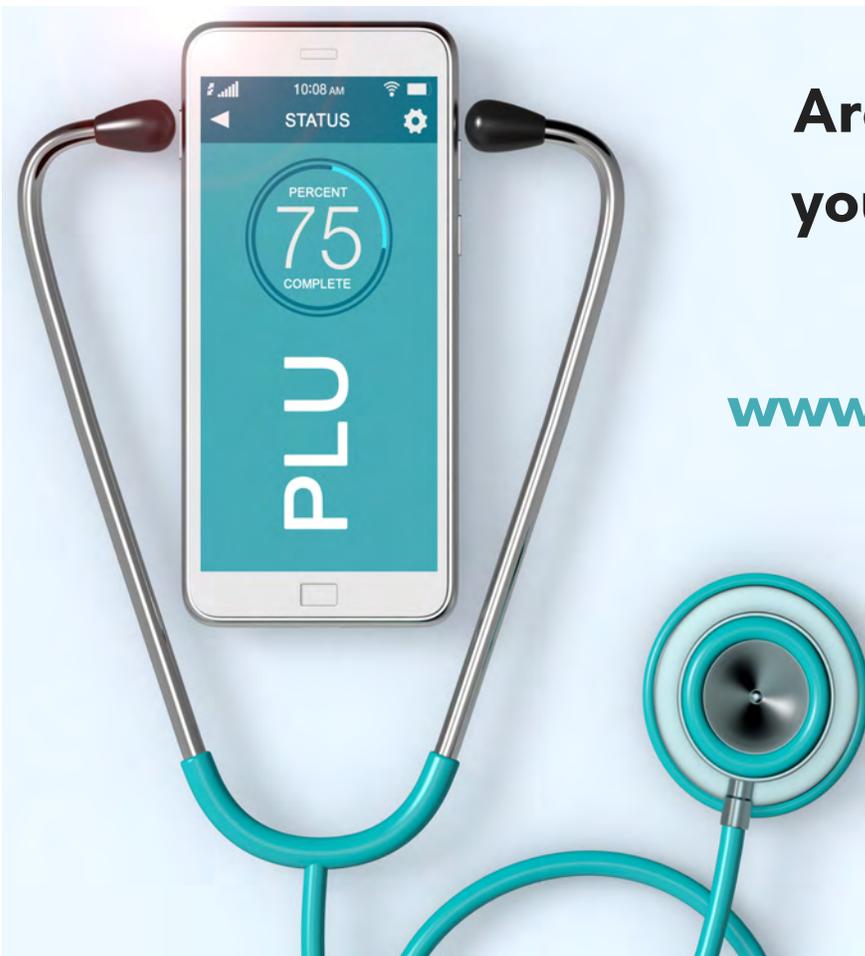
PLUACLD637  
Dec. 31, 2018



PLUACLD697  
April 1, 2019



PLUACLD692  
April 30, 2019



## Are you monitoring your PLU progress?

[www.clasleaders.org/PL](http://www.clasleaders.org/PL)

### Access:

- PLU Status
- Professional Learning Credits
- PLU Checklists
- Online PLU Programs
- Upcoming Events



# THIS IS HOW WE ROLL... AASPA Winter Conference

“Great service is how we roll in AASPA” by providing the best resource for all Alabama public school administrators in Human Resources. The Alabama Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) provides leadership in promoting effective human resource practices within education through professional development activities and a broad-based resource network. AASPA represents a network of professionals, just like you, who are working to make a difference in their employee practices and personnel positions. AASPA is committed to helping you with all issues pertaining to personnel that affect your job such as, but not limited to anything from job postings, to interviewing, to benefits, to employee evaluations. The goals of AASPA are to foster the staffing of school districts with the highest qualified individuals, to encourage and to assist in the development and utilization of sound school personnel administration and practices, as well as advance the cause of public education. We are faced with so many out of the box challenges today in the day-to-day operations from students, parents, employees, and community.

AASPA offers many opportunities to increase your knowledge and improve skills through professional learning. Our professional learning will empower you to discover new ideas, stay up-to-date on the latest research, and implement new concepts for your school system. AASPA’s professional development events are affordable and convenient. Another powerful benefit of AASPA’s professional learning is networking. You will meet many other administrators in schools who have either gone

through or are going through the same issues you are facing. Through these interactions, you will gain even more innovative ideas and build relationships for a lifetime.

AASPA provides the opportunity to earn an ACLD approved PLU for participants who successfully complete the required prerequisites. Jennifer Sinclair, director of personnel for Baldwin County Schools, monitors the PLU components and submits final documentation to CLAS. This benefit assists members so that administrators may maintain ACLD approved PLUs for certification renewal.

AASPA’s 2019 Annual Winter Conference provides three days of high quality professional and educational programs designed to sharpen expertise, enhance knowledge and equip you to lead your school system’s personnel department for tomorrow. All of the sessions are presented by experienced leaders and focus on legal issues and everyday opportunities needed to successfully lead your district. The conference is a

## Dr. Dell Goodwin

*Dr. Dell Goodwin currently serves as the Executive Director of the Alabama Association of School Personnel Administrators and serves as well as a board member on the National American Association of School Personnel Administrators. Goodwin received her undergraduate, master degrees, and Educational Specialist from Troy State. She earned a Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Sarasota. Goodwin retired as Director of Personnel Services for Dothan City Schools and previously served as Personnel Assistant, Director of Elementary Curriculum Services, Program Specialist and as a Special Education Teacher in her 39 years all with Dothan City Schools. Goodwin believes we should provide our children and our society with the best education we can.*



[goodwind226@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwind226@yahoo.com)



great opportunity for any ambitious school administrator committed to HR and passionate about their own professional growth and learning. You will have the opportunity to network with peers in the field of school HR; stay up-to-date in knowledge of new trends, laws, and strategies; gain knowledge in tried and true HR fundamentals and gain unique insight into new practices. Learn what's important to stay competitive and legal by discovering new innovative products and services from our partners in attendance. The partners will showcase products that will give you a preview to ultimately save you time and money as you look for the best tools for your district.

The AASPA 2019 Annual Winter Conference features an impressive team of presenters and leaders with real-world experience. You will gain the tools and techniques necessary to stay ahead of the curve at work and make your HR department as effective and efficient as possible. In addition to more than 20 hours in educational sessions, the conference offers the chance to network with some of the best school HR professionals around the state.

Topics/Presenters Include:

- KEYNOTE: Dr. David Bronner, Retirement Systems of Alabama
- “Teacher Certification and SDE Updates” Shavon Cummings, Martha White, Corey Martin, Niketa Dean, and certification specialists, ALSDE
- KEYNOTE: “Legal Updates” Whit Colvin, Attorney with Bishop, Colvin, Johnson, & Kent.
- “Retirement Preparation and Changes” Kit Gallup, Retirement Systems of Alabama Field Services Director
- “Current Topics in Education Law” Jayne Williams, Attorney General Counsel and Director of Legal Advocacy Alabama Association of School Boards
- “New HR Administrators Panel Discussion” Facilitator and Panelists TBA
- “Legislative Updates” Dr. Vic Wilson, CLAS Executive Director
- “Hot Topics in HR Mini Panel Discussion” with Dr. David Asbury, Mr. Whit Colvin and TBA
- “College Job Fairs and Training Dates” Debra Gosha, ALSDE
- “Update / Greetings from the ALSDE” Dr. Eric Mackey, State Superintendent
- KEYNOTE: Dr. Ed Nichols, AASPA Past President and Associate Trainer/

“As Secretary/Treasurer for AASPA, I am always excited and thrilled to work collaboratively with the executive board in planning for the winter conference. The 2019 Winter Conference is an excellent opportunity for district level HR professionals to learn, grow, and network.”

~Dr. Latanza Harrison, Alabaster City

Consultant ERI

AASPA will provide a “special” night event. If you are like most people, it is conversations between sessions that yield the most valuable lessons learned, resources, contacts and ideas. We invite you to join the “You Can’t Make This STUFF Up” event on Thursday evening. This is a great opportunity to meet new people and members for fun! Bring your business cards and share.

“The AASPA Winter Conference is one of the best three days of professional development School Personnel Professional will attend. All information presented is most valuable.”

~Nina Hayes, Mobile County

The 2019 Alabama Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) Winter Conference will be on January 30-February 1, 2019 in Montgomery, Alabama at the beautiful Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa. I encourage you to attend the AASPA Conference.

Although we’re proud of our conferences and services, nothing matches the pride we have in our 2018-2019 AASPA Executive Board. You see, we learned long ago that we’re really in the people business in personnel. Every person on our AASPA Executive Board is committed to providing networking experiences and high-quality professional learning for our members.

Meet the AASPA 2018-2019 AASPA Executive Board.

- Dr. David Asbury, Gadsden City Schools— President
- Dr. Michelle Washington, Lee County Schools — Immediate Past President
- Jennifer Sinclair, Baldwin County Schools — President-Elect
- Dr. Latanza Harrison, Alabaster City Schools - Secretary/Treasurer
- Dr. Dell Goodwin, Dothan City Schools, Retired - Executive Director
- Nina Hayes, Mobile County Schools - District 1 & 5 Representative
- Melinda Splawn, St. Clair County Schools - District 2 & 6 Representative
- Kristi Williams, Hoover City Schools - District 3 & 4 Representative
- Cliff Booth, Morgan County Schools - District 7 & 8 Representative
- Jim Miller, Shelby County Schools - AASPA/CLAS Director



# It's All About Choices

Since its inception, CLAS has been laser-focused on helping Alabama school leaders become the best they can be. The theory is that the better the administrator, the better the school, teachers, students, etc. Over the years, we introduced new professional learning opportunities, added new membership options, and rolled out services to better serve school leaders.

If you were to stop by the CLAS office on a typical Monday morning, you might be witness to a staff meeting. In these meetings, ideas are often born, hashed out, and ultimately decided to move forward, wait, or discontinue. All members of the staff have a voice and are always looking for ways to make your lives and jobs easier.

If you aren't familiar with Amazon by now, you might want to look it up. Fortune 500 ranks Amazon as the 12<sup>th</sup> largest company in the U.S. and is regarded as one of America's most powerful companies. Why is that? Amazon started as a book company run out of a garage, and today, its services and products have infiltrated almost every American's daily life. Amazon's reach has affected our expectations. We know what we want. We want choices. We want personalized service. And most of all, we want it NOW!

For several years, CLAS has been exploring options of deploying chat bots or live chat features to "Amazonify" customer service. While having a chat bot might automate some interactions, we ultimately felt it would detract from the personal service CLAS members are accustomed to. The chat widget has always been an ideological dream because it was cost prohibitive to launch such a feature.

If you have visited the CLAS website recently, you may have seen a little widget sticking up from the bottom right-hand corner inviting you to chat with us. On Sept. 14, CLAS officially added the chat widget as another customer service option to our website visitors. Best of all, it didn't cost a single penny. Everyone loves the word FREE, and so do we!

So, who is answering the chats?

Chat agents are full-time members of the CLAS staff. They are the same people you talk to when you call the office. Depending on your selections when you begin chatting, you will be connected to a staff member who is trained and ready to assist you with your request. There are currently five staff members who monitor the chats:

Tammy Coker, Susie Ellison, Leslie Dennis, Alyssa Godfrey, and Demica Sanders. In the coming weeks, we plan to add additional staff members to allow for easy access to all departments in the building.

To date, we've answered questions regarding conference registrations, PLUs, membership, awards and recognition programs, contact information, and more. Currently, the chat widget is available during regular business hours, and is hidden from view when we are offline. We are still working to tweak the settings so we can offer you the best, most personalized experience possible.

We invite you to engage with us however you choose. Feel free to stop by the office for coffee or a soda. We still have a live person answering the phone. Email is always good. You can still fax us. And now, you can also chat with us!

## Alyssa Godfrey

*Alyssa Godfrey currently serves as the director of communication and technology for CLAS.*

*She has a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration with a focus on management information systems from Auburn University Montgomery.*

*Alyssa enjoys exploring new technologies and finding new and innovative ways to get the job done.*

*She is married to Ryan with two children; Tristan (10) and Elodie Layne (3). She also has one cat, three dogs, and a guinea pig.*



LET'S  
CHAT!



Online



If you have some ideas about how we can improve the chat experience, or questions or comments about customer service in general, please let us know. Just as you never stop learning, CLAS never stops exploring ways to enhance our offerings.

Do you like ca\$h?

# GET REWARDED

The CLAS More Members, More Rewards Recruitment Incentive Program is designed to reward existing members for their efforts in recruiting first-time CLAS Individual and Institutional members to join the association.

More than  
**\$3,000**  
awarded  
in 2017-18

## How It Works



Invite a fellow member to join CLAS  
(form included on page 29)



Be sure he/she adds your name to the  
Recruited By line of the membership form.



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December 31, 2018



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# Protective Order on a Protesting Parent

A recent case brings together three topics that have been in the news lately: sexual misconduct of a teacher; protests outside a school; and open carry of a firearm near a school. The case is *S.B. v. Seymour Community Schools*, 97 N.E.3d 288, 354 Educ. L. Rep. [881] (Ind. App. 2018). S.B. is the father of a girl who was molested by a teacher in the summer of 2015. The girl was a twelve-year-old middle school student when the forty-one year old teacher molested her. Seymour is a town with a population of 17,503, and a central office, a high school, an athletic complex, a middle school, a sixth-grade center, and five elementary schools.

The events surrounding the molestation of the twelve-year-old girl are detailed in the teacher's appeal of his criminal sentence, which is recorded in *Murray v. State*, 74 N.E.3d 242 (Ind. App. 2017). That case reports that the teacher used his role as a teacher and a fellow church member to get close to the girl. He was her math teacher for the 2014-15 school year. His contact with her increased, at school and church, and by telephone, text messages, video, SnapChat, and Facebook. He began grooming her for an inappropriate relationship. In the middle of June 2015, he kissed and molested her. A friend of the girl reported the teacher to the girl's parents, who reported it to the police. The police investigation noted that the teacher and the girl had the same picture in their individual Facebook profiles: a picture of the two of them together. The teacher was sentenced to twenty-one years for three Level-4 felonies.

This case, *S.B. v. Seymour Community Schools*, begins by acknowledging that S.B.'s daughter had needed a great deal of therapy in the nearly three years since the molestation, and she had been suicidal. Her father, S.B., sought compensation from the school system to help with the medical bills, but had not received compensation. On the first day of school for the 2017-18 school year, S.B. positioned himself on a public sidewalk near the middle school. He was standing with a shovel, with the shovel end on the ground, and a sign attached to the handle. The sign was a white placard, with red capital letters reading, "WE PROTECT PEDOPHILES." On his right hip was a holstered handgun. S.B. had a license to openly carry the handgun.



### Dr. David Dagley

*Dr. Dave Dagley serves as professor emeritus of educational leadership with the University of Alabama.*

*Dagley holds the PhD degree from the University of Utah and the JD degree from Cumberland Law School. He has served as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent, and school board attorney. Dagley is a frequent presenter at CLAS events on various legal topics.*

*He has also been a long-time contributor to this publication.*



On the day before his protest, S.B. had called the police department to inform them that he would be present at the middle school the next day, on the sidewalk, and that he might be carrying a weapon. Several police officers were at the school early the next morning, and one police officer stood near S.B. while S.B. was present. The police officer testified that he had positioned himself close to S.B. to hopefully help parents feel more comfortable while they were dropping their children off at school. Many parents asked school officials about what was going on, and one father was very upset that his child saw, on the first day of school, a man standing outside the school with a gun.

Soon, the school superintendent approached S.B. The superintendent later testified that S.B. had greeted him pleasantly. The superintendent asked what the protest was about, and S.B. answered, “this was about his daughter and the former teacher.” The superintendent then asked S.B. if he would put his weapon in his car, because he was concerned about a weapon that close to school children. S.B. declined to remove his sidearm or return it to his car. The superintendent later testified that as the two men talked, S.B. began speaking in a pleasant tone, but became upset and angry. By the end of their conversation, S.B. asked the superintendent how he would feel if he (S.B.) came back with an AK-47, and said he (S.B.) would be back at 2:45 that afternoon at the high school. S.B. also mentioned that he was carrying a gun in his pocket, but he did not show it.



### **Dr. Amy L. Dagley**

*Amy Dagley, PhD, is an assistant professor in educational leadership at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She previously worked for the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and as a public educator in Alaska. She has earned bachelors and masters degrees from the University of Alaska Southeast, and a PhD from the University of Alabama.*

*Amy Dagley is the daughter of long-time columnist for this magazine, Dr. Dave Dagley.*

The superintendent took S.B.’s statements as a threat and petitioned a local court to put a protective order on S.B., which is a restraining order requiring S.B. to stay away from school system property. The petition asked the trial court for an order of protection based on an alleged threat of violence. The superintendent had considered the weapon as a threat, given the history of school violence in the news. He later testified that “whenever there is a weapon anywhere near a school, the school goes on lock down.” He further stated, “the school reacts defensively rather quickly to any weapons possibly anywhere near school children.” The local court put a temporary order for protection in favor of the school system against S.B. that day, and soon thereafter, the court held a fact-finding hearing to extend the order for two more years. Using a form document, the court enjoined S.B. from stalking, harassing, annoying, telephoning, contacting, or directly or indirectly communicating with the school system. The court ordered S.B. to stay away from the various properties owned and operated by the school system. The court did not restrict S.B.’s ownership or access to firearms, and expressly observed that S.B. was not prohibited under federal law (the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993) from possessing or purchasing a firearm.

S.B. appealed the trial court’s decision to issue an order for protection on behalf of the school system. S.B. raised the following issues for review by the court: 1. Whether the school system had standing to ask for an order for protection; 2. Whether the trial court’s decision to issue the order was “clearly erroneous;” and, 3. Whether the protection order violated S.B.’s rights under the First and Second Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Each of the three questions are addressed quickly below.

On the first issue, S.B. argued that the school system is not a biological person and therefore does not have standing to ask the court for such an order. Indiana law anticipates that a person or a parent, a guardian, or another representative would seek protection on behalf of a child. The court rejected this argument for three reasons. First, the school system is a representative seeking protection

***Continued on page 22***

# Training in Data Use and Analysis for Instructional Leaders

Do instructional leaders receive training in data use and analysis to improve student learning? To answer this question, I will discuss a couple of studies that align to this question. Moreover, I will share some practical leadership strategies that assisted me during my career as a school-based instructional leader. This article will identify some areas that may need attention in the examination of data. We must first understand that instructional leaders collect and utilize data in a variety of ways to improve student learning. Data collection may range from summative assessment data to attendance rate data. Although many different types of data are available, the purpose of this article is to identify areas of focus in the data use and analysis process that may need attention compared with different data types.

Jingping Sun, Johnson, and Przybylski (2016) suggest that principals utilize summative assessments the most. They discovered that principals review formative data and feel it to be more utilized as an indicator of student learning. Additionally, Jingping Sun et al. (2016) reviewed 60 studies focused on the principal's use of data. From these studies, they categorized 18 effective leadership strategies to promote data use in schools into four leadership domains: data-based goal setting, developing teachers' decision making capacity, building a data-wise culture in schools, and improving instruction based on data. Although the purpose of this article is not to discuss leadership domains, it is essential to acknowledge a school culture that utilizes data

to improve instruction. I could not agree more with their leadership domains, from both a research perspective and from my experience as an instructional leader.

## Understanding Data

Shen et al. (2010) examined the perspectives of 16 principals from four urban school districts in the United States to investigate what data they utilized and what decisions they made by using data. They discovered that all 16 principals used student achievement data. Additionally, they found that the use of data was primarily for accountability purposes. Moreover, fewer than half the principals noted the use of data for school improvement purposes. This finding implied that data was being used for tracking and describing outcomes of learning compared with intervening in the learning process (Shen et al., 2010). A finding such as this raises questions concerning whether a lack of understanding exists about the school improvement process or pressures from accountability has changed the focus of learning.

Another study examined whether principals could correctly interpret and make appropriate decisions about student growth percentiles (Clauser, Keller, & Mcdermott, 2016). The results of the study indicated that principals struggled with interpreting student growth percentile data and had not received necessary training to analyze such data correctly and effectively. Clauser et al. (2016) noted that nearly all



principals in the study had confusion concerning how school-level growth percentiles are calculated. Furthermore, they noted that if principals do not understand the way to calculate school-level growth percentile data then they will not be able to utilize growth percentile data to inform practice and curricular decisions.

## What Can Be Learned From the Previous Studies?

Both of the previous referenced studies indicate lessons to be learned. The first study clearly reveals a need to understand the big picture of the school improvement process compared with a sole focus on data use for accountability purposes. I speak to this from experience as a previous school-based instructional leader. Often times, you become immersed with accountability issues/concerns from the federal level, state level, and local level. As a result, you may feel pressure to conform to these accountability issues/concerns. However, I encourage you to embrace the big picture and realize that if you have an effective school improvement process then the accountability piece will take care of itself.

I once led an elementary school that had almost no processes in place to be successful. The state assessment scores were low and no formal/informal processes were occurring to improve student learning. As a result, we had no other way to move, but upward. From my previous endeavors of having a great mentor and a doctoral degree in educational leadership, I knew that structures needed to be created rather expeditiously if student learning was to be improved. I first established a leadership team composed of teachers from each grade level, media specialist, reading coach, and myself. The objective of this team was to develop a school improvement process to identify data (current and past), develop an action plan based on data, implement the action plan, monitor the action plan, and reflect on the plan. My job was to facilitate this objective with my teachers. We held monthly data meetings to analyze all types of data. We visited schools, reviewed current research, and collaborated to improve learning. I will never forget scheduling a visit along with my reading coach to a small school in Decatur, Alabama that had experienced great gains in reading achievement. The name of the school was Leon Sheffield. The school had demonstrated great gains in kindergarten reading achievement. Student learning was at high levels with students highly engaged in their academic work. I remember asking what attributed to their high gains in kindergarten reading. They replied that an adult managed every single learning station in kindergarten. Can you imagine how much time students were engaged in the academic learning activity? From librarians to trained volunteers, every student was receiving additional instruction to reinforce a previous taught skill. Although I was not able to assign an adult to every literacy station in my school, many things were gleaned from the visit to this particular school.

The second study reveals that perhaps more training is needed in the area of how to calculate and analyze data such as student growth percentiles. I vividly remember studying the bell curve and percentiles within my

***Continued on page 36***

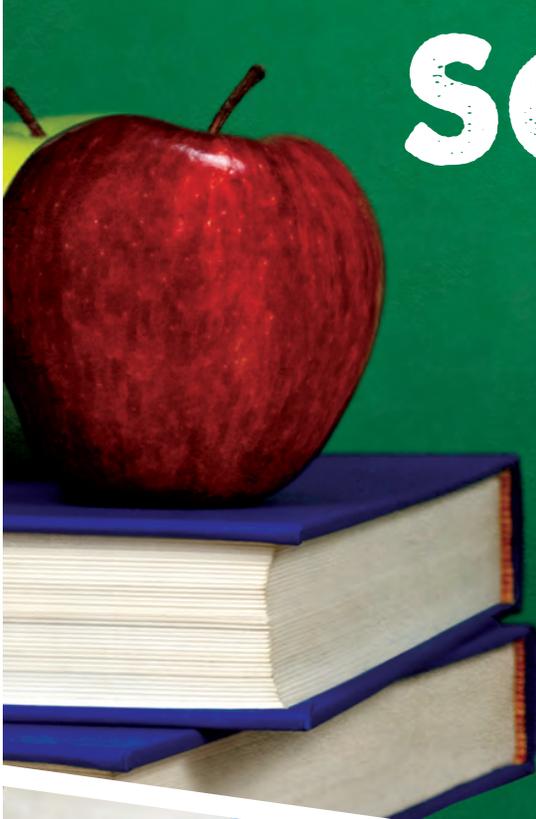


### **Dr. Jeff Cornelius**

*Dr. Jeff Cornelius is an Associate Professor of Instructional Leadership at the University of North Alabama. A native of Tusculumbia, AL, he received degrees from Mississippi State University, University of North Alabama, and Samford University. He also has served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, and assistant superintendent.*



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## Legal Forum Continued

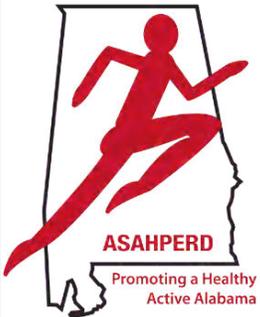


on behalf of children. Second, there is a specific statute in Indiana defining a “person” to include governmental entities. Third, Indiana’s criminal code on stalking defines a “person” to include governmental entities.

On the second issue, S.B. argued that the trial court’s decision was clearly erroneous. The appeals court rejected this issue, noting that the evidence presented showed that S.B. was both a current threat and a future threat. Although S.B. argued that he was engaged merely in a peaceful protest, the presence of the gun with the protest, in light of the recent history of gun violence in schools, made it not clearly erroneous for the trial court to issue the order.

On the third issue, S.B. argued that the trial court’s decision violated his First (speech) and Second (guns) Amendment rights. The court observed that there was nothing in the protective order that prevented S.B. from protesting outside the school unarmed, so his speech rights were not impaired. Likewise, the protective order did not violate his Second Amendment rights. The court underscored the rule that a school may prohibit the possession of firearms on school premises without violating the Second Amendment, even where there are no grounds for issuing an order for protection. (This was specifically stated in the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision about the Second Amendment, *D.C. v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570, 626 (2008).)

Finally, the appeals court ordered the trial court to modify the protective order, to allow S.B., briefly and without delay, to enter unarmed onto school system property to drop off and pick up his daughter at school. Likewise, the order cannot prohibit S.B. from exercising his First Amendment right to protest near school property while unarmed. The story of this case seems to inform school administrators well, regarding administrative practice, when a recent history of staff sexual misconduct, a parent-protestor, and a gun intersect at the school.



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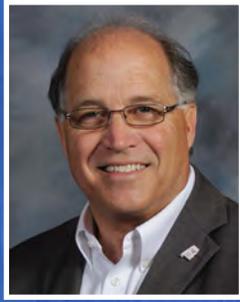
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## DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Five Quick Tips for School Leaders

Since another school year has begun, it is a good time to refresh Alabama's school leaders on the topic of discipline of students with disabilities. It is important to keep these tips in mind to ensure that traditional forms of discipline—suspension and other disciplinary removals—are administered wisely and in compliance with the law.



**TIP 1** Avoid “changes of placement” using suspension or other disciplinary removal and consider whether a “change of placement” via the traditional IEP Team process would be a better route to take.

For purposes of discipline, a student's “placement” is defined by the services in the student's IEP. Disciplinary removal or suspension of those services for more than 10 school days at a time or, generally, for more than 10 school days cumulatively in a school year, is a disciplinary “change of placement” for a student with a disability.

The IDEA requires that prior to making a 10-day disciplinary change of placement, the student's IEP Team must: (1) make a manifestation determination; (2) conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavioral intervention plan (if not done already); and (3) determine what services to provide during any disciplinary removal period beyond 10 school days in a school year, so that the student may continue to participate in the general curriculum and advance toward achieving IEP goals. For students where it is highly probable that the behavior at issue is a manifestation of disability, school

leaders should seriously consider whether calling on the student's IEP Team to address the need for a change in educational placement might be a better course of action to take. Often, following the traditional route of proposing a change of placement via the IEP Team process, rather than via the use of disciplinary removals, is the wiser course of action that would not trigger the need for a manifestation determination, since disciplinary removal is not contemplated.



**TIP 2** Keep in mind that disciplinary removal that may not be called a “short-term suspension” may still count toward the 10-day “change of placement” rule.

According to the U.S. DOE, any disciplinary removal of IEP-based services is a “change of placement” day, whether it is officially called a “suspension” or not. Things like “home time-out,” removal to the principal's office for the day, or sending a student home for a “cool-off period” are the same as a suspension in terms of counting the 10 days toward a “change of placement.”



**TIP 3** Develop and maintain appropriate alternatives to suspension that do not constitute a “change of placement.”

In 2006, the U.S. DOE reiterated its “long-term policy” that an alternative removal, such as an in-school suspension, would not be counted toward the 10-day



count “as long as the child is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately participate in the general curriculum, continue to receive the services specified on the child’s IEP, and continue to participate with non-disabled children to the extent they would have in their current placement.” Thus, alternatives to out-of-school suspension can be created that do not change the current placement of the student and would not count toward the 10-day limit. Of course, should the student be served too often in the “alternative to suspension” environment, the student’s IEP Team should be called upon to address what is going on—primarily because the alternative is not working, and the student’s placement overall needs to be addressed in some other way.



**TIP 4** Be careful when considering whether transportation is a “related service” for a student with a disability. It could be important in discipline.

Days of bus suspension might also count toward the 10-day “change of placement.” In the commentary to the 2006 IDEA regulations, the U.S. DOE commented that “[w]hether a bus suspension would count as a day of suspension would depend on whether the bus transportation is a part of the child’s IEP. If the bus transportation were a part of the child’s IEP, a bus suspension would be treated as a suspension...unless the public agency provides the bus service in some other way.” The DOE went on to note that where the bus transportation is not a part of the student’s IEP, it is not a suspension. “In those cases, the child and the child’s parent have the same obligations to get the child to and from school as a non-disabled child who has been suspended from the bus. However, public agencies should consider whether behavior on the bus is similar to behavior in the classroom that is addressed in an IEP and whether the child’s behavior on the bus should be addressed in the IEP or a behavioral intervention plan for the child.” Thus, whether a day of bus suspension counts toward the 10-day limit depends on whether transportation is a related service in the student’s IEP. If it is, to remove that service for disciplinary reasons is a “change of placement” day.



**Julie J. Weatherly, Esq.**

*Julie J. Weatherly, Esq. is the owner of Resolutions in Special Education, Inc. with offices and attorneys in Alabama and Florida. Julie is a member of the State Bars of Alabama and Georgia, and for over 30 years, has provided legal representation and consultative services to school districts and other agencies in the area of educating students with disabilities.*

*She has been a member of the faculty for many national and state legal institutes and is a frequent speaker at special education law conferences. Julie is the author of the legal update for the National CASE quarterly newsletter and is a member of LRP’s Special Education Attorneys Advisory Council.*



**TIP 5** Remember that there are also special rules of discipline applicable to students with disabilities under Section 504.

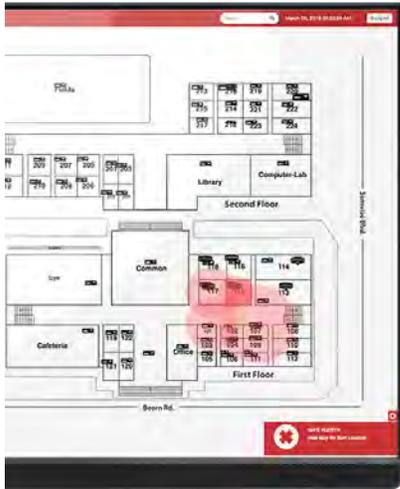
Essentially, the bulk of the IDEA rules for disciplining students with disabilities have their “roots” in Section 504. This is so because Section 504 prohibits discrimination solely on the basis of disability. Thus, in terms of discipline, the general notion is that students with disabilities should not be deprived of educational services if the conduct for which they are being disciplined is “based upon” (a/k/a “a manifestation of”) their disabilities. For the most part, the Office for Civil Rights applies the same rules of discipline for students under Section 504 that exist for those under the IDEA, particularly the requirement for making manifestation determinations when a disciplinary change of placement is contemplated.



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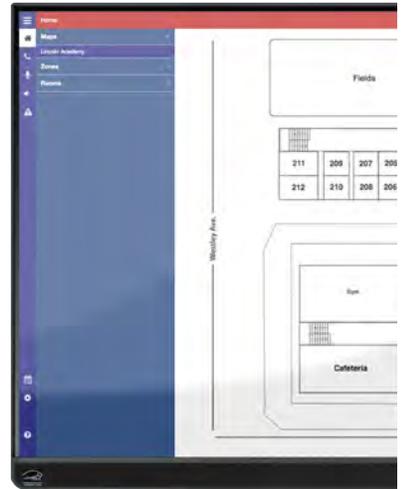
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Table listing affiliate membership dues for organizations like Alabama Association of Secondary School Principals (AASSP), Alabama Association of Elementary School Administrators (AAESA), Alabama Association of Middle School Principals (AAMSP), School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA), and Alabama Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (AASCD).

Table listing state-level membership dues for organizations like Alabama Council of Administrators of Special Education (ALA-CASE), Alabama Association of Prevention, Attendance, and Support Services (AAPASS), Alabama Child Nutrition Directors (ACND), Alabama Association of Career/Technical Administrators (ACTA/AACTE), and Alabama Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA).

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Membership in these national organizations is not required unless otherwise specified; however, CLAS supports the concept of total involvement and recommends national membership.

Table listing national membership dues for organizations like National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), Association of Career Technical Education (ACTE), The Council for Exceptional Children/Council of Administrators of Special Education (CEC/CASE), and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

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AASCD (Curriculum & Supervision) \$50
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C. National Affiliate Dues - Optional

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AAMSP (Middle-Level Principals) \$60 Renew \$30 New
SSA (Superintendents) Must be approved by Superintendent
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NASSP Retired (Secondary Principals) \$50

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Address questions to (800) 239-3616 or membership@clasleaders.org



## NAEP: Seldom Can So Few, Impact the Reputation of So Many

Recently, the Alabama State Department of Education hosted principals and superintendents from all across the state to discuss the importance of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP. Although the NAEP is nothing new for Alabama (the state has been participating in NAEP since 1994) it was important to meet face-to-face with some of the state's most prominent education administrators to really drive home the significance of this test.

Alabama's performance on the NAEP has the potential to impact the perception people have of our education system, the importance that we as a state place on education, and most importantly, the academic capabilities of our students.

The NAEP is a federally mandated test that is given once every two years to a randomly selected group of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, in randomly selected schools, in math and reading. The test is given in every state in America, as well as Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and Department of Defense schools. Often referred to as The Nation's Report Card, NAEP is America's definitive source for educational achievement. NAEP ranks every state's proficiency in reading and math, and its results are used by some of the nation's most respected publications and education policy-makers to get a snapshot of public education in America.

I cannot overstate how incredibly important it is for Alabama students and teachers to take this test seriously and do their very best.

Previously, because there is no individual score or grade given to students or schools, some have downplayed the significance of this assessment. Some have mistakenly assumed that there is no accountability for their performance on the NAEP assessment, so the consequences of not performing well were unimportant.

This could not be further from the truth. Media reporters, legislators, budget and policy-makers, and other key stakeholders use the results of the NAEP test to evaluate each state's public education system. For this reason alone, the NAEP is actually a very important test – especially in Alabama.

On previous NAEP assessments, Alabama has not reached its full potential. We have had a number of barriers that have contributed to that problem; academic standards that are not aligned with those necessary to prepare students adequately, not recognizing the importance of the test preparation and administration, among other things.

Alabama is at a critical juncture in public education. The expectations of our students and teachers are higher than ever. I believe our focus on improved standards in reading and math, a new strategic plan, a renewed

### Dr. Eric Mackey

*Dr. Eric G. Mackey currently serves as the Alabama State Superintendent of Education. Prior positions include executive director of the School Superintendents of Alabama, superintendent of Jacksonville City Schools, principal, and assistant principal.*

*Throughout his career, Dr. Mackey has been an advocate for increased rigor and advanced high school courses as well as challenging elementary and middle school classes.*

*He and his wife, Robin, have three boys, John (22), Brandon (19), and Christopher (14).*

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**Continued on page 39**

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## Special Contribution (Continued)



graduate academic coursework. However, I do not recall specific training geared toward student growth percentiles as well as interpreting these scores to decide upon curriculum revisions and instructional practices. I remember learning how to interpret scores and data from reviewing research on these topics and requesting assistance from other faculty members such as the guidance counselor and reading coach. Many principals do not have this training. As a previous school-based instructional leader, I could have been more effective as an instructional leader with skills in data calculation and analysis. For example, it would have been helpful to have a strong understanding of student growth percentiles measures and individual student growth measures. Student growth percentiles may provide some information about teacher effectiveness as well as how a student compares to another student nationwide. However, student growth percentiles (e.g., norm-referenced assessments) compares students to other students. Individual growth measures (e.g., criterion-referenced assessments) compares each student to a particular set of knowledge and/or skill areas. The point of discussion is not to argue the merits of the different measures, but rather to acknowledge that both measures may be beneficial if used appropriately. Instructional leaders need to have knowledge of both types of measures so that this applied knowledge may influence student learning.

As an Associate Professor of Instructional Leadership, I am pleased to know that Alabama recently adopted the PSEL (Professional Standards for Educational Leaders). The PSEL standards were adopted in the Alabama Administrative Code (290-3-3-.48) on September 18, 2018 and will become effective on June 1, 2019. The PSEL standards will apply to graduate students enrolled in an Instructional Leadership Class A Program in Alabama beginning on June 1, 2019 and thereafter. The PSEL standards

may be accessed through the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (<http://npbea.org/pse/>). As part of standard four of the PSEL standards (curriculum, instruction, and assessment), I am excited to know that future students seeking a Class A Instructional Leadership Program in Alabama will be required to utilize assessment data appropriately to monitor student progress and improve instruction. This will permit universities across the state to revisit their standards and academic learning activities to ensure adherence to the PSEL standards. Additionally, instructional leadership professors will have an opportunity to develop academic learning activities that train future instructional leaders in data use to improve instruction. After a careful review of these standards, I am confident that the PSEL standards pave the way to improve student learning.

## Conclusion

An understanding of data is an important part of an instructional leader's responsibility. Data will continue to be part of the accountability process (federal, state, and local). However, as instructional leaders, we must continue to embrace the entire school improvement process. As a result, I encourage you to network with colleagues, participate in training and/or professional development, review research, and network with professors to strengthen your skills in data use and analysis. We may have access to all the data imaginable; however, data that is not utilized to inform instructional practices is most likely not having any impact on student learning. It is my hope that this article has provided you with useful information that will further assist you in your need to learn more about the use of data.

Clauser, A. L., Keller, L. A., & Mcdermott, K. A. (2016). Principals' Uses and Interpretations of Student Growth Percentile Data. *Journal of School Leadership, 26*(1), 6.

Jingping Sun, Johnson, B., & Przybylski, R. (2016). Leading with Data: An Increasingly Important Feature of School Leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, 44(3), 93–128.

Shen, J., Cooley, V. E., Reeves, P., Burt, W. L., Ryan, L., Rainey, J. M., & Yuan, W. (2010). Using data for decision-making: perspectives from 16 principals in Michigan, USA. *International Review of Education/Internationale Zeitschrift Fur Erziehungswissenschaft/Revue Internationale l'education*, (4), 435.



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# Professional Learning Update

KEEP  
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## Invest in Yourself

### Invest in your People!

In my spare time, I enjoy reading! During that time, I often find myself googling or downloading resources that inspire me in my role as a leader. As I peruse the web, certain leadership buzzwords predominate—buzzwords such as transformational, visionary, communicator, or innovator. Nevertheless, I rarely run across readings on how to empower and appreciate those that you lead. Those individuals who work extensive hours to assist you in becoming successful.

While many people desire the title of “leader,” many fail to understand the internal and external challenges of leaders. For example, there have been times that I have fallen short as a leader... but during those times, I was resilient because of a supportive and dedicated staff. Hence, as a leader, the focus can’t be on you, but on others. Once this resonates within your leadership psyche, you will experience revolutionizing success.

So, the questions that must be asked are, “How do you accomplish this goal? How do you work toward valuing your people more?” Forbes Community Voice writer, Amy Modglin, provides these helpful tips on ways to work toward valuing your people more:

**View your people as your biggest success.** A good leader supports those around them. Your focus should be on developing them, helping them succeed, and watching them grow into the people they want to become. When your people are successful, it is a reflection on you as a leader. Work hard on your people. They are your biggest asset. Without them, your team can fail.

**Acknowledge and appreciate people.** Everyone

wants to be valued. It is critical as a leader to give your people credit and recognition for the incredible things they do. One of the reasons people leave a job is because they feel underappreciated. A leader should never take the credit for the work that their people do. A good leader is a generous leader who recognizes people. Work recognition into the culture of your team. Make a conscious effort to call out your top producers in a recurring meeting. When others see a coworker being recognized, it infuses motivation into your team. Everyone will work harder to be the next person whose hard work is recognized.

**Know your people.** I mean really know them. Sure, you may know their names and their positions and what they are working on, but do you really know them? Do they have children? Do you know where they came from? Do you know what they have done in their lives before they started working with you? Most importantly, do you know their hopes and dreams? Getting to know them in a more personal way will make them feel valued and increase their respect for you as a leader.

**Leave your ego at the door.** People are going to

### Demica Sanders

*Prior to her appointment as CLAS Director of Professional Learning, Demica Sanders was the superintendent in Midfield City Schools. In addition, her educational career encompassed a variety of roles including special education coordinator, adjunct instructor, staff development trainer and classroom teacher.*

*Demica is married to Tim Sanders and they are the parents of Jaylon (15) and Kameron (12). She enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, and shopping.*



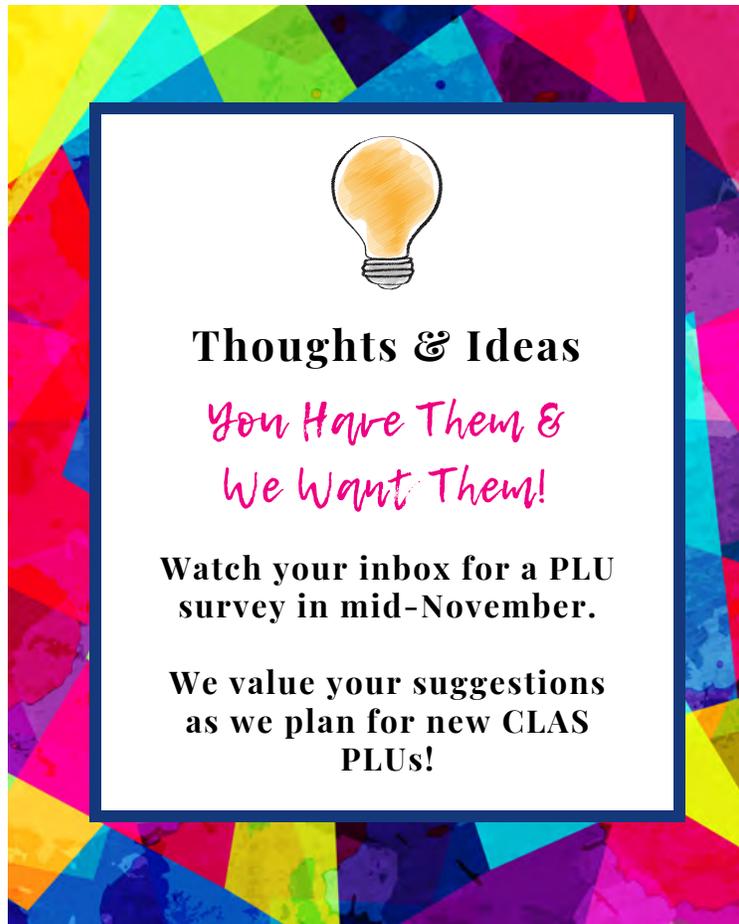
**@demica\_sanders**

do better than you. You will have people on your team who have significant achievements. They may get another degree, get a certification, or move on to a new position. One of the biggest compliments you can receive as a leader is to have one of your people move on to a better opportunity. Be proud, not jealous.

**Empower your people.** Everyone wants to be trusted to make decisions. Empower your people to make certain decisions. Do not short change them. Allow them opportunities to shine rather than discounting their abilities and doing it yourself. Do you have a big presentation coming up with your executive team? Allow one of your top performers to give the presentation instead. Being empowered will make them confident and help them strive for larger-than-life goals.

In closing, John Quincy Adams emphasizes, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” Remember the importance of valuing each person on your team. Without them, there would be no you!

Citation: Modglin, A. (20, September 2017). *Leadership: It's Not About You*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbes-coachescouncil/2017/09/20/leadership-its-not-about-you/>





**Thoughts & Ideas**

*You Have Them & We Want Them!*

**Watch your inbox for a PLU survey in mid-November.**

**We value your suggestions as we plan for new CLAS PLUs!**

## SDE Spotlight (Continued)



focus in teacher recruitment, credentialing, and career technical education are all things that will result in increased progress in areas that matter most to college and career readiness. These are all areas that the leadership at the State Department of Education are vigorously pursuing.

In addition, strategies to improve education overall, are specific measures that educators can use to bolster their student’s performance on the NAEP. During the meeting at the State Department, our assessment professionals provided principals and superintendents with a host of resources that are available for all educators in Alabama. The link below goes to a wealth of information about NAEP and material that can be used to better understand, and quite possibly, perform better on the NAEP assessment.

A relatively small group of 4th and 8th grade students actually take the NAEP; still, their performance is ranked and compared nationally. It is not often that so few students play such a pivotal role in determining the reputation for so many. As randomly selected Alabama schools get ready to take the NAEP in 2019, I encourage everyone to prepare as diligently as possible to perform well. Our students can, and will, improve academically. We as education leaders owe it to our students to take the NAEP assessment seriously, making test preparation a top priority.

**View NAEP Resources and Information here:**

<http://bit.ly/alsdenaep> 



## LOOKING AHEAD TO THE UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fall is here even though it doesn't feel like it. Soon the leaves will start changing colors, and the cool wind will begin to blow, hopefully sooner than later. As I think about the change in the season and change in the colors of nature, I think about all the change that is coming for the 2019 legislative session.

Next month Alabama voters will go to the polls to elect representatives and senators. Many new faces are running for open seats, incumbents are battling newcomers, and some seats will stay the same. Nonetheless, the anticipation over many new law-makers being voted into office on Election Day is building. Everyone in Alabama has one more month to influence the 2018 election outcomes and the lawmakers voting on education related legislation for the next four years.

### How do you influence legislation?

The first step in influencing the 2019 Legislative Session is to vote November 6. From this moment until Election Day you have the responsibility to get to know candidates, educate each candidate about the role and importance of public education, and ask candidates how they will represent public education and any other issues important to you. Sharing your stories and experiences let them know what is good or what needs to be changed and why. Make sure you let your candidate know you can serve as a source of information and share your contact information with him or her. Even if your legislator is not on the ticket in November, continue to engage with him or her.

CLAS has started preparing for the 2019 Legislative Session. Let's take a look at the State Department of Education FY20 budget request and other issues CLAS thinks may be dealt with this session.

**Education Trust Fund Budget** – After a \$6.6 billion education budget was passed for FY19, we are hopeful

to see another year of increases for the FY20 budget. In September, State Superintendent, Dr. Mackey released the FY20 budget priorities and FY20 budget request.

Large increases are for school nurses, \$30 million; lowering divisors in grades four through 6 which adds about 243 teachers (\$21.9 million increase); and \$39.5 million increase for OCE to support school safety initiatives, and the cost to operate schools. A \$5 million increase for literacy and reading will be used to expand dyslexia support and ARI. Math increase of \$2 million will be used to focus on high-quality professional learning for the new Alabama Math Course of Study.

Also, the budget proposal reflects a commitment to increase classroom instructional support. Student materials receives an increase from \$536 to \$600 per unit, technology receives an increase from \$300 to \$350 per teacher unit, professional development from \$90 to \$100 per unit, library enhancement from \$96 to \$200 per unit.

Keep in mind, the numbers above are a request from the SDE and will change as the budgeting process continues. CLAS will keep you updated on changes.

**Alabama Accountability Act (AAA)** – The Senate could push to raise the cap on how much money can be collected by tax credits for business and individuals. Currently the cap is set at \$30 million a year. Although there seems to be little appetite in the House for increasing the cap, this is an issue we want to stay ahead of. CLAS opposes any legislation that would increase the

### Susie Ellison

*Susie Ellison currently serves as the CLAS Communications and Legislative Coordinator. She has been employed with CLAS since 2012.*

*Susie received a Masters in Public Administration from Auburn University Montgomery in 2013, and Bachelors in Political Science from Troy University in 2009.*



**SusieEllison3**

cap, diverting more money away from Education Trust Fund.

**Revisiting Tier II** – Currently, TRS and ERS members hired after January 1, 2013 pay lower contribution rates, are not able to draw a retirement benefit until the age of 62 and have no sick leave conversion. The Tier II Defined Benefit Plan is contributing to teacher absenteeism and negatively impacting teacher recruitment. We could see legislation changing Tier II. Some changes we could see are as follows: allow teachers to retire after 30 years of service regardless of their age; increase the employee contribution rate; and allow sick leave to apply toward retirement.

**CIL funding** – CLAS is working on a funding request for this program. The Certified Instructional Leader Program was created by CLAS in 2013 as a way for school and school system administrators to receive advanced certification. Utilizing the National Board Certified Teachers format, the CIL program was initiated to promote the highest standards of school instructional leadership and identify school leaders who demonstrate knowledge and skills which are essential to the practice of effective instructional leadership.

Other education issues will arise the closer we get to March, stayed tuned!

In June, we sent a CLAS Legislative Services Member Survey. Survey results found 75% of members who responded are not part of the CLAS legislative network and several wanted to be involved but did not know how. Here is how **YOU can GET INVOLVED with CLAS Legislative Advocacy:**

**CLAS Legislative Network:** Be an active force in positively influencing legislation by becoming a member of the CLN. If you have a personal relationship with state or federal legislators/congressmen, would like to cultivate a relationship, would like to receive advocacy alerts, receive updates as action is taken on legislation related to education, or help CLAS amplify the voices of public school leaders, then join the CLN. You can sign up at the following web address:

[www.clasleaders.org/clnsignup](http://www.clasleaders.org/clnsignup) >

**CLAS Hill Days:** A day for CLAS members to lobby the legislature. The CLAS staff will provide updates on bills affecting education and give advocacy tips. You will hear from lawmakers who are invited to discuss pending legislation, receive information regarding education issues, and answer your questions. Participants will meet with legislators to relay CLAS legislative priorities, tell their personal stories, develop relationships with lawmakers, and watch the House and Senate during session. Meeting dates and signups are available online:

[www.clasleaders.org/clashilldays](http://www.clasleaders.org/clashilldays) >

CLAS commits to continuing to be a strong advocate for public education at the state house. We can be even stronger with your voices in Montgomery and also in your local communities.

*Thank you for everything you do.  
Keep up the great work!*

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A. Total Number Copies Printed		4,328	4,256
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C. Total Paid Distribution		4,182	4,115
D. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	1. Free or Nominal Outside County	0	0
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