



**April 15, 2024**



## **State Graduation, CCR Rates Increase**

Alabama's graduation rate for the 2023 class is 90.04%, a 1.83% increase, from 88.21% for the class of 2022. "We are very excited about where we are," State Superintendent of Education Eric Mackey told State Board of Education (SBOE) members Thursday.

The 2023 College and Career Readiness (CCR) rate also has seen an increase, from 79.07% in 2022 to 84.20% in 2023, up 5.13%. ALSDE Instructional Services Coordinator Sean Stevens said the College and Career Readiness grants funded by the Legislature helped provide students with opportunities such as college tours, test preparation, industry tours, and scholarships.

SBOE Vice President Tracie West (District 2) noted the Legislature's interest in "providing a pathway for younger students to work" and how it coincides with CCR.

The Education Trust Fund (ETF) supplemental appropriation proposed by the Legislature currently includes \$17 million for these grants, although the ETF budget package has just begun to move through the legislative process and this could change. Earning a CCR Indicator becomes a graduation requirement beginning with the 2025-2026 school year (Act 2023-365).

The SBOE approved the state's first alternative teacher preparation program, iTeach, during Thursday's meeting. This approval signals the Board's intent to explore and provide quality alternative teacher prep programs in the state, pursuant to Alabama law, which allows for additional pathways for teachers to earn certification (Act 2023-

451). Another alternative teacher preparation program, the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, was rejected by the SBOE.

Other discussion and action items from the April 11 board meeting and work session included:

- ETF budget update;
- Evaluation of reading coaches; and more.

[Read Full Story](#)

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### **WEBINAR: Reading Your Financial Statements A to Z**

School boards act as the governing body for their school system, overseeing a wide variety of responsibilities including financial management. Interpreting data and documents is essential to the board's function and ensuring financial accountability.

Mark your calendars to join us Thursday, April 18 from noon to 1 p.m. for AASB's next webinar, "Reading Your Financial Statements A to Z."

Dale County Schools Chief Financial Officer **Jesse James** will break down the complexities of financial statements and make it easier for you to interpret and analyze financial data. Whether you are a seasoned board member or new to your role, this webinar will offer key takeaways for effectively read and interpret your financial statements.

Cost: \$55 individual ; \$210 group | Earn 1 training hour

[Register Now](#)

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## Incoming Board Members Can Attend AASB Training

One of the best ways to foster a smooth transition as new board members come on board is to ensure they get training early on. Did you know even if they have not yet taken office, your incoming board members are already eligible to participate in board member training at board expense? ([See AG Opinion](#)).

Consider registering your incoming board members for one or more of these excellent training opportunities:

- **Webinar** April 18 on "Reading Your Financial Statements from A-Z"
- **Summer Conference** June 28-30 at The Lodge in Gulf Shores
- **New School Board Member Orientations** July 12 & 13 at AASB's office in Montgomery
- **Fall Conference**, Leadership for Creating Positive Climate and Culture, Oct. 6 & 7 at The Renaissance in Montgomery



## Join Us in Gulf Shores!

You still have time to register for AASB's annual Summer Conference, which will be held at the Lodge at Gulf State Park June 28-30. The event will be full of learning and networking as well as motivating sessions inspiring you to reflect upon this year's Summer Conference theme: "Remember Your Why!" [REGISTER NOW.](#)

## Don't Miss the 2024 School Safety Summit

There still are slots available for the pre-conference workshop, the School Safety Summit Friday, June 28 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. You'll hear from expert speakers on topics such as child trafficking to who will share key advice, real-world scenarios and guidance to help keep your schools safe. [REGISTER NOW.](#)

## Summer Conference Keynote Speakers



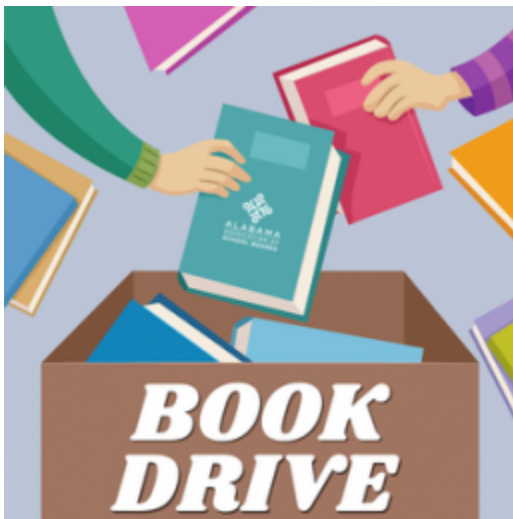
**Dr. Donna Beegle**, *Poverty Expert, Author & Motivational Speaker*

Dr. Donna M. Beegle inspires and educates individuals, organizations, leaders and communities with proven models to better outcomes for people in poverty. Her inspiring story and groundbreaking work have been featured throughout the nation, including on CNN and PBS.



**Chuck Underwood**, *Founder & Principal of The Generational Imperative, Inc. (TGI)*

One of the original pioneers in the field of generational studies, Chuck Underwood is the author of "America's Generations in the Workplace, Marketplace, and Living Room," and he has been featured on the PBS mini-series, "America's Generations With Chuck Underwood."



## Annual Summer Conference Book Drive

We're calling on all Summer Conference attendees to donate new or like-new books to help promote literacy and combat the "summer slide" for students at all grade levels. Simply drop off your book donations at AASB registration area during the Conference.

Below are the grade-level books we're asking districts to donate:

- AASB Districts 1, 2 & 3:** Grades K-5
- AASB Districts 4, 5 & 6:** Grades 6-8
- AASB Districts 7, 8 & 9:** Grades 9-12



## Time Running Out to Schedule Whole Board Training

The 2023-2024 training year which ends June 30. If your board has not yet completed or scheduled its state-mandated Whole Board Training session, now is the time to get on the calendar!

First, browse AASB's [Whole Board Training Catalog](#) to choose from more than 40 available training topics, or contact us to discuss a custom option. Once you've selected a topic, [contact us](#) to request your training.

**BOARD MEMBER** *Spotlight*  
**Meet Randy Sparkman**  
Hartselle Board of Education

**Q:** What's one piece of advice you have for incoming board members?  
**A:** — “ —  
Take your time. Listen more than you talk. It takes a while to fully appreciate the role of a school board member, to understand where you can influence and where you should not.  
” —

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Board Member Spotlight: Randy Sparkman

Randy Sparkman has been a member of the Hartselle City Board of Education since 2011, but as a Morgan County native, his love for the area is lifelong.

Soon to be retired following a 39-year career with NASA, Randy always has had his finger on the pulse of technology. He believes his career experience allows him to offer a unique combination of perspectives as he works with his board to equip students for the future.

Randy is most proud of the visionary culture he has helped to build in Hartselle City Schools, where all students benefit from a rich portfolio of opportunities.

[Read More](#)



# Just Ask Jayne

## Are interviews always required to fill positions?

Dear Jayne:

Our board will be hiring a new principal for the coming school year and I'm confused about something. I know we're required to post the position but I'm getting conflicting answers about interviews. Are we required to interview for the position?

[View Answer](#)



### REMINDER: Ethics Forms Due April 30

It's time for school board members and superintendents to file annual financial disclosure forms with the state Ethics Commission. The forms are available on the State of Alabama Ethics Commission's website. The deadline to submit is April 30.

[Get Form](#)

## AASB Job Board



### CSFO Search: Escambia County Schools

The Escambia County Board of Education is seeking an experienced leader to serve as its next Chief School Financial Officer and work efficiently with the superintendent and board in building and maintaining a high-performing school system. This search is being conducted by the Alabama Association of School Boards.

[Learn More/Apply](#)

**WE'RE  
HIRING!**

Director of Leadership  
Development

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:**  
Position Open Until Filled

**APPLY:** <https://bit.ly/leadershipdevdirector>



### AASB is Hiring!

AASB is seeking an energetic, team-oriented leader to serve as **Director of Leadership Development**, overseeing school board member training and several member services programs. This executive-level position is responsible for developing and delivering educational programs as well as managing department staff and consultants.

[Learn More/Apply](#)



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