



PRESS RELEASE

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New Report Indicates Alabama Can Lead the Nation *"We have the roadmap, but we have hills to climb."*

PT. CLEAR - The Business Education Alliance of Alabama today revealed its third comprehensive white-paper research report at the Business Council of Alabama's 2016 Governmental Affairs Conference. Conducted by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, the report, entitled "*Exceeding Expectations: Keys to Alabama Students Success*," takes an in-depth look at the factors necessary to see Alabama high schools achieve at least a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020. It also reveals the tools necessary for those graduates to be College- and Career-Ready.

Alabama is increasing its high school graduation rate, but at the same time, fourth-grade reading scores have declined. Alabama has shown significant increases in Pre-K student enrollments and Advanced Placement student success but lags behind the national average in both categories. The number of career-tech credentials by students is increasing, as is the number of high school students taking college-level courses through dual enrollment; however, the college level remediation rate is persistently hovering around 30 percent. The *Exceeding Expectations* report gives many examples of school systems across the state that are on the right track and are role models for others to follow.

The *Exceeding Expectations* report comes at the halfway point of the Alabama State Board of Education's Plan 2020 adoption. It makes use of new measures of student achievement adopted to judge progress toward Plan 2020's goals, taking a statewide look at Alabama's results on these measures and identifying a sample of school systems that have performed well on key metrics.

"Alabama school systems have been challenged like never before by the aspirational goals of Plan 2020; however, we know we can accomplish the goals it outlines – we must," said Joe Morton, Ph.D., BEA chairman and president, in presenting the report.

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The Governmental Research Association has recently recognized the BEA 2014 *Obstacles into Opportunities* and the 2015 *Teachers Matter* research reports for national merit.

“This recognition means the BEA is fully on target to provide educators, state level policy makers, the Alabama Legislature and the business community with concise road maps on how to improve education and develop a first class work force,” Morton added. “Our latest report is another excellent update and game plan on how to achieve all of the goals of Alabama's Plan 2020. We have the roadmap, but we have hills to climb.”

“The BCA has a keen interest in taking action to ensure that well-educated students leave the school system ready to begin careers or further their technical or education learning,” said William J. Canary, BCA president and CEO and BEA board member. “Building on the research of its last two reports, the BEA has established a clear path for successfully preparing our students for bright futures with its *Exceeding Expectations* report.”

The Business Education Alliance of Alabama was created in 2013 to assist in providing the best education opportunities and skills training available for Alabama's public school students. The BEA's mission is to stimulate the thoughtful study and constructive discussion of key policy issues facing Alabama and to jumpstart solutions to the problems that face us by promoting interactions between the public and private sectors.

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