

NEWS RELEASE

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A+ President Caroline B. Novak Inducted into the Alabama Academy of Honor

Caroline Novak, president of A+ Education Partnership, was inducted today into the Alabama Academy of Honor, an establishment created by the State Legislature in 1965 to recognize living Alabamians "*chosen for accomplishment or service greatly benefitting or reflecting great credit on the State.*"

This honor was bestowed on Novak for the many accomplishments in public education she fostered for over 25 years as the co-founder and leader of A+ Education Partnership, a non-profit dedicated to offering an excellent education to all Alabama children, no matter where they live.

"Mentor, challenger, champion for children, friend are just a smattering of the many terms that come to mind when I think of Caroline," said Dr. Tommy Bice, Alabama State Department of Education Superintendent. "Alabama and our children are a better place because she believed!"

Before A+ was created, Caroline spent four years uniting the arts and education by spearheading the ARTWORKS interactive learning wing at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, a hands-on children's gallery.

As a member of the charter class of Leadership Alabama, she learned more about the depth of Alabama's challenges in education and also about the role citizens can play in organizing comprehensive efforts to improve education in states such as Kentucky. She challenged her class to address improvements in education as the path to a better Alabama. Classmate Bill Smith, chairman of Royal Cup Coffee, Inc., led the response to her call to action with other members of the class. Along with guidance of advocates for equity such as Wayne Flynt, distinguished author and professor emeritus at Auburn University, and with corporate and individual support, they launched A+ in 1991.

A+ is now nationally recognized as the driver of real improvement for public education in Alabama.

Novak crafted a message about education in Alabama that resonated with others based on both opportunities and challenges. In addition to clearly outlining the path to success in education, she stressed the importance of demonstrating that that Alabama students and teachers *can* succeed with the right mix of high standards, improvements in teaching, and accountability. She partnered A+ with the state to develop and rollout the Alabama Reading Initiative, an effort that led to dramatic

improvements in 4th grade reading scores, especially for minorities. And, she raised more than \$1 million in private funding to launch the ARI.

In addition, over the years, A+ established two direct service divisions. The Alabama Best Practices Center works with teachers and school leaders across the state resulting in improved teaching and learning. A+ College Ready leads the nation in the rate of improvement in participation and success in Advanced Placement math, science and English courses.

More recently, Novak helped create two statewide coalitions, the Alabama School Readiness Alliance and Alabama GRIT - *Graduate Ready. Impact Tomorrow.*, to promote policies and investments for improving student success outlined in the State Board of Education's Plan 2020. Both efforts have led to success in legislative action. A+ also promotes innovation through charter schools, redesigning traditional high schools and addressing students' out-of-school issues.

Novak currently serves on the boards of the Education Commission of the States, the Southern Regional Education Board, the Business Council of Alabama, Sterling Bank and Leadership Alabama. Her honors include recognition by Policy Innovators in Education, Samford University's Medallion Award and Mercedes-Benz.

According to the A+ team, Novak is driven by her focused passion for education, because she fundamentally believes that all children have great potential. She is troubled that not all students currently have the same opportunities and support as others, and she also believes that a top-notch, student-centered education system is paramount to our democracy and individual and civic prosperity.

Those who have worked closely with Caroline for many years note that her success can be attributed to her focus on students and their great potential for the future.

"Caroline has been the linchpin in every aspect of educational improvement over the last 25 years," said A+ Board Chair, Preston Bolt. " She has worked tirelessly as the voice of those who matter most – the students – and to support teachers, principals and administrators in their hard work. The Board of Directors and staff of A+ Education Partnership are grateful for her leadership and proud for this most deserved recognition."

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