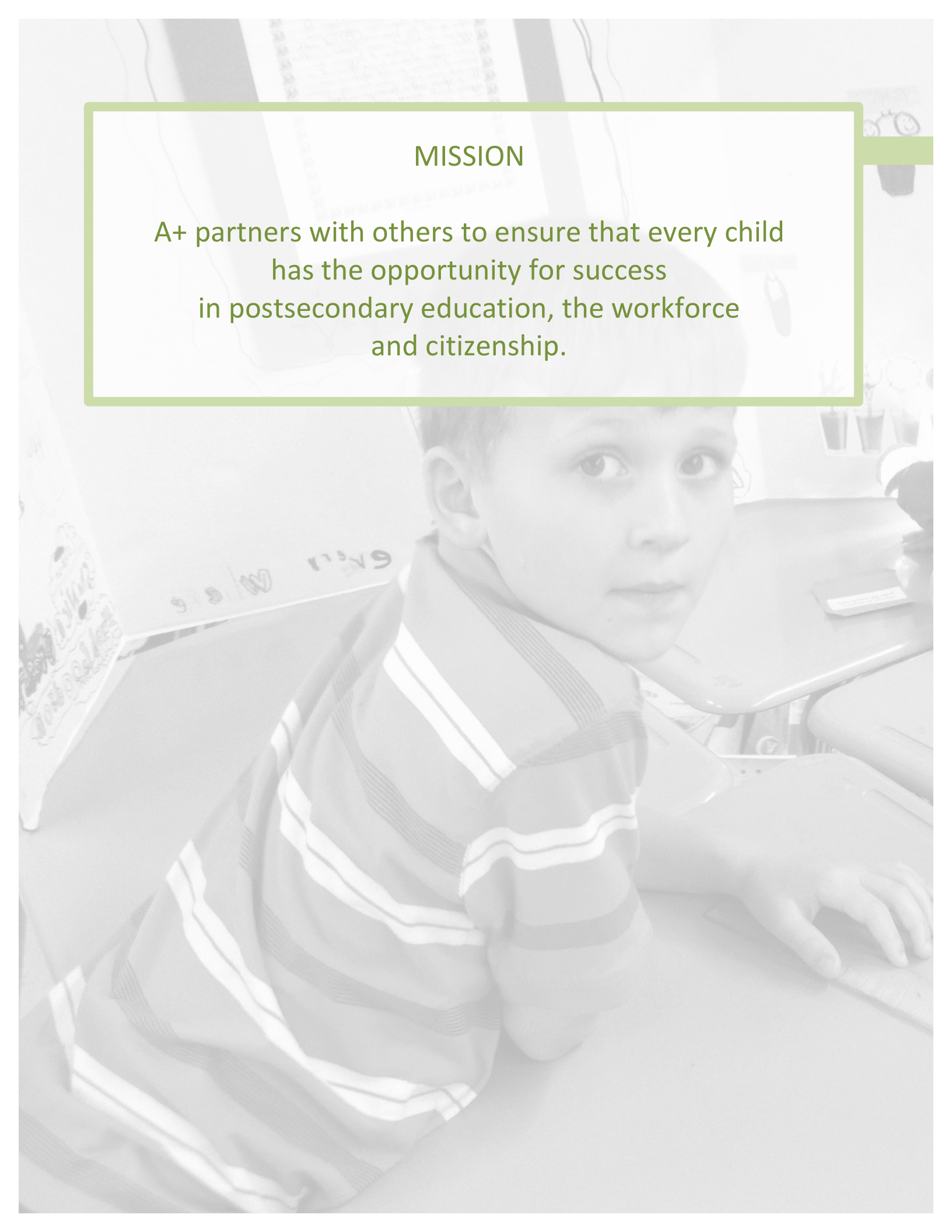




Equip, Empower, Expect More ...
Fostering a Culture of Innovation in Alabama Schools



MISSION

A+ partners with others to ensure that every child
has the opportunity for success
in postsecondary education, the workforce
and citizenship.



Alabama students are in a better position than ever because of your support of our work. Your investments are leveraged in the most effective ways possible to effect positive, lasting change.

In 2015, Alabama public schools have made tremendous progress in most areas. In this report, we present to you the impact we've made and the priorities on which we will be focused moving forward.

We can't ignore, however, that many deep-rooted challenges still remain. Most Alabama schools continue to struggle with achievement gaps within the state and compared to other states. **But there is a plan.** A+ has been a driving force over the last 25 years inspiring and challenging our partners to support this plan, and assisting them with tools to implement it.

A+ Education Partnership is focusing our work on critical elements of a plan adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education in 2010, called "**Plan 2020.**" We believe if carried out fully, it can truly change the entire public education system in Alabama for the better. Those elements are:

- Consistently implementing high academic standards for all students
- Promoting state policies and educational practices that support high-quality teachers and teaching
- Inspiring schools to innovate locally and become efficiently-run, model schools for the nation

We are proud to present to you this brief report describing the work of A+ and its divisions, the Alabama Best Practices Center and A+ College Ready. We think you'll see that the comprehensive approach we have taken has yielded meaningful change in Alabama public schools and beyond, and, with your help, we know we can continue to build on these successes.

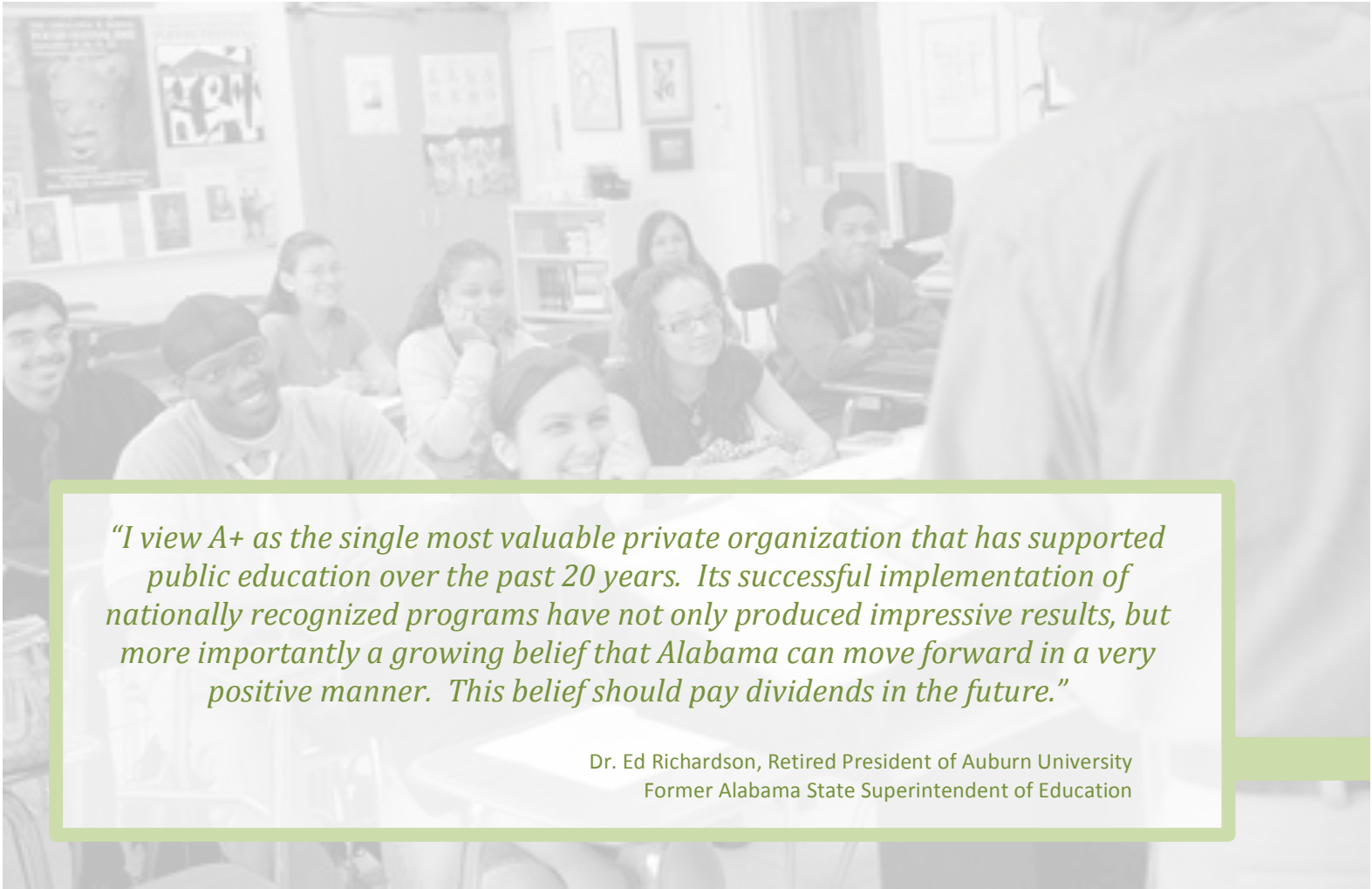
Caroline B. Novak, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Caroline Novak". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located below the printed name.

25 YEARS A+ EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP
DRIVER OF REAL IMPROVEMENT
for public education in Alabama



FOUNDER, DEVELOPER, CHALLENGER, RESEARCHER, BRIDGE-BUILDER

A faded background image of a classroom. Several students are seated at desks, looking towards the camera with smiles. A teacher or adult is partially visible in the foreground on the right, facing away from the camera. The classroom has posters on the wall and a bookshelf in the background.

"I view A+ as the single most valuable private organization that has supported public education over the past 20 years. Its successful implementation of nationally recognized programs have not only produced impressive results, but more importantly a growing belief that Alabama can move forward in a very positive manner. This belief should pay dividends in the future."

Dr. Ed Richardson, Retired President of Auburn University
Former Alabama State Superintendent of Education

*A+ is a
founding member of*



Alabama School
Readiness Alliance

A+ Education Partnership: PRIORITIES

Equip and Empower

- + Advance efforts to recruit, develop and retain high-quality teachers
- + Extend the reach of the Alabama Best Practices Center networks to increase statewide collaboration and talent development
- + Prepare more students for success through A+ College Ready
- + Push for full investment in what works well, like Alabama's high-quality, voluntary First Class Pre-K, the Advanced Placement program, the Alabama Reading Initiative and the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative

Expect More

- + Support effective implementation of high academic standards and accountability systems that foster student progress
- + Support collaborations that offer more career technical training and opportunities to challenge and inspire students
- + Elevate the teaching profession to the highest levels of performance, accountability and student outcomes

Foster a Culture of Innovation and Continuous Improvement

- + Share research-based practices for 21st-century learning
- + Challenge systems and educators to rethink traditional classrooms
- + Promote policy solutions to foster innovation in schools

2015 Policy Accomplishments

- + Successfully pushed the passing of the state's first public charter school legislation, developed from the best practices in other states
- + Successfully defeated the third attempt to throw out high academic standards
- + Published a second edition of Alabama's only comprehensive collection of public education local-level data, including student demographics, achievement and funding per student
- + Successfully advocated for increased funding of programs proven to improve educational opportunities and success, like First Class Pre-K expansion, Advanced Placement, and the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative

POLICY AGENDA

A+ Education Partnership will actively work to:

Business Education Alliance's Teachers Matter Report

- Ensure through regulation, legislation and/or appropriation of funds the implementation of recommendations from the BEA's 2015 report, *Teachers Matter*, including:
 - Raising standards for recruitment and admission to and graduation from teacher preparation programs.
 - Providing financial incentives for teachers who commit to work in hard-to-staff schools and high-need fields.
 - Implementing in all school systems a teacher effectiveness evaluation system that includes measures of student performance, encourages professional growth, and can ultimately inform employment and tenure decisions. These evaluations should be accompanied by support for improving effectiveness for teachers entering and continuing in the field, including mentors for new teachers.
 - Developing pathways for teachers to grow professionally while remaining in teaching roles.
 - Creating financial incentives for schools that achieve improved high-level student results.

College and Career Ready Standards

- Protect and fully implement the College and Career Ready Standards and Plan 2020.

Innovation

- Foster innovation through flexibility waivers and the creation of sound policy and regulation for public charter schools. This includes:
 - Creation of a clear and thorough process for approval/denial of public charter school applications to the Alabama Public Charter School Commission.
 - Promotion of innovative ideas in flexibility waivers approved by the Alabama State Department of Education.

Transparency

- Improve transparency of Alabama schools and systems' performance through creation and dissemination of *Alabama Public Education at a Glance*, and promotion of the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama's district-level data analysis.

Pre-k

- Expand the number of students entering school ready to learn through expansion of state-funded high-quality First Class Pre-K classrooms.

State Longitudinal Data System

- Create a State Longitudinal Data System and other means of improving transparency and data-driven policymaking in Alabama’s education and workforce systems.

Education Trust Fund Budget

- Maintain funding in the Education Trust Fund budget for programs with proven effectiveness, including but not limited to:
 - Advanced Placement
 - Alabama Reading Initiative
 - Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative
 - Student Assessments
 - Office of School Readiness (First Class Pre-K)
 - Teach For America
 - Arts Education
 - Other items outlined in the State Department of Education budget request

A+ will support efforts to:

- Create a **common definition of remediation** for all students entering post-secondary education in Alabama, whether two-year or four-year schools.
- Launch a **grade-level reading campaign** with the Alabama Literacy Alliance.
- Expand high-speed wireless Internet connectivity in schools through adoption of the **WIRED plan** for improved infrastructure across Alabama.
- Improve **wrap-around services** for students in Alabama schools, including but not limited to law enforcement, social workers, guidance counselors, and mental health providers.
- Improve Alabama’s **school funding** formula by:
 - Shifting to a weighted, per-pupil-based formula.
 - Creating a statewide “Achievement School District” of low-performing schools similar to those in Louisiana and Tennessee.
 - Promoting school innovation through after-school and summer-learning programs.
 - Returning Alabama to performance-based budgeting, as endorsed by PARCA.
 - Improving data transparency around performance of students who attend private schools with the help of tax credits and scholarships.

4 PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

ALABAMA BEST PRACTICES CENTER

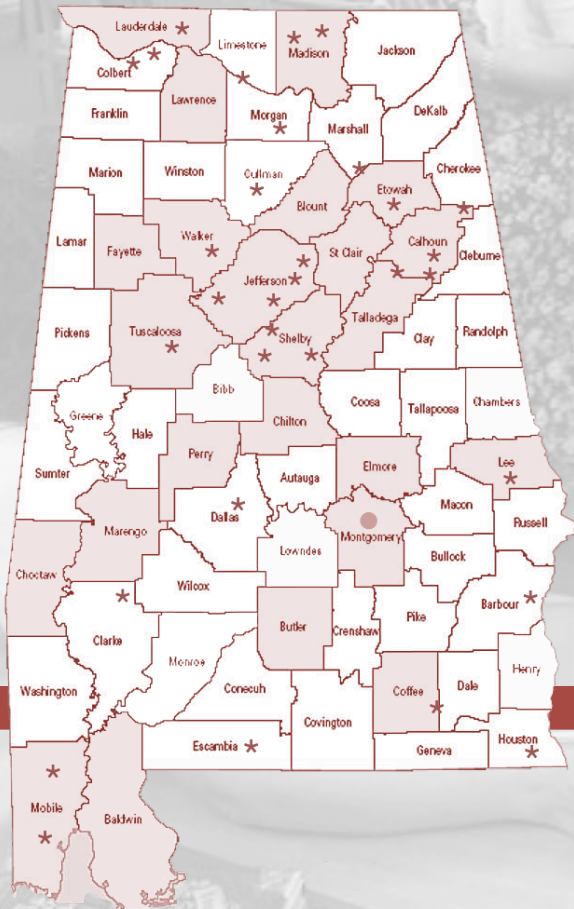
IMPACTS

400,000

STUDENTS

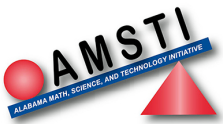
58 DISTRICTS

COLLABORATOR, TRAINER, FACILITATOR, INSTRUCTIONAL PARTNER



Instructional Round with students, Weeden Elementary School, Florence City

Our Partners



Alabama Best Practices Center

PRIORITIES:

- + Facilitate and design effective learning for networks of educators, four already in place and growing; Superintendent Leaders Network, Key Leaders Network (district and school leaders), Powerful Conversations Network (schools), and Instructional Partners Network (school-based instructional coaches)
- + Partner with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) to expand training and professional development to even the most rural, poverty-challenged schools
- + Encourage school cultures where educators hold each other accountable for student learning
- + Provide links to current research and practice that can be applied in Alabama classrooms to improve student learning, and college and career readiness
- + Challenge systems and educators to rethink traditional classrooms to meet the educational needs of the 21st century student

IMPACT:

- + Served 58 of the state's 134 public school districts
- + Impacted more than 400,000 of Alabama's 740,000 students
- + Facilitated 89 different professional learning sessions in 2014-15, with only three full-time employees
- + Developed effective professional development that was utilized by ALSDE in its regional meetings
- + Credited for increased student engagement in active, high-level learning, higher graduation rates and increased test scores

"The Best Practices Center is a change agent and catalyst. Professional development offered by the Superintendent Leaders Network is unmatched elsewhere. And the Key Leaders Network and Powerful Conversations Network have improved our schools."

Dr. Jeff Goodwin, Oxford City Schools Superintendent

80,000 AP ENROLLMENTS

A National Math and Science Initiative Program

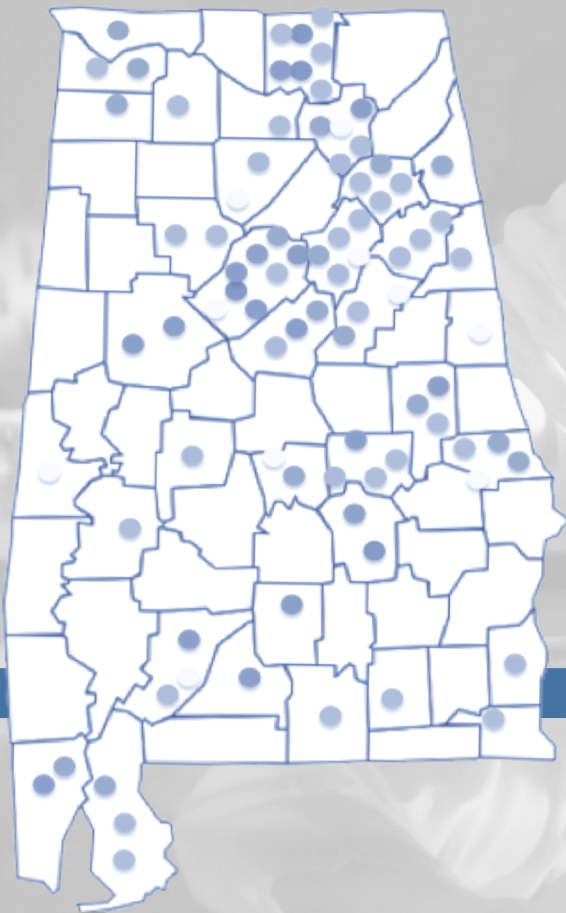
A+ COLLEGE READY

A Division of the A+ Education Partnership

#1 NATIONALLY IN
PERCENTAGE GROWTH
WITH 26,560
QUALIFYING SCORES IN
MATH, SCIENCE &
ENGLISH

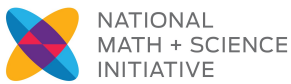
\$48 MILLION POTENTIAL COLLEGE SAVINGS

COURSE DEVELOPER, TRAINER, COLLEGE-LEVEL PREP, MENTOR, SUCCESS



Advanced Placement Summer Institute, University of Alabama

Our Partners



A+ College Ready

PRIORITIES:

- + Expand upon the foundational pipeline of middle and high school teachers preparing students for more rigorous courses
- + Partner with the Alabama State Department of Education to expand training and professional development to more rural, poverty-challenged schools
- + Provide outstanding teacher training which increases opportunities for student success in Advanced Placement (AP) and college
- + Develop the highest-quality curriculum and resources for teachers in grades 6-12
- + Work to dramatically increase the number of students in Alabama taking math, science, English and social studies AP courses, and earning qualifying scores on AP exams
- + Expand access to computer science and social studies education

IMPACT:

- + Helped Alabama rank #1 in the nation for percentage increase of math, science and English qualifying scores over seven years, and #2 nationally for minority student success
- + Showed an average 95% increase in AP qualifying scores in the first program year in 97 high schools, 14 times the national average
- + Helped save Alabama families an estimated \$48 million in potential college costs as students earned 26,560 qualifying scores that count toward college credit
- + Increased percentage participation of African-American students in AP to improve Alabama's rank nationally from 32nd in 2008 to 10th in 2015

"What A+ has provided is transformative. I have really become a new teacher (after 20 years)! And because of the training I've received, I teach all my classes differently – not just AP."

Carla Wurtz, AP Calculus, Marbury High School

MAJOR INVESTORS

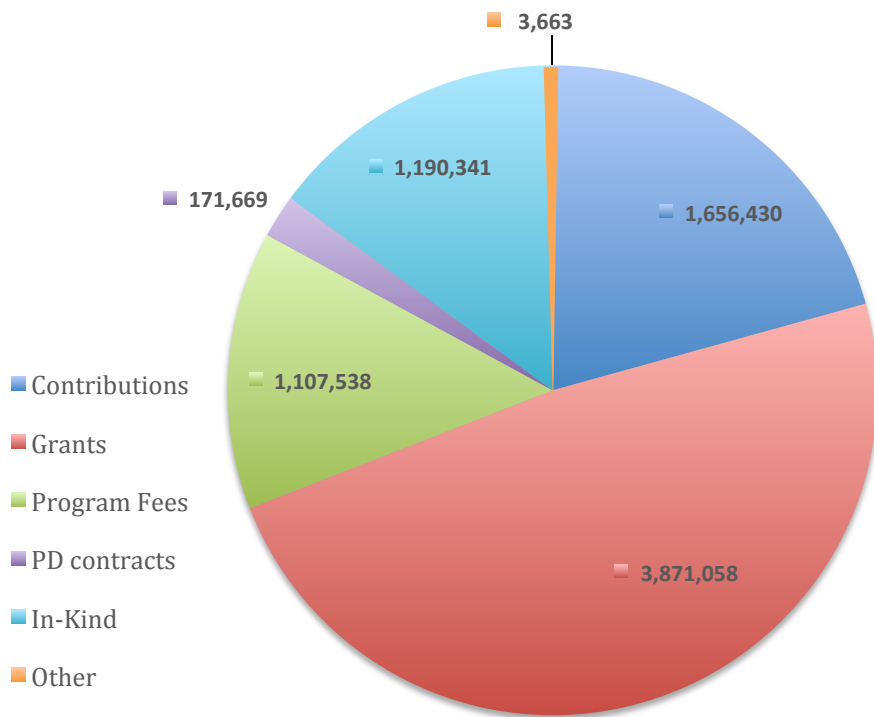
AAA Cooper Transportation
 Alabama Civil Justice Foundation
 Alabama Power *(in kind)*
 Altec / Styslinger Foundation
 AT&T Alabama
 Belk Foundation
 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama
 Boeing
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"A+ Education Partnership is a critical advisor to key education decision-makers in Alabama. We have invested annually in A+ because of their unwavering focus on high academic standards, which ensure students are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow."

Johanna Edens Anderson
Executive Director, The Belk Foundation

LEVERAGING PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENTS FOR HIGH-IMPACT RESULTS

REVENUES



EXPENSES

Administrative	\$	408,761
Program A+	\$	496,752
Program ABPC	\$	273,543
Program A+CR	\$	5,933,590
Alabama GRIT	\$	165,587
Alabama School Readiness Alliance	\$	149,077
Woodlawn Innovation Network (WIN)	\$	819,539

REVENUES \$8,000,699
EXPENSES \$8,246,849

ADMINISTRATIVE 5.7 %
PROGRAMMATIC 94.4 %

Public Partners

Appalachian Regional Commission
Local Alabama School Systems
National Science Foundation
State of Alabama
U.S. Department of Defense
Initiative for Military Families

Investors in the work of Alabama School Readiness Alliance

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The Daniel Foundation
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Lockheed Martin
Jane K Lowe Foundation
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Regions Financial Corporation
SAIC
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Wells Fargo

MAKING AN IMPACT ON ALABAMA'S FUTURE

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In Memory of Winton M. Blount III

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PARTNERSHIP
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