



# Alabama Education

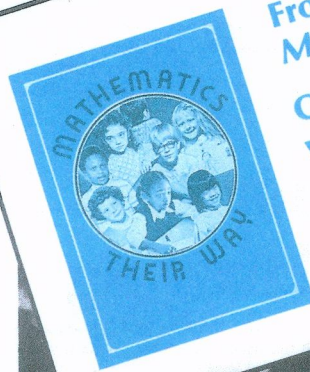
OFFICE

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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From the authors of  
Math Their Way . . .  
One district's experience  
with the —

**BARATTA-LORTON  
READING PROGRAM**

**CONFIRMS RULING**—Following the recent ruling by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta that the \$500,000 settlement of the teacher testing lawsuit will be enforced, State Superintendent of Education Dr. Wayne Teague met with members of the news media at the State Department of Education to present his views and answer their questions. To Dr. Teague's right is Dr. C. C. Baker, Assistant State

## Teacher Test Suit

# Court Enforces The Settlement

Following the Nov. 25 ruling of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta regarding the Alabama Initial Teacher Certification Test, State Superintendent of Education Dr. Wayne Teague met the news media at the State Department of Education on Wednesday and read a prepared statement. Appearing with Dr. Teague was State Board Vice President John M. Tyson Jr., who also addressed the group.

Dr. Teague said that the ruling was another step in what has proven to be a most controversial issue surrounding what is one of the state's most important programs as it relates to the assurance of quality education in our classrooms.

He gave the chronology of events leading to the ruling:

In June 1981, the Alabama Initial Teacher Certification Testing Program was born—a series of tests designed to measure mastery of general professional education and specific teaching field knowledge of individuals hoping to become certified in the state of Alabama. It was also decided, because of a push from the governor at that time, to test currently certified teachers who were attempting to be updated in their fields of specialization.

The testing program was developed and validated specifically for the state of

Alabama through a contract with National Evaluation Systems of Massachusetts. The State Board of Education, after hearing advice from professional educators as well as testing specialists, chose this route for development of the testing program because it was necessary to construct and validate tests that met the unique needs of Alabama. It was recognized that special field testing, instrument changes and validation would have to be carried out for any program chosen; thus, it was determined that the construction of a testing program designed specifically for Alabama was the best avenue to take.

• With each administration of the test, the scores of prospective teachers improved. Early on, candidates from certain institutions experienced extreme difficulty in passing the examinations. However, through subsequent program improvements that have resulted at these institutions, test scores have steadily improved throughout the process of implementing this program.

• In December 1981, a group of plaintiffs filed a class action suit against the State Board of Education seeking the termination of the testing program and asked the court to award what could become an excessive rate of damages to this class of individuals.

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## Board VP Advocates Reasoned Response

State Board of Education Vice President John M. Tyson Jr. pointed out that he did not attend the meeting in Birmingham and he understood that the opinion refers to the presiding officer at that time. "I was not presiding officer, I have been elected," he said.

Now, this lawsuit is important to the state of Alabama and what I have to say lives the way that we approach a resolution of this issue," said Tyson. "We have just through what I think is probably the most divisive, the toughest, hardest-fought decision in a long time in the history of Alabama. I think you would all agree."

He added that what we need now is to allow the state to begin to heal some of the wounds that occurred during that fight and to approach to this particular issue, espe-

cially, what we need is cool, calm, reasoned judgment about what responses the State Board and the state of Alabama will make to the judgment by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

"I have not had time to thoroughly read and understand the opinion," he said. "I am a little dismayed that we had to waste, apparently, 21 days of trial over a six-week period of time, all of which is apparently now unnecessary. I would have preferred that the Court grant the stay that we asked them to and put off the trial until the Eleventh Circuit ruled, but apparently that was not to be. I'm a little concerned about that.

"But despite that concern, we need cool, calm, reasoned judgment," he continued. "What I expect Dr. Teague and the State

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# Fail-Proof Method Teaches Reading Fast

By Dr. Jack Sasser\*

Children in Dothan City Schools are excited about learning to read, thanks to a unique approach their school system initiated last year.

The reading program, which is based upon the philosophy that "all children can learn to read," was piloted in the Dothan City Schools in 1985-86 and extended to 26 kindergarten and first-grade classrooms in 1986-87. This program was created by Mary and Bob Baratta-Lorton to make the process of learning to read and to write the same kind of activity-centered, child-centered, manipulative-based experience. At the same time, it is a:

- language experience approach;
- phonics approach, consisting of 44 basic sounds;
- non-ability-group approach;
- writing program;
- reading program;
- language arts program; additionally, it does not require a workbook;
- does not require duplicator sheets; and
- is unique.

There are no other programs presently available which approach the teaching of reading and writing in the same manner. No child fails to learn to read.

The program is represented by samples of the approach used:

• The more a classroom learning environment encourages students to look for patterns and relationships in the world around them and the better children become at seeing these relationships, the easier meaningful learning becomes for the child. The reading program places an emphasis on searching out patterns as opposed to memorizing rules.

• The program provides freedom for children to learn from one another. None of us is as smart as all of us. If we use each other to help each other, we can make maximum utilization of the knowledge possessed by each child to help another child to learn. There are no traditional reading groups and no homogenous ability groups which convince some children they can learn and others that they cannot. A child is where he is, neither behind nor ahead.

• Once a child has learned the procedures for an activity at one level, those same procedures are used at each succeeding level. Children advance through the program with only a minimum of teacher supervision, freeing the teacher to become a diagnostician and helper of children.

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## For Academics

# Dothan Hosts First Decathlon

By Anndra Faulk\*

The gym was packed with students, quiet anticipation one moment and loud cheering the next moment. Television cameras moved in for close-ups and coaches nervously paced on the sidelines. It was so exciting—almost as dramatic as football.

—A. Robert Paltiel  
*World Book Inc.*

The city of Dothan has the distinction of hosting the first Alabama Academic Decathlon, scheduled the first Friday in December, with 11th- and 12th-grade students from across the state eligible to compete in the 10-event contest.

Although fashioned after the Greek Decathlon, the event is academic rather than athletic and provides a team competition as well as one for individuals. Each team has a boy and a girl at each of three levels—A, B and C—since competition provides incentive for B and C students as well as for A students.

Scheduled at Wallace College, the competition includes written examinations on economics, science, mathematics, fine arts, social science, language and literature. Students are scored during a speech, interview and on an essay. The exciting and intense event, the Super Quiz, in the Wallace Gym, is the only part of the competition open to the public.

that academics is just as important as athletics and can be just as competitive."

Sponsored by the Education Committee of the Dothan-Houston County Chamber of Commerce, the event is supported by the University of Alabama. Dothan City Schools, Troy State-Dothan, Wallace College, Alabama Power Co., WenSouth Corp., Coca-Cola of Dothan, World Book, Michelin, Sony, General Telephone Electronics and Wiregrass Commons Mall.

At press time, high schools committed to participate in the day-long event include Dothan, Northview, Abbeville, Carroll of Ozark, Central of Phenix City, Childersburg, Davidson of Mobile, Gadsden, Headland, Montgomery Catholic, Red Bay, Emma Sansom, and Litchfield of Gadsden and Ashford.

The steering committee for the event is made up of Marion Loftin, Gayle Oberst, Anndra Faulk, Gene Brannon, Mildred Enfinger, Sandra Walls, Fred Blackwell, Janice Bell, Jean Bollin, Ed Coey, Dr. Jack Sasser, Dr. Lester Stewart, Dr. R. Dean Davis, Ann Judah, Barry Singletary, Donna Valeska, Carolyn Ballard and Laurie Hornsby.

Speakers Bureau members Az Flowers, Bill Entz and Jim Loftin have been available as speakers for civic clubs and other organizations to promote interest in the Academic Decathlon.



**REAUTHORIZATION HEARING**—State Superintendent of Education Dr. Wayne Teague and educators from other states testify before the congressional Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee concerning reauthorization of the Chapter 1 and 2 programs. Pictured (left to right): Patricia Hamner, immediate past president, West Virginia Board of Education; Dr. Tom Anderson, deputy commissioner for Finance and Compliance, Texas Education Agency; Dr. Tom Saterfield, deputy state superintendent, Mississippi Department of Education; and Dr. Teague.

## In Birmingham

# ECIA Chapters 1 & 2 Subject Of Hearing

State Superintendent of Education Dr. Wayne Teague testified before a congressional subcommittee on education last month in Birmingham in one of four hearings around the country to determine reauthorization of the federal Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 programs.

Teague and educators from several other eastern states cited what they think should or should not be changed about the programs before the Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee. Members of the subcommittee include representatives Augustus F. Hawkins, D-Calif., chairman of both the committee and subcommittee; Charles Hayes, D-Ill.; Lynn M. Dymally, D-Calif.; William F. Dingell, R-Pa., a former local superintendent of education in Pennsylvania; Rep. C. Perkins, D-Ky.; and several subcommittee staff members.

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 are administered nationwide under the 1981 Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, which expires Sept. 30, and must be reauthorized before any monies can be appropriated. Combined, the Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 programs bring in about \$80 million for federal assistance in Alabama. In the Department of Education, the programs are administered by the Division of Special Administrative Services.

Teague told the congressional panel that Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 programs "are going quite nicely, thank you, as they are."

"There are a number of individuals and groups around the country who are pushing to change portions of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. I firmly believe that these changes would be detrimental to the program and subsequently to the offerings provided the youth of this nation," he said.

### Chapter 1

Concerning the Chapter 1 program, the Superintendent urged the subcommittee to:

- retain support of the current supplementary nature of the program and its targeting of resources for the education of children with normal intelligence whose classroom performance is below the level appropriate for their ages. Teague said there is a need for coordination of federal, state and local efforts to provide programs for

these students, including close coordination with the regular education program at the local school level.

- disregard voucher proposals and tuition tax credit plans to aid nonpublic school students. Teague said such proposals are intended to create separate tax-supported school systems "for the self-elected." He said that tax credits, vouchers and other tax avoidance schemes not only will reduce financial support to the existing public school systems but will dilute national commitment to the concept of common schooling in the future.

"To keep the emotional and financial support of all taxpayers, we must continually emphasize the national benefits of common schooling," he said.

- maintain parent involvement in Chapter 1 programs. Teague said it is not necessary to mandate formal, bureaucratic parental groups. The present law requires an annual public meeting and consultation with parents in the design and implementation of Chapter 1 programs.

- allow local school districts flexibility to match appropriate program service models—in-class projects, limited and extended pull-out projects, replacement models and add-on projects—with student needs.

- maintain a high degree of Chapter 1 services that are specific or required to be coordinated with regular education programs at the local school level.

### Chapter 2

For the Chapter 2 program, Teague:

- strongly recommended eliminating references to antecedent programs and replacing them with specific categories which reflect national needs and complement, reinforce and strengthen local and state efforts.

- said that there should be no change in the current legislation which mandates systematic consultation with parents, teachers, administrators and others as being appropriate.

- recommended that the role and purpose of the state advisory council as presently outlined in the Act be maintained.

- stated that the present flexibility given in the Chapter 2 program is well-liked by local education personnel.

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# Every Child Learned To Read—100 Percent

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- Children learn to read and to write in a secure environment. There is no element of failure associated with the learning involved. First-year efforts resulted in *not a single child failing to learn to read successfully.*

- Children are involved at a very early stage in the process of writing their own thoughts and stories without the need for teacher intervention and *before the child even knows the alphabet.* Children can write what they wish using their own words, *before they can even hold a pencil.*

- The program teaches children to write and read, but most importantly, it teaches them to love reading and writing, so that excitement generated by this early reading experience will translate into a desire to keep on reading and keep on writing, long after the school day or the school year has ended.

None of the program materials is consumable. There are no workbooks, no worksheets. A large number of books to read are needed, because *children read a lot.* In this program, all children can learn to read and write with a level of understanding and enthusiasm that is unmatched, cannot be described and must be seen.

Pilot and first-year efforts in the Dothan City Schools using the reading program have yet to experience failure for any child. The program currently is used in kindergarten, first grade and special education classes. Modification to the basal reading instructional process will occur as children

exit this program as readers. The love for reading must be fostered and nurtured. The children will possess the skill and love for reading and can be kept busy reading, rather than doing worksheets and seatwork.

Although the initial cost of the program—\$827 per classroom—sounds high, bear in mind that this cost covers the entire program and includes *everything* needed to teach children to read. There are no textbooks or workbooks to buy and the materials can be used year after year.

For more information, write to: Center for Innovation; Reading Program; 19225 Vineyard Lane; Saratoga, CA 95070.

(\*Director of Instruction, Dothan City Schools)

## Child Care in Public Schools

The National School Boards Association issued a report on successful child-care programs in the public schools. According to advocates of school-based child-care programs, schools have numerous advantages over families and communities offered about latchkey children, including effective use of public resources; affordable, convenient and regulated environments for children; and safe and familiar surroundings. Day Care in the Public Schools is available for \$9 from the National School Boards Association, 1680 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.