



**SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENTS**  
*of Alabama*

400 SOUTH UNION STREET, SUITE 405  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104

## **NEWS IN EDUCATION**

**CONTACT:** Janet H. McCain, Public Relations or  
Dr. Susan Lockwood, Exec. Director  
334-262-0014 or 1-877-269-0014

### **Dr. Joyce Levey, Tuscaloosa City School Superintendent Named Alabama's 2010 Superintendent of the Year**

**Montgomery, AL., October 21, 2009** -- The School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) and Classworks, an SSA Premium Business Member, are proud to announce the selection of Dr. Joyce Levey as the Alabama/Classworks 2010 Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Levey was selected from nine finalists throughout the state, each of whom is an outstanding superintendent. Dr. Levey will be honored at the Superintendent of the Year Luncheon on January 12, 2010, held during SSA's Legislative Conference in Montgomery. Classworks will provide Dr. Levey with a Superintendent of the Year ring and travel expenses to the AASA National Conference on Education, to be held February 11 - 13, 2010 in Phoenix, AZ. At the National Conference, Dr. Levey will represent Alabama and receive a bronze medallion with the Superintendent of the Year emblem and a plaque from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), SSA's national affiliate and national sponsor of this program. Each state's winner will be recognized during the National Conference on Education where the national winner for 2010 will be announced.

Nominations for the award were submitted from the nine districts of the School Superintendents of Alabama membership to a committee of educators and representatives of education. All finalists were recognized earlier this week during the SSA Fall Conference held at the Marriott Shoals Hotel and Conference Center. The other 2010 finalists include Mrs. Melanie Ryals, Monroe County School Superintendent; Dr. Daniel Boyd, Lowndes County School Superintendent; Mr. Dennis Coe, Henry County School Superintendent; Mr. Chuck Marcum, Roanoke City School Superintendent; Mr. Andy Craig, Hoover City School Superintendent; Mr. Jim Cunningham, Ft. Payne City School Superintendent; Dr. Jan Harris, Cullman City School Superintendent; and Mr. John Mullins, Arab City School Superintendent. In the spring, each of the nine finalists will award a \$1,000 scholarship on behalf of School Superintendents of Alabama, to a graduating senior in their school system who meets a minimum GPA and ACT score with the intention of majoring in education and teaching in Alabama. Each of these superintendents do an outstanding job and deserve the recognition of this program.

Dr. Joyce Levey has had the opportunity to serve as Superintendent in the Tuscaloosa City School System since 2003. Prior to her superintendency, she served as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Director of Testing, Assessments, Guidance, and Grants; and as Principal of the Central High School for the East and West Campuses. Dr. Levey holds a Doctorate of Administration and Education Research, and an Educational Leadership Specialist degree, both from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. She holds a Master of Education Leadership degree, an Education Specialist degree in Biology, a Master of Arts and Education in High School Biology, and a Bachelor of Science degree, all from the University of Alabama in Birmingham.

Tuscaloosa City is a school system with a total population of 10,311 students on 24 campuses, in which 67 percent of students meet free and reduced-price lunch guidelines; and ethnicity includes: African American, 74 percent; white, 22 percent; and other, 4 percent. Dr. Levey is a torchbearer with regards to the inception of a Pre-K program in the city of Tuscaloosa. With the support of local government, Dr. Levey has initiated and implemented a successful Pre-K program within the district that enables children to begin their quest for knowledge at a much younger age. The Tuscaloosa City Schools have provided a Pre-K program to more than 1028 four-year-old children who are academically at-risk in the city of Tuscaloosa. It provides teacher units to the city program and a detention center for those students who become wards of the legal system. The Tuscaloosa City School System most recently received the State and National Civic Star Award for the

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district's Pre-K Initiative. Tuscaloosa City's High school seniors recently earned more than \$17.2 million in scholarships to colleges and universities across the nation. During the past five years, 42 students have been named National Merit Semifinalists and two students were recognized as National Achievement nominees. The school system has received the "What Parents Want Most" Award for the 12th consecutive year. There are 50 teachers who have received National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Certification in the past four years, 19 Jacksonville State University Teacher Hall of Fame system-wide winners, five Alabama Teacher of the Year winners, and one Region II and National Outstanding New Career and Technical Teacher of the Year Award winner. In May of 2008, the University of Alabama presented to the Tuscaloosa City School Superintendent the Center for Community-Based Partnerships Excellence in Engagement Award for outstanding partner-initiated engagement efforts.

"Under Dr. Levey's leadership, a new magnet school opened just this year, several schools have been built, and much-needed change has come to programs from the elementary to high school levels. We are pleased to welcome graduates of the city's three high schools to The University of Alabama. Clearly, they are well prepared for college academics and compete very successfully with their peers from across the country," praises Dr. Robert Witt, President of The University of Alabama.

"Dr. Levey is an effective leader that has successfully initiated change through her passionate endeavor to build leadership and ownership within the school family and through the implementation of programs such as the Pre-K Initiative both system and city wide, the Positive Behavior support system, middle school initiative, Administrative Leadership Academy (ALA), Aspiring Administrative Leadership Academy (AALA), a district strategic plan, a demographic study, the Helping Families Linking Parents Initiative (HELP), professional learning communities as well as other programs and initiatives," says Mr. Dan Meissner, Tuscaloosa City School Board Chair.

According to SSA's Executive Director, Dr. Susan Lockwood, "Dr. Levey is a proven and successful superintendent because her focus remains on students while keeping her eye on future needs of both the children and the school system. She effectively collaborates with all parts of the community to consistently work with those within the system and those outside the system so good things happen for boys and girls. Today Alabama's schools are facing unprecedented financial challenges. This year is especially difficult in Alabama for several reasons: school systems faced a steep reduction in funds last year, this year's budget allocation was slashed, so no funds were provided for such things as teacher supplies and textbooks; and now on top of that reduced budget they are faced with 7.5% proration of that reduced amount. To make matters worse, after the Depression many laws and constitutional amendments were passed that prohibit school boards from taking any actions that would bring financial relief. Alabama school systems are unable to reduce the school year as Hawaii has done, or to grant furloughs as Georgia has done. There is no recourse other than to seek funds from local government or borrow to meet payroll and other obligations once the reserve is depleted."

"Dr. Levey has been a leader in this region of the state through her participation in meetings with the school board, the Mayor and City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and with the media to keep them informed of the situation the schools are facing. While they can benefit from the stimulus package, there are regulations on how every bundle of funding from the federal and state governments can be used, which really ties the hands of local boards and superintendents when there is funding for special projects but not enough to "pay the bills". Operations funding has been depleted. In spite of these difficulties, Dr Levey is focused on student learning, professional growth, and morale moving in a positive direction. She and the Tuscaloosa City School Board are making the best fiscal decisions possible while not sacrificing the future. Dr. Levey is an SSA District VII President for school systems in this area of the state, and her leadership in these difficult times is a model for others to follow," says Dr. Susan Lockwood, SSA Executive Director.

The School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) provides a united voice for superintendents in our state. SSA promotes public education in Alabama and the nation; is the leading advocate for children and youth in our state; provides a forum for discussion of educational issues; provides professional development for superintendents and their leadership team to promote the efficient and effective operation of the school system and the achievement of students; and is the organization for superintendents to influence policy makers and legislators.