

COUNSELOR CONNECTION

AUGUST 2019

ACCS receives grant to expand apprenticeships

The Alabama Community College System has received a \$12 million grant from the U. S. Department of Labor to expand apprenticeships with private partners.

The grant focuses on advanced manufacturing. In Alabama, some 5,000 students will benefit from the expanded training in advanced manufacturing.

“Employers in Alabama are looking for individuals who are job-ready on day one and an apprenticeship is a great way for students to gain both the classroom training and real-world experience these employers are seeking,” ACCS Chancellor Jimmy H. Baker said.

Alabama’s community colleges will use the grant to:

- Expand the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education program at Calhoun Community College and to extend that program to Northwest-Shoals Community College, Wallace State Community College at Hanceville and Bishop State Community College.
- Implement quick-start pre-apprenticeship programs that lead to nationally recognized



Manufacturing Skill Standards Council certifications that prepare students for in-depth apprenticeships or entry-level jobs in manufacturing.

- Implement short-term apprenticeship programs that place residents in one of several high-wage, in-demand occupations in advanced manufacturing.

Students should start thinking about retirement

Retirement is a long way off for today's high school students, but it's not too early for them to start thinking about it.

For decades, U.S. citizens have depended on Social Security for much of their retirement income. However, Congress can change the laws that govern Social Security at any time.

Many people have also relied on pensions, but many companies are scaling back or ending their pension plans. Changing jobs often means workers won't be able to build up a pension even if employers offer one.

People are also living longer, which means their retirement funds have to cover more years.

When it comes to retirement, today's students should hope for the best but prepare for the worst.

Every time they get paid, they should set something aside for retirement. A little can go a long way. For example, if they save \$200 per month for 40 years without earning any interest, they will have saved \$96,000. If they can invest that money at 2.5 percent, they will have more than \$164,000 built up — and that's not much for retirement.

Students should learn to set up and follow a budget that includes saving as much as they can, then invest those savings wisely. When they begin their careers, they should work with an investment professional to pick a plan that will provide a secure retirement. Then, if they don't have Social Security or a pension upon retiring, they will still have something to help get them through their retirement years.



Good admissions essay may mean more aid for college

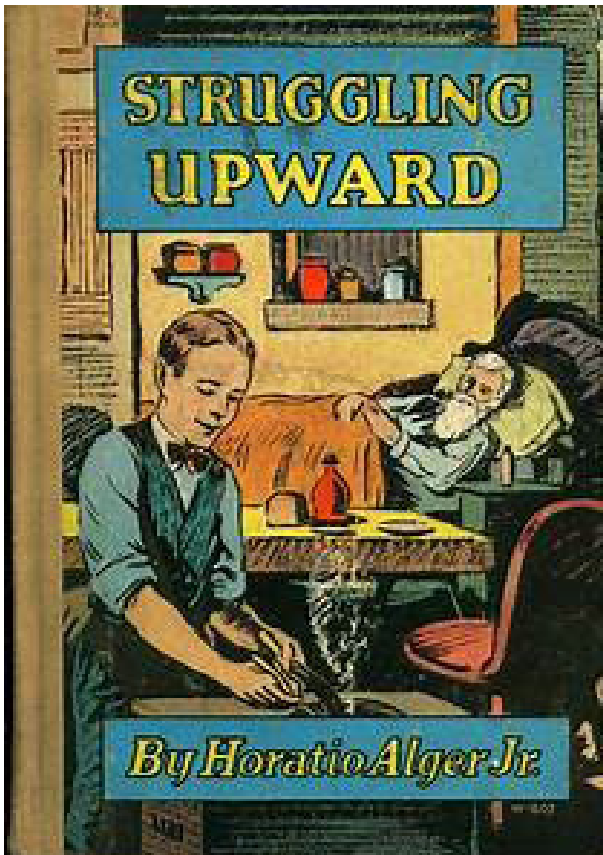
Some colleges, especially private schools, require an essay as part of the admissions process for college freshmen. That essay may also help when it comes to paying for college.

Generally, the more exclusive the college, the more important the essay may be in admissions and financial aid decisions.

Essays let schools learn more about students by giving them a chance to set themselves apart from other applicants.

Students should put time and effort into an admissions essay. Schools that require a written essay want students who can express themselves clearly, using proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. It may take several drafts to get it right, but the essay needs to be well written and free of errors. Students should have a teacher, school counselor or parent review the essay before submitting it to the college.

Some schools let students submit nontraditional essays such as poems, song lyrics or videos. That lets students show their creativity.



Scholarship spotlight

Horatio Alger Alabama Scholarship

Eligibility: Must be enrolled full time as a high school senior in Alabama, plan to enter a college in the U.S. no later than the fall following graduation, demonstrate a strong commitment to pursuing and completing a bachelor's degree at an accredited non-profit public or private institution in the United States, demonstrate financial need, be involved in cocurricular and community service activities, demonstrate integrity and perseverance in overcoming adversity, maintain at least a 2.0 GPA and be a U.S. citizen and resident of Alabama.

Award: \$10,000

Number: 1

Deadline: October 25

Contact: Counselor or <https://scholars.horatioalger.org/about-our-scholarship-programs/state-scholarships/>

Registration for Poetry Out Loud continuing

Registration is continuing for Alabama's 2020 Poetry Out Loud competition, with school competitions to be held no later than October 14.

Schools are invited to participate in classroom and school-wide contests, with winners advancing to state competition at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery on February 17. State champions advance to the national finals in Washington, D.C., April 27–29.

Students in grades 9–12 are eligible. Eighth-graders taking high school classes may also compete. All competitors at the state and national finals must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. A school must organize a school-wide poetry competition and select a school champion by February 7.

Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation.

For more information, contact program manager Diana Green of the Alabama State Council on the Arts at diana.green@arts.alabama.gov or 334.242.4076, ext. 241.

For more information and a complete list of rules, visit the Alabama State Council on the Arts [website](#).

State celebrating school attendance month

The state is celebrating Alabama School Attendance Awareness Month through September 30.

Each year, millions of hours of classroom instruction time are missed because of excessive school absences. Chronic absenteeism places students at greater academic risk and leads some to fail or drop out of school altogether. Suspensions and excessive absences lower classroom proficiency.

Poor school attendance can start as early as kindergarten and can affect a student's achievement through high school. Consistent school attendance helps students build strong basic skills in reading, math and language.

Barriers in transportation, health issues, poor nutrition and mental health can impact a student's attendance.

To combat this trend, many Alabama communities have developed innovative resources, programs and methods to reduce school absences.

The Birmingham City Schools, Huntsville City Schools and Montgomery County Schools have best practice-level school attendance efforts.

Innovative attendance initiatives can be found in these districts:

- Alabaster City Schools – School Social Workers and Report Card Conferencing



- Hoover City Schools – Truancy Prevention Program
- Madison County Schools – Code of Conduct Strategies and School Social Workers
- Dallas County Schools – Attendance Manual – Fair and Equitable Procedures
- Jackson County Schools – Attendance and Student Mentoring Program

To learn more, contact Alabama State Department of Education Administrator Kay Warfield at 334-694-4724 or ALSDE Education Specialist Kanetra Germany at kgermany@alsde.edu.