



# JCAFT ACTION

1900 – 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue South • Birmingham, AL 35209 •

January 2008

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## ALTERNATING BLOCK SCHEDULE

On Tuesday, December 4, 2007, the Student Schedule Committee voted to recommend to Dr. Hammonds and the Board that the Jefferson County School System replace the traditional 4 X 4 Block Schedule with the Alternating Block Schedule beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. The Alternating Block Schedule is the most commonly implemented block schedule in school systems today, according to recent research. The eight-block alternating day schedule differs

from the traditional 4 X 4 block schedule

in that eight classes meet throughout the year with four classes on one day and four other classes on the next day.

These recommendations have been made based upon the following rationale:

- It would make it easier with student transfers to Jefferson County Schools and also from Jefferson County to other school systems. The current block schedule is very often not compatible with other school systems and in some cases, students transferring in have not been allowed to graduate because the classes they needed were not offered.
- The core curriculum (Math, Science, Social Studies and English) is taught for the entire school year.
- The opportunity remains as with the 4 X 4 Block for students to take more electives.
- The schedule is similar to what students will experience in college.
- There is less time used for class changes.
- There is less time lost from class; there is no longer the need for end-of-term exams in mid-year.
- There is no time required by counselors and school staff at mid-year for planning and implementing a new schedule for the spring.
- There is more flexibility within school calendar (first term does not have to end prior to winter break, and the semester could end either prior to or after the winter holidays).
- Students will be attending core classes at the time of AHSGE/ACT administration (Math, Science, Social Studies, and English).
- This schedule is more advantageous for students participating in Advanced Placement classes.

- Eight classes per year may be taken.
- Teachers will retain the same amount of planning time.

The committee further recommended that all forms of block schedule be eliminated in middle schools (grades 6-8) effective beginning the 2008-2009 school year, and that all teachers of grades 9 through 12 along with school administrators receive ongoing professional development in the areas of effective classroom instruction using the 96 minute block. The committee also asked the Board for flexibility in the upcoming year as it will be a challenge to schedule needed classes for students and should be approached with a case by case consideration.

Any comments or questions should be directed to Dr. Jerry Mitchell at the Jefferson County Board of Education. The JCAFT, as well, can address your concerns and advocate for you during this process.

Thanks to JCAFT member Marrienne Coleman and other committee members for their hard work.



## JCAFT CONDUCTS VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

JCAFT leaders are in the process of conducting a voter registration drive in the Jefferson County Schools. High Schools have been targeted first since 18 years olds students are eligible to register. JCAFT staff member, Brenda Thompson organized and carried out the registration activity. So far, we've received a tremendous response with over 150 new voters registered for the February 5<sup>th</sup> primary. If you or anyone you know has not registered, the deadline is fast approaching. Included below are instructions

on how to register to vote in the state of Alabama. You may also obtain a copy by visiting the JCAFT website at [www.jcaft.com](http://www.jcaft.com).

### How To Register To Vote In Alabama

Voter registration is governed in Alabama by state law and the federal National Voter Registration Act (commonly known as "motor voter"). This act provides for three types of voter registration in the state: Motor voter registration, agency-based registration, and postcard registration. Motor voter registration applies to those who apply at the Driver's Licensing Office. Agency-based registration is for those who register at any Department of Human Resources Agencies (i.e. Medicaid Agency, Public Health Dept, WIC Program, etc.). Postcard registration is just what the name implies. You pick up a postcard at various locations or download online, then send it in to your County Board of Registrars. Registering to vote can be done following these simple steps.

#### Things You Will Need:

- Voter Registration Application
- Physical Mailing Address
- Acceptable Form of Identification

#### Step One

To meet the criteria to register you must be at least 18 years of age on or before Election Day, be a resident of Alabama, have not been legally declared mentally incompetent by a court of law, have not been convicted of a felony (however, are eligible if civil rights restored).

#### Step Two

Choose which form of registration is most convenient for you. You can register any of the three ways mentioned above.

#### Step Three

Read the instructions on the form and fill it out using blue or black ink. Remember to print legibly on the form.

#### Step Four

Submit the form in person or by mail to the local County Board of Registrars, or to voter registration organizer.

#### Step Five

You should receive your voter identification card (proof of registration) by mail within 30 days.

#### Step Six

Check your certificate carefully for errors. Correct any errors and return it to the County Board of Registrars immediately.

### 2008 Election Dates and Voter Registration Deadlines

Elections	Voter Registration Deadline	Election Date
Presidential Preference Primary/Special Election	January 7, 2008	February 5, 2008
General Primary/Special Election	June 16, 2008	July 15, 2008
Primary Runoff/Special Runoff	June 16, 2008	August 5, 2008
Special Election	August 18, 2008	September 16, 2008
General - Nonpartisan Election/Special Election	October 6, 2008	November 4, 2008
General - Nonpartisan Election Runoff	October 6, 2008	December 2, 2008

**For more voter registration information you may access the following sites:**

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2043244\\_register-vote-alabama.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2043244_register-vote-alabama.html);

[http://www.presidentialelection.com/register\\_to\\_vote/alabama.htm](http://www.presidentialelection.com/register_to_vote/alabama.htm); <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/election/registration.html>

**NOTE:** Providing false documentation on the voter registration application can carry up to a five-year prison sentence if convicted



**REMEMBER TO**

**VOTE**

**FEBRUARY 5!**

**Let Your Voice  
Be Heard**

**FULL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**JANUARY 29, 2008**

**5:00 P.M. – Dinner**

**5:30 P. M. \_ Meeting**

**Door Prizes**

**Get information about upcoming Presidential Primary on Feb 5.**

**Other Topics will include legislative updates, alternative work schedule, and new member benefits.**

**The Exceptional Education Task Force & Custodial Chapter will meet immediately following the membership meeting.**



**JCAFT NEW BENEFIT**

**Verizon Wireless Service Discounts  
Call John Little at  
(205) 907-4513**

**JCAFT SEEKS INFORMATION REGARDING THE MUCH TALKED ABOUT BOND ISSUE**

JCAFT members are concerned about any additional occupational taxes being placed on Leeds City School employees. Some Leeds City School employees have reported paying as much as \$600.00 a year in occupational taxes to the City of Leeds. This is approximately twice the amount of occupational tax employees report paying to Jefferson County.

Several meetings were scheduled to discuss and plan for the funding of the new Leeds Middle School and Leeds High School. The joint meeting between the Leeds City Council, Leeds City Board of Education and the Public Educational Building Authority was scheduled and then canceled. This resulted in many questions being asked by Leeds City School employees regarding the proposed bond issue and what was happening with the funding for the much-needed new Leeds City Schools. JCAFT membership chairperson spoke with Superintendent Dr. Pack who indicated the Mayor and City Council had come to a decision regarding the bond issue and there was no need for a meeting. The mayor's office was then contacted numerous times to request a copy  
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**Here's An Opportunity for You to Earn 3 Hours of Professional Development Credit in a workshop open to all teachers and paraprofessionals**

**TIME ON TASK, TEACHER PRAISE, AND HOMEWORK**

Thursday, February 7, 2008

JCAFT Auditorium - 1900 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35209

Dinner: 4:00 P.M. - Class: 4:30 – 7:00 P.M.

FREE Admission – Door Prizes

Topics to be covered:

- Allocated/engaged time
- Academic learning time
- Striking a balance
- Using homework effectively
- Purposes of homework
- Importance/Outcomes of homework
- Designing effective homework
- User-friendly homework
- Teacher praise as a reinforcer
- How to use praise
- Praising effectively

To register call the JCAFT office at 933-1124 or FAX this form to 933-1101

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ WORKSITE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**Bond Issue** (cont'd): of the proposed bond issue pursuant to the Alabama Open Records Act. January 8, 2008, JCAFT received a letter from Mayor Whitfield stating that *“the city does not have in its possession at this time any documents responsive to our request.”* He also suggested that JCAFT *“contact the issuing authority for the bonds, the Public Educational Building Authority, and /or Dr. Pack at the Leeds City Schools for any updates or documents pertaining to this bond issue.”*

JCAFT is currently in the process of contacting the Public Educational Building Authority. Our members will receive information and updates on the bond issue as soon as it becomes available.

**24 MORE NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS**

Congratulations on new National Board Certified Teachers in Jefferson County, Leeds, Trussville and Vestavia!

Jefferson County Schools added 24 more National Board Certified Teachers to its roster bringing the JefCoEd total to 78 NBCTs. The results of the November announcement of teachers successfully completing the process are listed. All but two of the candidates had worked with the Stellar Teaching Program, which our own JCAFT Executive Board Secretary, Pat Cleino, coordinates. The program involves all 13 area school systems and provides workshops and seminars, studying portfolios, and interview session with a candidate support provider. The Stellar Teaching Program is sponsored by the Jefferson



**CONGRATULATIONS  
JCAFT BUILDING  
REPS & MEMBERS**  
**Your union is almost  
2000 strong! Continue  
to tell others about  
your union.**

County Public Schools Foundation. Two candidates had worked with a support system within their former districts. Board certification is comparable to getting a graduate degree in nine months. Sally Price is executive director of the Foundation. One main funding source for the stellar program is from the County Commission providing funds for the program.

**TEACHER**

Debbie Anderson  
Joy Bates  
Cathy Beth  
Jeff Calvert  
Akina Canty  
Connie Clayton  
Kim Cobb  
Leah Commer  
Eresa Erbrick  
Cathy Foust  
Christine George  
Yvonne Hare  
Rhonda Leggio  
Kelly Little  
Rebecca Lutonsky  
Connie Oberneder  
Rodney Ragland  
Julie Ramsay  
Jennie Thompson  
Kathy Thompson  
Kim Townsel  
Anetra Thrash  
Dana Waldrop  
Jennifer Winholtz

**SCHOOL**

Shades Valley/JCIB  
McAdory High  
Shades Valley High  
Bottenfield Middle  
Brighton Middle  
Kermit Johnson Elementary  
Clay-Chalkville High  
Kermit Johnson Elementary  
Bryan Elementary  
Shades Valley High  
Shades Valley/JCIB  
North highland Elementary  
Gardendale Elementary  
Kermit Johnson Elementary  
Erwin High  
Fultondale High  
Bragg Middle  
Fultondale Elementary  
Gardendale Elementary  
Oak Grove Elementary  
Clay-Chalkville Middle  
Lipscomb Elementary  
Oak Grove Elementary  
Pleasant Grove High

**LEEDS**

Kathy Bishop  
Teresa Pawlik

Leeds Elementary  
Leeds Elementary

**TRUSSVILLE**

Ashley McCombs  
Jennifer N. McLaughlin  
Stephanie Millard  
Michelle Miskelley  
Shayna Swann

Paine Intermediate  
Paine Intermediate  
Hewitt-Trussville High  
Paine Primary  
Paine Primary

**VESTAVIA**

To be announced

**Join JCAFT NOW!!!!**

Fax membership application to (205) 933-1101 or mail to JCAFT.

