

**FROM CHANCELLOR
JIMMY H. BAKER**

The 'Alabama Career Roadmap' takes students where they want to be

No matter a resident's journey toward work in Alabama's robust economy, the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has a program or service that can route them to success. We call it the Alabama Career Roadmap.

The Alabama Career Roadmap fuels opportunities for every Alabama high school student to make informed, intentional decisions about their future after high school. The goal is for every Alabama high school senior to have earned at least one postsecondary credit or workforce credential by 2029, better equipping them for success in Alabama's workforce.

In addition, the Alabama Career Roadmap more aggressively deploys our existing efforts to assist adults with postsecondary and specialized skills

training that helps them progress in the workforce.

Eddie Jordan, a construction supervisor who recently upskilled in a short-term construction class at Northeast Alabama Community College, shared his experience. "In just a short time I learned a lot, with safety being the biggest thing," he said.

"The college goes out of the way of making sure the class is as convenient for us as possible. I think I'll be with my company until the end, so the higher up I can move, the better."

The roadmap is already working for businesses like Southeast Gas who collaborate with the ACCS Innovation Center's Skills for Success program.

"Having every member of our construction crew CDL-certified is invaluable. What

would have been three to four weeks, and at a cost, Skills for Success and LBW Community College gave us the opportunity to train students faster and at no cost," said Shannon Jackson, Southeast Gas Director of Corporate Services.

The avenue for transfer opportunities, paid apprenticeships, and degrees are accessible on the Alabama Career Roadmap.

More than 156,000 students have started their educational journey at their local community college. Of those who graduate, 71% continue to work, support their families, and make valuable contributions to Alabama's workforce.

More information about the Alabama Career Roadmap is available at www.accs.edu/roadmap.

It's a great time across the ACCS. Enrollment has increased at our colleges at a higher rate than community colleges nationally and four-year universities statewide. We are engaged with more than 5,200 companies who trust us to build customized, work-based learning opportunities to meet their hiring needs. The ACCS Innovation Center's Skills for Success courses have helped train more than 11,000 high school students and adults for postsecondary credentials. Alabama's adult education programs are ramping up to identify those individuals who need remedial education assistance to prepare them for postsecondary education and/or workforce training.

We have more work that we want to do – and *will* do. We ask you to continue traveling this journey with us as we build a stronger Alabama, together.

Meeting Alabamians where they are: how the ACCS lives the mission

Residents of all demographics can enhance their quality of life through the Alabama Community College System. Since 1963, Alabama's 24 community and technical colleges have been providing resources for academic instruction and workforce development. The colleges are living this mission all over the state.

To provide greater accessibility for their students, Trenholm State Community College extended its business hours.. At the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, the Super Saturday Blitz initiative allows students who work during the weekdays to meet with admissions, financial aid, and academic counselors in-person. They can complete the registration process without compromising their work schedule.



Photo: High school students at Wallace Selma's Aviation Days.

Another initiative took flight 50 miles away to introduce rural blackbelt students as early as middle school to aviation careers. Wallace Community College Selma and Marion Military Institute are working with the Craig Field Airport and Industrial Authority to revive the former military airport. Thanks to state legislators appropriating \$2 million to fund the project, students with limited transportation would be able to take advantage of a portable flight simulator and explore multiple career pathways in the industry.

More examples of living the mission exist at community and technical colleges across Alabama. The ACCS excels at meeting residents wherever they are.

ACCS enrollment increases surge past national average

Spring registrations for classes throughout the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) mark the third consecutive year for enrollment increases statewide.

Alabama's community and technical colleges, in collaboration with leading industry partners, experienced a 6.2% increase in for-credit coursework for Fall 2023 compared to the year before. Enrollment throughout the ACCS outshines the roughly 4% fall term growth among community colleges in other states, according to the National Student Clearinghouse.



Photo: Alabama community college students learning together

Dual enrollment, which enables high school students to earn college credits at little to no cost, has increased by nearly 17% from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023, and by more than 159% since 2015.

ACCS robotics education opens the door to STEM careers

Alabama's focus on expanding STEM education points to the necessity of training for high-skill positions in the state's tech industry.

A unique group of students competing at Alabama's community colleges may be the players the industry needs to keep up with demand.

Engineering design students like Gabby Zaragosa recently participated in the Tennessee Valley BEST Robotics Competition at Calhoun Community College. She became a robotics mentor to her former high school team, and now she's one of the lead volunteers for the competition.

"I knew I wanted to do something with my hands," said Gabby. "I wanted to be involved because I love robotics."

The high school teams that participate in this free program develop technical skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities that prepare them for the workforce and gain certifications at community colleges like Calhoun.



Photo: Tennessee Valley BEST Robotics Competition at Calhoun Community College.

"It's very exciting," said Faith Plunkett, an instructional technology coach at Decatur City Schools. "Why go to a four-year university when this is right here and it's affordable and accessible to our students?"

Experts say robotics careers in the manufacturing industry pay 30% more than entry-level non-robotics manufacturing jobs, and some foundational elements

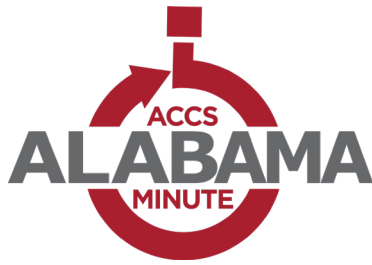
required for these roles stem from the skills that students learn in robotics competitions.

Students get to experience a sport they enjoy. And when they graduate – employers get to recruit the talent they need.

Employers rely on local community colleges to meet healthcare needs. It's never too late to start your career in healthcare: Dental Assistant, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Funeral Services, Medication Aide, Pharmacy Technician Assistant, Certified Nursing Assistant (MAT), Veterinary Technician.



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Alabama Community College System
135 S Union St
Montgomery, AL 36130

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ACCS COMMUNICATIONS

Elijah Baker
elijah.baker@accs.edu

Students with learning disabilities make their mark on the workforce

As the state and nation confront the scarcity of today's workforce, Alabama's community and technical colleges are taking charge. Among them, Lurleen B. Wallace Community College (LBW) stands out for helping individuals with learning disabilities close the gap with the Alabama RISE Program.

"Throughout our state, most individuals with disabilities are not in the labor force," said LBW President Brock Kelley. "With the right resources, they are proven to be good employees with the ability to produce quality work."

The Alabama RISE Program tailors its curriculum to fit the needs of each student to support and advocate for themselves. One avenue is mentorship.

"I learned how to do down payments on a car, how to pay for a mortgage on a house, and how much money to spend, save, and set aside," said RISE student Conner Kelley.

Connor primarily took high school classes online, but his mother said that he stepped out of his comfort zone and started attending classes in-person thanks to LBW.

"For my son to do the RISE program was such a blessing," said Jan Kelley. "Everyone was so friendly, and it gave me peace of mind that he could be successful."

The RISE Program has not only afforded the opportunity for students with disabilities to excel. The program also enlightens employers on the benefits of hiring these talented individuals.

"We gained an employee who has now worked full-time for just over two years," said Chace Sauls, an accounting and office manager of Andalusia Distributing Company. "It has been personally and professionally rewarding to be a part of RISE because we've been able to witness the growth in confidence as the students realize their potential for the workforce."



Photo: LBW RISE student Sarah Sanders with Career Pathways Specialist Jeanni Sanders.