

The Alabama Faith Council

UNDERSTANDING AND ACTING TO BETTER CHILDREN'S LIVES IN ALABAMA

The way we nurture our children today has a great impact on the world tomorrow. We must work early in the lives of children to produce a foundation of character that will enhance the communities of the future. This requires us to develop an environment of quality education for raising our children with a desire for knowledge. Whether an individual congregant, a congregation or a state-wide faith community, there are several ways to engage in the efforts to improve public education in the State of Alabama:

STUDY

- Read the Alabama Faith Council statements on Voluntary Pre-K Education and on Education. They can be found on the website: <http://www.alfaithcouncil.org>.
- Visit the websites of many organizations and agencies working on the issues of improving education in our state and country. Included in that list are the following:
 - A+ Foundation (<http://www.aplus.org>)
 - Alabama Best Practices Center (<http://www.bestpracticescenter.org>)
 - Alabama School Readiness Alliance (<http://www.alabamaschoolreadiness.org>)
 - The Center for Education Reform (<http://www.edreform.com>)
 - The Literacy Council (<http://www.literacy-council.org>)
 - Southern Education Foundation (<http://www.sefatl.org>)
 - Teaching Tolerance (<http://www.tolerance.org>)
 - Voices for Alabama Children (<http://www.alavoices.org>).
- Study these issues with a trained facilitator in your congregation within morning, evening or weekday classes or gatherings.
- Participate in the monthly meetings of the Children and Education Issues Workgroup. Please check the Alabama Faith Council website (<http://www.alfaithcouncil.org>) for contact information and meeting times, places and toll-free numbers to join by telephone.

Once you have studied and reflected about these important issues, consider the following ways you can share your time trying to resolve them:

ACTION

- Find out if your congregation or faith community has passed a resolution in support of Education Reform or Pre-K Education. If not, ask your faith's leadership to reflect on this issue and to consider passing such a resolution.
- Invite a speaker from one of the many organizations and agencies working on the issue to come lead a class or speak to your congregation, study group, or community.

- Organize a letter writing campaign within your congregation to school boards, school superintendents, the State Superintendent, your legislators and the press.
- Sign on-line petitions sponsored by other organizations and agencies calling for actions by elected officials to improve the education system.
- Arrange a meeting with your state legislators to present the Alabama Faith Council statements and discuss the issues.
- Work with other congregations and other faith communities to develop activities to raise awareness and call for action.
- Be a part of the solution by participating in after-school programs for children of working parents and/ or local literacy programs.
- If programs are lacking in your area, work with your congregation and local schools to create after-school programs and literacy initiative for children and families.

There are congregants in all of the Alabama Faith Council faith groups who would like to be involved in the effort to improve education in the State of Alabama. If you or anyone you know would be interested in joining others around the state, please contact Rev. Vivian J. Ford, the Education & Children's Issues Workgroup Chair: 205-428-8409 or revford@netzero.net.