



STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Education

Alabama  
State Board  
of Education

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**July 19, 2018**

**CONTACT: Communication**  
**334-242-9950**  
[comm@alsde.edu](mailto:comm@alsde.edu)

Governor Kay Ivey  
President

**STATE SUPERINTENDENT VISITING AKEEP-STARTALK KOREAN  
LANGUAGE PROGRAM AT TROY UNIVERSITY MONTGOMERY CAMPUS**

Jackie Zeigler  
District I

**Montgomery, Ala.** – *Alabama-Korea Education & Economic Partnership (AKEEP)* will welcome Alabama State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Eric Mackey during an official visit to the **AKEEP STARTALK facility at Troy University Montgomery**, on July 24.

Betty Peters  
District II

Dr. Chuck Ledbetter, Pike Road School District Superintendent, will also be attending.

Stephanie Bell  
District III

**AKEEP STARTALK: Cultural Treasure Hunters**, hosted by Troy University Montgomery introduces Montgomery and surrounding areas' 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students to Korean language and culture. Non-Korean heritage students act as cultural *Treasure Hunters*, while bilingual Korean students act as *Treasure Guides*.

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.  
District IV



**AKEEP is also excited to be hosting a group of STARTALK Central Program evaluators and observers from Maryland, Wisconsin, and New York next week, on July 23.**

Ella B. Bell  
District V

This program is an intensive and fun educational adventure, taking place on July 16-August 3, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with six expert language and cultural instructors (all Korean National Teaching Certificate holders), a top Montgomery

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.  
District VI  
Vice President

Public Schools special education teacher and several AKEEP staff members, with support from Troy University.

Jeff Newman  
District VII  
President Pro Tem

*Brief Facts:*

Mary Scott Hunter, J.D.  
District VIII

- In April 2018, AKEEP was awarded a \$90,000 STARTALK grant to operate a 3-week non-residential Korean Language and Culture education program.
- AKEEP is one of 5 institutions awarded by the National Security Agency (NSA) in the Korean Category for a language program.
- AKEEP-STARTALK: *Cultural Treasure Hunters* is the only NSA-grantee in the Korean Category in the Southeast U.S.
- A total of **22 students** from **Montgomery and Pike Road schools** were **accepted to AKEEP-STARTALK: Cultural Treasure Hunters**.

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.  
Secretary and  
Executive Officer

– more –

Part of the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) announced by former President Bush in 2006, STARTALK receives funding from NSA and seeks to increase the number of U.S. citizens learning, speaking, and teaching *critical need foreign languages*.

The program strives to deliver engaging and dynamic language learning experiences for students and creates a pathway for certification in critical need languages that are not commonly taught for students and teachers in the U.S.

***Information About AKEEP***

The Alabama-Korea Education & Economic Partnership (AKEEP) is a Montgomery, Alabama nonprofit acting as Global Partnership Facilitator for economic prosperity that provides education in global leadership and multicultural diversity.

AKEEP's work provides critical knowledge and services to improve the quality of life for students, professionals, and organizations while enabling these groups to take full advantage of the opportunities in the growing economic ties between Alabama and South Korea.

Please contact AKEEP Public Relations, Amoree Brackins at 334-578-0851, [Amoree.Brackins@AKEEP.org](mailto:Amoree.Brackins@AKEEP.org), for more information about this innovative program.

###