



**News Release**  
For Immediate Release

## **MARSHALL COUNTY SCHOOLS IMPROVES PROFICIENCY ON THE ALABAMA READING AND MATH TEST IN ALL GRADE LEVELS**

**GUNTERSVILLE, AL** (September 1, 2010) – Since implementing a comprehensive professional coaching program that facilitated ongoing student assessment and the use of data to improve instruction, Marshall County Schools has increased proficiency on the Alabama Reading and Math tests in all grade levels.

Marshall County Schools administrator's attribute the progress to an intensive district-wide initiative led by key faculty including Margaret Mastin, Federal Programs Director and Sharon Lessley, Professional Development and Special Programs Supervisor, support staff, with the help of the *STI Achievement Services* team, and skilled school improvement specialists who are veteran educators with extensive experience in education data analysis, instructional design, and the school improvement field.

Beginning in 2008, Marshall County Schools contracted with STI, a national leader in K-12 education data management solutions, to provide professional coaching services over the span of 2 years. Over the two year period, Asbury High School who was in School Improvement Year 1, and then Year 2 Delay, increased their graduation rate from 53% to 77% -a 24% boost from 2008. Another school, Brindlee Mountain High School, increased their graduation rate by 10% in just one year of deployment. These individual school achievements led to both schools being removed from the Alabama State Department of Education School Improvement list in 2010.

In addition to the accomplishment of increasing their graduation rates, the district has had success with common pacing and developing formative assessments throughout the district, instilling teacher collaboration and camaraderie which resulted in increased Reading and Math test scores in all grade levels. The district's Reading and Math annual measurable objectives improved significantly from 2009 to 2010. The most notable achievements were made in Math with a 9% growth in Grade 4, 6% increase in Grade 8 and a 4% increase in Grade 7. Grade 4 and Grade 7 also made considerable gains in their reading test scores with a 4% increase from 2009-2010. "We strongly believe that increases in graduation rate and in the Alabama Reading and Math Test scores are due to dedicated teachers and administrators and to our partnership with *STI Achievement Services*. All system stakeholders have a deeper knowledge of data analysis, pacing, and the use of individualized instructional strategies," stated Sharon Lessley and Margaret Mastin.

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Through *STI Achievement Services*, Marshall County School faculty members have developed the competencies and tools they need to improve instruction for struggling learners, including ability to assess data to drive instruction and intervention, the way to address common reasons for student failure, and the ability to use various assessment methods to monitor student progress in all academic areas.

*STI Achievement Services* offers schools and districts assistance in planning and executing instructional change to improve student achievement. The company provides customized programs of face-to-face and online professional development and coaching for educators, using best practices, research-based strategies, and data-driven decision-making to positively affect student outcomes.

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