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ALABAMA DISABILITIES ADVOCACY PROGRAM October 13, 2015

The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) is part of the nation's federally-funded protection and advocacy (P&A) system. ADAP provides legal services to Alabamians with disabilities to protect, promote and expand their rights. ADAP's vision is one of a society in which persons with disabilities are valued and exercise self-determination through meaningful choices, and have equality of opportunity. ADAP is part of the [National Disability Rights Network \(NDRN\)](#).

Find us on the Web
www.adap.net

Analysis of Special Education Rule Changes

Parent attorneys [Deborah Mattison](#) and [Rachel McGinley](#) of [Wiggins Childs Pantazis Fisher Goldfarb](#) have prepared an extensive legal analysis of the special education rule changes proposed by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) which they have graciously agreed to share with family and child advocates. Read [more](#).

Special Education Public Hearings

The first of three hearings on the ALSDE's proposed special education rule changes will take place tomorrow, **Wednesday, October 14** at [Carver High School](#) in Montgomery.

Two additional public hearings will be held:

- Thursday, October 29 at **Saraland High School** in Saraland
- Wednesday, November 4 at **Cullman City High School** in Cullman

All the hearings will start at 4:30 PM and conclude at 6:30 PM.

If you cannot attend one of the meetings, you can submit written comments about the proposed changes by emailing the ALSDE at sesaac@alsde.edu. All comments are due by Sunday, November 15. If you submit emailed comments, consider emailing a copy of your comments to **ADAP**; we're going to summarize the comments for public distribution (if requested, your name will be withheld). Questions? Contact **ADAP**.

Young Emerging Leaders (YEL)



Fifteen youth are learning what it takes to be powerful self-advocates in Young Emerging Leaders (YEL), a hands-on training for young adults with disabilities who are interested in becoming leaders in their communities. The program is run by **People First of Alabama**. The training class recently gathered in Birmingham for sessions on professionalism, disability rights, and self-advocacy skills. Later this October, the young adults will be traveling to Selma to visit the

National Voting Rights Museum to learn more about their right to vote. YEL is funded through a grant from the **Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities**. ADAP and the **Sparks Clinic**, Alabama's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, are providing technical support. For more information, contact **Julie Morrow** at People First.

Public Forums on Independent Living Needs

The Alabama State Independent Living Council (SILC) is holding forums to gather public input regarding the independent living needs of people with disabilities of all ages. The first one is Thursday, October 15th in Birmingham. Read [more](#).

Are Alabamians With Disabilities Voting?

Voting is one of our most important rights as citizens. Reasons to vote are different for everyone. If you don't vote, you're letting others decide for you who wins and what issues matter. There is power in numbers. When the disability community votes and gets our family members to vote, we can impact outcomes and change the debate.



Download the State of Alabama Mail-in Voter Registration form [here](#) or call the Alabama Voter Hotline at 1-800-274-8683 to receive a copy by mail. Mail the completed form to the [Board of Registrars in your county](#).

If you have experienced discrimination in any part of the election process (ex. registering to vote, accessing your voting site or casting your vote), contact [ADAP](#). Our PAVA program (Protection and Advocacy for Voting Accessibility) provides advocacy services to persons with disabilities who have been discriminated against as they participate in the voting process.

Tax-Free Savings Program for Alabamians with Disabilities

The Alabama ABLE Plan will provide a tax-free vehicle for saving for certain Alabamians who have disability-related expenses. Read [more](#).



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