



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Ed Richardson
Interim State Superintendent of Education

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

As an Education Specialist at the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), with expertise in Fine Arts education, I feel privileged to add my voice to that of other teachers, principals, and superintendents in praising the Chess in Schools (CIS) program. Over the past three years, I have served as the ALSDE support and contact person for this organization, attending teacher trainings, orientations, and other professional development sessions related to CIS. The training is high-quality and aligned with the ALSDE goals and educational standards.

I have witnessed teachers (many of whom had little or no prior knowledge of chess) who come to summer training and leave the sessions with high enthusiasm for what chess can do to help students think and achieve at higher levels and with sufficient self-confidence to begin chess programs in their own classes.

Both the initial training and the follow-up support are outstanding! Teachers not only learn the basics, but they learn how to integrate chess or the principals of chess (which are closely tied with academics, critical thinking, and positive behavior) into their class curricula. Support includes classroom visits, curriculum, and standards-based, chess-related lesson plans in core subject areas.

A unique feature of CIS is that it is teacher driven. With the support of the CIS team, teachers are empowered to teach chess with or without volunteer assistance from the community or "expert" chess mentors. This allows more exposure to the game and I can personally and professionally attest to the credibility of the CIS program.

I am very pleased with the promise and performance-to-date of the **Alabama Chess in Schools** (ACIS) initiative. The program has been enthusiastically received by most teachers and preliminary research results are promising. **Chess in Schools LLC**, has been a model ALSDE partner; highly professional, responsive, and innovative.

Sincerely,

Andy Meadows
Education Specialist
Alabama State Department of Education

AM:SMR

ACIS Program Coordinator

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