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**AG MARSHALL PRESENTS OPELIKA MIDDLE SCHOOL
WITH 2016 SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steven T. Marshall today presented Opelika Middle School with the 2016 Attorney General’s Safe School Initiative Award of Excellence for Alabama State Board of Education District 2. Schools were selected as winners from seven* Alabama State School Board of Education districts, as well as private schools for two regions of the state.

“I am pleased to carry forward an important tradition of the Attorney General’s Office, to recognize schools throughout our state for dedication and excellence in keeping students safe,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Each day that parents leave their children at school, they are entrusting what they hold most precious into the care of schoolteachers, principals and other staff. With these awards, we honor those who have achieved particularly high standards and set examples that others may follow. We are grateful for their service and commitment to protecting the children of Alabama.”

“The Attorney General’s Office is proud that Opelika Middle School was selected as one of the nine winning schools in Alabama for 2016,” said Attorney General Marshall. “In making this decision, judges noted many things that distinguished Opelika Middle School: its good relationship with police and fire departments, excellent preparation, three regularly visible student resource officers, and training that is current and relevant.”

"Safety is of the utmost importance for our school," said Principal Keith York. "We have a diligent faculty and staff that work hard each day to create a safe and positive learning environment. We are honored to be recognized by the Attorney General with the Alabama Safe Schools Award."

Attorney General Marshall is presenting awards for the 2016 Safe School Awards of Excellence winners to the nine winning schools during April and May. Other winning schools throughout the state include Pike County High School in Pike County, Helena Middle School in Shelby County, Orange Beach Elementary School in Baldwin County, Moody Middle School in St. Clair County, Forest Hills Elementary School in Lauderdale County, Bob Jones High School in Madison County, Advent Episcopal School in Jefferson County and Coosa Valley Academy in Shelby County.

**Alabama has eight public school districts but no submissions were received from District 4, nor was one received for a southern district private school.*

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