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Page 1 of 2

**AG STEVE MARSHALL PRESENTS AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL
WITH 2017 SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**
Austin High School is Five-Time Recipient of Award

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall today presented Austin High School with the Attorney General’s Safe School Initiative Award of Excellence for Alabama State Board of Education District 6. This is the fifth time Austin High School has received the distinction. Schools were selected as winners for 2017 from seven* Alabama State School Board of Education districts, as well as private schools for three regions of the state.

“In these times, we are all intensely aware of the serious responsibility our schools carry for the safekeeping of our children,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Recent events have been heartbreaking reminders that we must remain vigilant and committed to provide the best protections possible in Alabama’s schools. I am pleased to carry on this important tradition of the Attorney General’s Office, to recognize schools throughout our state for dedication and excellence in keeping students safe. Each day that parents leave their children at school, they are entrusting what they hold most precious into the care of schoolteachers, principals, school resource officers 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.”

In presenting the award today Attorney General Marshall said, “The Attorney General’s Office is proud that Austin High School was selected as one of the 10 winning schools in Alabama for 2017. In making this decision, judges noted many things that distinguished Austin High School: a local computer-aided dispatch system to notify school officials if a local threat exists, student resource officers equipped with radios so that communications are not hindered if calls are not functioning through cell phone towers, and an excellent partnership with the Decatur Police Department that includes mentoring initiatives.

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Austin High School Principal Melissa A. Scott Ed. D., said, "It is such an honor to be awarded the Alabama Safe Schools Award of Excellence by the Attorney General's Office. With so many incidents happening at schools across the country, student safety is a top priority at Austin High School. Due to the type of campus we have, safety at Austin High is everyone's responsibility. Students, teachers, staff, parents, the Central Office, Board and community are all a part of the safe schools initiative here. We are blessed to have great safety agencies in the City of Decatur and thankful for their support. The schools have a strong partnership with these agencies and immediate access to their services. Without their help, we could not do what we do to keep our students safe."

Attorney General Marshall is presenting awards for the 2017 Safe School Awards of Excellence winners to the 10 winning schools during April and May. Other winning schools throughout the state include Opelika Middle School in Lee County, Pine Level Elementary School in Autauga County, Satsuma High School in Mobile County, Nichols-Lawson in Sylacauga, Simmons Middle School in Jefferson County, Bob Jones High School in Madison County, Sumiton Christian School in Walker County, Coosa Valley Academy in Shelby County and The Lakeside School in Barbour County.

**Alabama has eight public school districts but no submissions were received from District 4.*