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**AG STEVE MARSHALL PRESENTS OPELIKA MIDDLE SCHOOL
WITH 2017 SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall today presented Opelika Middle School for the second year in a row with the Attorney General’s Safe School Initiative Award of Excellence for Alabama State Board of Education District 2. 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 Opelika Middle School was selected as one of the 10 winning schools in Alabama for 2017. In making this decision, judges noted many things that distinguished Opelika Middle School: excellent procedures for making sure all students are accounted for following a drill or actual emergency; outstanding use of traditional and social media to keep parents and community leaders informed, and local collaboration that allows advanced law enforcement tactical teams to train within the school building.”

"Safety is always 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 again by the Attorney General with the Alabama Safe Schools Award."

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 Satsuma High School in Mobile County, Nichols-Lawson Middle School in Talladega County, Pine Level Elementary School in Autauga County, Austin High School in Morgan County, 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.*

