



## **2024 Robert Morton Award District Nominees**

AASBO is pleased to announce the 2024 district nominees for the Robert L. Morton Award. This award is named in honor of the late Robert L. Morton, former assistant superintendent of administration and finance for the Alabama State Department of Education. This award recognizes outstanding Chief School Finance Officers devoted to going above and beyond to do their job and to serve their community. AASBO seeks to recognize individuals who are trying to make a difference in the lives of their peers and subordinates and have set new standards for themselves and their colleagues in their profession. Congratulations to the district nominees.



District 1  
Samantha Sanks, Brewton City

Samantha has been employed with the Brewton City Board of Education since 2013. She serves in various roles including the CSFO, payroll, and Child Nutrition Director. Prior to her employment with the Board, she worked with the State of Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts for over 10 years as an auditor in the governmental county division. She is a graduate of Auburn University with double majors in accounting and finance. She is married to Tony Sanks, and they reside in Brewton with their two children John and Anna Laura.



District 2

Arthur Watts, Montgomery Public Schools

Arthur has been employed as CSFO with Montgomery Public Schools (MPS) for five (5) years. Prior to his employment with MPS, he served as CSFO of Talladega City Schools for (2) years and as CSFO of Birmingham City Schools for (14) years. Watts' first job in Education was serving as CSFO of Wilcox County for (4) years. He graduated from Barber-Scotia College (Concord, North Carolina) with a BS in Business Administration-Concentration-Accounting.

Arthur is a strong proponent for increased funding for public education. He often speaks with Board Members, Community Leaders, Politicians and Other Stakeholders about the need to appropriately fund public education.



District 3  
Kerry Bedsole, Houston County

Kerry Bedsole has been employed by the Houston County Board of Education for 25 years. She has served 16 years as the Chief School Financial Officer (CSFO). Prior to becoming CSFO, Kerry was the first cooperative education/work-based learning student in the District Office, subsequently taking on responsibilities as an accounts payable clerk and later as an accounts payable secretary.

Kerry earned her Bachelor's degree in Accounting Information Systems and a Master's in Business Administration from Troy University in Dothan. This marks her third nomination for the Robert L. Morton Award, having been recognized in 2014 and 2018.

In her personal life, Kerry has been happily married to her husband, Scotty, for 19 years. Together, they are proud parents of two sons: Kaidin and Jase.



District 4  
Liz Springer, Auburn City

Liz Springer has been employed with the Auburn City Board of Education for the past seven years, first as the Finance Director and then CSFO. Prior to her employment with Auburn City Schools, she worked in public accounting for several years. Liz is a two-time graduate of Auburn University, holding the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Accounting) and Master of Accountancy. She is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations (SFO).



District 5  
Michele McCay, Hoover City

Michele has been employed with the Hoover City Board of Education for 21 years. She is currently serving as the Chief School Financial Officer. Her previous positions with Hoover City Schools included the Director of Accounting and the Accounting Supervisor. Prior to her employment with Hoover, she worked as an auditor for the accounting firm Warren, Averett, Kimbrough & Marino, LLC. She is a graduate of the University of Alabama with a Bachelor of

Science Degree in Accounting. She currently serves on the AASBO Board and has been a member of the Professional Development Committee. She has been married to her husband for 33 years and has two sons and two daughters-in-law. She enjoys spending time with family, hiking, reading, cheering for The Tide and pampering her rose bushes.



District 6  
Alicia Gilley, Piedmont City

Alicia Gilley has been employed with the Piedmont City Board of Education for the past 34 years. Alicia has held the CSFO title for 24 of those years and 10 years prior at the local school level as secretary. Prior to her employment with Piedmont City Schools; she worked for the City Of Piedmont Administration and Utility office as Bookkeeper and Cashier.

Alicia has been married to Russ Gilley for 43 years. They have two daughters; Stephanie Steward and Kristen Story and are the proud grandparents of three: Abbey, Jordan, and Avery.



District 7

Danny Higdon, Tuscaloosa County

Danny has been employed with the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education for 17 1/2 years (2005 – 2020 and 2021 – present) and is the CSFO. He has held the position of CFO/Director of Finance, Director of Accounting and Coordinator of Accounting. Prior to his employment with Tuscaloosa County, he worked with the City of Northport as the Assistant Finance Director and Auditor. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama with Bachelor of Science in Commerce and Business Administration. He earned his School Business Official certification in 2008 from AASBO and his Payroll/Personnel certification in 2011. He is a former member of the Alabama Revenue Officers Association (AMROA) where he served as Treasurer, President, and Chairman of the Board. He is also a former member of the Alabama Army National Guard and achieved the rank of Captain. He has been married to his wife Mitzi for 37 years and has three sons and five grandchildren.



District 8  
Sherry Langley, Muscle Shoals City

Sherry has been employed with the Muscle Shoals City Board of Education the past 5 years. Before joining the Muscle Shoals City School family, she served as the Accounts Payable Clerk for Tuscumbia City Schools. Within two years, she earned the distinction of Chief School Financial Officer.

Sherry's experience extends to roles within Athens City Schools' finance department and as Chief School Financial Officer for Lauderdale County Schools. Prior to her tenure in school finance, she gained experience in banking and worked with a certified public accounting firm. Sherry holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of North Alabama. Additionally, she is a Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations (SFO) by ASBO International and holds a Capital Planning certification. Sherry is married to Michael Langley and they have 1 daughter, Erica.





District 9  
Bob Hagood, Marshall County

Bob Hagood has been the CSFO for Marshall County Schools since September 2020. His K-12 career began in 2000 with Limestone County Board of Education. He was employed with Athens City Schools for 13 years as the Custodian of Funds/Accounting Supervisor, Huntsville City Schools as Finance Director and CSFO, and Bibb County Board of Education as CSFO. Prior to his career in K-12, he worked for Intergraph Corporation and a local CPA firm. Bob is a graduate of Athens State University with a B.S. Degree in Accounting and is a member of the Alabama Society of CPAs since 1996. Bob and his wife, Lana, have been married for 36 years. They have three daughters and two grandsons that call him GrandBob. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with family, listening to music on his back porch, boating, fishing, and watching true crime documentaries.