

A Guide to Understanding K-12 Schools

A Project of the A+ Education Foundation and the Peabody Center for Education Policy

Kenneth K. Wong and James W. Guthrie, Executive Editors

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Credits/Acknowledgements

Introduction

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Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments, and Standards

The key to sparking and sustaining improvements in education is alignment between rigorous standards that specify what students should know and be able to do, assessments that accurately measure student learning, and an accountability system that rewards progress and establishes consequences for schools that persistently fail to raise student achievement. This chapter explains the elements of Alabama's courses of study, statewide assessment system, and statewide accountability system and how the three work in tandem to improve teaching and learning.

Chapter 2: Achievement

This chapter provides a quick reference for the assessments given in Alabama to measure student achievement at the international, national and state levels and where to find this data. The Appendix to this chapter is a report entitled "Education Watch: Alabama" written by The Education Trust, a Washington-D.C.-based advocacy group for poor and minority students. This report provides trend data for Alabama on several national assessments and performance indicators.

Chapter 3: Closing the Achievement Gap

Alabama, like other states in America, has documented achievement gaps between low-income and non-low-income students; African-American and white students; Hispanic and white students; and special education and general education students. However, research and practice show that all children, regardless of socioeconomic background, can learn at high levels when taught to high levels. This chapter provides a snapshot of Alabama's achievement gaps and discusses in detail initiatives and programs that are closing these gaps.

Chapter 4: Finance and Funding

Who pays for public education in Alabama? How is revenue utilized in Alabama? How does Alabama education finance compare to the South and Nation? What are some barriers to effective school financing in Alabama? This chapter answers these questions and explores the intricacies of financing and funding Alabama's schools. Included are discussions of federal, state and local funding, as well as a detailed description of Alabama's foundation program for funding K-12 schools.

Chapter 5: Governance and Policymaking

Who runs Alabama's schools? This chapter analyzes Alabama's education governance arrangements, from the role of the federal government to responsibilities of state officials and local school boards. Also discussed are trends in education governance, including reconstitution, P-16 systems, and charter schools.

Chapter Six: Math, Science and Technology

Across the nation and in Alabama, students must be prepared for the demands they will face in an increasingly complex world. In today's global society, high school graduates need higher-level skills and knowledge in order to compete and to succeed. This chapter analyses Alabama student performance in math and science and discusses statewide initiatives to improve student achievement in these areas. It also looks at the use of technology in Alabama's classrooms and provides information on the state's Career Technology Program.

Chapter 7: No Child Left Behind (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)

This chapter explains the requirements of the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act and provides details on Alabama's implementation. Alabama has a unique timeline for implementation of NCLB to allow the state to fulfill requirements of a Compliance Agreement under the 1994 version of ESEA, more commonly known as Improving America's Schools Act.

Chapter 8: Reading and Writing

Reading and Writing are critical skills for every student to master. Alabama is making strides in improving student achievement in both subjects, primarily because of the nationally recognized Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI). This chapter provides details on the ARI, the federally funded Alabama Reading First Initiative, and the statewide measures in place to ensure that student writing receives the attention it deserves.

Chapter 9: School Choice

This chapter delineates the varying types of school choice available to students in the nation, the region, and the state. Alabama, unlike other Southern states, has not passed charter or voucher legislation. However, the state is confronting other school choice issues as it meets new NCLB requirements for intra-district choice for those students attending low-performing schools.

Chapter 10: School Leadership

Simply put, where you find a successful school you find a successful principal. After a thorough analysis of the current standards for principals and administrators, the chapter finds that the state must improve and support its leadership development initiatives to sustain high-performing schools. This chapter also details the current initiatives underway to prepare and train school leaders.

Chapter 11: Teaching Quality

Providing a well-prepared, qualified and caring teacher in every classroom in Alabama is critical if the state is to meet the goals of *No Child Left Behind* and allow all children to graduate from high school with a meaningful degree. This chapter examines the teaching continuum in Alabama, including recruitment, preparation, certification, retention, professional development and teacher leadership.

Education•ary

This section provides definitions to the education-related terms and acronyms used throughout the primer.

Credits/Acknowledgements

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Founded in 1991, the A+ Education Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that advances policies, programs and initiatives in Alabama's K-12 education system that result in high achievement by every child. To accomplish this, A+ works with the Governor, the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education and individual schools and school districts. A+ provides information on school improvement to educators, the media, community-based groups and the business community through a variety of publications and forums. A+ is located in Montgomery.

The Peabody Center for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University in Nashville exists to enhance education policy and practice through research, service, and communications. The center provides policy research, technical assistance, symposia, workshops and initiatives to education professionals, policymakers, scholars, foundations, and families and communities with the goal of raising expectations and standards in public education systems. Areas of scholarship include public opinion, race and education, public- and private-sector relations, education reform, policy formation and implementation, governance, and resource allocation.

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Introduction

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A new era of educational accountability has transformed the agenda of public school reform. Building on the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act, the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 (NCLB) has its primary focus on the academic achievement of all students, particularly low-performing students in disadvantaged schools. NCLB requires states to establish and implement an accountability plan with well-defined standards for academic proficiency. It also requires states to hire highly qualified teachers who are trained in their instructional subject areas. Students are required to take annual tests in grades three through eight with results disaggregated by several subgroups, including racial and ethnic groups, special education students and English language learners. Additionally, NCLB allows for supplemental services and school transfers for students in schools identified as needing improvement. Clearly, achievement for all students must now be a primary objective of educational reform.

Alabama is well-positioned to meet the challenge of accountability as established in the federal NCLB legislation. At the time when NCLB was enacted, Alabama had begun to put in place a strong policy framework that aimed at raising school performance. The state's accountability system put in place strong standards and has phased in student testing requirements (Wong 2004). Compared to other states, Alabama was a national leader in statewide standards in 2000-01 (Wong, Fordham, ACHIEVE). Alabama is phasing in student assessments in reading and math for grades 3-8 and 11 that will give policymakers an understanding of the status of student learning and what improvements need to be made.

Notwithstanding a strong accountability framework, Alabama faces tough challenges in its efforts toward meeting the goal of academic proficiency for all students in 2013-14. First, the social conditions pose a serious risk to school reform. According to the 2004 Kids Count Data Book published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Alabama ranks 47 among the fifty states in terms of ten social indicators, which include percent of teens who are high school dropouts, percent of teens not attending school and not working, percent of children in poverty, and percent of families with children headed by a single person. Limited life chances outside of school will continue to constrain the schooling efforts to improve student performance.

Second, the state's political history has frustrated school reform. Many political observers would point out that the debate over education reform in Alabama is shaped by the broader political context of the state, which may not be structurally distinct from one hundred years ago when the state constitution was written. An array of constitutional constraints in the structure of the gubernatorial

office, the state legislature, and state education authorities tend to limit the terms of the debate over equitable and adequate funding, academic achievement, and teacher compensation, even though a new era of accountability is now upon the state.

Third, statewide leadership may need to broaden its public trust on school reform across the state. In recent years, governors from the two major political parties have tried without success in gaining public approval of school funding referenda. In 1998, Democratic Governor Don Siegelman won the gubernatorial race against Republican incumbent Fob James, Jr. with an education lottery popular in neighboring Georgia — as his primary campaign issue but failed to receive public support for the proposal in a highly contested public vote. Three years later, in 2003, Republican Governor Bob Riley, who defeated his predecessor in a close race, proposed a series of tax restructuring proposals in a comprehensive reform package that was overwhelmingly defeated by the voters. In the end, neither governor could rally public support for funding school reform in Alabama.

Fourth, there is urgency in building capacity at all levels of the policy system so that successful strategies can be brought to a wider scale more rapidly. In the "closing the gap" series of its quarterly journal, "Working Toward Excellence," the Alabama Best Practices Center has identified key lessons learned from high performing, high poverty schools in the state. Their "secrets of success" include strong professional leadership, high expectations, data-driven decision making, a passion for professional growth among teachers, parental engagement, and a collective conviction that they can succeed despite adverse social conditions (Volume 3, Numbers 1 & 2, 2003). Whether these promising lessons can be scaled up to districts and schools across the state constitutes a critical link to meeting the statewide accountability goals.

As an effort to begin to address the urgency in raising educational accountability in Alabama, the Peabody Center for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University is pleased to partner with the A+ Education Foundation to produce this inaugural edition of the *Alabama Education Policy Primer*. While the Primer must be seen as work in progress, the two collaborating organizations have high hopes for the role that the Primer may play in the broader policy community. The Primer may serve as an analytic tool to engage policy makers and the public on school reform issues. It is designed as an open resource for legislators, senior state officials, members of local school boards, district administrators, practitioners, reporters and anyone who is interested in learning about the most pressing issues in K-12 education.

In the chapters that follow this introduction, a diverse group of policy researchers from Vanderbilt University, A+ Education Foundation will highlight the nature of various education issues, promising strategies, and the potential steps toward scaling up in the state of Alabama.

This collaborative project is designed to make a contribution to the current statewide efforts to improve student performance. While the social conditions and public trust remain a key challenge, there is a window of opportunity for building broad-based support in Alabama's education system. The high expectations of *No Child Left Behind* have gained the attention of the public, the media, and policy makers to focus on accountability. With this first edition of the Primer, we hope that a collective enterprise of researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and an informed public will work together to advance the new accountability agenda in Alabama.

Accountability, Assessments and Standards

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Key Policy Points

- Alabama's old accountability system (prior to 2004) did not have a systematic method for improving student achievement.
- Alabama's new accountability system builds on the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and offers a comprehensive, aligned approach to raising student achievement.
- > Alabama disaggregates student achievement data by poverty level, race and other factors.
- Under No Child Left Behind, 100% of students from all backgrounds are expected to be proficient in reading and math by 2013-14. The first year of data from Alabama's new accountability system is 2003-04.
- In order to meet 100% proficiency by 2013-14, all subgroups of students are expected to make "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) in achievement each year.
- Alabama's new accountability system holds schools accountable for student achievement as measured by student assessments in grades 3-8 and 11 in reading and math; student participation in assessments; student attendance; and the school drop-out rate.

- Alabama's new accountability system is based on the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT), the Alabama High School Graduation Exam and the Alabama Alternate Assessment. These assessments accurately measure what Alabama students know and are able to do.
- Alabama continues to administer the norm-referenced Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10). SAT-10 items that are aligned with Alabama's academic content standards, called courses of study, are included in the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT). However, the entire test is no longer included in the state accountability system, as it does not fully align with the state's courses of study.
- The Alabama accountability system is complex by necessity. Communicating with all stakeholders around issues of accountability will be an ongoing challenge.
- Alabama's courses of study and graduation requirements are among the most rigorous in the nation.
- Alabama passed financial accountability legislation in 1995 that has increased the transparency of school system financing and improved the oversight of the state.

For concise definitions of education-related terms, see the Educationary at the end of this primer.

There is strong overlap between this chapter and Chapter 7: No Child Left Behind. For terms and policies related to NCLB, see Chapter 7.

Overview

The largest and most successful movement in current education reform has been the movement of states, districts and schools toward the alignment of standards, assessments and accountability. The old way of looking at education improvement measured such inputs as the number of books in school libraries or the number of students in a classroom. While both of these measurements are still important, the new way of measuring education improvement looks at gains in achievement levels of students from all backgrounds.

Accountability and assessment policies have been the cornerstone of American public education reform since the 1990s. Such Southern states as North Carolina and Texas have received national attention for their successful efforts to improve public education through the use of rigorous accountability and assessment policies at the state level. Alabama has been behind the curve on implementing accountability and assessment policies. However, since the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, Alabama has focused efforts to align its courses of study, state assessments, and accountability policies toward the goal of raising student achievement for children of all backgrounds.

Alabama began implementation of its new accountability system in 2003-04. Through the new accountability system, Alabama set the goal of having 100% of students performing at the proficient level in reading and math by 2013-14. Schools and subgroups of students are now required to make "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) each year as they progress toward meeting 100% proficiency as defined by the state and the *No Child Left Behind* Act. To complete the next generation of accountability in Alabama, new assessments and accountability policies will be phased in over a period of several years.

This chapter outlines the importance of standards, curriculum, assessments and accountability policies in creating an aligned system that improves student achievement in Alabama and the nation. This chapter also explains how each of these issues is addressed in Alabama and gives an overview of the new Alabama accountability system.

Standards-Based Reform:

Aligning Curriculum, Assessments and Accountability

Standards – Through "standards," educators and policymakers seek to define what all children are expected to learn for each grade and subject. This becomes the criteria that all children should meet. Today, nearly every state has established standards in at least some subjects, and 44 states (including Alabama) have completed standards in English, mathematics, social studies and science. Most states periodically review their standards every several years. Between 2001 and 2004, 38 states developed new or revised standards, or created additional documents clarifying the standards (this included Alabama).

Standards, by themselves, will not yield gains in student achievement or other improvements that states may be seeking. Standards are only one component in a system that also encompasses assessment, curriculum, accountability, teacher education and professional development, and intervention and support for struggling students and schools.

What little research has been done on the effectiveness of standards tends to support this argument. States that have shown improved student achievement — notably North Carolina, Texas, Maryland, Connecticut and Kentucky — are for the most part states that also have shown sustained commitment to aligning other components of their education system with standards.¹

Standards-Based Reform – Of all the education reforms that have emerged over the past 15 years, none has been more powerful and enduring than the push to establish challenging academic standards for students. Today, the standards-based approach is the primary reform strategy of most states and districts. States are using standards, among other things, to improve efficiency, generate challenging curriculum, create greater system coherence and serve as the basis for new ways of measuring and attaching consequences to the performance of students, teachers and schools.

Standards-based reform pushes policymakers and educators to focus on results and achievement instead of inputs and process. The focus on results is a crucial change in public education. With the standards-based reform movement, education has moved from an attitude that says, "I taught it." to one that asks, "Did they learn it?"

> The old way of teaching says, "I taught it." The new way of teaching asks, "Did they learn it?"

¹ "Standards Issue Brief," Education Commission of the States, www.ecs.org, 2004.

Standards-based reform in public education has three main components, all of which should be aligned with each other and pointed toward the primary goal of raising student achievement for all students:

- **1.** *Curriculum.* States must first develop and implement a curriculum that clearly outlines what students should know and be able to do at each level of the education system.
- **2.** *Assessments.* States should develop rigorous, valid assessments in order to determine whether (or not) students have learned the curriculum satisfactorily. These assessments should not test general knowledge, but instead should accurately measure how well students are learning the state curriculum as it is described.
- **3.** *Accountability.* Finally, states should develop a system of accountability that includes rewards and sanctions to recognize good outcomes, good effort and the need for improvement. This system should be based on what a school or system has done to promote student academic achievement as defined by the curriculum and measured by the assessments.

Figure 1.1: Aligning the Curriculum, Assessments, and Accountability

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The Curriculum:

What Should Students Know and Be Able To Do?

What is the Curriculum? — The starting point for a high quality education system should be a set of challenging state standards that make clear what students should know and be able to do at the end of each course. Meeting the standards should mean that students are ready and capable to move to the next course. The curriculum includes the methods and strategies by which the standards are taught. This curriculum must be clear and specific so that teachers and students know what is expected of them. Policymakers face tough choices when it comes to determining the most important knowledge and skills to emphasize in state curricula.²

Courses of Study in Alabama – Alabama's statewide curriculum is organized into courses of study. These courses of study are linked by subject area through all grade levels and are designed to provide an established, sound sequence of learning for students in each academic area. The courses of study are developed by committees comprised of educators appointed by the State Board of Education and business leaders and professionals appointed by the Governor. Each course of study is subject to public review and revision on a six-year cycle. The courses of study define the minimum required content to be mastered by the end of each grade level and course, defining what each Alabama student should attain. In addition to courses of study in each of the four core subject areas — mathematics, English/language arts, science and social studies — Alabama has developed courses of study for health education, and physical education, technology education and driver education, arts education, foreign languages, and career/technical education.

Alabama's courses of study are considered to be fairly rigorous compared to other states. ACHIEVE³, a national organization that rates standards, has used Alabama's history and social studies standards as a benchmark for other states. Another national organization, the Fordham Foundation, determined that many of Alabama's courses of study were "solid," awarding them 4 points on a 5-point scale. This organization also determined that some of Alabama's courses of study did not rate as highly. Alabama was only one of five states to receive specific praise as a top-tier state for educational standards.⁴

See Appendix A for an example of what courses of study look like. Included in Appendix A are the Alabama reading content standards for grades 4 and 11.

Alabama Graduation Requirements – Setting high standards is important, but the standards must be used in the classroom if students are going to benefit. To this end, Alabama has established rigorous graduation requirements with the goal that every graduating senior enters the workforce or college with the required knowledge and skills. These graduation requirements are an example of successful policies that grow out of the creation of clear and aligned standards, such as those contained in the Alabama Courses of Study. The table on page 7 outlines the course requirements for an Alabama diploma.

^{2 &}quot;All Tests Are Not Equal: Why State Need to Give High-Quality Tests." Achieve, Inc. and NCEA. Summer 2003.

³ ACHIEVE is a national organization created by governors and business leaders helps states set and achieve high academic standards. www.achieve.org

⁴ Fordham Foundation, Grading the Systems (Dayton, OH: 2004). www.fordhamfoundation.com.

Diploma Type	Alabama High School Diploma (AHSD)	AHSD with Advanced Academic Endorsement	Alabama Occupational Diploma	Alternative Adult Diploma
English/Language Arts	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
Social Studies	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4	4
Science	4	4	4	4
Physical Education	1	1	1	1
Foreign Language	0	2	0	0
Arts Education	.5	.5	.5	.5
Career/	0	0	4 ⁵	0
Technical Education				
Health Education	.5	.5	.5	.5
Computer Applications	.5	.5	0	.5
Electives	5.5	5.5	2	5.5
Totals	24	26	24	24
Assessment	Pass Required Graduation Exam	Pass Required Graduation Exam		GED

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Source: Alabama State Department of Education, www.alsde.edu

Assessments

How do we know what students know?

What are Assessments? - Student assessments are a crucial part of an accountability system in that to determine whether or not students are learning the curriculum. Teachers and students should know that if they work hard to reach standards, test results will reflect that hard work. This happens only when standards and tests are aligned with each other.⁶ Alignment between state standards and the assessments simply means that students are tested on the material that they learn in the classroom as required by the curriculum. In an aligned system, the criticism that teachers are "teaching to the test" disappears. Teaching to the test becomes the same as teaching the state curriculum, which is what teachers are hired and compensated to do.

Criterion vs. Norm-Referenced Tests -

Criterion-referenced tests (CRT) – CRTs reflect how a student performed relative to a norming group. Criterion-referenced tests are well suited for examining performance over time, because the criterion is more stable than a normed average. Since policymakers are usually most concerned with student academic improvement and the closing of achievement gaps between subgroups, they favor the use of criterion-referenced tests.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) **Examples:** Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) Alabama High School Graduation Exam Alabama Alternate Assessment

⁵ One in a career and technical education cooperative setting and one in career and technical education coordinated studies 6 "All Tests Are Not Equal: Why State Need to Give High-Quality Tests." ACHIEVE, Inc. and NCEA. Summer 2003

> Norm-referenced tests (NRT) - NRTs reflect how a student performed relative to a state, regional or national population of other students. As a result, half of the students tested will be "above average" and half will be "below average." Norm referenced tests are good for gauging how students compare across a group. However, since the population average changes every year, it is very difficult to track student performance across time.

Stanford Achievement Test 9 (Standford 9) **Examples:** Stanford Achievement Test 10 (Stanford 10)

Aligned vs. Off-the-Shelf Tests -

- > Aligned tests are usually designed within a state so that test questions reinforce the state curriculum. Alabama's accountability system emphasizes the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) and the Alabama High School Graduation Exam, which are designed around the state's courses of study in reading and math.
- > "Off-the-shelf" tests such as the Stanford Achievement Test, are standardized national tests that do not apply and do not align fully to an individual state's curriculum. This type of test can be less expensive for states to acquire. However, this type of test is unlikely to effectively measure state standards unless it is enhanced by questions designed to measure those standards.7

Figure 1.3: lesting the New Way vs. The Ul	a way			
The Old World - Pre-Standards ⁸	The New World - Post-Standards			
What standardized tests looked like: • Disconnected from state and local curricula –	What good standards-based tests look like:Aligned with the state standards that shape what			
so they may not test what students have been learning	students have been learning			
 "Norm-referenced" to measure students' skills relative to an average, not to the skills students need to succeed 	against the standards for skills they will need to succeed			
 Largely multiple-choice questions – so they produce a narrow picture of what students know and can do 	 Measure skills that matter — problem-solving, analysis, communicating — not rote memorization 			
Source: Mass Insight Education				

 ⁷ "All Tests Are Not Equal: Why State Need to Give High-Quality Tests," Achieve, Inc. and NCEA (2003).
 ⁸ "Benchmarks for an Effective State Standards & Testing Strategy: Lessons from the Front Lines of Standards-Based Reform in Two National-Model States," Mass Insight Education & Partnership for Learning (Boston, 2004).

Alabama's Assessment System

Assessments Required by the No Child Left Behind *Act* – Each state must determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by administering criterion-referenced achievement tests in reading and math, based on state academic content standards, to students in Grades 3-8 and at least one time in grades 9-12.

Recent History of Alabama's Assessment System -

1995: In 1995, the Alabama legislature passed a requirement that the state use norm-referenced tests, which violated the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the legislative precursor to *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). Implementing norm-referenced testing put the state behind other states that were quickly moving toward criterion-referenced testing in order to be in compliance with the federal law and education best practice. Later, Alabama signed a compliance agreement with the federal government agreeing to use criterion-referenced tests.

2001: In 2001, the *No Child Left Behind* Act put in place strict assessment and accountability guidelines for states who choose to use federal funds for public education.⁹ NCLB requires states to use criterion-referenced tests and to measure the progress of student categories¹⁰ based on performance levels. Since Alabama was already revising its assessment system, policymakers were able to craft a new statewide assessment system that was aligned with the goals and requirements of NCLB. The new system includes criterion-referenced tests aligned to the state courses of study and reports student achievement individually and by categories in easy-to-understand performance levels.

2002: Since 2002, Alabama has been in transition to a new assessment system that is more aligned with the requirements of the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act. Prior to 2002, Alabama relied almost entirely on the Stanford 9 test, published by Harcourt Assessment, as a norm-referenced, off-the-shelf test for its accountability policies.¹¹ For more information on No Child Left Behind, see Chapter 7: No Child Left Behind.

Alabama's Assessment System in 2004 – Figure 1.3 on page 10 lists the assessments that Alabama will administer during the 2004-2005 school year. Alabama will give the norm-referenced Stanford 10 in grades 3 through 8, along with a set of questions developed by the State Department of Education to accurately measure student knowledge of the state courses of study. These criterion-referenced items, along with a set of questions from the Stanford 10 that match Alabama's courses of study, are known as the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT). Additionally, Alabama students are required to take the Direct Assessment of Writing, a criterion-referenced test, in grades 5, 7, and 10, as well as the Alabama High School Graduation Exam beginning in grade 10. The Alabama Alternate Assessment is given to students with disabilities whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) team determines that the student cannot participate in the other assessments. It is an assessment of the student's mastery of the IEP.

⁹This includes all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

¹⁰ Student categories include all major racial and ethnic groups, free/reduced lunch (an indicator of poverty), special education, and limited English proficiency.

¹¹ We refer here to assessments that were directly involved in Alabama's systemic reform efforts and accountability system. Alabama also participates in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP. These tests, however, are only used to assess national progress and are not tied to Alabama's systems of rewards and sanctions.

Ла	ibania Student Assessment Program – (2004-05)
Grade	Assessment
K-2*	DIBELS (Reading) Alabama Alternate Assessment
3	Stanford 10 (Reading, Language & Math) Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test ** Alabama Alternate Assessment
4	Stanford 10 (Reading, Language & Math) Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test ** Alabama Alternate Assessment
5	Stanford 10 (Reading, Language, Math & Science) Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test ** Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing: Grade Five Alabama Alternate Assessment
6	Stanford 10 (Reading, Language, Math & Social Science Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test ** Alabama Alternate Assessment
7	Stanford 10 (Reading, Language, Math & Science) Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test ** Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing: Grade Seven Alabama Alternate Assessment
8	Stanford 10 (Reading, Language & Math) Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test ** Alabama Alternate Assessment
10	Pre-Graduation Examination (Grade 11 content) Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing: Grade Ten Alabama Alternate Assessment
11	Alabama High School Graduation Exam Alabama Alternate Assessment

Source: Alabama State Department of Education, 2004

Alabama will continue to complete its assessment system by phasing in new assessments. The recommended timeline for implementing all of these new assessments is displayed in Figure 1.5:

Implementation Year	Grades	Test name	Test Type
2004-2005	3,5,7	Reading and math assessment	Criterion-referenced
2005-2006	K, 1, 2	Math assessment	Criterion-referenced
2006-2007	5,7	Science assessment	Criterion-referenced
2007-2008	6	Social studies assessment	Criterion-referenced

Source: Alabama Accountability and Assessment Committee, 2002

Used for accountability

Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) – The Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) is a criterion-referenced assessment administered in grades 3-8. It is made up of select questions from the Stanford 10 that match Alabama's courses of study and additional questions that were developed to measure how thoroughly Alabama's student have learned the academic content standards set forth in the courses of study. The ARMT was developed by the Alabama State Department of Education to meet the NCLB requirement that all states use a criterion-referenced test to measure student performance and to accurately measure student knowledge of the Alabama courses of study.

The Stanford 10 contains some questions that are aligned to the Alabama courses of study. The information from these multiple-choice questions are extracted from the Stanford 10 and combined with other multiple choice questions, gridded response questions (math only) and questions designed by the ALSDE. Together, these questions make up the ARMT. Student scores are reported in four achievement levels: Level I – Does not meet academic content standards; Level II – Partially meets academic content standards; Level III – Meets academic content standards; Level IV – Exceeds academic content standards.

The Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) — The AHSGE is a criterion-referenced exam that all Alabama high school students must pass in order to graduate. Such tests are often referred to as "high stakes tests," as a student's academic future is based on his or her performance on the test.

The AHSGE is first administered in 10th grade as a checkpoint. Students may take the exam in 11th and again in 12th until they pass all five sections: reading, language, math, science, and social studies. State-funded remediation is available for students in 12th grade who fail to pass one or more sections. The 11th grade score is used for accountability purposes.

Alabama Alternate Assessment – The Alabama Alternate Assessment is administered to special education students whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) indicates they are unable to take the regular assessments. It is an assessment of how well the student has mastered his or her IEP.

Other Alabama Assessments Aligned to Content Standards

Not used for accountability

DIBELS – It is not enough to measure student achievement only once a year. To improve teaching and learning, teachers need diagnostic tools that measure student performance throughout the year.¹² Alabama requires that the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) reading test be administered three times a year in grades K-2. It is optional in grade 3; however, more than 80% of all third grade classrooms used DIBELS in the 2003-2004 school year. Teachers and principals use DIBELS data to track the progress of individual students in reading. To provide guidance in instruction, this data is made available to the public and is included on the individual school report cards. However, the scores are not included in the formal statewide accountability system. See chapter 8: Reading and Writing for more information on DIBELS.

Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing — The Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing was first implemented in 5th grade in 1991, in 7th grade in 1992, and in 10th grade in 2004. Students in these grades are tested in writing mechanics, sentence formation, and grammar and usage. The assessments are scored on a four level rubric: students scored at Level I have not met the standard; students at Level II are close to meeting standards, those at Level III have met the standards and students scoring at Level IV have exceeded the standards.

In 2001-2002, the Direct Assessment of Writing was included in the statewide accountability system. Schools and school systems were given "Clear," "Caution" and "Watch" designations based on the percentage of students at Level III and Level IV. This inclusion created a new focus on student writing in Alabama, and scores on the Direct Assessment of Writing begin to rise. In 2003-2004, however, the assessment was dropped from the accountability system. It will be reinstated in 2004-2005 when the remaining new ARMT assessments are added. *For more information on the Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing, see Chapter 8: Reading and Writing*.

Other Assessments Not Aligned with Content Standards

Not used for accountability

Stanford 10 – The Stanford-10 is a norm-referenced, off-the-shelf achievement test produced by Harcourt, Inc. This multiple-choice test is designed to measure how a student's performance compares with student performance nationally. Individual student performance is compared to the performances of students in a norming group. Scores are reported in terms of percentiles based on the scores of the students in the original norming group. Under the new statewide assessment system, Alabama will administer the Stanford 10 annually in grades 3 through 8 and publicly report the scores prior to the beginning of the next school year. For more information on the Stanford 10 in Alabama, see Chapter 2: Achievement.

Accountability

What is Accountability? – Accountability policies should work in conjunction with standards, curricula and assessments in order to recognize school and school system performance. Accountability measures generally consist of rewards for improved or sustained performance, assistance for struggling schools and consequences for consistently poor performance. Recent research suggests that

- > Both rewards and sanctions are more effective than sanctions alone.¹³
- > Systems should recognize both reaching high goals and improvement over time

Alabama's 1995 Accountability System

Alabama's accountability system passed by the legislature in 1995 included financial, safety and academic accountability for schools and systems. This system required all local boards to be more fiscally accountable by requiring them to prepare annual financial statements and increasing the financial oversight of the State Board of Education. This increase in oversight has allowed the State Board of Education to intervene when school systems have been financially mismanaged. This intervention has involved technical assistance as well as system takeover. *For more information on school and system takeovers, see Chapter 5: Governance.*

Under the academic accountability portion of this legislation, student test scores were reported

¹³ G. Henry and D. Opfer, *The Impact of High Stakes Accountability on Teachers Efforts to Improve Instruction*, National School boards association, 2004.

in aggregate terms, allowing the high scores of the few to mask the low scores of many. This often led the public to believe that some schools were doing well, when in fact many students may not have been succeeding academically.

Alabama's New Accountability System

Alabama's new accountability system builds on the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* Act. The components of the new statewide accountability system are:

Four Levels of Student Performance – Student achievement data is reported in four levels. Data is reported for each school by the percentage of students in each level for every subgroup:

Level IV	_	Exceeds academic content standards	Proficient
Level III	_	Meets academic content standards	
Level II	_	Partially meets academic content standards	Not Proficient
Level I	_	Does not meet academic content standards	

Reporting All Categories – The State Department of Education will report the achievement level for each category identified by *No Child Left Behind* (e.g., economically disadvantaged, special education students, students with limited English proficiency and students from each major ethnic and racial group). Schools must make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with each subgroup, with the ultimate goal of having every subgroup at Level III or above by the 2013-2014 academic year. *For more information on AYP as defined in the NCLB legislation, see Chapter 7 on* No Child Left Behind.

Adequate Yearly Progress – Adequate Yearly Progress, or "AYP" is the progress that each category of students is required to make in order to improve academic proficiency toward the NCLB and Alabama accountability goal of having 100% of students proficient in reading and math by 2013-14. Figure 1.6 below illustrates Alabama's criteria for meeting AYP. For a school to meet AYP, that school must meet AYP for 100% of the applicable cells in the matrix above.

Indicator Category	Reading Grades 3-8, 11		Mathematics Grades 3-8, 11		Additional Academic Indicators
	Met Participation AYP	Met Reading AYP	Met Participation AYP	Met Mathematics AYP	Met Graduation Rate Attendance
All Students					
Free/Reduced Lunch					* Alabama will use student drop-out rate
American Indian/ Alaskan Native					the graduation rate.
Asian/Pacific Islander					
Black					
Hispanic					
White					
Special Education					
LEP ¹⁴					

Source: Alabama State Department of Education

¹⁴ Limited English Proficiency.

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Explanation of AYP Chart:

Category – each of the student categories listed here must show continued improvement in achievement levels in order to meet the AYP.

Met Participation AYP – No Child Left Behind requires each school to have 95% of students of all subgroups taking the assessments included in the accountability system. If the school has less than 95% of students taking those assessments, then that school will not meet AYP for that year. This provision is included in NCLB and the Alabama accountability system to ensure that the instructional needs of all students are identified and can then be addressed.

Met Reading/Math AYP – The Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) is the student assessment for reading and math. This test will be required of grades 3-8 beginning in 2004-05. Because each subgroup currently performs at different levels on the state assessments, AYP will require greater improvement from some lower-performing subgroups in order to meet the goal of 100% proficiency by 2013-14.

Additional Academic Indicators – *No Child Left Behind* requires that states have an additional academic indicator to measure progress other than achievement on state assessments. Alabama includes student attendance and student graduation rate as its additional academic indicators.¹⁵ Elementary and middle schools must have a 95 percent attendance rate in order to make AYP. High schools are required to use the drop-out rate indicator. However, a K-12 school will be required to meet both the drop out rate and student attendance indicator.

Figure 1.7 is an example of a school that met all criteria for AYP for the 2004-05 year. Central Park Elementary is an Alabama Reading Initiative School located in Birmingham. Central Park has a school population of 99% minority and more than 85% free-and-reduced lunch.

¹⁵ The state will use the drop-out rate in place of the graduation rate indicator for 2004-05. The state substituted the drop-out rate indicator because it did not have the capacity to utilize the graduation rate indicator when releasing its accountability system.

Figure 1.7: Example of a School that Met AYP in 2004-05

State of Alabama

Department of Education Adequate Yearly Progress Status for 2004-2005

Based on School Year 2003-2004 Data

Birmingham City – Central Park Elementary School State Academic Assistance Required: NO Title I Status

13 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals out of 13 (100%) were met.

Reading					
Subpopulation	Percent Participation Goal = 95.00%	Met Participation AYP	Proficiency Index Goal = 0.00	Met Proficient AYP *	
All Students	96	Yes	12	Yes	
Special Education Students	81.82	NA	~	NA	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	
Asian/Pacific Islander	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	
Black	95.3	Yes	11.7	Yes	
Hispanic	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	
White	100	NA	~	NA	
Limited English Proficient	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	
Free/Reduced Lunch	95.33	Yes	9.1	Yes	

Mathematics					
Subpopulation	Percent Participation Goal = 95.00%	Met Participation AYP	Proficiency Index Goal = 0.00	Met Proficient AYP *	
All Students	100	Yes	6.2	Yes	
Special Education Students	100	NA	-42.8	NA	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	
Asian/Pacific Islander	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	
Black	100	Yes	7.1	Yes	
Hispanic	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	
White	100	NA	~	NA	
Limited English Proficient	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	
Free/Reduced Lunch	99	Yes	1.6	Yes	

		Additior	nal Academic	Indicators		
Subpopulation	Attendance	Attendance	Met	Four-Year	Four-Year	Met Four
Year	Rate Goal = 95.00%	Rate Previous Yr.	Attendance AYP *	Projected Dropout Rate Goal = 10.00%	Projected Dropout Rate Previous Year	Projected Dropout AYP **
All Students	99.96	97.7	Yes			NA

~ Not reported, less than 10 students (Protects confidentially).

NA = *Not in AYP, less than 40 students (ensures reliability).*

* AYP is met if the goal is met or the goal is within the confidence interval (ensures reliability).

** AYP is met if the goal is met or there is improvement from the previous year.

Revision: 8/12/2004

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Assistance for Schools Not Meeting AYP – State and federal sanctions for not meeting AYP include a list of assistance and interventions over five years that begin with a warning and parental notification and eventually give students the option to transfer to other schools (Title I schools only). If a school does not meet AYP for five consecutive years, it must develop a plan for restructuring. Figure 1.8 on page 16 outlines the progression of school improvement stages under the Alabama accountability system. See Chapter 7: No Child Left Behind for more detail on the sanctioning process.

Rewards for Schools – Most states have "rewards and sanctions" education policies to encourage school systems, schools, and teachers to engage in practices that result in improved student achievement. As part of Alabama's new state accountability plan, a new proposal for meaningful accountability with rewards and sanctions is to be implemented. These rewards and sanctions will be focused towards schools instead of individual teachers or systems. *See Appendix B for the principles governing these rewards and sanctions*.

What Remains to be Accomplished in Alabama

As of 2004, Alabama was still developing and augmenting its accountability system. Reading and math assessments in grades 3, 5, 7 are to be developed and phased in during the 2004-05 year. The Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) will be the test administered for these grades. Science assessments are to be developed and phased in beginning on 2007. All of these assessments are required by *No Child Left Behind*. Alabama also must adopt the details of the state accountability system. This includes adoption of rewards and sanctions policies for schools as they strive to meet AYP and the goal of 100% proficiency in reading and math by 2013-14. Lastly, for the accountability system to recognize the progress of individual schools, the state will have to fund rewards for schools.

Conclusion

Alabama has been slightly behind many other states in its implementation of aligned assessment and accountability systems. However, this may be to the state's advantage, as Alabama has been able to create and implement a set of education reform polices that are informed by the efforts of other states. Alabama's current accountability system is consistent with the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act and moves Alabama toward alignment of its courses of study, assessments and accountability policies. Each of these efforts is targeted to the overarching goal of raising student achievement for all students from all backgrounds. The continued challenge for education policymakers will be to hold high expectations for all education stakeholders so that the accountability system is rigorously implemented.

This chapter was developed by Eric Houck and John Cannon, with research assistance from Kyle Southern.

Additional Resources:

National Resources :

United States Department of Education: www.ed.gov

The Fordham Foundation: www.fordhamfoundation.com

ACHIEVE, Inc.: <u>www.achieve.org</u>

Education Commission of the States: www.ecs.org

Southern Regional Education Board: www.sreb.org

State Resources:

Alabama State Department of Education: www.alsde.org

A+ Education Foundation: <u>www.aplusala.org</u>

This chapter was developed by Eric Houck and John Cannon, with research assistance from Kyle Southern.

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Appendix A Alabama Standards for Reading in Grades 4 and 11¹⁶

Alabama Fourth Grade Reading Standards

Students will:

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1. Demonstrate word recognition skills, including structural analysis.

Examples: structural analysis - root words, prefixes, suffixes

- Producing common word parts
- Reading multisyllable words
- · Reading compound words, contractions, possessives, and inflectional endings
- 2. Demonstrate reading vocabulary knowledge, including recognition of a variety of synonyms and antonyms.
 - · Using context clues
 - Reading multiple-meaning words
 - · Increasing the number of sight words
- 3. Use a wide range of strategies, including distinguishing fiction from nonfiction and making inferences to comprehend fourthgrade literary/recreational materials in a variety of genres.

Examples: novels, short stories, poetry, trade books

- Skimming passages
- Summarizing
- Comparing and contrasting
- Using sentence structure and context
- Self-monitoring for understanding

Examples: rereading, using context clues, adjusting speed, and accessing prior knowledge and experiences

- Using vocabulary knowledge
- · Reading fluently with expression and attention to punctuation
- · Using prior knowledge and experience
- Drawing conclusions
- Asking and answering questions
- Relating events, ideas, and characters to specific life experiences
- 4. Identify literary elements and devices, including characters, important details, and similes, in literary/recreational materials and identify important details in textual/informational materials.
 - Identifying main idea
 - Identifying author's purpose
- 5. Use a wide range of strategies and skills, including using sentence structure, locating information, and distinguishing fact from fiction, to comprehend fourth-grade functional and textual/informational reading materials.
 - Determining sequence of events
 - · Distinguishing fact from opinion
 - Summarizing passages
 - Comparing and contrasting
 - · Self-monitoring text understanding
 - Examples: rereading, using context clues, adjusting speed, accessing prior knowledge and experiences
 Using text features to gain meaning
 - Examples: titles, headings, glossary, boldface print, index, table of contents, tables, charts, graphs
 - Previewing and predicting
 - Highlighting, note taking, and outlining
 - · Detecting obvious bias
 - · Recognizing persuasive techniques

Examples: sources – advertisements, Internet, speeches, newspaper editorials

¹⁶ "Alabama Courses of Study: English Language Arts" Alabama Department of Education, 2004.

Alabama Eleventh Grade Reading Standards

Students will:

- 1. Analyze authors' use of the literary elements of characterization, theme, tone, setting, mood, plot, and literary point of view in American short stories, drama, poetry, or essays and other non-fiction literature, predominantly from 1900 to the present.
 - Identifying major historical developments of language and literature in America from 1900 to the present Examples: relationships to place and time, changes in American lexicon as a result of the industrial revolution; chronology, genre, style
 - Evaluating author technique
- 2. Analyze the use of figurative language and literary devices, including hyperbole, simile, metaphor, personification, and other imagery, to enhance specific literary passages.
 - Allusions
 - Analogies
 - Irony
 - · Rhythm and rhyme schemes
- 3. Read with comprehension a variety of textual/informational and functional materials, recognizing organizational patterns, evaluating the strengths or weaknesses of argument, and identifying directions that are implied or embedded in a passage.

Examples:

textual – employee manuals, HELP or other technical manuals, safety/trouble shooting information, subject area texts other than anthologies;

functional – posted weather warnings, lease and credit agreements, memoranda, federal laws such as child labor and Americans with Disabilities Act, medical instructions and information, nutritional pamphlets

• Recognizing fallacies in logic

Drawing conclusions

- · Applying advanced knowledge of context clues and structural analysis to determine word meaning
- Evaluating quality of writing

Appendix B State Board Principles of Rewards and Sanctions

Principles Governing Rewards

- 1. Rewards should apply to all schools that meet or exceed their annual measurable objectives or other growth expectations in accordance with the state's Accountability Plan.
- 2. Rewards should affirm professionalism and boost teacher morale.
- 3. Rewards should enhance the climate of a school.
- 4. Priority for rewards should be given to schools that face the greatest challenges.
- 5. A school's total faculty should make decisions about the use of cash awards.
- 6. The magnitude of the rewards should parallel the magnitude of the improvement.
- 7. Schools should be rewarded for substantially outperforming other schools with similar demographics.
- 8. Schools should be rewarded for substantial gains among subgroups that traditionally have been low performers, e.g. special education students, minority students, economically disadvantaged students, English language learners.
- 9. Options for the use and/or type of reward should be linked to school status, e.g., targeted professional development as determined by academic deficiencies for lower performing schools, recognition as a li ghthouse school" for higher achieving schools.
- 10. LEAs will be eligible for non-monetary rewards.

Principles Governing Sanctions

- 1. Sanctions should result in increased learning opportunities for students.
- 2. The primary response to schools that are not making progress should be intensive support.
- 3. Sanctions should establish a priority for support that targets state assistance beginning in the first year of failure to make AYP.
- 4. Sanctions should fit the severity of the situation.

Achievement

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International Measures of Student Achievement
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Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)
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Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS)
<i>Stanford-10 (SAT-10)</i>
Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT)
State-Level Measures of Student Achievement
Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT)1
Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE)
Appendix: Education Watch: Alabama

Overview

In recent years, states have placed increasing focus on assessments to gauge student achievement in the core subjects of reading, mathematics, science, and writing. The federal *No Child Left Behind* Act is very specific about assessments. It requires all students to be tested in reading, mathematics and science in grades 3–8 and once in high school. The results of these assessments pinpoint which students are achieving proficiency and which students lag behind. Educators can then use this student achievement data to identify strengths and challenges in curriculum and instruction in order to tailor lesson plans and classroom strategies to meet the needs of every student.

Historically, when student test data is "broken down," or disaggregated, by gender, ethnicity, race, and socioeconomic status, large gaps in student achievement emerge between black and white students, poor and non-poor students, and general education and special education students. Alabama's student achievement data reflects this trend. *For more information, see Chapter 3: Closing the Achievement Gap.*

This chapter provides a quick reference for the assessments given in Alabama to measure student achievement at the international, national and state levels and where to find this data. Included in this chapter is a report entitled "Education Watch: Alabama" written by The Education Trust, a Washington-D.C.-based advocacy group for poor and minority students. This report provides trend data for Alabama on several national assessments and performance indicators. *For more on Alabama's statewide assessment system, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments and Standards.*

International Measures of Student Achievement

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) – The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, formerly known as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study) was created to address the American education community's need for reliable and timely data on the mathematics and science achievement of our students compared to that of students in other countries. TIMSS is the most comprehensive and rigorous assessment of its kind ever undertaken. Offered in 1995, 1999, and 2003, TIMSS provides trend data on students' mathematics and science achievement from an international perspective. It is administered in fourth, eighth, and 12th grades in the United States and 38 other countries.

- For more information on TIMSS, see Chapter 6: Math, Science and Technology
- TIMSS data for every nation can be found online at http://nces.ed.gov/timss/

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) – The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is a large international comparative study of reading literacy of students in 35 countries in grades equivalent to fourth grade in the United States. The study includes a written test of reading comprehension and a series of questionnaires focusing on the factors associated with the development of reading literacy. PIRLS 2001 was the first in a planned 5-year cycle of international trend studies in reading literacy. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) coordinates the studies. PIRLS data can be found online at http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/.

National Measures of Student Achievement

National Assessment of Educational Progress – The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as "the Nation's Report Card," is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Since 1969, assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and the arts.

Once a voluntary assessment, all states are now required under *No Child Left Behind* to administer NAEP in the 4th and 8th grades as a way to accurately gauge student achievement nationwide. For NCLB purposes, NAEP selects a sample of students in each state and administers a generic series of tests in reading and math. The benefit of NAEP is that it measures against high standards. While the SAT-10 may show parents that their students rank at the 60th percentile (an above average level of performance in the U.S.), the majority of students in the U.S. reach only the "basic" level on NAEP. Therefore, the 60th percentile may not represent a very high level of achievement on the SAT-10.

- For a discussion of NAEP data and the achievement gap in Alabama, see Chapter 3: Closing the Achievement Gap
- ➤ For Alabama NAEP data in math and science, see Chapter 6: Math, Science and Technology
- > For Alabama NAEP data in reading and writing, see Chapter 8: Reading and Writing

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Detailed information about NAEP, including state-by-state analysis, is available online at http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS) – This is a standardized reading test used to assess elementary reading proficiency. This exam, administered at least three times during each school year in Alabama, assesses elementary reading proficiency. In Alabama, DIBELS is required in grades K–2 and optional in Grade 3. More than 80% of all third grade classrooms used DIBELS in the 2003-2004 school year.

- > For more information on Alabama's use of DIBELS, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments, and Standards or Chapter 8: Reading and Writing.
- More information on the components of DIBELS can be found online at http://dibels.uoregon.edu/.

Stanford-9 (SAT-9) and Stanford-10 (SAT-10) – The Stanford-9 and the Stanford-10 are norm-referenced, off-the-shelf achievement tests produced by Harcourt, Inc. These multiple-choice tests are designed to measure how a student's performance compares with that of other students, from classmates to national peer groups. Individual student performance is compared to the performances of students in a norming group. Scores are reported in terms of percentiles based on the scores of the students in the original norming group.

Alabama first administered the SAT-9 in 1995. The SAT-9 is based on norms set in 1995. Between 1995 and 2002, there was a slow increase in student achievement on the SAT-9. In the 2002-2003 school year, Alabama administered the SAT-10, which is a different test based on norms set in 2002. Under the new statewide assessment system, Alabama will continue to administer the SAT-10 annually in grades 3 through 8 and publicly report the scores prior to the beginning of the next school year. *For more information on the SAT-10 in Alabama, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments and Standards.*

Alabama SAT-10 results by school and school systems are posted on the Alabama State Department of Education's website at http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp. The results are broken down by gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and learning ability (special education, general education, and English Language Learners). This disaggregated data gives educators, parents and policymakers a clearer picture of student achievement in Alabama.

Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) – The SAT and the ACT are both standardized college entrance exams. Scores on these tests are usually reported as state averages and states are ranked based on those averages. Left unreported, however, is the percentage of seniors taking these tests. For example, because Alabama colleges and universities require the ACT for admission, Alabama has artificially inflated average SAT scores due to the small number of students who take the SAT (mostly high-achieving students who are attending colleges and universities out of state); whereas some states look comparatively worse by having virtually all seniors — even those who are only marginally college bound — take the test.

	Alabama	Southeast	United States
SAT Scores, 2003 ¹			
Verbal	559		507
Math	552		519
ACT Scores, 2003 ²	20.3	20.0	20.8

Advanced Placement (AP) Exam – Students take Advanced Placement (AP) exams after completing AP courses, which are typically the highest level courses offered in high schools. AP courses are rigorous and are designed to prepare students for college-level learning. Most colleges award college credit to students who score a 4 or a 5 on one or more of the nationally standardized AP tests.

In Alabama, not every student has access to AP courses. AP course offerings are plentiful in well-funded school districts. However, urban and rural school districts have difficulty offering these courses, as funding for teachers is tight. An analysis of which students take AP courses in Alabama and how they score is provided in the Appendix of this chapter in a report by The Education Trust entitled "Education Watch: Alabama."

For more information on Advance Placement courses and exams, visit http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html.

State-Level Measures of Student Achievement

Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) – The Alabama Reading and Math Tests (ARMT) are criterion-referenced assessments administered in grades 3–8 in conjunction with the SAT-10. Alabama first administered the ARMT in the 2003-2004 school year in grades 4, 6 and 8. It will be piloted in grades 3, 5, and 7 during the 2004-2005 school year.

Criterion-referenced tests are designed to measure how thoroughly a student has learned a particular body of knowledge. Unlike a norm-referenced test, which shows how a student performed against other students in a nationally normed group, the ARMT gives specific information about how much a student has learned reading and math, using Alabama's courses of study as the guide. The ARMT was developed by the Alabama State Department of Education to accurately measure student knowledge of the Alabama Courses of Study, which define what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. *For more information on the Alabama Courses of Study, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments and Standards.*

The SAT-10 contains some questions that are aligned to the Alabama Courses of Study. These multiple-choice questions are extracted from the SAT-10 and combined with a series of multiple-choice and open-ended, fill-in-the-blank questions designed by the ALSDE. Together, these questions make up the ARMT. Student scores are reported in four achievement levels: Level I – Does not meet academic content standards; Level II – Partially meets academic content standards; Level III – Meets academic content standards; Level IV – Exceeds academic content standards.

Statewide ARMT scores for 2003-2004 indicate that the state has significant work to do to ensure that all students reach proficiency: (Eileen, it would be awesome to have these as bar charts).

¹ The highest possible score on the SAT is 1600 (800 verbal, 800 math).

² The highest possible score on the ACT is 36.

Grade 4, Re	eading		
Cat	egory	% of Students at Proficiency (Level III and Level IV	
All S	Students	76.95	
Spe	cial Ed Students	31.45	
Ame	erican Indian/Alaskan Native	84.52	
Asia	an/Pacific Islander	75.55	
Blac	ck	64.77	
Hisp	panic	61.18	
Whi	te	84.95	
Limi	ited English Proficient	47.08	
Fully	y Paid Lunch	88.94	
Free	e/Reduced Lunch	67.50	
Grade 4, Ma	ath		
Cat	egory	% of Students at Proficiency (Level III and Level IV)	
All S	Students	72.00	
Spe	cial Ed Students	31.07	
Ame	erican Indian/Alaskan Native	78.19	
Asia	an/Pacific Islander	90.61	
Blac	ck	58.26	
Hisp	panic	60.68	
Whi	te	80.68	
Limi	ited English Proficient	52.33	
Fully	y Paid Lunch	84.90	
Free	e/Reduced Lunch	61.88	
Grade 6, Re	eading		
Cat	egory	% of Students at Proficiency (Level III and Level IV)	
All S	Students	82.43	
Spe	cial Ed Students	37.19	
Ame	erican Indian/Alaskan Native	78.12	
Asia	an/Pacific Islander	91.71	
Blac	ck	72.09	
Hisp	panic	70.57	
Whi	te	82.51	
Limi	ited English Proficient	53.63	
Fully	y Paid Lunch	91.05	
Free	e/Reduced Lunch	75.21	

 Grade 6, Math		
Category	% of Students at Proficiency (Level III and Level IV	
All Students	56.06	
Special Ed Students	13.10	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	69.72	
Asian/Pacific Islander	85.62	
Black	35.94	
Hispanic	47.07	
White	68.18	
Limited English Proficient	49.15	
Fully Paid Lunch	73.05	
Free/Reduced Lunch	42.20	
Grade 8. Reading		
 Category	% of Students at Proficiency (Level III and Level IV	
All Students	57.34	
Special Ed Students	11.48	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	64.07	
Asian/Pacific Islander	70.87	
Black	38.99	
Hispanic	43.35	
White	68.38	
Limited English Proficient	20.16	
Fully Paid Lunch	72.18	
Free/Deduced Lunch	40.04	

ARMT results by school and school systems are posted on the Alabama State Department of Education's website at http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp. The results are broken down by gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and learning ability (special education and limited English proficiency). This disaggregated data gives educators, parents and policymakers a clearer picture of student achievement in Alabama.

The Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) – The Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) is a criterion-referenced exam that all Alabama high school students must pass in order to graduate. Such tests are often referred to as "high stakes tests," as a student's academic future is based on his or her performance on the test.

The AHSGE is first administered in 10th grade. Those students who fail to pass in 10th grade may retake the exam in 11th and again in 12th until they pass all four sections: English, math, science, and history. State-funded remediation is available for students in 12th grade who fail to pass one or more sections. *For more information on the AHSGE, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments and Standards.*





AHSGE results by school and school systems are posted on the Alabama State Department of Education's website at http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp. The results are broken down by gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and learning ability (special education, general education, and English Language Learners). This disaggregated data gives educators, parents and policymakers a clearer picture of student achievement in Alabama

³ The statewide accountability system is based on ARMT scores and AHSGE scores for the 11th grade.

Closing the Achievement Gap

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Key Policy Points

- Alabama, like other states in America, has documented achievement gaps between low-income and non-low-income students; African-American and white students; Hispanic and white students; and special education and general education students.
- There are examples across the country of high achieving low-income and high minority schools that offer important lessons in how to close achievement gaps.
- > Teachers and administrators must hold high expectations for all children and demonstrate leadership in order to begin closing achievement gaps.
- Strong data systems are needed to accurately measure gaps between different groups of students by race, income, gender, and school. Accurate and timely data systems can inform the decisions of policymakers and educators as they work to close gaps.
- Creating high quality pre-Kindergarten programs targeted to at-risk children is a critical component of efforts to close achievement gaps. Alabama, however, funds a mere 52 preschool programs statewide.
- The Alabama Reading Initiative, which focuses on improving reading skills for K-12 students, is one of Alabama's more effective initiatives targeted to closing achievement gaps. The Alabama Reading Initiative was fully funded for grades K-3 in FY 2005.
- > The Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative, which focuses on improving math, science, and technology skills offers strong opportunity to close achievement gaps in these subjects but remains unfunded by the state.
- The Alabama Success Initiative and REACH (Realizing Every Child's Hopes) are two comprehensive proposals from the State Department of Education that were designed specifically to close achievement gaps. Both proposals require funding to meet their respective goals.

The 'What and 'Why' of Achievement Gaps

- **1** The myth [about achievement gaps] says that student achievement has much more to do with a child's background than with the quality of instruction he or she receives. The myth is powerful. It is pervasive. And it is wrong. All across the country, there are examples of high-poverty schools that perform at or near the top on state tests.¹
 - Kati Haycock, Executive Director, The Education Trust

Simply stated, achievement gaps are disparities in academic achievement across lines of wealth, race, and special education. Typically, low-income students and minorities score lower on tests and other measures of achievement than non-low-income and white students. Research has revealed achievement gaps among the following groups:

- Students from low-income families and their more affluent peers
- > Minority students-especially between African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American students and their white and Asian-American counterparts. In fact, the gaps persist even for students from more affluent minority families²
- > Students in general education courses and those in special education courses

Some researchers have found that explanations of the achievement gap often point to the inadequacies in the child's education in the home.³ One study found that by age three, children from professional families developed a vocabulary of about 1,100 words while children from low-income, non-professional families had a vocabulary of about 500 words.⁴ This research demonstrates that the achievement gap starts early and highlights the importance of quality early learning and K-12 instruction, especially for at-risk students. The bottom line is that all children - regardless of socioeconomic background — can learn at high levels, when taught to high levels. Some children may have more obstacles than others, but it is a fact that all children can learn.

There are increasing numbers of low income and minority schools across the country that have consistently outperformed their more affluent and white peers. These performance results have led to research on promising strategies that can help to close achievement gaps by raising student achievement among minorities and low-income students.⁵ Central Park Elementary School (Birmingham), Maryvale Elementary School (Mobile), Weaver Elementary School (Calhoun County), West Jasper Elementary and K. J. Clark School of Mathematics and Science (Mobile) are several of the high-poverty schools in Alabama that have made dramatic strides toward closing the achievement gap.⁶

Classroom Conditions and Efforts that Affect Achievement

Significant differences in educational achievement between schools and different populations of students within schools can be at least partially explained by classroom and school conditions.⁷ There is evidence dating from the 1970's through today describing how schools with large populations

¹ Haycock, K. (2001, March). Closing the Achievement Gap. Educational Leadership, 58 (6).

² College Board's National Task Force on Minority Achievement. (1999). Reaching the Top. New York.

 ³ For example: Valerie E. Lee and David T. Burkam, "Inequality at the Starting Gate: Social Background Differences in Achievement as Students Begin School," Economic Policy Institute. September 2002.
 ⁴ Hart, B. and Risley, T. (1995) *Meaningful Differences in Everyday Parenting and Intellectual Development in Young American*

Children. Baltimore: Brookes.

⁵ African American students make up 36% of the public school population in Alabama and White students make up nearly 62% (Latino, Asian, and Other combine for only 2%).
⁶ "Four Schools that Teach so All Students Can Learn," *Working Toward Excellence*. Alabama Best Practices Center. 2003.

⁷ Murphy, J. & Hallinger, P. (1989) Equity as Access to Learning.

of low-income students and minority students narrow achievement gaps.⁸ Addressing the following issues has proven successful in closing the achievement gap:

High Expectations – Researchers have found that in classrooms where teachers maintain high expectations for all students, minority students perform at higher levels. For example, in classrooms where "students are expected to always work, think and behave in the best way [they] know how and... do whatever it takes for them and [their] fellow students to learn,"⁹ formerly low achieving students demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.¹⁰ Unfortunately, research has also shown that teachers often hold lower expectations for minority and low-income students. These lower expectations do little more than perpetuate racial disparities in achievement.¹¹ Instead of relying on remediation at a later point, a child's learning is accelerated. Holding high expectations can allow educators to gain confidence in their ability to teach all students effectively as they experience successes with new practices and strategies.

Continuous Monitoring of Student Performance Through Use of Data – In order to close achievement gaps, educators must first be able to use data from student test scores, drop-out rates, and other factors to measure gaps in performance. Second, educators must be able to measure the effectiveness of programs, practices, and policies in improving student achievement and closing gaps. Decisions at all levels of education — from the classroom to the state department — should be made based on use of accurate and timely data.¹²

Leadership – In schools that prove effective in closing the achievement gap, school leaders actively engage in the process of implementing reforms targeting student achievement. Principals effective in closing the achievement gap share such common characteristics as a vision of change, effective communication skills, and the ability and will to lead instruction, monitor progress and support the staff.¹³

Quality Teaching – Existing research has demonstrated powerfully that teacher effectiveness has a dramatic impact on student achievement, especially for high-risk children.¹⁴ In a prominent 2002 study, researchers concluded from extensive data in Texas that having a high-quality teacher throughout elementary school can "substantially offset or even eliminate the disadvantage of low socioeconomic background."¹⁵ Continuous quality professional development is especially important for educators working with at-risk students, as it allows educators to be at their best for the children that need them the most. See Chapter 11: Teaching Quality for more information on this topic.

Academic Coursework and Instruction – New federal research indicates that the biggest factor in determining whether students earn bachelors' degrees is participation in a strong academic curriculum in high school. A strong curriculum is partially defined by taking the following course load: more than three years of English, at least two years of laboratory sciences, at least two years of foreign languages,

- 8 Johnston, R. (2002). Using Data to Close the Achievement Gap. California: Corwin Press
- ⁹ Thernstrom, A and Thernstrom, S. (2002). Schools that Work. In John Chubb and Tom Loveless (Eds.) *Bridging the Achievement Gap.*
- pp. 131-157. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press.
- ¹⁰ Johnston, R., & Viadero, D. (2000, March 15). Unmet promise: Raising minority achievement. *Education Week*. http://:www.edweek.org
- ¹¹ Hedges, L., & Nowell, A. (1998). Black-White test score convergence since 1965. In C. Jencks and M. Phillips (Eds.), The Black-White test score gap (pp. 149-181). Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.
- ¹² Educational Testing Service. (2003). Parsing the Achievement Gap. New Jersey: Educational Testing Services.
- ¹³ Slavin, R and Madden, N. (2002). "Success for All" and African American and Latino Achievement. In John Chubb and Tom Loveless (Eds.) *Bridging the Achievement Gap.* pp. 11-47. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press.
- ¹⁴ W.L. Sanders and J.C. Rivers, *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement*,

University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center, 1996.

¹⁶ Gamoran, A., & Hannigan, E. (2000) Algebra for everyone: Benefits of college-preparatory mathematics for students with diverse abilities. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 22, 241-254.

¹⁵ Steven G. Rivkin, Eric A. Hanushek, and John F. Kain, *Teachers, Schools and Academic Achievement*, University of Texas-Dallas Texas Schools Project, 2002.

at least two years of history, mathematics beyond Algebra II, and Advanced Placement courses.¹⁶ In addition to the quantity of courses, the curriculum should be rigorous and challenging. Because some at-risk students do not receive needed intellectual or conversational stimulation outside the school day, the time spent learning in school is all the more important. Sustaining exposure to strong learning opportunities for students during and after school allows at-risk students to get the most out of every hour of every day.

Pre-School/Early Learning – Research has demonstrated that the provision of high quality preschool programs that foster young children's development of social and school readiness skills, develop their interest in learning, and orient them toward academic achievement are crucial for establishing the basic foundation for a child's education.¹⁷ In addition to establishing quality pre-school programs, it is often necessary for local communities to actively recruit family involvement in early learning programs, especially for at-risk students.

Achievement Gaps in Alabama

Alabama is no different from other states in that there are significant achievement gaps between African-Americans and white students and between low-income and non-low-income students. However, the achievement gap is wider in Alabama than the national average as measured by the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), a test that allows states to compare student achievement. On this test, African-American students in Alabama performed last or near last in both reading and math among all states.

Alabama Achievement Gap: Reading – Looking at national assessments to evaluate the achievement gap can place the performance of Alabama students in a national context, which is helpful to evaluate absolute student performance for comparison to students in other states. A difference of 10 scale points on NAEP is approximately equivalent to a school year's worth of learning. The chart below shows how far each group — African Americans and whites — have to go in order to reach the proficient levels on the Alabama state assessment (SAT-10) and the national test (NAEP) in 4th grade reading. The performance of all students must improve if Alabama is to be competitive with the rest of the nation.

- On the SAT-10 in 2003, 4th grade African-American students scored on average at the 37th percentile, while white 4th grade students scored on average at the 66th percentile.
- On the national NAEP test, only 8% of African-American 4th graders scored at or above the proficient level in reading while about 30% of white students scored at or above the proficient level. This means that almost four times as many white students as African-American students reached the proficient reading levels.

Figure 3.1: 2003 Alabama SAT-10 Grade 4 Reading ¹⁸ African-American Asian Latino Native American White 37% 67% 36% 63% 66% Median National Percentile					
	African-American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White
	37%	67 %	36 %	63 %	66 %
		Median	National Percent	tile	

¹⁷ "The Progress of Eduscation Reform: Early Care and Education," Education Commission of the States. 2001.
 ¹⁸ "Education Watch: Alabama," The Education Trust, 2004.

4th Grade NAEP Reading Achievement Gap – The chart below illustrates the achievement gaps in Alabama on 4th grade Reading NAEP tests over time between whites, African-Americans, low income (eligible for free and reduced lunch) and non-low income (not eligible for free and reduced lunch). There were no statistically significant changes in scores among any groups between 1990 and 2003.

- The achievement gap between African-Americans and whites in Alabama on NAEP 4th grade reading tests in 2003 was about 30 points the approximate equivalent of three years worth of learning.
- The achievement gap on 4th grade NAEP reading tests in 2003 between low income and non-low income students was about 30 points — the approximate equivalent of three years worth of student learning.



Figure 3.3: 1992-2003 4th Grade NAEP Reading Achievement Gap



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, http://nces.ed.gov.

Alabama Achievement Gap: Math – The two charts below show how far each group — African Americans and whites — have to go in order to reach the proficient level on the Alabama state assessment (SAT-10) and the national test (NAEP) in 8th grade math.

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- On the SAT-10 in 2003, 8th grade African-American students scored on average at the 35th percentile, while white 8th grade students scored on average at the 60th percentile.
- On the national NAEP test, only 3% of African-American 8th graders scored at or above the proficient level in reading while about 23% of white students scored at or above the proficient level.

8th Grade Math NAEP Achievement Gap – The chart below illustrates the achievement gap in Alabama on 8th grade Math NAEP tests over time between Whites, African-Americans, low income (eligible for free and reduced lunch) and non-low income (not eligible for free and reduced lunch). While math scores among all groups improved from 1990 to 2003, the achievement gap between Whites and African-Americans and between low-income and non-low-income remained the same.

- The achievement gap between African-Americans and Whites in Alabama on NAEP 8th grade math tests in 2003 is about 30 points the approximate equivalent of three years worth of learning.
- The achievement gap on 8th grade NAEP math tests in 2003 between low income and non-low income students is about 25 points — the equivalent of more than two years worth of student learning.

Figure 3.4: 2003 Alabama SAT-10 Grade 8 Math ¹⁹ African-American Asian Latino Native American White 35% 81% 39% 58% 60% Median National Percentile													
	African-American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White								
	35%	81 %	39 %	58 %	60 %								
_A		Median National Percentile											



¹⁹ "Education Watch: Alabama," The Education Trust, 2004.





Source: National Center for Education Statistics, http://nces.ed.gov.

Alabama Achievement Gap: Special Education Students – In Alabama and across the nation, there are achievement gaps between special education students and those in the general population. For some special education students, this gap is due to the nature of their disability. Nevertheless, research demonstrates that many special education students can meet standards. According to Lawrence Gloelecker, Executive Director of the Special Education Institute at The International Center for Leadership in Education in North Carolina:

- Special education students require a more rigorous curriculum and strict standards in order to close achievement gaps.
- Strict criteria for special education referral can narrow achievement gaps by eliminating over-referral of minority students to special education.

Summary of the Achievement Gaps in Alabama – The descriptions of achievement gaps in reading and math in the sections above offer only a snapshot of the achievement gaps between the groups of students displayed. Achievement gaps are also evident between Hispanic and white students and between special education students against general education students. However, the snapshots above are incomplete because they do not show how achievement gaps can be closed. There are numerous examples in Alabama and across the country of schools serving poor children and minorities with achievement levels above their white and more affluent counterparts. For example, Texas and North Carolina, two states that Alabama has watched as Southern models for education improvement, made strong successes in closing their respective achievement gaps during the 1990s. Comparing these successes to states that have not made as much progress in closing the gap can be illustrative:

- Latino eighth graders in Texas are 25 points ahead of similar students in Minnesota on the NAEP writing test. This is the rough equivalent of two and half years worth of learning.
- In mathematics, African-American eighth graders from North Carolina are 17 points-or nearly two years-ahead of similar students from Michigan.²⁰
- In Alabama, Southside Primary in Dallas County, Calcedeaver Elementary in Mobile County, and Highland Avenue in Montgomery each have more than 90% of students in poverty with more than 80% of their students reading at grade level.

Efforts in Alabama to Close Achievement Gaps

The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) – Enacted in 1999, The Alabama Reading Initiative is a statewide K-12 whole-school reform effort in reading practice. The goal of ARI is to improve reading instruction significantly and ultimately transform student reading skills in an effort to close achievement gaps in reading and other subjects. In terms of student achievement, students in ARI schools consistently make gains on the SAT-10 that are approximately twice those of non-ARI schools regardless of the variables of race, poverty, or outstanding vs. struggling schools. In FY 2005, the Alabama Reading Initiative expanded to all K-3 schools with an allocation of \$40 million in state funds. This expansion, followed by expansion to grades beyond K-3, could aid in reducing gaps in reading achievement. *For a more detailed explanation of ARI, see Chapter 8: Reading and Writing.*

The Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) – Like the Alabama Reading Initiative, AMSTI is a statewide K-12 whole-school reform initiative. AMSTI focuses on improving students' math, science, and technology knowledge and skills. A 2004 study indicated math and science test scores of students attending AMSTI schools were higher in most cases than scores of students enrolled in non-AMSTI schools.²¹ Additionally, the report showed that students who attended AMSTI schools also made slight gains in reading and writing. As of 2004, AMSTI had been piloted in 72 Alabama schools. However, state funding for initiative did not exist as of July 2004. Building student knowledge and skills in math, science, and technology is critical in order to prepare all students for a world that is increasingly driven by these disciplines. *For a more detailed description of this initiative, see Chapter 5: Math, Science, and Technology.*

Targeting Students with Disabilities – Historically, Alabama has over identified students with disabilities. For example, many students who did not know how to read were referred to special education. To address this issue, the State Department of Education is providing technical assistance and support to teachers. Better reading programs and positive behavioral interventions are slowly reducing the number of students referred to special education.

Strong Graduation Requirements – According to the Fordham Foundation, a nationally recognized education policy resource, Alabama has one the highest sets of graduation requirements in the country. High school students must pass a minimum of 24 credits, including four years of mandatory English, mathematics, social studies, and science. These courses include Biology and Algebra. Students are tested on fundamental concepts of core courses using the Alabama High School Graduation Exam, a high-stakes exit exam designed to measure students' ability in core course work, logic and other problem solving skills. As stated earlier, high expectations and rigorous academic standards like these are critical for reducing achievement gaps.

²⁰ Education Trust, Inc. (2001). Education Watch Online: Key Education Facts and Figures from Elementary School through College. www.edtrust.org

²¹ "Impact of AMSTI on Student Academic Performance 2002-2003," Institute for Communication Research, University of Alabama.

Proposals in Alabama to Close Achievement Gaps

In addition to the existing efforts in Alabama listed above, there have been two proposals, the Alabama Success Initiative (1999) and REACH (Realizing Every Child's Hopes) (2001), that have sought specifically to close achievement gaps in Alabama. Some components of both of these efforts have been put in place; however, many pieces of the Alabama Success Initiative and REACH have not vet been implemented.

The Alabama Success Initiative²² – Developed by the Social Promotion/Retention Committee appointed by the State Board of Education in 1999, the Alabama Success Initiative is a proposal based on extensive research to determine effective alternatives to social promotion (passing students to the next grade when they have failed to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills) or retention. The committee recommended broad improvements in several areas in order to support improved student achievement and reduce achievement gaps:

School Readiness – Alabama is one of the few states that has not systematically provided pre-school programs for its early learners. In July 2004, the state adopted standards for what all 4-year olds are expected to know in Alabama's preschool programs (only 52 state funded preschool programs existed as of July 2004). These standards are consistent with the requirements of No Child Left Behind. The Alabama Success Initiative recommended Alabama ensure all children are ready for schools, and all schools are ready for children by providing access to high quality pre-Kindergarten and kindergarten programs for at-risk children.

Academic Support - Instructional time in the classroom is especially important for the most at-risk students. One way Alabama can increase instructional time is by raising the total number of school days from 175 to the national and southeastern average of 180 so that all children have more instructional time each year. In addition to offering quality instructional time, schools should have the structure and capacity to meet the needs of every learner. This includes providing the funding and flexibility necessary for quality academic initiatives such as the Alabama Reading Initiative, after-school programs, one-on-one tutoring, and extended learning time. Some state and federal funds have been directed toward proven academic initiatives such as the Alabama Reading Initiative²³ and High Hopes (which provides targeted tutoring for students unable to pass the Alabama High School Graduation Exam). No Child Left Behind requires that federal funding school be used to provide supplemental services to children in persistently failing schools.

Benchmarks and Gateways – The state should develop assessments that measure essential skills, knowledge, and understanding. These benchmarks can offer guidance for decisions about what specific assistance should be given to each student to accelerate his or her progress. As Alabama's new accountability system matures, the state will be able to evaluate benchmarks. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is an example of a reading assessment that could be used as a benchmark gateway. DIBELS allows educators to quickly test student reading ability throughout the year to measure if the students are approaching benchmark.

Staff Development – Teachers should be trained in both content and instructional strategies, which should equip them with a deep understanding of how students learn and how to raise achievement levels. Quality staff development for all teachers is an effective method for reducing achievement gaps. Staff development is one area in which Alabama has made strong progress since the Alabama Success Initiative study was released in 1999. Both the Alabama Reading Initiative (for more

²² "Alabama Success Initiative Report," Alabama State Department of Education, 2000.
²³ State funds support the Alabama Reading Initiative, which is designed as a K-12 reading initiative. Federal funding

supports the Alabama Reading First Initiative, a K-3 reading initiative that is comparable to the ARI.

information on ARI, see Chapter 8: Reading and Writing) and the Alabama Math Science and Technology Initiative (*for more information on AMSTI, see Chapter 6: Math, Science, and Technology*) are comprehensive staff development initiatives. In 2002, the State Board of Education adopted state standards for professional development. As a result, staff development in Alabama has begun to shift from static workshops to school-based staff development systems.

Parental Support – Schools should develop efforts to increase effective parental and community support. Parental involvement is important for all children's enrichment, but is even more important for at-risk students. Federal funding has allowed some schools and school systems in Alabama to make progress in generating stronger parental involvement. For example, Dallas County has effectively utilized federal funds to create broad-reaching and effective parental involvement in its schools.

Funding – Adequately funding the Alabama Success Initiative, among other efforts, is important to begin to close the achievement gap. The REACH initiative (described below), which is driven by a mission to achieve adequacy in education, provides more information about funding in order to reduce achievement gaps.

REACH (Realizing Every Alabama Child's Hopes)²⁴ – REACH was a proposal created by the Alabama State Board of Education in 2001 to provide a system of education committed to high academic standards with accountability in order to provide every student an opportunity to obtain the necessary skills to be productive, engaged citizens. It emerged out of earlier successful state programs, the Alabama Success Initiative, and years of litigation requiring the state to address inadequate school facilities and resources. REACH considered the costs of providing adequate instructional services to all Alabama students and targeted strategies for students most at-risk of academic failure.²⁵

Supplemental Program Costs and Pre-Kindergarten for At-Risk Students – This component of REACH recommended funding voluntary statewide programs for at-risk students that focused instructional time in small group settings through both private and public pre-Kindergarten programs.

Supplemental Program Costs and K-12 Efforts for At-Risk Students – This component of REACH included the following recommendations:

- > Fund the Alabama Success Initiative to end social promotion and retention through additional instructional time, specialized instruction, and remediation
- Strengthen education services for English Language Learners (ELL) students and homeless students
- Provide additional funding to address needs of at-risk students including proven academic support services, drop-out prevention and targeted school assistance

Department of Education Initiatives and Support – The goals of this component of REACH are to allow the State Department of Education to provide programs and leadership to achieve adequacy and to create a steady revenue source to the Department of Education to provide and sustain programs and initiatives. Specifically, these efforts would expand accountability mechanisms and promote proven state initiatives including:

- > Expand teacher testing
- Strengthen the courses of study
- > Strengthen Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE)

²⁴ REACH Proposal PowerPoint, Alabama State Department of Education, 2001.

²⁵ The National Center for Educational Statistics is a part of the U.S. Department of Education.

- ➤ Strengthen teacher preparation
- Expand the Alabama Reading Initiative
- Expand the Alabama Math, Science, Technology Initiative
- Improve Career / Technical Education through equipment upgrades, equipment renewal, and materials and supplies
- Provide full funding to meet SACS accreditation requirements including providing sufficient counselors, librarians, and assistant principals

Improve the Delivery of Instruction at the School Level – The goals of this component of REACH are targeted to the school level and are to provide professional development resources necessary to create an ongoing plan of instructional renewal, provide a library media program equal to the southeastern average, and to create an educational technology network to assure total instructional integration. Specifically these improvements would include:

- > Expanding quality teacher professional development efforts
- > Creating a statewide system of lead teachers, including reading and math coaches
- ➤ Improving library media
- > Funding for special education needs

In addition to addressing numerous other needs, the REACH study determined that the cost of providing an adequate education to Alabama children, especially at-risk children, would cost the state an additional \$1.6 billion. Based on financial analysis and comparisons to other Southern states, the REACH study also determined that the state of Alabama has the tax capacity to achieve its goals of raising \$1.6 for the educational services and initiatives described above (for more information on Alabama finances and tax capacity, see Chapter 4: Finance and Funding).

Conclusion

In Alabama, inadequate educational services and policies perpetuate disparities in achievement. However this does not have to be the case. Ultimately, research and common sense tell us that a variety of school, community and home factors contribute to gaps in achievement, but we also know that lower academic achievement of minorities, poor, and special education students have more to do with how schools operate and less to do with the effects of race or socio-economic status.²⁶ Most importantly, we know that Alabama has the capacity to reduce achievement gaps through current initiatives and plans for future expansion. Support and funding for proven practices and initiatives is critical to closing the dramatic achievement gaps in Alabama.

This chapter was developed by Aaron Baker and John Cannon.

²⁶ Johnston, R., & Viadero, D. (2000, March 15). Unmet promise: Raising minority achievement. *Education Week*. http://:www.edweek.org

Finance

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Key Policy Points

- Like all states, Alabama funds schools through a combination of local, state, and federal funds. Each school system has a different combination of funds from these sources.
- Alabama's revenue generation is different from United States and Southern average revenue sources due in part to the limitations of the Alabama Constitution, which restricts both the rate and base of property taxes in Alabama.
- Alabama has a higher dependence on state funding as a percentage of total funding for schools than all but two other states.

- Earmarking and proration hinder Alabama's planning and budgeting procedures. Alabama earmarks more than any other state in the U.S. at almost 90% of all state revenues; on average, states earmark only 24% of revenues.
- Alabama's school systems spend funds in ways that are similar to national and Southern averages.
- Funding for school system central administration accounts for less than 5% of total education spending in Alabama.
- Alabama policy makers have been reluctant to define educational equity and adequacy, possibly to the detriment of enhanced educational opportunity.
- Alabama state law sets tighter limitations on county governments than city governments when it comes to levying local taxes. This discrepancy in policy combined with other limitations on home rule for county governments, can severely hamper the generation of local funding for county school systems.
- Alabama should reevaluate how it allocates money for students with special needs to ensure that funds are distributed equitably. Making a stronger commitment to and redefining the purpose of the Catastrophic Trust Fund for Special Education¹ should be considered.

For concise definitions of key education finance terms and concepts discussed throughout this entry, the reader should refer to the "Educationary" located at the end of this Primer.

Overview

This chapter provides information on the following topics:

- How revenue is generated for Alabama's public elementary and secondary schools
- ▶ How Alabama's education budget is created
- > How state funds are allocated to Alabama's public elementary and secondary schools
- How Alabama's public school revenues and expenditures compare to the United States and other Southern states
- How two education finance concepts equity and adequacy are shaping education finance matters in the United States and within Alabama

¹ The Catastrophic Trust Fund for Special Education is "administered by the State Department of Education for the purpose of assisting local education agencies providing special education and related services for children with disabilities in catastrophic cases" (Code of Alabama, Article II, section 16-39-30: 1991).

Who Pays for Public Education in Alabama?

During FY 2002, more than \$5.1 billion was generated for Alabama's 128 public school systems. This amounted to an average of \$7,028 for each of the 730,170 students on the membership rolls. All of the state's school systems received revenue from federal, state, local, and other (miscellaneous) sources.

Figure 4.1 shows the statewide contribution of revenues from federal, state, and local sources in fiscal year 2002. The largest share of revenues came from state tax dollars (58.5%). Local tax dollars contributed another 30.4% of the revenues, and the federal share was 10.2%. The remaining 0.9% came from other, miscellaneous sources.²



Figure 4.2 on pages 5 and 6 provides details for the 128 Alabama public school systems in terms of revenues per student and percentages of revenue by source

² Alabama State Department of Education, 2003

Figure 4.2: Public	c School	Revenu	e Per S	<i>tudent, 2</i>	2002					
County School System	Students	Federal	State	Local	Other*	Total	Percent Federal	Percent State	Percent Local	Percent Other
Statewide Totals	730,170	\$716	\$4,115	\$2,137	\$60	\$7,028	10.2 %	58.5 %	30.4%	0.9%
AUTAUGA COUNTY	8,716	506	4,111	1,634	42	6,293	8.0%	65.3%	26.0%	0.7%
BALDWIN COUNTY	23,087	463	3,597	2,921	74	7,056	6.6%	51.0%	41.4%	1.1%
BARBOUR COUNTY	1,581	1,308	4,830	1,002	102	7,241	18.1%	66.7%	13.8%	1.4%
BIBB COONTA	3,/33	904	4,408	966	74	6,352	14.2%	69.4%	15.2%	1.2%
	7,369	494	4,190	1,284	14	5,982	8.3%	/U.U%	21.5%	0.2%
	1,914	1,344	4,342	1 002	04	6,070	20.1%	64.6%	13.5%	1.3%0
	3,399 9,570	580	4,343	1,002	68	6.444	9.0%	60 10%	14.9%0 20.8%	1.7%0
CHAMBERS COUNTY	4 334	874	4,400	1,545	68	6,507	13.4%	62.3%	23.2%	1.1%
CHEROKEE COUNTY	3,988	621	4.250	1,621	79	6.571	9.4%	64.7%	24.7%	1.2%
CHILTON COUNTY	6,860	554	4,043	1,410	41	6,047	9.2%	66.9%	23.3%	0.7%
CHOCTAW COUNTY	2,198	1,305	4,363	1,942	64	7,674	17.0%	56.9%	25.3%	0.8%
CLARKE COUNTY	3,581	1,004	4,154	1,396	57	6,611	15.2%	62.8%	21.1%	0.9%
CLAY COUNTY	2,329	638	4,676	1,274	12	6,601	9.7%	70.8%	19.3%	0.2%
CLEBURNE COUNTY	2,565	672	4,405	1,088	51	6,216	10.8%	70.9%	17.5%	0.8%
COFFEE COUNTY	1,993	808	4,137	1,517	52	6,513	12.4%	63.5%	23.3%	0.8%
COLBERT COUNTY	3,344	703	4,306	2,504	78	7,590	9.3%	56.7%	33.0%	1.0%
CONECUH COUNTY	2,051	1,153	4,516	1,152	157	6,977	16.5%	64.7%	16.5%	2.2%
COOSA COUNTY	1,713	901	4,909	1,029	64	6,902	13.0%	71.1%	14.9%	0.9%
COVINGTON COUNTY	3,169	886	4,420	1,464	65	6,836	13.0%	64.7%	21.4%	1.0%
CRENSHAW COUNTY	2,403	795	4,312	1,075	67	6,250	12.7%	69.0%	17.2%	1.1%
CULLMAN COUNTY	9,517	637	4,522	1,401	55	6,615	9.6%	68.4%	21.2%	0.8%
DALE COUNTY	2,670	602	4,263	1,526	98	6,489	9.3%	65.7%	23.5%	1.5%
DALLAS COUNTY	4,686	1,159	4,509	8/9	57	6,605	17.6%	68.3%	13.3%	0.9%
	7,921	/22	4,448	1,491	22	6,683 5,620	7406	00.0%	22.3%	0.3%
ELIVIORE COUNTY	10,703	1 027	4,073	1,120	17	5,030	15 20%	72.3%0 62.7%	20.0%	0.3%0
FTOWAH COUNTY	4,713	492	4,277	1,444	66	6 161	8.0%	69.6%	21.2%	1 10%
FAYETTE COUNTY	2 778	584	4 334	1,010	28	6 350	9.2%	68.3%	22.1%	0.4%
FRANKLIN COUNTY	3 072	943	4 655	1,100	34	7253	13.0%	64.2%	22.3%	0.5%
GENEVA COUNTY	2.667	722	4.490	1.110	46	6.368	11.3%	70.5%	17.4%	0.7%
GREENE COUNTY	1,782	1,440	4,662	1,419	68	7,590	19.0%	61.4%	18.7%	0.9%
HALE COUNTY	3,303	1,033	4,469	1,034	67	6,602	15.6%	67.7%	15.7%	1.0%
HENRY COUNTY	2,719	746	4,520	1,224	63	6,554	11.4%	69.0%	18.7%	1.0%
HOUSTON COUNTY	6,243	523	4,182	1,602	65	6,372	8.2%	65.6%	25.1%	1.0%
JACKSON COUNTY	6,225	692	4,327	1,850	14	6,883	10.1%	62.9%	26.9%	0.2%
JEFFERSON COUNTY	40,457	484	4,128	2,277	64	6,953	7.0%	59.4%	32.8%	0.9%
LAMAR COUNTY	2,666	830	4,803	1,368	46	7,048	11.8%	68.2%	19.4%	0.7%
LAUDERDALE COUNTY	8,777	410	4,174	2,047	42	6,673	6.1%	62.5%	30.7%	0.6%
LAWRENCE COUNTY	6,088	843	4,361	1,536	38	6,779	12.4%	64.3%	22.7%	0.6%
LEE COUNTY	9,181	441	3,994	2,089	36	6,560	6.7%	60.9%	31.8%	0.5%
LIMESTONE COUNTY	7,953	451	4,266	2,097	11	6,824	6.6%	62.5%	30.7%	0.2%
LOWNDES COUNTY	2,646	2,399	4,505	914	95	7,913	30.3%	56.9%	11.6%	1.2%
	3,822	1,131	4,436	1,012	133	6,713	16.8%	61.40%	15.1%	2.0%
	10,149	309	4,055	2,124	52	6,60 I	0.6% 16.6%	61.4%	32.2%	0.8%
	1,721	1,143	4,440	1,234	120	6 250	8 80%	68.6%	20.5%	0.7%0 2.10%
MARSHALL COUNTY	5,05Z 6,022	552	4,292	1,200	100	6,259	0.0%0 9.70%	62.0%	20.5%	2.1%0
MOBILE COUNTY	64 714	891	3 939	1,045	46	6,688	13 30/	58.9%	20.0%0 27.1%	0.7%
MONROF COUNTY	4 439	803	4 253	1,012	35	6 322	12.7%	673%	19 5%	0.7%
MONTGOMERY COUNTY	(33 274	895	4,200	1 874	69	6 838	13.1%	58.5%	274%	1.0%
MORGAN COUNTY	7446	545	3,906	3 088	34	7573	72%	51.6%	40.8%	0.5%
PERRY COUNTY	2.239	1.517	4.638	733	161	7,049	21.5%	65.8%	10.4%	2.3%
PICKENS COUNTY	3.685	968	4.618	1.085	43	6.714	14.4%	68.8%	16.2%	0.6%
PIKE COUNTY	2,177	1,357	4,448	1,825	94	7,724	17.6%	57.6%	23.6%	1.2%
RANDOLPH COUNTY	2,261	586	4,098	1,336	5	6,025	9.7%	68.0%	22.2%	0.1%
RUSSELL COUNTY	3,838	822	4,300	1,464	74	6,661	12.3%	64.6%	22.0%	1.1%
SAINT CLAIR COUNTY	7,071	487	4,130	1,552	53	6,223	7.8%	66.4%	24.9%	0.9%
SHELBY COUNTY	20,955	411	3,839	3,474	71	7,796	5.3%	49.2%	44.6%	0.9%
SUMTER COUNTY	2,712	1,817	4,447	1,259	87	7,610	23.9%	58.4%	16.5%	1.1%
TALLADEGA COUNTY	7,745	810	4,363	1,579	51	6,803	11.9%	64.1%	23.2%	0.8%
TALLAPOOSA COUNTY	3,442	701	3,965	1,667	17	6,350	11.0%	62.4%	26.2%	0.3%
TUSCALOOSA COUNTY	15,718	510	4,051	2,374	62	6,997	7.3%	57.9%	33.9%	0.9%
WALKER COUNTY	8,105	922	4,499	1,907	79	7,407	12.5%	60.7%	25.7%	1.1%
WASHINGTON COUNTY	3,640	766	3,843	1,662	48	6,318	12.1%	60.8%	26.3%	0.8%
WILCOX COUNTY	2,489	1,573	4,437	1,114	102	7,226	21.8%	61.4%	15.4%	1.4%
WINSTON COUNTY	2,802	688	4,694	1,740	68	7,191	9.6%	65.3%	24.2%	1.0%

Figure 4.2: Publi	ic School	Revenu	e Per S	tudent, 2	2002, con	tinued				
City School System	Students	Federal	State	Local	Other*	Total	Percent Federal	Percent State	Percent Local	Percent Other
Statewide Totals	730,170	\$716	\$4,115	\$2,137	\$60	\$7,028	10.2 %	58.5 %	30.4 %	0.9 %
ALBERTVILLE CITY	3,518	538	4,125	1,789	51	6,502	8.3%	63.4%	27.5%	0.8%
ALEX. CITY	3,542	551	4,020	1,827	20	6,418	8.6%	62.6%	28.5%	0.3%
ANDALUSIA CITY	1,796	744	4,052	1,649	53	6,498	11.4%	62.4%	25.4%	0.8%
ANNISTON CITY	2,686	1,313	4,289	1,635	32	7,269	18.1%	59.0%	22.5%	0.4%
ARAB CITY	2,673	387	4,140	1,623	6	6,156	6.3%	67.2%	26.4%	0.1%
ATHENS CITY	2,808	542	3,805	3,588	60	7,995	6.8%	47.6%	44.9%	0.8%
ATTALLA CITY	1,946	750	4,439	1,331	56	6,576	11.4%	67.5%	20.2%	0.8%
	4,442	828	3,880	6,504	67	11,279	7.3%	34.4%	57.7%	0.6%
BESSEIVIER CITY	4,622	1,046	3,803	1,655	114	6,617	15.8%	57.5%	25.0%	1.7%
	37,520	900	3,849	2,074	90	6,913	13.0%	55.7%	30.0%	1.3%
	1,341	583	4,085	3,405	Z1 49	8,094	7.Z%	50.5%	42.1%	0.3%
	2,030	1.064	3,097	2,099	40	7,423	10.5%	49.0%	39.1% 16.5%	0.7%0
	1,049	1,004	4,130	1,032	29	0,201	7,0%	00.1%	10.3%	0.5%
	0,042	002	3,00/	3,390	30	6,120	7.4%0 12.5%	47.0%0 62.7%	44.3%	0.3%0
	2,339	040	5,904 // 115	1,413	70	7010	14.10%	62.7%	22.7%	0.00%
	0,020	900 760	4,113	1,040	03	7,010	14.1%0	50.7%0 66.40%	20.3%0 21.00%	0.9%0 1 20%
	5 1 1 0	580	4,777 4 380	1,070	12	6 738	8 60%	65.0%	26.20%	0.2%
	2,006	663	4,300	1,704	57	6 728	9.0%	60.3%	20.2%	0.2%
	2,330	800 800	4,000 4 119	1 502	44	6.645	13.0%	62.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	4 308	998	3 965	3 743	80	8 785	11 40%	45 10/	42.6%	0.7%
	2 681	753	3 955	1 616	57	6 381	11.4%	62.0%	25 30/	0.0%
GADSDEN CITY	5 481	1 1 3 8	3,000	1,010	90	6 965	16.3%	56 3%	26.0%	1 30/
GENEVA CITY	1,365	557	4 282	1,610	15	6,316	8.8%	67.8%	23.2%	0.2%
GUNTERSVILLE CITY	1,838	479	3 994	2 5 2 1	28	7021	6.8%	56.9%	35.9%	0.2%
HAI FYVILLE CITY	1,680	617	4 191	1 681	41	6,530	9.5%	64.2%	25.7%	0.470
HARTSFLLECITY	3.067	331	4,368	2 312	32	7043	4 7%	62.0%	32.8%	0.0%
HOMEWOOD CITY	3 217	274	3 562	8,358	43	12 236	2.2%	29.1%	68.3%	0.3%
HOOVER CITY	10 265	198	3,997	5 862	80	10 137	2.0%	39.4%	578%	0.8%
HUNTSVILLE CITY	22.591	666	3,996	3,199	69	7,930	8.4%	50.4%	40.3%	0.9%
JACKSONVILLE CITY	1.680	603	4.231	1.325	54	6.214	9.7%	68.1%	21.3%	0.9%
JASPER CITY	2.596	563	4.022	2.625	74	7.284	7.7%	55.2%	36.0%	1.0%
LANETT CITY	1.132	974	4.288	1.431	52	6.745	14.4%	63.6%	21.2%	0.8%
LINDEN CITY	622	1.557	5.191	1.517	64	8.328	18.7%	62.3%	18.2%	0.8%
MADISON CITY	6,348	282	3,847	2,843	40	7,011	4.0%	54.9%	40.5%	0.6%
MIDFIELD CITY	1,160	866	4,295	1,326	7	6,494	13.3%	66.1%	20.4%	0.1%
MT. BROOK CITY	3,996	119	3,717	5,753	9	9,599	1.2%	38.7%	59.9%	0.1%
MUSCLE SHOALS CITY	2,444	281	3,878	2,989	63	7,211	3.9%	53.8%	41.5%	0.9%
ONEONTA CITY	1,286	374	4,090	1,621	223	6,309	5.9%	64.8%	25.7%	3.5%
OPELIKA CITY	4,495	727	4,139	2,146	112	7,125	10.2%	58.1%	30.1%	1.6%
OPP CITY	1,400	646	4,287	1,314	69	6,316	10.2%	67.9%	20.8%	1.1%
OXFORD CITY	3,194	469	4,076	1,725	77	6,346	7.4%	64.2%	27.2%	1.2%
OZARK CITY	2,852	792	4,380	1,423	46	6,641	11.9%	65.9%	21.4%	0.7%
PELL CITY CITY	3,936	636	4,034	1,376	97	6,143	10.4%	65.7%	22.4%	1.6%
PHENIX CITY CITY	5,021	1,056	4,117	2,046	91	7,309	14.4%	56.3%	28.0%	1.2%
PIEDMONT CITY	1,013	806	4,610	1,362	83	6,861	11.8%	67.2%	19.9%	1.2%
ROANOKE CITY	1,493	634	4,573	1,064	69	6,340	10.0%	72.1%	16.8%	1.1%
RUSSELLVILLE CITY	2,324	685	4,513	1,847	71	7,116	9.6%	63.4%	26.0%	1.0%
SCOTTSBORO CITY	2,724	612	4,330	2,615	24	7,581	8.1%	57.1%	34.5%	0.3%
SELMA CITY	4,084	1,486	4,239	1,156	60	6,941	21.4%	61.1%	16.7%	0.9%
SHEFFIELD CITY	1,381	846	4,206	2,870	81	8,003	10.6%	52.6%	35.9%	1.0%
SYLACAUGA CITY	2,234	749	4,303	2,143	76	7,271	10.3%	59.2%	29.5%	1.1%
TALLADEGA CITY	3,034	833	4,694	1,456	67	7,050	11.8%	66.6%	20.7%	0.9%
TALLASSEE CITY	1,872	509	4,339	1,191	10	6,049	8.4%	71.7%	19.7%	0.2%
TARRANT CITY CITY	1,377	648	3,889	2,364	50	6,951	9.3%	56.0%	34.0%	0.7%
THOMASVILLE CITY	1,664	641	4,384	1,357	53	6,435	10.0%	68.1%	21.1%	0.8%
TROY CITY	2,300	793	3,899	1,948	76	6,717	11.8%	58.1%	29.0%	1.1%
TUSCALOOSA CITY	9,695	1,013	4,354	4,960	34	10,360	9.8%	42.0%	47.9%	0.3%
TUSCUMBIA CITY	1,381	579	4,138	2,531	67	7,314	7.9%	56.6%	34.6%	0.9%
VESTAVIA HILLS CITY	4,549	183	3,707	4,423	176	8,490	2.2%	43.7%	52.1%	2.1%
WINFIELD CITY	1,271	1,039	4,272	1,978	60	7,350	14.1%	58.1%	26.9%	0.8%

Figure 4.2 *Excludes intermediate sources, payments on behalf, and one-time revenues such as bond proceeds and disposal of fixed assets.

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Source: Calculations of the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) based on school system financial reports.

Federal Revenues – Public education is primarily a state and local responsibility, but the federal government has assisted public schools in targeted ways throughout American history. Grant programs were begun for vocational education in 1917, for school lunch programs in 1946, for school systems impacted by federal facilities in 1950, for instructional areas affecting national defense in 1958, and for "compensatory" education for underprivileged students in 1965. The 1965 act, known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), has been reauthorized and expanded in succeeding years. The current authorization, known as the *No Child Left Behind* Act, was adopted in 2001. In 1975, grants for education of children with disabilities were added. Today the federal contribution is substantial in several of these areas.³ For Alabama, the largest federal amounts received for FY 2002 were:

- Subsidies for lunchrooms and for meals provided to low-income students (\$147 million).
- Grants enabling school systems to provide educational assistance to underprivileged students (\$131 million).
- Grants enabling school systems to provide special education services to students with disabilities (\$79 million).

In addition, local school systems where there are federal installations or large federal land holdings also benefit from payments to offset the impact of these facilities on the community. Federal assistance is most significant to public schools in lower-income communities because of the nature of the programs supported and the lack of local tax support for public education in these areas. Figure 4.2 on pages 5 and 6 shows that federal revenues per student in FY 2002 ranged from \$2,399 in the Lowndes County system (30.3% of all revenues) to \$119 in the Mountain Brook system (1.2% of all revenues). For 22 Alabama school systems, federal revenues provided 15% or more of total revenues in FY 2002, and for six systems the federal contribution was more than 20% of the total.

State Revenues – Public schools in all states are organized into a statewide system governed by state law and funded in part by state revenues. In FY 2001, states provided 50% of all public school revenues in the nation. In Alabama, state revenues are a much higher percentage of the total (58.5% in FY 2002) because of the low level of local tax support for education in many communities. Figure 4.3 below provides the component sources of state revenues in Alabama, the dollar amounts they raise, and the percent of revenue for each source. Nationally, the trend is toward a higher state contribution, in part because of the unpopularity of the property tax, which is the mainstay of local support for education, and in part because of equity considerations. Increasing the percentage of education funding from state sources reduces the impact that variations in local tax capacity have on the money available to school systems and tends to "level the playing field."

Source	Dollar Amount	Percentage Distribution
Income Tax	\$1,439,077,077.93	51%
Sales Tax	\$853,927,059.86	31%
Utility Tax	\$209,982,063.90	8%
Use Tax	\$117,589,955.78	4%
Other	\$170,785,411.97	6%
Total	\$2,791,361,569.44	100%4

State revenues are distributed to the various local school systems through formulas defined by state law. **There are two main types of school-aid formulas:**

³ Historical information from "Financial and Education Law Training Program, Study Guide." Alabama State Department of Education.

⁴ Numbers are rounded to equal 100%.

A Foundation Program – Most states have a funding formula built around a definition of the basic requirements for an adequate educational program. This "foundation" level is in effect the state's definition of adequacy. The foundation level can be defined in terms of money (dollars per student) or resources (teachers, textbooks, classroom space, operating costs, etc.). The local community is normally expected to contribute a certain amount toward reaching the foundation level, based on its financial capacity, and the state pays the remainder. For example, in Alabama every local school system is required to have the equivalent of ten mills of local property tax support for its schools, and the state provides the rest of the amount required by the foundation formula. Thus, the state provides more revenue for public schools in areas where local taxes raise few dollars than it does in wealthy communities. Having a foundation program does not necessarily mean that each school or school system receives the same level of funding, since some of the items in the funding formula may apply only to certain kinds of students or programs.

A Guaranteed Tax Base Program – A few states leave the definition of an adequate educational program to the local community. The state simply guarantees to give every community, wealthy or poor, the same financial capacity to afford the educational program it decides to have. In this type of formula, the state matches local tax effort but does not require any specific local contribution. For example, the state might guarantee that any community would receive the same amount of revenue per student per mill from a property tax levy. The state would provide the amount necessary to produce the targeted revenue per student per mill, over and above what the local tax actually raised. Under this type of formula, too, the state provides more revenue for public schools in impoverished areas than for those in wealthy communities.

Each type of formula has its advantage. The foundation program assures a minimal level of adequacy in all communities, while the guaranteed tax base program creates an incentive for communities to invest in their public schools. Several states combine these features, starting with a foundation program and adding a limited state matching program for local tax effort that is above the minimum effort required under the foundation formula.⁵

In addition to the distributional formulas just described, states also contribute special-purpose revenues to local public schools. These include funds for student transportation, for special assistance to disadvantaged or "at-risk" students, for capital requirements, and for other purposes.

Alabama Minimum Foundation Program – Alabama has used a Minimum Foundation Program since 1935 to guarantee that all local school systems have a minimum level of revenue. The Minimum Foundation Program requires a minimum local tax contribution equivalent to ten mills of district property tax, and this revenue is included along with state taxes in the financing of the program. This feature provides some equalization of revenues among local school systems, since each school system contributes part of the money necessary to cover the cost of a minimum level of educational services for its students, based on a measure of its ability to pay.⁶ For more information on Alabama's Foundation Program, see Appendix A to this chapter.

Proportion of State Funding Varies Per School System – Figure 4.6 on pages 12 and 13 shows that state revenues provided on average \$4,115 per student to Alabama's local school systems in FY 2002, which was 58.5% of their revenues. State revenue totals ranged from \$4,909 in the Coosa County system (71.1% of total revenues) to \$3,562 in the Homewood system (29.1% of total revenues). The state provided two-thirds or more of total revenues in 31 school systems. Because state revenues for the public schools are derived mainly from state income and sales taxes, they are sensitive to changes in economic activity. Cutbacks in appropriations from these state revenues, known as

 ⁵ Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, 2004.
 ⁶ Harvey, 2003.

"proration," have occurred regularly in Alabama history, and those school systems that are highly dependent on state revenues suffer the most from them.

To illustrate the important role Alabama's Minimum Foundation Program plays in ensuring systems receive nearly equal amounts of funding regardless of local wealth, Figure 4.2 on pages 5 and 6 details per pupil revenue generated from local, state, federal, and combined revenue sources

Local Revenues – Perhaps the most significant revenue for local school systems is their local tax support. The reason for this is that federal and state revenues for schools generally come with strings attached. Locally generated support contains the only general-purpose money available for community priorities, and without it there is little freedom to make choices. Figure 4.4 below provides detail regarding local revenue sources, the dollar amount raised by each source, and percent of revenue each source comprises.

:	Source	Dollar Amount	Percentage Distribution			
	Property Tax	\$ 596,065,628	40.65%			
	Non-Property Tax	\$ 327,777,792	22.35%			
	Tuition	\$ 4,276,875	0.29%			
	Transportation Fees	\$ 75,500	0.01%			
	Earnings on Investment	\$ 55,846,753	3.81%			
	Food Service	\$ 110,489,462	7.53%			
	Student Activities	\$ 134,551,659	9.18%			
	Textbooks	\$ 1,200,879	0.08%			
	Other Revenue	\$ 236,196,272	16.11%			
	Total Revenue	\$1,466,480,820	100.00%			

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), National Public Education Survey, 2000–2001.

Figure 4.6 on pages 12 and 13 breaks down the local support for each Alabama school system into its tax and fee components. The first four columns in the table show types of support that are often general-purpose in nature:

Property tax support – \$867 per student, 41% of all local revenues statewide.

- *Highest* The Mountain Brook city system received the highest amount from local property taxes (\$4,291 per student)
- *Lowest* The Wilcox county system received the least (\$108 per student).

> **Sales tax support** – \$491 per student, 23% of all local revenues statewide.

- *Highest* The Tuscaloosa city system received the highest amount from local sales taxes (\$2,180 per student)
- *Lowest* 13 school systems allocate no local sales tax revenue for education.
- Appropriations from cities and county governments to their local school systems – \$99 per student, 5% of all local revenues statewide.
 - *Highest* The Auburn city system received \$3,724 per student.
 - *Lowest* A number of local systems received no support of this type.
- Other general-purpose support \$114 per student, 5% of all local revenues statewide. This category includes various other taxes and related revenues.
 - *Highest* The Tuscaloosa city system received \$674 per student.

Together, these general-purpose sources comprise 73% of all local support statewide, but 18 systems receive over 80% of local support from general-purpose sources while 12 receive less than half of local support from general-purpose sources. The school systems with higher amounts of these general-purpose sources of local support are in the best position to manage their own affairs, and vice versa.

Figure 4.6 on pages xx shows that local revenues on average provided \$2,137 per student to Alabama's local school systems in FY 2002, which was 30.4% of their revenues. The amounts per student ranged from \$8,358 in the Homewood system to \$733 in the Perry County system — an incredible gap of almost 14 to 1.

Earmarked Local Revenue – The other two types of local support are often earmarked. Fee-related income includes investment earnings (often related to capital projects), lunchroom revenues, student activity fees, tuition, and school-level income from vending machines and other sources. The miscellaneous category includes asset sales and other one-time sources of income.

Variations in Local Revenue Amounts – There are two reasons why some of the school systems in Figure 4.6 (pages 12 and 13) receive significantly more local tax revenues than do others:

- Their community's tax base is larger, enabling them to generate more revenue from the same tax rate than other school systems.
- Their community's tax effort is larger, allowing them to generate more revenue because they levy a higher tax rate than other school systems.

Both of these are equity issues that require the attention of the legislature, which should consider them in designing a foundation program that provides an equitable balance between state and local support for school systems. If the foundation program allows wealthy communities to take advantage of their larger tax base and businesses are assessed at higher rates, receiving large amounts of state revenues even though they are making very little effort locally to support their schools, then the foundation program is discriminating against the poorer communities within the state. On the other hand, if the foundation program provides large amounts of state revenue to poorer communities without requiring them to make a reasonable tax effort, then the foundation program is discriminating against the well-to-do communities within the state.

Figure 4.5 on page 11 shows the local property tax rates that provide support for the 128 school systems in Alabama.⁷ The rates are denominated in mills (a mill is one-tenth of a percent; ten mills equals one percent). The rates range from 7 mills in a number of communities to 52.9 mills in Mountain Brook. About one-fourth of Mississippi's school systems had millage rates higher than Mountain Brook's. On the other hand, almost half of Alabama's school systems receive 12 mills or less of local property tax revenue, which is below the lowest millage rate in Mississippi.⁸

⁷ Since the creation of these charts and data sets, new school systems in Alabama have been created.

⁸ Jim Williams, Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, 2004.

Figure 4.5: School property Tax Rates in Mills, FY 2002-03

County School System	Property Tax Rate Total in Mills	City School System	Property Tax Rate Total in Mills
AUTAUGA COUNTY	7.0	ALBERTVILLE CITY	15.5
BALDWIN COUNTY	12.0	ALEXANDER CITY	15.0
BARBOUR COUNTY	70		70
BIBB COUNTY	70	ANNISTON CITY	19.8
	0.0		8.0
	9.0		0.0 9 E
	10.0	ATTALLA CITY	0.J
	12.0		5.0
	20.0		24.0
CHAMBERS COUNTY	10.7	BESSEMER CITY	23.3
CHEROKEE COUNTY	22.0	BIRMINGHAM CITY	30.8
CHILTON COUNTY	9.2	BREWTON CITY	12.0
CHOCTAW COUNTY	14.0	CULLMAN CITY	17.5
CLARKE COUNTY	15.5	DALEVILLE CITY	8.0
CLAY COUNTY	13.5	DECATUR CITY	22.0
CLEBURNE COUNTY	17.0	DEMOPOLIS CITY	18.0
COFFEE COUNTY	17.0	DOTHAN CITY	8.0
COLBERT COUNTY	12.0	ELBA CITY	16.0
CONECUH COUNTY	9.5	ENTERPRISE CITY	16.0
COOSA COUNTY	12.0	EUFAULA CITY	20.0
	70	FAIRFIELD CITY	34.1
	80		25.0
	70		20.0
	7.0		14.0
	9.0		22.U
	11.5		11.4
DEKALB COUNTY	14.5	GUNIERSVILLE CITY	17.0
ELMORE COUNTY	7.0	HALEYVILLE CITY	12.0
ESCAMBIA COUNTY	12.0	HARTSELLE CITY	17.1
ETOWAH COUNTY	15.0	HOMEWOOD CITY	37.5
FAYETTE COUNTY	7.0	HOOVER CITY	46.1
FRANKLIN COUNTY	10.0	HUNTSVILLE CITY	27.5
GENEVA COUNTY	11.4	JACKSONVILLE CITY	18.5
GREENE COUNTY	14.0	JASPER CITY	10.5
HALE COUNTY	7.0	LANETT CITY	10.7
HENRY COUNTY	12.0	LINDEN CITY	8.0
	80		270
	70		21.0
	20.1		24.7
	30.1		02.9 00.0
	7.U 10.0		20.0
	18.0		16.5
LAWRENCE COUNTY	9.0	OPELIKA CITY	24.0
LEE COUNTY	18.0	OPP CITY	12.0
LIMESTONE COUNTY	7.0	OXFORD CITY	18.5
LOWNDES COUNTY	7.0	OZARK CITY	23.0
MACON COUNTY	32.0	PELL CITY CITY	13.5
MADISON COUNTY	16.0	PHENIX CITY CITY	24.5
MARENGO COUNTY	8.0	PIEDMONT CITY	20.0
MARION COUNTY	7.0	ROANOKE CITY	12.0
MARSHALL COUNTY	17.5	RUSSELLVILLE CITY	17.8
MOBILE COUNTY	21.5	SCOTTSBORO CITY	14.5
MONBOE COUNTY	10.0	SELMA CITY	23.3
	80	SHEFEIFID CITV	10.0
	171		10.0
	17.1		10.0
	9.0		10.0
	11.2	IALLASSEE CITY	10.0
PIKE COUNTY	9.7	IARRANT CITY CITY	26.2
RANDOLPH COUNTY	12.0	THOMASVILLE CITY	15.5
RUSSELL COUNTY	17.5	TROY CITY	10.7
SAINT CLAIR COUNTY	13.5	TUSCALOOSA CITY	21.0
SHELBY COUNTY	30.0	TUSCUMBIA CITY	20.5
SUMTER COUNTY	13.8	VESTAVIA HILLS CITY	52.1
TALLADEGA COUNTY	13.0	WINFIELD CITY	17.0
TALLAPOOSA COUNTY	15.0		
	95		
	3.J Q ()		
	0.0		
	12.0		
	10.0		
WINSTON COUNTY	12.0		

Source: Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama and Irs W. Harvey

Figure 4.6: Lo	cal Scl	hool Re	evenu	es Pei	r Stude	ent, 20	002							
County School System	Students	Property Tax	Sales Tax	Appro- priation	Other Gen. Spt.	Fee- Related	Miscel- laneous	Total	Percent Property	Percent Sales	Percent Approp.	Percent Other Gen.	Percent Fee-Rel.	Percen Misc.
Statewide Total	730,170	\$867	\$491	\$99	\$114	\$506	\$60	\$2,137	41%	23%	5%	5%	24%	3%
AUTAUGA COUNTY	8,716	228	869	0	3	510	23	1,634	14%	53%	0%	0%	31%	1%
BALDWIN COUNTY	23,087	1,022	1,175	0	74	607	44	2,921	35%	40%	0%	3%	21%	1%
BARBOUR COUNTY	1,581	280	402	2	37	266	15	1,002	28%	40%	0%	4%	27%	1%
BIBB COUNTY	3,733	179	207	0	21	537	23	966	18%	21%	0%	2%	56%	2%
	7,369	266	419	0	7	574	19	1,284	21%	33%	0%	1%	45%	2%
	1,914	515	108	3	/	245	23	901	5/%	12%	0%	1%	27%	3%
	3,599	421	197	0	26	325	33	1,002	42%	20%	0%	3%	32%	3%
	9,570	691	U E01	0	52	552	43	1,343	51% 210/	0%	0%	4%	41%0	3%
	4,334	400	120	14	09 10	44 I 677	40	1,012	31%0 470%	33%U 90%	10%	4%	29%0 420%	3%0 10%
	6,860	2/13	130	0	10 Q	//02	1/0	1,021	4/%0 2/10/2	30%	0%	1%	42%0	100/
CHOCTAW COUNTY	2 198	1 046	303	2	63	484	44	1,410	54%	16%	0%	3%	25%	2%
CLARKE COUNTY	3,581	746	110	0	26	404	20	1,396	53%	8%	0%	2%	35%	10/1
CLAY COUNTY	2 329	390	217	0	1	648	17	1,000	31%	17%	0%	0%	51%	1%
CLEBURNE COUNTY	2,565	527	0	0	16	530	15	1.088	48%	0%	0%	1%	49%	1%
COFFEE COUNTY	1,993	576	369	36	13	514	9	1,517	38%	24%	2%	1%	34%	1%
COLBERT COUNTY	3.344	545	1.111	0	247	585	16	2.504	22%	44%	0%	10%	23%	1%
CONECUH COUNTY	2.051	426	270	0	106	316	33	1.152	37%	23%	0%	9%	27%	3%
COOSA COUNTY	1,713	530	0	4	39	441	15	1,029	52%	0%	0%	4%	43%	1%
COVINGTON COUNTY	3,169	323	510	9	7	579	37	1,464	22%	35%	1%	0%	40%	2%
CRENSHAW COUNTY	2,403	205	312	0	2	544	12	1,075	19%	29%	0%	0%	51%	1%
CULLMAN COUNTY	9,517	289	457	21	33	585	17	1,401	21%	33%	2%	2%	42%	1%
DALE COUNTY	2,670	374	623	12	7	509	0	1,526	25%	41%	1%	0%	33%	0%
DALLAS COUNTY	4,686	329	178	0	5	342	25	879	37%	20%	0%	1%	39%	3%
DEKALB COUNTY	7,921	356	248	0	100	686	100	1,491	24%	17%	0%	7%	46%	7%
ELMORE COUNTY	10,703	262	337	0	32	438	58	1,126	23%	30%	0%	3%	39%	5%
SCAMBIA COUNTY	4,719	276	371	69	227	466	35	1,444	19%	26%	5%	16%	32%	2%
TOWAH COUNTY	8,451	505	212	11	44	525	19	1,316	38%	16%	1%	3%	40%	1%
AYETTE COUNTY	2,778	225	607	4	2	541	23	1,403	16%	43%	0%	0%	39%	2%
RANKLIN COUNTY	3,072	293	272	0	112	734	210	1,620	18%	17%	0%	7%	45%	13%
GENEVA COUNTY	2,667	348	257	0	3	481	21	1,110	31%	23%	0%	0%	43%	2%
GREENE COUNTY	1,782	574	524	2	83	218	18	1,419	40%	37%	0%	6%	15%	1%
HALE COUNTY	3,303	173	335	0	21	398	106	1,034	17%	32%	0%	2%	38%	10%
HENRY COUNTY	2,719	420	307	3	10	437	49	1,224	34%	25%	0%	1%	36%	4%
HOUSTON COUNTY	6,243	509	539	16	5	522	11	1,602	32%	34%	1%	0%	33%	1%
JACKSON COUNTY	6,225	243	768	0	275	531	34	1,850	13%	41%	0%	15%	29%	2%
IEFFERSON COUNTY	40,457	1,535	0	6	64	577	96	2,277	67%	0%	0%	3%	25%	4%
AMAR COUNTY	2,666	242	391	17	38	648	33	1,368	18%	29%	1%	3%	47%	2%
AUDERDALE COUNTY	(8,777	595	681	0	114	645	12	2,047	29%	33%	0%	6%	32%	1%
AWRENCE COUNTY	6,088	238	617	0	83	522	75	1,536	15%	40%	0%	5%	34%	5%
LEE COUNTY	9,181	605	817	0	89	555	23	2,089	29%	39%	0%	4%	27%	1%
	7,953	301	993	0	153	623	26	2,097	14%	47%	0%	7%	30%	1%
LOWNDES COUNTY	2,646	1/3	235	0	50	240	216	914	19%	26%	0%	6%	26%	24%
	3,822	527	3	11	2/5	1/6	20	1,012	52%	0%	1%	27%	17%	2%
	10,149	001	699	1	211	534	15	2,124	28%	33%	0%	10%	25%	4%
	1,/21	349	300	0	17	400	15	1,234	28%	31%	0%	1%	38%0 E104	1%0
	3,03Z	220	300	32	30	00Z	34 72	1,200	260%	24%	Z%0 10∕a	3%0 50%	25%	3%0 40%
	0,92Z	002	302	12	95	041	/3	1,845	30%	20%	1%	0%0 010/2	35%0	4%
	64,714	0/1	100	19	3/0	5/5	23	1,012	40%0 2106	0%0 2106	1%0 20%	21%	Z1%0	190 506
	4,439 EV 22 274	3/0	203	200	2 65	205	03	1,231	31%0	Z1%0	2%0 160%	0%0	41%0	0%C
	7//6	1 169	1046	309	248	20J 571	55	2 0 8 8	23%0	40%0 240%	00%	3%0 80%	19%	2%0 20%
	2 2 2 2 0	2/0	1,044	3	52	256	1	3,000	240%	220%	0%0	70%	250%	2%0 00%
PICKENS COUNTY	2,200	243	50	0	160	200 542	і 4/i	1 025	27 0/	50%	0%0 00%	150%	50%	0%0 20%
	2 177	200	1 035	0	4	343	44	1,005	27% 220%	57%	0%	0%	190/	30/
	2 261	652	36	n	- 6	628	14	1,336	<u>49</u> %	30/	0%	0%	Δ 7 0/n	10/
	3 838	563	546	n	99	9 <u>7</u> 0	8	1 464	38%	370/	0%	7 %	170/n	190 10/a
AINT CLAIR COUNTV	7071	567	323	6	29	554	73	1,552	36%	210/n	0%	20/	36%	50/2
SHELBY COUNTY	20 955	2 028	351	4	50	948	94	3 474	58%	10%	0%	10/	27%	30/0
SUMTER COUNTY	2 7 1 2	383	482		216	154	24	1 259	30%	38%	0%	17%	12%	0-70 20/∩
	7745	644	402	0	52	355	2 4 Δ7	1,200	Δ10/n	30%	0%	30/	270 22%	2.70 30/2
	3 442	697	373	n	35	548	13	1,575	Δ20/n	220%	0%	20/n	330/	10/n
	/ 15718	445	1 068	22	33 88	638	126	2 37/	100%	2270 450/a	10%	270	27 0/	190 50/2
	8 105	210	1 0/2	0	1	536	17	1 907	160/	550%	n%	0%	27 %0 280/a	10%
	0,100 √ 3.6/i∩	1 068	1,040 N	0	۱ ۲۵	530	0	1,507	640%	00%	0%0	30%	320%	190
	, 3,040 2,600	1000	750	0	4/	227	9 20	1,002	100%	670%	0%0	10%	32-70 9104	190 20%
	2,409 2 RU2	100	/2U	0	35 0	229 765	20	1,114	70%0 2/10%	07 %U	0%0	190 20/2	∠1%0 /\//0//2	∠%0 20%
WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW	2,0UZ	41/	400	U	30	700	30	1,740	∠ 1 %0	20%0	0%0	∠%0	+4%0	∠%0

system statem	Students	Property Tax	Sales Tax	Appro- priation	Other Gen. Spt.	Fee- Related	Miscel- laneous	Total	Percent Property	Percent Sales	Percent Approp.	Percent Other Gen.	Percent Fee-Rel.	Perce Mis
LBERTVILLE CITY	3,518	555	418	. 0	77	469	270	1,789	31%	23%	0%	4%	26%	15
LEX. CITY	3,542	475	367	203	35	661	85	1,827	26%	20%	11%	2%	36%	5
NDALUSIA CITY	1,796	276	413	71	294	497	98	1,649	17%	25%	4%	18%	30%	6
NNISTON CITY	2,686	979	0	229	93	294	39	1,635	60%	0%	14%	6%	18%	2
	2,673	236	598	0	71	675	45	1,623	15%	37%	0%	4%	42%	3
ATTALLA CITY	2,808	3/5	1,8//	356	208	/11	61	3,588	10%	52%	10%	6% 1204	20%	2
	1,940	330 1 ///7	210 556	0 3 72/i	170	513	40 170	6 50/	23%0 220%	00%	0%0 570%	10%	42%0 80%	3
BESSEMER CITY	4 622	944	372	3,724 71	21	229	170	1 655	57%	22 %	40/n	1%	14%	1
BIRMINGHAM CITY	37,520	1,606	0	151	4	256	58	2,074	77%	0%	7%	0%	12%	3
REWTON CITY	1,341	420	392	1,721	202	628	41	3,405	12%	12%	51%	6%	18%	1
CULLMAN CITY	2,635	1,170	586	235	52	716	140	2,899	40%	20%	8%	2%	25%	Ę
DALEVILLE CITY	1,649	195	396	0	7	401	34	1,032	19%	38%	0%	1%	39%	3
DECATUR CITY	8,842	1,357	1,427	0	328	414	73	3,598	38%	40%	0%	9%	11%	2
DEMOPOLIS CITY	2,339	504	332	0	43	528	7	1,413	36%	23%	0%	3%	37%	(
	8,828	500	562	351	17	374	41	1,845	27%	30%	19%	1%	20%	2
	986	360	496	24	30	593	/2	1,5/5	23%	31%	2%	2%	38%	5
	2,119	430	826 205	0 225	122	4/5	2/	1,764	24%	47% 20%	0%0 120%	0%0 70%	27%0 220%	4
	2,990	1 1 1 5	395	230	21	404	54 50	1,901	70%	20%0	00/	7%0 10/2	25%	2 5
	4,308	1,113	1 400	22	459	403	46	3 743	36%	37%	10/0	12%	120%	1
ORT PAYNE CITY	2.681	521	251	24	119	633	68	1.616	32%	16%	1%	7%	39%	
ADSDEN CITY	5,481	917	215	162	25	453	43	1,813	51%	12%	9%	1%	25%	2
GENEVA CITY	1,365	307	594	87	0	446	29	1,463	21%	41%	6%	0%	30%	2
JUNTERSVILLE CITY	1,838	648	1,132	0	188	483	70	2,521	26%	45%	0%	7%	19%	3
ALEYVILLE CITY	1,680	320	333	89	243	688	8	1,681	19%	20%	5%	14%	41%	(
ARTSELLE CITY	3,067	763	613	347	88	457	43	2,312	33%	27%	15%	4%	20%	2
IOMEWOOD CITY	3,217	3,821	2,157	1,301	4	868	205	8,358	46%	26%	16%	0%	10%	2
IOOVER CITY	10,265	3,815	80	682	20	1,139	126	5,862	65%	1%	12%	0%	19%	
IUNTSVILLE CITY	22,591	1,377	936	119	231	422	114	3,199	43%	29%	4%	7%	13%	1
ACKSUNVILLE CITY	1,680	663	0	100	51	488	23	1,325	50%	0%	8%	4%	37%	2
ASPER CITY	2,596	357	1,6/6	0	6U 60	495	3/	2,625	14%	64% 29%	0%	2%	19%	1
	622	261	622	20	23	780	10	1,431	29%0 170%	28%	∠%0 10/a	20%	24%0 520%	1
	6 348	1 157	724	12	204	637	10	2 843	410/n	20%0 250/0	1%0 00/a	2%0 70/a	22%0	1
AIDFIFI D CITY	1 160	887	0	0	4	356	79	1 326	67%	0%	0%	0%	22 /0 27%	F
AT. BROOK CITY	3,996	4,231	0	0	4	1,027	491	5,753	74%	0%	0%	0%	18%	ę
JUSCLE SHOALS CITY	2,444	794	439	516	281	786	173	2,989	27%	15%	17%	9%	26%	6
NEONTA CITY	1,286	541	329	0	8	658	85	1,621	33%	20%	0%	1%	41%	5
PELIKA CITY	4,495	573	567	378	94	454	79	2,146	27%	26%	18%	4%	21%	4
OPP CITY	1,400	361	405	0	38	454	57	1,314	27%	31%	0%	3%	35%	4
DXFORD CITY	3,194	722	0	389	48	557	8	1,725	42%	0%	23%	3%	32%	(
ZARK CITY	2,852	631	347	49	4	360	33	1,423	44%	24%	3%	0%	25%	2
	3,936	524	380	0	13	438	21	1,376	38%	28%	0%	1%	32%	2
	5,021	911	515	0	6 40	432	181	2,046	45%	25%	0%	0%	21%	5
	1,013	090 356	24	100	40 9	552	70 12	1,302	44%0 220%	20%	0%	4%0 10%	41%0 52%	
	1,495	330 455	275	100	0 419	686	12	1,004	25%	3%0 150/a	9%0 0%	230/	3Z%0	
COTTSBORO CITY	2,324	544	1 0 9 4	0	291	604	82	2 615	20%	42%	0%	11%	23%	2
ELMA CITY	4.084	617	56	0	78	369	36	1.156	53%	5%	0%	7%	32%	3
HEFFIELD CITY	1,381	622	1,100	69	283	751	46	2,870	22%	38%	2%	10%	26%	2
SYLACAUGA CITY	2,234	372	483	411	69	664	143	2,143	17%	23%	19%	3%	31%	7
ALLADEGA CITY	3,034	347	490	104	62	407	46	1,456	24%	34%	7%	4%	28%	;
ALLASSEE CITY	1,872	212	340	8	28	472	130	1,191	18%	29%	1%	2%	40%	1
ARRANT CITY CITY	1,377	1,152	431	0	46	615	120	2,364	49%	18%	0%	2%	26%	į
HOMASVILLE CITY	1,664	636	96	99	2	488	36	1,357	47%	7%	7%	0%	36%	;
ROY CITY	2,300	452	1,025	0	3	428	40	1,948	23%	53%	0%	0%	22%	
USCALOOSA CITY	9,695	1,368	2,180	303	674	380	56	4,960	28%	44%	6%	14%	8%	
	1,381	568	644	199	259	742	119	2,531	22%	25%	8%	10%	29%	
ESTAVIA HILLS CITY	4,549	3,270	116	163	1	847	27	4,423	/4%	3%	4%	0%	19%	
	1,271	300	012	U	I	940	90	1,970	19%	31%0	0%0	0%0	40%0	
VINFIELD CITY			1 - 1	algulation	es leased as	a celegal car	ctam finan	rial rotan	rte filad wit	h tha State	a Data autor	and of Eday	ation	

Revenue Comparisons: United States, the South⁹, and Alabama

The proportion of Alabama public school revenues from federal, state and local sources is not the same as in most other states. As indicated in Figure 4.7 below, Alabama's reliance on state revenue is over 20% greater than the United States average (60% of total revenues vs. 50%) and 12.5% greater than the Southern average, while Alabama's reliance on local revenue sources is 40% lower than the United States average and 13% lower than the Southern average. In fact, only five Southern states, and 11 states overall, rely as much or more on state sources for public school revenue than Alabama.

Figure 4.7: Public School Revenue Comparisons of U.S., Southern, and Alabama Averages

	Local	State	Federal
Alabama	31%	60%	9%
Southern States	38%	53%	9%
United States	43%	50%	7%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), National Public Education Survey, 2000–2001.

Why does Alabama depend so much on state revenue sources? – Heavy dependence on state revenue is largely a result of Alabama's property tax structure.¹⁰ Figure 4.8 outlines the constitutional requirements for assessment of property taxes in Alabama.

Class	Description of Property	Assessment Ratio	Lid as a Percent ¹¹
1	Utility property	30 percent of market value	2.0 percent
//	Commercial or business properties	20 percent of market value	1.5 percent
///	Agricultural, forestry, and single-family residential property	10 percent of market value, except that the owner may elect to have the property taxed on the basis of current use ¹² rather than market value	1.0 percent
IV	Private passenger automobiles and pick-up trucks	15 percent of market value	1.25 percent

Source: Figures adapted from Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (2001) and Harvey (2003).

In addition to the assessment requirements shown in Figure 4.8, the Alabama Constitution creates a three step process for adopting property taxes that requires approval of the local legislative body, the state legislature, and the voters.

⁹ The "South" is defined as the 15 states served by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

¹⁰ As defined under Section 217 of Article XI of the Alabama Constitution of 1901, as amended by Amendments 325 and 373, often referred to as the "Lid Bill."

¹¹ "Lid as a percent" means that the total property tax may not exceed the percent of market value shown (Harvey, 2003). For example, the owner of a class III property will never pay more than one percent of the market value of the property in taxes. That is, a parcel of class III property assessed at \$100,000 of market value could never pay more than \$1,000 in property taxes annually.

¹² The current use provision allows the setting of values for agricultural and forestry properties on the basis of their productivity in the current use. Alabama's current use provision, however, is very different from similar provisions in other states. As described by Harvey (2003), "Rather than protecting suburban area farm land from tax values that might apply to developing land, current use in Alabama is applied statewide and becomes a special tax exemption benefiting the special interest groups which wrote and sought passage of the legislation in 1982."

The Lid Bill was designed to place a higher tax burden on business property. As indicated in column three of Figure 4.8, it did this for only certain kinds of business enterprises. That is, the highest tax burdens are placed on utility and commercial properties, but not agricultural and forestry properties, since they are imbedded within the same classification as single-family residential property.

Classification schemes such as Alabama's not only favor certain kinds of taxpayers over others, they also create inequities in the capability of local school systems to provide funds for the education of their students. The reason for this is that the different classes of property are not evenly spread among the 128 local school systems. A school system that has high-value commercial property, such as the Homewood city school system, becomes "wealthy" by definition — but at the same time its taxpayers are expected to pay a higher burden in terms of the market value of their property. On the other hand, a rural county school system lacks tax wealth because its property is valued at a lower percentage of its true worth.

Alabama Tax Capacity - Alabama's tax capacity¹⁴ is underutilized, largely a result of the above mentioned tax complexities. In October of 2001, the State Board of Education completed an appraisal of how much additional money would be needed to provide an adequate education for every child. The report's acronym — REACH — stands for Realizing Every Alabama Child's Hopes. Though the details of this study will be discussed later in this chapter, a subsection of the study explored Alabama's tax capacity and tax effort¹⁵ in comparison to other states in the southeast region.¹⁶ The four major findings from the State Board of Education report are detailed below.

- Though Alabama's capacity to generate tax revenue ranks 8th out of 12 southern states, our tax effort ranks 12th. Nationally, Alabama's tax effort ranks 50th. Neither our income per capita nor our tax capacity ranks last among all states.
- > When compared to a subsection of Southern states that most resemble its economic profile, Alabama's tax capacity ranks 3rd out of 7. Yet, Alabama's tax effort is once again last.
- > If Alabama's tax effort matched the 7 southern states that most resemble its economic composition, Alabama would generate an additional \$1.6 billion.

Alabama's reliance on state revenue sources is not a new trend. As indicated in Figure 4.9 below, Alabama has relied consistently and heavily on state sources for revenue. For example, between 1990 and 2000 revenue generated from state sources has accounted for at a minimum 58% of all education revenue.

¹³ Harvey, 2003

 ¹⁴ The REACH report defined tax capacity as the ratio between per capita personal income and taxes per capita.
 ¹⁵ The REACH report defined tax efforts as, "the extent to which a state utilizes its tax base for social services such as highways, law enforcement, health care, education, etc."

¹⁶ In this context, the Southern Region is the twelve southern states defined by the United States Census Bureau. It is not the SREB member states.



Figure 4.9: Revenue for Public Education in Alabama by Source Over Time

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), Common Core of Data: America's Public Schools, 2004.

Revenue Per Student – Many policymakers look to expenditures per student as an indicator of education funding levels. While per-pupil expenditure levels are a helpful statistic, a more accurate way of measuring education funding levels is revenue per pupil.

	Reve	90/10	Number of		
	10th Percentile	Median	90th Percentile	Ratio	Students
United States	\$5,940	\$7,693	\$11,952	2	46,248,784
South	6,163	6,915	8,449	1.4	16,680,052
Alabama	5,857	6,442	7,774	1.3	730,184
Arkansas	5,552	5,943	7,243	1.3	450,751
Delaware	8,007	9,413	1 <i>2</i> ,433	1.6	107,048
Florida	6,365	7,051	8,641	1.4	2,377,271
Georgia	6,297	7,100	8,487	1.3	1,419,497
Kentucky	5,944	6,582	7,473	1.3	646,467
Louisiana	5,603	6,274	7,209	1.3	750,755
Maryland	7,366	8,226	9,064	1.2	846,582
Mississippi	4,850	5,354	6,563	1.4	499,362
North Carolina	6,534	7,311	8,714	1.3	1,261,586
Oklahoma	5,091	5,944	7,949	1.6	627,032
South Carolina	6,045	6,818	8,262	1.4	666,780
Tennessee	5,035	5,512	6,494	1.3	907,222
Texas	6,509	7,589	10,822	1.7	3,965,860
Virginia	6,586	7,387	9,597	1.5	1,132,673
West Virginia	6,961	7,696	8,454	1.2	290,982

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Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), National Public Education Survey, 2000–2001.

¹⁷ F. Johnson, Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 1999-2000. U.S. Department of Education (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Figure 4.10 illustrates revenues per student for the U.S., Southern states, and Alabama. The "90/10 ratio" shown in the table represents the size of the gap in funding between a school system at the top (the 90th percentile in a ranking of systems from high to low) and at the bottom (the 10th percentile in such a ranking); in Alabama the 90th-percentile system has 1.3 times the revenue per student of the 10th percentile system.

Alabama ranks 11th out of 16 Southern states in revenue generated per student. Alabama is also well below the national and Southern median level of revenue generated per student.

Planning and Budgeting

Planning is a management function that should occur at all levels within an educational system. State officials should be concerned with matters such as enrollment projections, teacher supply and demand, and capital needs. Planning is important to help reduce uncertainty and focus organizational activities so as to utilize resources more efficiently.¹⁸

It is through budgeting that an organization aligns its resources with its purposes. Also, the budget process is the link between planning, the forward-looking portion of an organization's management activities, and evaluation, which focuses systematically on past performance.¹⁹ Just as students are held accountable for their academic performance, Alabama's accountability system seeks to hold school systems financially accountable by requiring a funding and expenditure report annually. *For more information on Alabama's accountability system, see Chapter 1 on "Standards, Accountability, and Assessments."*

Two planning and budgeting practices with important implications for the budget in Alabama — proration and earmarking — are described below.

Proration — "Proration" is the term used to describe a mid-year budget reduction to prevent deficit spending. Because the Alabama Constitution requires the state to balance its budget on a continuing basis, the state must have revenue on hand to cover each expenditure. Proration can occur when revenue falls below estimates or when expenditures exceed estimates. In Alabama, proration has occurred, on average, once every four years during the last half-century.

Earmarking – "Earmarking" is the term used to describe a legal reservation of funds for a particular purpose. The Alabama constitution and statutes call for extensive earmarking of state revenues. In fact, 87 percent of state tax dollars are earmarked for specific purposes in Alabama.²⁰ No other state in the United States earmarks more than 65 percent of its tax revenues; the average state earmarks only 24 percent.

Key Issues – Detailed on page 18 are three public education system issues that have become increasingly important to the planning and budgeting process in Alabama. Each of these issues is also tied to Alabama's frequent use of proration and heavy reliance on earmarking, which hinder an efficient education planning and budgeting process.

¹⁸ J. W. Guthrie, W. I. Garms, & L. C. Pierce, "School Finance and Education Policy: Enhancing Educational Efficiency, Equality, and Choice" (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1986).

¹⁹ Guthrie, et al., 1986.

²⁰ Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, "How Alabama's Taxes Compare" The PARCA Report, Number 42

⁽Birmingham, AL: Spring 2001).

> Alabama's Teacher Salary Matrix - During the early 1990s, the Alabama State Department of Education investigated teacher pay practices and found significant variation among school systems. As a result, the state developed a teacher salary matrix to set a floor under teacher compensation in all school systems. The state salary matrix, published each year in the education appropriation act, contains the minimum salary that can be paid a teacher at various levels of educational attainment and years of teaching experience.

	Type of Certification								
	Non Degree ²¹	Bachelors	Masters	6 Year	Doctoral				
Salary as % of BS degree	100%	100%	115%	124%	133%				
Years of Experience									
0 to < 3	\$29,538	\$ <i>29,538</i>	\$3 <i>3,968</i>	\$36,627	\$3 <i>9,286</i>				
3 to < 6	32,491	32,491	37,364	40,288	43,213				
6 to < 9	33,913	33,913	39,000	42,063	45,104				
9 to < 12	34,368	34,368	39,524	42,617	45,710				
12 to < 15	34,992	34,992	40,240	43,391	46,541				
15 to < 18	35,791	35,791	41,129	44,380	47,600				
18 to < 21	36,253	36,253	41,690	44,953	48,216				
21 to < 24	36,715	36,715	42,224	45,527	48,832				

> National Average Teacher Pay Raise Bill (NATPR) – In 2000, the Alabama legislature approved and the Governor signed National Average Teacher Pay Raise Bill (NATPR). NATPR calls for a gradual increase in teacher salaries to the national average and automatically earmarks 62% of Education Trust Fund²² (ETF) revenue growth for teacher compensation when annual revenue growth in the Education Trust Fund exceeds an annual 3.5%. When NATPR was enacted, Alabama teachers were paid an average of \$35,820, whereas the national average was \$40,462.²³

Rising Costs of Employee Health Care and Benefits – The escalating costs of fringe benefits for state employees have been of particular concern since the 1990s. According to the Alabama Education Spending Commission's initial report submitted to Governor Bob Riley on July 14, 2003, the fastest growing component of the education budget is comprised of teacher and employee benefits. It is estimated that fringe benefits for teachers, support personnel, and transportation staff will increase by \$113.8 million in FY 2005.

Why do the teacher salary matrix, pay raise bill, and rising employee health care and benefits pose challenges for Alabama's planning and budgeting process? — As previously mentioned, 87 percent of Alabama's tax dollars are earmarked for specific purposes and proration has occurred once every four years during the last half-century. Alabama law does not permit public school employee salaries and benefits to be reduced in the proration process. Since salaries and benefits amount to 85 percent of public school expenditures, the remaining 15 percent of school operating costs must absorb the effect of proration.²⁴ The combination of these structural features of Alabama's budget system, the

²¹ The "non degree" classification refers to teachers who have alternative teacher certifications or alternative degrees.

²² ETF budget is the source of funding for both elementary, secondary, and post-secondary public education, plus a number

of other education-related activities in Alabama.

²³ National Center for Education Statistics. Common Core of Data, 2003.

rising cost of fringe benefits, and the salary policies created by the state salary matrix and the NATPR law, may well damage the prospects for starting and continuing new programs such as the Alabama Reading Initiative, which are focused on improved student achievement. Any such initiative, other than one focused on increasing compensation, would be subject to proration, and would be squeezed by the predetermined priorities now locked into law. The extreme predetermination of the uses of education dollars hinders any effective planning and budgeting process.

How School Systems Spend Their Revenues

School systems spend most of their revenues on four types of academic operations, as shown in Figure 4.11. These expenditures include:²⁵

Instruction – This includes teacher compensation, school supplies, and other outlays directly related to the instruction of students. Alabama school systems spent \$3,693 per student on instructional activities in FY 2002, which was 69% of all academic operating expenditures. The Blount County system spent the least on instruction, at \$3,180 per student; the Homewood system spent the most, at \$5,215 per student.

Instructional Support – This includes libraries, counseling, curriculum support, the principal's office, and other activities that directly support the instruction of students. Alabama school systems spent \$893 per student on instructional support activities in FY 2002, or 17% of all academic operating expenditures.

Plant Operation — This includes maintenance of buildings and grounds, repairs, utility expenses, and other outlays associated with operating and maintaining school facilities. Alabama school systems spent \$539 per student on plant operation in FY 2002, which represented 10% of academic outlays.

Central Administration – The top management and administrative staff support for school systems are included in this expenditure category. Alabama school systems spent \$243 per student, or less than 5% of total academic operating expenditures in FY 2002, on central administration.

In addition to the academic expenditures, Alabama school systems operate lunchrooms to feed and bus fleets to transport students. These are termed "auxiliary" expenditures because they do not relate directly to the classroom. For Alabama school systems, auxiliary expenditures amounted to \$725 per student in FY 2002. Auxiliary expenditures should be considered separately from academic operating expenditures because they do not provide academic resources; mixing them with the academic expenditures hides important information about the resources available for classroom learning.

Figure 4.12: Operating Expenditures Per Student in Alabama School Systems, FY 2002												
County School System	Students	Instruction	Instructional Support	Plant Operation	Central Administration	Academic Subtotal	Academic % of Total	Rank	Transportation & Food Service	Operating Total	Rank	
Statewide Total	730,170	\$3,693	\$893	\$539	\$243	\$5,367	88.1%	_	\$725	\$6,093	_	
AUTAUGA COUNTY	8,716	3,316	665	349	119	4,449	86.2%	126	711	5,161	126	
BALDWIN COUNTY	23,087	3,789	1,006	569	149	5,512	89.6%	43	638	6,150	50	
BARBOUR COUNTY	1,581	3,634	875	406	268	5,183	82.7%	69	1,082	6,265	43	
BIBB COUNTY	3,733	3,428	783	332	258	4,802	85.5%	118	817	5,619	114	
BLOUNT COUNTY	7,369	3,180	666	376	188	4,411	86.1%	128	715	5,126	127	
BULLOCK COUNTY	1,914	3,657	943	377	346	5,323	82.8%	58	1,109	6,432	34	
BUTLER COUNTY	3,599	3,674	899	448	262	5,283	86.6%	61	815	6,097	55	
CALHOUN COUNTY	9,570	3,257	973	458	201	4,888	85.7%	109	815	5,703	103	
CHAMBERS COUNTY	4,334	3,360	755	491	236	4,842	84.4%	116	894	5,736	97	
	3,988	3,709	/30	398	2/4	5,111	85.1%	82	893	6,004	6/	
	0,000	3,402	000	000	210	4,010	00.3%	26	1 0 2 9	5,569	11/	
	2,190	3,504	983	433	330	5 270	84.3%	62	985	6.26/	22 ///	
CLAV COUNTY	2 329	3,550	665	346	238	4 906	85.7%	108	820	5 726	98	
CLEBURNE COUNTY	2,525	3 523	713	352	281	4 868	85.7%	112	814	5 682	106	
COFFFF COUNTY	1 993	3 588	814	395	235	5 032	870%	98	749	5 781	90	
COLBERT COUNTY	3.344	3.834	734	580	340	5.488	84.6%	45	1.002	6.489	30	
CONECUH COUNTY	2,051	3,553	780	420	363	5,116	83.8%	79	989	6,105	54	
COOSA COUNTY	1,713	3,327	835	346	339	4,847	83.8%	115	935	5,782	89	
COVINGTON COUNTY	3,169	3,586	775	586	260	5,206	86.0%	65	847	6,053	60	
CRENSHAW COUNTY	2,403	3,614	684	346	294	4,938	84.9%	106	876	5,814	86	
CULLMAN COUNTY	9,517	3,465	826	578	163	5,033	86.6%	97	780	5,813	87	
DALE COUNTY	2,670	3,628	589	519	353	5,088	86.2%	86	816	5,904	80	
DALLAS COUNTY	4,686	3,556	863	438	276	5,133	85.5%	77	867	6,000	70	
DEKALB COUNTY	7,921	3,776	912	466	219	5,372	86.4%	53	845	6,217	48	
ELMORE COUNTY	10,703	3,205	695	378	145	4,423	87.8%	127	615	5,038	128	
ESCAMBIA COUNTY	4,719	3,865	979	626	302	5,772	86.1%	25	931	6,703	17	
ETOWAH COUNTY	8,451	3,545	792	355	179	4,871	87.5%	111	696	5,567	118	
FAYELLE COUNTY	2,778	3,554	709	576	274	5,114	85.9%	81	837	5,951	75	
FRANKLIN COUNTY	3,072	3,714	721	520	349	5,304	83.8%	60	1,024	6,328	38	
GENEVA COUNTY	2,667	3,448	/85	384	334	4,951	86.6%	105	/63	5,713	100	
	1,782	3,810	1,044	506	379	5,745	81.2% 96.1%	30	1,332	7,077	/ 70	
HENRY COUNTY	2 710	3,722	745	404	275	5 120	86.0%	74	836	5,905	72	
HOUSTON COUNTY	6 243	3,000	679	336	186	4 554	85.4%	125	777	5 331	123	
JACKSON COUNTY	6 2 2 5	3 534	738	622	200	5 0 9 4	84.6%	84	926	6 020	64	
JEFFERSON COUNTY	40.457	3,578	822	439	184	5.023	88.0%	100	688	5.711	101	
LAMAR COUNTY	2,666	3,403	1,084	379	227	5,093	84.8%	85	909	6,002	69	
LAUDERDALE COUNTY	8,777	3,648	732	503	195	5,077	87.1%	89	752	5,830	85	
LAWRENCE COUNTY	6,088	3,700	839	474	261	5,274	86.9%	63	797	6,070	58	
LEE COUNTY	9,181	3,665	740	501	146	5,051	86.4%	94	793	5,844	83	
LIMESTONE COUNTY	7,953	3,883	689	467	138	5,178	86.3%	70	821	5,999	71	
LOWNDES COUNTY	2,646	3,453	1,222	461	450	5,586	81.8%	37	1,240	6,826	14	
MACON COUNTY	3,822	3,595	658	509	219	4,981	83.8%	102	966	5,948	77	
MADISON COUNTY	16,149	3,446	876	519	157	4,997	88.1%	101	675	5,672	108	
MARENGO COUNTY	1,721	3,780	782	504	277	5,342	82.2%	56	1,153	6,495	28	
MARIUN CUUNIY	3,832	3,603	/34	366	217	4,919	87.1%	107	/2/	5,647	111	
	6,922	3,520	906	528	208	5,163	85.0%	/2	914	6,077	5/	
	64,714	3,494	801	499	197	5,041	88.5%	96	700	5,699	104	
	4,433	3,004	90/	612	180	5,000	80.1%	5/	653	6,010	65	
MORGAN COUNTY	7446	3 857	1 171	601	224	5,853	85.8%	19	970	6,823	15	
PERRY COLINTY	2 2 3 9	3 698	649	365	446	5 158	83.0%	73	1 059	6,020	47	
PICKENS COUNTY	3.685	3.607	832	764	293	5.495	86.9%	44	826	6.322	39	
PIKE COUNTY	2.177	3.691	1.038	663	450	5.843	84.5%	21	1.075	6.918	11	
RANDOLPH COUNTY	2,261	3,361	781	379	258	4,779	85.4%	119	820	5,598	115	
RUSSELL COUNTY	3,838	3,365	676	475	259	4,775	83.7%	121	933	5,708	102	
SAINT CLAIR COUNTY	7,071	3,400	667	385	152	4,604	87.3%	124	671	5,275	124	
SHELBY COUNTY	20,955	3,829	1,120	585	123	5,657	86.6%	33	875	6,532	27	
SUMTER COUNTY	2,712	3,954	842	503	490	5,789	86.4%	24	913	6,702	18	
TALLADEGA COUNTY	7,745	3,246	1,098	475	227	5,046	85.5%	95	859	5,904	79	
TALLAPOOSA COUNTY	3,442	3,729	617	464	300	5,111	85.8%	83	843	5,954	74	
TUSCALOOSA COUNTY	15,718	3,651	712	416	186	4,965	86.2%	103	794	5,759	94	
WALKER COUNTY	8,105	3,749	827	707	276	5,559	87.0%	39	829	6,388	37	
WASHINGTON COUNTY	3,640	3,607	599	411	242	4,859	85.8%	113	805	5,664	11	
	2,489	3,953	1,030	4//	309	5,769	03.0%	26	1,134	0,903	13	
	2,802	3,/41	848	522	311	5,422	83.8%	48	1,048	0,47 I	31	
Source: Public Affairs R	esearch Co	nuncil of Alaba	ıma, 2004									

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System	Students	Instruction	Instructional Support	Plant Operation	Central Administration	Academic Subtotal	Academic % of Total	Rank	Transportation & Food Service	Operating Total	F
Statewide Total	730,170	\$3,693	\$893	\$539	\$243	\$5,367	_	\$725	\$6,093	_	
ALBERTVILLE CITY	3,518	3,750	770	480	220	5,220	89.3%	64	625	5,845	
ALEX. CITY	3,542	3,891	925	546	185	5,547	90.7%	40	567	6,114	
ANDALUSIA CITY	1,796	3,828	757	538	283	5,406	90.9%	52	544	5,950	
ANNISTON CITY	2,686	3,708	1,081	709	252	5,750	85.8%	27	950	6,700	
ARAB CITY	2,673	3,538	957	356	264	5,116	89.9%	80	575	5,691	
THENS CITY	2,808	4,646	832	749	392	6,619	93.6%	7	456	7,075	
ATTALLA CITY	1,946	3,632	721	328	404	5,085	88.2%	88	681	5,766	
UBURN CITY	4,442	4,128	1,293	534	290	6,245	90.4%	11	666	6,911	
ESSEMER CITY	4,622	3,445	861	483	351	5,140	88.7%	76	653	5,793	
IRMINGHAM CITY	37,520	3,695	1,189	743	460	6,088	91.6%	12	556	6,644	
REWTON CITY	1,341	4,154	856	578	313	5,900	94.1%	17	368	6,269	
ULLMAN CITY	2,635	3,513	704	429	307	4,954	90.1%	104	545	5,500	
ALEVILLE CITY	1,649	3,518	915	373	380	5,186	90.2%	68	562	5,748	
ECATUR CITY	8,842	4,224	1,145	813	174	6,356	91.3%	10	604	6,960	
EMOPOLIS CITY	2,339	3,586	832	379	260	5,057	91.4%	93	477	5,534	
OTHAN CITY	8,828	3,576	1,103	487	246	5,413	88.3%	51	718	6,131	
BA CITY	986	3,854	886	550	349	5,639	86.9%	34	851	6,491	
NTERPRISE CITY	5,119	3,631	1,063	447	272	5,413	89.0%	50	668	6,081	
JFAULA CITY	2,996	3,669	852	511	307	5,339	88.8%	57	672	6,010	
IRFIELD CITY	2,319	3,666	943	706	408	5,722	90.7%	31	587	6,309	
ORENCE CITY	4,308	4,653	1,129	798	294	6,874	91.6%	3	632	7,507	
ORT PAYNE CITY	2,681	3,688	681	377	286	5,032	87.5%	99	722	5,753	
ADSDEN CITY	5.481	3.707	1.032	578	319	5.635	91.3%	35	534	6.169	
ENEVA CITY	1.365	3.831	637	384	211	5.063	88.6%	92	651	5.714	
UNTERSVILLE CITY	1 838	3 877	970	559	343	5 749	88.9%	29	717	6 4 6 6	
AL FYVILLE CITY	1,680	3 865	687	415	222	5 189	91.6%	67	476	5 665	
ARTSELLE CITY	3 067	3 879	827	526	297	5 529	90.0%	41	616	6 145	
	3 217	5 215	1 262	940	329	7746	93.6%	1	528	8 274	
	10 265	5,215 4 482	1,202	032	215	6 7 2 6	8790%	5	930	7656	
	22 501	4,402	060	902 800	213	6,720	01.9%	2 Q	550	7,030	
	1 6 9 0	4,342	303	200	200	5,405	91.9%	0	503	5,032	
	1,000	3,039	702	390	327	5,060	09.0%	0/	593	5,679	
	2,090	3,000	1,145	202	224	5,602	90.6%	23	590	0,391	
	1,132	4,007	043	411	420	0,001	90.6%	32	376	0,209	
	622	4,270	1,225	626	607	6,728	89.0%	4	834	7,562	
	6,348	3,539	885	494	159	5,077	87.9%	90	698	5,775	
	1,160	3,783	848	643	5//	5,850	91.1%	20	571	6,420	
II. BROOK CITY	3,996	5,081	1,486	822	335	7,724	95.7%	2	344	8,068	
USCLE SHOALS CITY	2,444	3,947	850	853	416	6,066	91.6%	13	554	6,620	
NEONIA CITY	1,286	3,483	647	366	282	4,777	89.6%	120	556	5,333	
PELIKA CITY	4,495	4,159	938	598	259	5,954	89.8%	15	677	6,632	
PP CITY	1,400	3,805	809	628	279	5,522	93.1%	42	408	5,930	
XFORD CITY	3,194	3,518	688	384	267	4,858	86.9%	114	733	5,591	
ZARK CITY	2,852	3,555	1,027	468	298	5,348	88.5%	55	693	6,041	
ELL CITY CITY	3,936	3,328	701	444	211	4,684	86.2%	123	752	5,435	
HENIX CITY CITY	5,021	3,441	854	596	284	5,176	86.2%	71	828	6,003	
EDMONT CITY	1,013	4,179	904	368	298	5,750	92.3%	28	480	6,230	
DANOKE CITY	1,493	3,522	815	434	372	5,142	91.3%	75	493	5,634	
USSELLVILLE CITY	2,324	3,788	761	456	409	5,414	89.7%	49	625	6,039	
COTTSBORO CITY	2,724	3,959	923	693	240	5,815	86.9%	22	875	6,690	
ELMA CITY	4,084	3,674	1,038	505	206	5,424	89.5%	47	636	6,060	
HEFFIELD CITY	1,381	4,430	984	796	458	6,668	92.5%	6	539	7,207	
LACAUGA CITY	2.234	4.076	993	467	382	5.917	89.4%	16	702	6.619	
LLADEGA CITY	3.034	3.806	939	584	240	5,569	88.4%	38	728	6.297	
LLASSEE CITY	1.872	3,441	709	359	224	4,733	90.4%	122	505	5.238	
RRANT CITY CITY	1 377	3 663	824	575	423	5 485	91 10/	46	538	6 023	
IOMASVILLE CITV	1,66/	3 710	788	372	318	5 107	90.0%	0 - 66	580	5 776	
ROY CITY	2 300	3,713	201	672 1/78	261	5 21/	91 10/s	50	517	5 832	
	2,000 0 605	6,000	1 026	500	2/7	6 00C	80 20%	1/	670	6 6 9 5	
	9,090 1 201	4,043	1,020	590	347 760	0,000 5 Q07	03.0%	14	0/9	0,000 6 //25	
	1,301	3,/10 4 500	1,124	0/9	400	0,00/	91.0% 0/ 704	10	040	0,430	
	4,549	4,522	88/	011	338	0,358	94.7%	9	308	0,710	
INFIELD CITY	1,271	3,500	748	362	200	4,876	86.7%	110	746	5,622	
MINHELD CHY Source: Public Affairs Re	1,271 esearch Coi	3,500 uncil of Alaba	748 ma calculatio	362 ns based on	266 school system fir	4,876 aancial repor	86.7% ts filed with	110 the State	746 Department of E	5,622 Education	

Expenditure Comparisons: United States, the South, and Alabama

Figure 4.13 below provides a snapshot of instructional expenditure allocations for the United States, the South and Alabama. Alabama average funding allocations are very similar to national and Southern averages.

Figure 4.13: Expenditures for Instruction in Alabama, South and Nation									
State	Salaries	Employee Benefits	Purchased Services	Tuition	Supplies	Other			
Alabama	71.5%	18.4%	2.5%	0.1%	7.1%	0.4%			
United States	72.1%	18.4%	3.0%	1.1%	4.9%	0.5%			
South Average.	72.5%	18.5%	2.5%	0.4%	5.7%	0.4%			

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), National Public Education Survey, 2000–2001.

Resource Equity and Adequacy

Issues of resource equity and adequacy has occupied much of education finance policy during the latter part of the twentieth century both in legislatures and in the courts.

Equity and Adequacy

Equity – "Equity" is the term used to describe the fair distribution of funding, technology, facilities, services and equal education opportunities to different schools and groups of students. Determining what is a fair or equitable distribution of educational resources requires professional judgment because it is complicated; it can become controversial when it leads to providing additional resources to meet the specific needs of certain kinds of students.

Adequacy – "Adequacy" is the term used to describe the connection between resources and results in an educational program. Adequacy looks at the access students have to the programs, staff, and facilities that could offer them an opportunity to succeed in school. Evaluating an adequate education includes the connection between educational provisions and school processes employed (i.e. curriculum, curriculum content, instructional aids, teacher quality and quantity, extracurricular activities, programs, services, facilities, equipment, changes in school management, and accountability), the effect of specific pupil criteria (i.e. special needs, at-risk, and low spending), and the resultant student outcomes (i.e. achievement test scores).

Legal and Policy Initiatives Involving Equity and Adequacy in Alabama

Minimum Foundation Program – The Foundation program is discussed in greater detail on page 8 and in Appendix 1 to this chapter.

Education Finance Lawsuits – On page 23 is a brief overview of the most recent education finance lawsuit in Alabama.²⁶

²⁶ Though a comprehensive account of these legal initiatives is beyond the scope of this chapter, the Advocacy Center for Children's Educational Success with Standards (ACCESS) referenced at the end of this chapter provides a good launching point for additional information.

The case, *Ace v. Hunt*, was introduced in 1991/1992. *Ace v. Hunt* was predicated on both equity and adequacy claims and challenged the constitutional basis of Alabama's funding mechanism.²⁷ In 1993, Montgomery Circuit Court Judge Gene Reese ruled that Alabama schools were neither equitably nor adequately funded in accordance with the state's constitution. As a result, a nine-step plan was developed to enhance education equity and adequacy over a seven-year period. The plan included increased academic standards and opportunities, increased teacher and school personnel training, increased accountability, etc.

In 1997, the Alabama Supreme Court revisited the *ACE v. Hunt* decision. Though the Supreme Court upheld the liability ruling of the Circuit Court's 1993 decision, it dismissed the nine-step remedy order aimed at enhancing educational equity and adequacy (*ACE v. Folsom*).²⁸ The Alabama Legislature was left with the responsibility of developing a method to provide equitable and adequate learning opportunities for Alabama's public school students.

Plaintiffs in Alabama education finance lawsuits were dealt a crippling blow in 2002, when the Alabama Supreme Court dismissed the education finance lawsuit one month prior to the Montgomery County Circuit Court scheduled hearing date designed to assess implementation of a remedy (*ACE v. Siegelman*).

Realizing Every Alabama Child's Hopes (REACH) – In 2001, Alabama's State Department of Education released REACH, an education adequacy funding plan. REACH's mission was "to provide a system of public education which is committed to high academic standards and to providing every school student an opportunity for graduation and the opportunity to obtain the requisite skills to be prepared for the 21st century." Advocating a \$1.4 billion annual expenditure increase, REACH sought facility renewal, increased instructional staffing, supplementary programs for pre-kindergarten and K-12 at-risk students, department of education support programs and initiatives, and enhanced professional development, library media, and technology. For more information on REACH, see Chapter 3: Closing the Achievement Gap.

Campaign for Amendment 1 and the Alabama Excellence Initiative Fund – In June 2003, the Alabama legislature placed Amendment 1, a constitutional amendment containing numerous tax and accountability bills, on the ballot for public referendum. Championed by Governor Bob Riley, Amendment 1 called for broad based tax restructuring that would have raised an additional \$1.2 billion. The tax restructuring program was to establish the Alabama Excellence Initiative Fund (AEIF) resulting in more money for schools. If passed, the additional school revenue would not have been earmarked. Funding would have been prioritized for meeting budget deficits, fully funding the Alabama's Reading Initiative, teacher bonuses and salaries, a scholarship plan, and ensuring fiscal flexibility for future unexpected opportunities or emergencies.²⁹ Though a broad coalition of interests supported the campaign, on September 9, 2003, nearly two-thirds of voters in the public referendum voted against the plan.

City and County School Systems and Local Property Tax Structure

As of 2004, Alabama had a total of 130 local school systems — 67 are classified as county while 63 are classified as city systems. City school systems are an outgrowth of county school systems. When a municipality exceeds 5,000 population, the control of its schools passes to a new city school system unless the city adopts an agreement to remain within the county school system.³⁰ The new city school system operates independently of the existing county system.

²⁷ Under Article XIV, Section 256 of the Alabama Constitution, "The Legislature shall establish, organize, and maintain a liberal system of public schools throughout the state... The public school fund shall be apportioned to the several counties in proportion to the number of school children of school age therein..."

²⁸ See Opinion of the Justices.

²⁹ John Cannon, "Earmarking in Alabama," Alabama Partnership for Progress (2003).

³⁰ See Code of Alabama, Section 16-13-199.

City school systems often have clear financial advantages over the county systems from which they are derived. In the first place, city residents are more likely to value schools highly and to see good schools as an investment not only for their children, but also for the value of the property they own. As a result, they are more likely to fund their schools adequately through local taxes. Second, the city's tax base is likely to be larger since it will contain business property that is assessed at a higher percentage of value than residential or agricultural property. Third, cities enjoy more taxing power than counties and can adopt city taxes in support of their schools. These advantages explain why there are a number of cities considering the formation of their own school systems at the current time.

If local support and parental ownership of schools are important, then the financial advantages of city school systems may well translate into performance advantages as well. What of the equity considerations for the county school systems? The state's foundation program will provide additional state funds to a county system that loses property value in relation to its student population, and the newly formed city system with higher property values will help pay for the increase.

The effect of Alabama's tax structure is quantified by comparing average per pupil expenditures for county and city school systems. During the 2002 – 2003 academic year:

- City school systems raised an average of \$1,237.58 from local revenue on a per pupil basis, while county school systems raised an average of \$687.23 from local revenue on a per pupil basis.
- City school systems spend an average of \$6,225.72 per pupil, while county school systems spend an average of \$5,947.47 per pupil.
- On a per pupil basis, nine of the top 10 and 23 of the top 30 school systems at generating local revenue are city school systems.

Funding Students with Special Needs

When amending its foundation program in 1995, Alabama created a disincentive for local education agencies to over-identify students for special education services by allocating a block grant to each local education agency for special needs students. Alabama has made great strides in declassifying special needs students and integrating these students back into mainstream classes. As illustrated below, however, special needs students are not evenly distributed across school sites.³¹ As a result, the current system is not fair since all local education agencies receive the same amount of money earmarked for special education regardless of how many special education students are enrolled in the system.

On average, special needs students comprise 15.9% of Alabama's school age population.
 Special needs students as a percentage of total students vary from 9 percent to 27 percent within Alabama's county and city school systems.

These figures are not surprising considering many parents with students who have special needs move to areas that contain schools, hospitals, and other resources adept at meeting their child's needs. Alabama's Catastrophic Trust Fund for Special Education could be a valuable resource for remedying disparities in the distribution of special needs students. Originally developed in 1975 to assist in "those cases where special education and related services which are required to a particular child are unduly expensive, extraordinary and/or beyond the routine and reasonable special education and related services provided by a state agency,"³² this fund could be expanded to cover special needs that are beyond the capacity of school systems within the constraints of the foundation program.

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³¹ These figures are a proportional representation of special needs student counts (published in System Child Count 2002) by county and city school system's average daily membership (published in Alabama State Department of Education Annual Report 2002).

Conclusion

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Education finance is integral to ensuring that all students are afforded an equal and adequate educational opportunity in Alabama. In order to enhance this opportunity, however, local and state officials should evaluate the following policy options:

- The Equity and Adequacy movements in public education have become broad goals for policy in states. Alabama should evaluate its ability to offer equal and adequate educational opportunities.
- Alabama should further explore disparities in the methodology used by county and city systems to levy additional taxes under the current constitution.
- Alabama should further explore the impact of earmarking the vast majority of state tax revenues and the vulnerability of public school budgets to proration.
- Alabama should revisit how money is allocated to students with special needs, as well as explore alternative fund sources such as the Catastrophic Trust Fund for Special Education to compensate high incident rate communities and achieve greater fiscal equity.

The above policy options focus on issues of improving equity and adequacy in Alabama school finance. Alabama already has some systems and policies in place to promote greater equity and adequacy across schools. Federal funding is targeted to the areas of highest need in all states. The Alabama Minimum Foundation program, like foundation programs in many other states, helps to ensure a basic level of funding is met across school systems. Nonetheless, overall, Alabama's tax effort is 50th in the country. Alabama's low state taxes are compounded by the relatively low local tax effort throughout city and county systems across the state. Alabama's school finance system has both a unique structure and unique challenges if it is to optimize resources for the state's children.

This chapter was developed by Matthew G. Springer, Monica Bhatt, and Jim Williams.

³² Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-39-31.

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Appendix 1

The Foundation Program and Related State Allocations to Alabama School Systems

1. Requirements for local school systems to participate in the Foundation Program.

- a. The school system must have local tax receipts equivalent to ten mills of ad valorem district school tax.
- b. The school system must provide at least 175 days of school during the year.
- c. The school system must pay teachers at least the amount provided in the State Minimum Salary Schedule for their education and experience, and must use all funds allocated for teacher salaries to pay teachers in the instructional program. The State Minimum Salary Schedule is set by the Legislature and published in the education appropriation act each year. The current schedule is shown at the end of this appendix.
- d. The school system must allocate state and local foundation program funds to each school in an equitable manner, based on current school populations and the needs of the students and the schools. In terms of student needs, the law specifically mentions at-risk, special education, and vocational/technical education students. The school system must report annually to the State Board of Education on how all state and local funds have been allocated to each school.
- e. The school system must submit seven plans to the State Superintendent, under regulations of the State Board of Education:
 - (1) Building program how schools are to be provided for all children.
 - (2) Transportation program bus routes and road conditions (city systems with no buses are exempt from this requirement).
 - (3) Professional development program how employees' professional development needs will be met.
 - (4) Technology program how technology funds will be expended.
 - (5) Special education program services to students with disabilities and gifted students.
 - (6) Vocational education program.
 - (7) At-risk program services to students at-risk of failure and dropping out.
- f. The school system must meet any other standards created by the State Board of Education to promote improved educational opportunity and provide better schools.

2. Cost of the foundation program. The cost of the Foundation Program for each school system is determined by adding amounts calculated from the following four allowable cost factors that are recommended by the State Board of Education and adopted by the Legislature:

a. Teacher salaries. The school system earns a total salary figure based on the number of earned teacher units and the actual distribution of its teachers in the cells of the state minimum salary schedule, multiplied by the dollar figures in the state minimum salary schedule. Three types of teacher units are funded in the foundation program:

- (1) Regular teacher units. For each of four grade-level groupings, the number of pupils in average daily membership for the first forty days of the preceding school year is divided by a divisor published in the education appropriation act, to derive an earned number of teacher units for the school system. The current divisors are:
 - Grades K-3 = 1 teacher unit for every 13.8 students
 - Grades 4-6 = 1 teacher unit for every 22 students
 - Grades 7-8 = 1 teacher unit for every 21 students
 - Grades 9-12 = 1 teacher unit for every 18 students

According to state law, all four divisors assume that special education students are 5 percent of all students on a full-time-equivalent (FTE) basis, and that their needs (i.e., costs) are 2.5 times as much as a regular student. The divisor for grades 7-8 also assumes that 7.4 percent of FTE students are in vocational/ technical education, at a cost 1.4 times as much as a regular student; and the divisor for grades 9-12 assumes that 16.5 percent of FTE students are in vocational/technical education, at a cost 2.0 times as much as a regular student.

Students are considered on an FTE basis for these assumptions because they may only be in special education or vocational classes for part of the day. For example, two students who attend vocational classes for half a day would be the equivalent of one FTE student. Each school system creates its own special education and vocational education programs out of the teacher units earned through the divisors listed above.

- (2) Current teacher units. School systems that are growing earn additional teacher units based on the increase in students from the preceding school year.
- (3) Instructional support units. Each school earns teacher units for a principal, assistant principals, counselors, and librarians on the basis of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation standards. The current allocation is one principal and one librarian per school, plus one assistant principal per 500 students and one counselor per 400 students. In calculating salaries, principal units receive a percentage increase over the state minimum salary schedule amount to account for their increased responsibilities.
- b. Fringe benefits. The school system earns a dollar amount for fringe benefits based on the salaries and number of teacher units earned. The amount includes the employer's contribution for retirement, health insurance, social security and medicare, unemployment compensation, personal leave, and sick leave. The cost factors for these amounts are published in the education appropriation act. Retirement and health insurance figures are set by the Legislature based on recommendations of the administrative agencies, and the rates cannot be changed thereafter during the year except by legislative action.
- c. Classroom instructional support. The school system earns an amount for classroom instructional support that includes funds for the following purposes:

- (1) Classroom materials and supplies an amount based on the number of earned teacher units (currently \$525 per teacher unit).
- (2) Library enhancement an amount based on the number of earned teacher units, to be spent for books, cd-rom's, computer software, computer equipment, audio-visual materials, newspapers, periodicals, recordings, video tapes, cataloging, and book repair in school libraries/media centers (currently \$135 per teacher unit).
- (3) Professional development an amount based on the number of earned teacher units (currently \$60 per teacher unit); annual spending plan required.
- (4) Technology an amount based on the number of earned teacher units (currently \$181 per teacher unit); annual spending plan required.
- (5) Textbooks an amount based on the number of students (currently \$57.50 per student).

The school system is required to budget each of these amounts on the basis of their appropriation. For example, the amount appropriated for classroom materials and supplies is based on a dollar value per teacher unit, and the school system must budget the appropriated amount to each teacher. For items 2 - 5, however, the principal and teachers in a school can agree to waive this type of allocation; waivers must be approved by the local superintendent and the state superintendent.

d. Other current expense (OCE). To cover all other necessary expenses, the school system receives an amount per earned teacher unit. These expenses include such necessities as the central office staff and school expenses such as utilities, telephone and other communications, maintenance and janitorial services, and insurance coverage. The table below shows the amounts allocated for classroom support and other current expense since 1996.

3. Local share. A local share of the Foundation Program is charged against each school system, calculated on the basis of the revenue generated by one district mill of property tax. A district property tax is one that applies solely within a taxing district that lies within a single school system; the taxing district may include all of the school system or, in the case of a county system, it may include only a part of the entire system. (Schools also receive revenue from countywide property taxes, which are shared among the school systems in the county if there is more than one.) The local share is the amount of money that is or would be raised by 10 mills of district property taxes. Each local system is required to raise the equivalent of this amount, from any source available; most systems have local sales as well as property tax revenue. The state share of the Foundation Program is calculated as the total (from item 2, above) less the local share.

The law provides that the State Board of Education may, from time to time, cause a study to be done of the allowances, and may recommend changes to the Governor and Legislature based on the results of such study.

In addition to the Foundation Program, local school systems receive the following related allocations.

4. Transportation allowance. Each school system providing pupil transportation receives an operating allowance based on (a) the number of pupils transported in accordance with regulations of the State Department of Education, and (b) the average amount per pupil spent by school systems of similar population density. The allowance is intended to cover all operating expenses, including amounts for fringe benefits of transportation personnel. The school system also receives an amount (currently \$4,600) for annual depreciation on each of its school buses; this money is to be set aside by the local board of education for use in replacing school buses, and must not be used for current expenses.

5. Public school fund allowances. The State of Alabama has a 6.5-mill property tax. The revenue from 3 mills of this tax is set aside in the public school fund. The Legislature has earmarked this fund for the following allowances to school systems:

- a. Sixteenth section allowance. An allowance that in total is less than \$1 million is made to the schools of each township for public lands set aside in the 19th century for school purposes.
- b. Capital purchase allowance. The remainder of the public school fund, after the above-mentioned deduction, is allocated to local school systems for capital outlay projects, including the planning, construction, and renovation of school facilities, purchase of land, and acquisition of technology and equipment. The law requires a local match based on the revenue per student per mill of the local school district ad valorem tax, and each system receives the same amount per student from the combination of state and local funds. The formula requires that no local system will have to provide more than 50 percent of the allowance from its local funds. In the current fiscal year, the capital purchase allowance totals \$140.88 per student from the combination of state and local funds.

6. At-risk student allocation. The state accountability law requires each local school system to budget at least \$100 per student for programs to serve at-risk students. Since 1996 the Legislature has appropriated funds for an at-risk student program. The amount appropriated for 2004-05 is \$30.8 million. These funds are to be used to increase the amount and quality of instructional time for such students, including before and after school, weekend, summer, tutoring, alternative-school, and other such programs, as well as training for parents and teachers. The appropriation act for 2004-05 defines at-risk students as those who score in the bottom four stanines on the Stanford Achievement Test, plus those recommended by the faculty. It also requires that school system spend at least 20 percent of their at-risk funds to partner with nonprofit community organizations for at-risk services. Each school system receives a pro-rata share of the total funds available based on its number of at-risk students.

7. Allocation for school nurses. State law requires the employment of registered nurses in each local school system, contingent on funding in the education appropriation act. In the current year, the appropriation act provides funding for one nurse per school system, plus another nurse for every full complement of 11,500 students.

8. State Department of Education allocations. The education appropriation act each year contains allocations to the State Department of Education for grant programs to local school systems. The allocation rules are set by the Department or the State Board of Education. This funding is only portion of total State Department of Education budget. The allocations for FY 2005 included:

- \$40,000,000 for the Alabama Reading Initiative
- \$2,265,442 for pilot pre-school programs
- \$5,000,000 for a \$5,000 addition to base salary for teachers passing National Board Certification
- \$5,885,927 for the Governor's High Hopes program to assist students who have failed any section of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Additional Resources

Organization	Mission	Contact and Web Information		
Alabama Executive Budget Office	The Executive Budget Office (EBO) is a division of the state's Department of Finance and is operated under the direction of the Assistant Finance Director for Fiscal Operations. The mission of the EBO is to effectively prepare the Governor's budget proposal, properly administer and supervise the execution of legislative appropriations, estimate revenues for budget preparation and administration, and assist in the drafting of appropriation bills.	P.O. Box 302610 Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2610 (343) 242-7230 www.budget.state.al.us		
Alabama Department of Finance	To provide outstanding resourceful leadership and service in the areas of financial management and operational support to advance the Governor's mission of restoring trust and transforming state government.	600 Dexter Avenue - Suite N-105 Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2610 (334) 242-7160 www.finance.state.al.us		
Alabama State Department of Education	To provide a state system of education which is committed to academic excellence and which provides education of the highest quality to all Alabama students, preparing them for the 21st century.	50 North Ripley Street P.O. Box 302101 Montgomery, Alabama 36104 www.alsde.edu		
Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA)	PARCA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation that exists to collect, synthesize, and report information on issues of public interest affecting state and local government policy in Alabama. It is financed by contributions from civic-minded organizations and individuals who share the belief that the future of Alabama depends on public understanding of the issues facing the state. The support of all who share its aims is welcomed.	Room 402 Samford Hall Samford University Birmingham, Alabama 35229 (205) 726-2482 parca.samford.edu		
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)	NCES is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data that are related to education in the United States and other nations.	1990 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006 (202) 502-7300 nces.ed.gov		
Advocacy Center for Children's Educational Success with Standards (ACCESS)	The ACCESS Project is a national initiative that seeks to strengthen the links between school finance litigation, public engagement, and the standards- based reform movement. ACCESS has created, and is now working to expand, a national network of advocates, attorneys, researchers, educators, and parents committed to reforms in education and education finance. ACCESS is a Project of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE), a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.	c/o CFE, Inc. 6 East 43rd Street New York NY 10017 (212) 867-8455 www.accessednetwork.org		
American Education Finance Association (AEFA)	The American Education Finance Association's purposes are to facilitate communication between and among the various groups and individuals in the school finance field, including academicians, researchers, policy makers, administrators, and teachers. AEFA's substantive scope encompasses a broad range of issues and concerns, including traditional school finance concepts, issues of public policy that have an impact on the field, and the review and debate of emerging issues that often crystallize interests and generate public knowledge of education finance.	8365 S. Armadillo Trail, Evergreen, Colorado 80439 (303) 674-0857 www.aefa.cc		

Governance and Policymaking

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Key Policy Points

- Educational governance arrangements are complex. There are several overlapping political institutions at different levels of government that influence the creation of new policies. This is one reason that education is a significant political and electoral issue.
- > The policymaking process for public education involves multiple layers of involvement from different levels of government. Thus, there are sometimes natural bureaucratic obstacles to accountability given the governance arrangements in education.
- Through reauthorizations of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (called *No Child Left Behind Act* in 2001) the federal government has played a stronger role in education funding, governance, and accountability in recent years. In 2004, about 10% of Alabama's education spending came from federal funding a higher percentage than most states.
- Compared to most states, Alabama has a very high percentage of total school funding coming from the state. This reliance on state funding by local systems heightens the importance of state governance structures and the legislative budgeting process in how local officials make policy decisions.
- Policymakers should consider the balance of power between state and local boards of education when drafting new accountability policies.
- Changes to many taxes in Alabama require a vote of the people.
- The Alabama Constitution of 1901 creates structural barriers that reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of both local and state education initiatives. For example, constitutional limits on "home rule" concentrate power in Montgomery and often restrain local school systems from making decisions without the consent of the state legislature.

For concise definitions of key governance terms and concepts discussed throughout this chapter, the reader should refer to the Educationary located in the back of this primer.

Overview

Elementary and secondary education in the United States is governed by elected and appointed officials at the local, state, and federal levels of government. These officials must collectively maintain a free public school system, an important responsibility specified by constitutional provision in every state except Iowa.1

Many popular news stories over the past five years have focused on the controversial issues of state takeover, charter schools, and the No Child Left Behind legislation. A common sentiment voiced in the media has been that local constituents are losing control of the public schools. Whether or not that is accurate depends on the perspective of who you ask, but it is clear that public officials are exploring issues of governance, or "who makes what decisions in public education."² In addition to state officials such as the governor, several distinctive positions and representative bodies provide specialized governance in public education. By law in Alabama, these include the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, local school boards, and local superintendents. Although the governance role of each educational official or agency may change over time, there are constitutionally defined relationships between state and local officials.

The State-Local Partnership in Governing Public Education - The public elementary and secondary education system is based on a unique arrangement to finance and deliver educational services. Most states finance a large share of these costs as formula-calculated aid to local districts through their formal role as a state education agency (SEA). In contrast, local governmental officials deliver educational services to students through a local education agency (LEA) that operates as a school system. By law, the school system is a formal agency of the state for the local implementation of state education mandates. In fact, state aid to local educational agencies is easily the largest component of total state government spending. On average, states finance nearly half of local government spending on elementary and secondary education, although this varies from state to state and region to region.

The major implication of the state's leading role in financing education is its concurrent role in governance. State governments define the responsibilities, powers, and procedures of school districts through legislative enactments, administrative rules and regulations, and judicial decisions. School districts in Alabama have limited policymaking authority due to the state constitution's restriction on *home rule*, or the opportunity for a local government to make decisions without the consent of the state legislature. The Alabama Constitution also prevents local governments and the state government from changing many forms of taxes without a vote of the public.

While research does not dispute that exceptional classroom instruction is the strongest determinant of student achievement³, the remainder of this chapter will show that public education is connected in significant ways to the prevailing governance arrangements and the dominant political conditions.⁴ As the National Commission on Governing America's Schools concluded in 1999, "without good governance, good schools are the exception, not the rule."⁵

¹ Todd Ziebarth, State Constitutions and Public Education Governance Policy Brief (Denver: ECS, 2000).

² Kirstin Craciun and Todd Ziebarth, What's Hot in School Governance: Takeovers, Charter Schools, and P-16 Systems Policy Brief (Denver: ECS, 2002). Available online at http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/37/54/3754.pdf

³ See Chapter 2: Achievement for more information on this topic.

⁴ Kenneth K. Wong, "The Politics of Education," in *Politics in the American States*, ed. V. Gray and R.L. Hanson, 8th ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2003).

⁵ Todd Ziebarth, Governing America's Schools: Changing the Rules (Denver: ECS, 1999).



Figure 5.1: Governance Arrangements and Fiscal Roles in Alabama

The Federal Level

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The federal government is restricted by the U.S. Constitution in its governance capacity for the public education system, but has gradually increased its education policymaking role since the 1960s.

United States Congress – In coordination with the President, Congress makes budgetary and policy decisions for the nation's schools in successive reauthorizations of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), which was first passed in 1965 as part of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. The current reauthorization is the *No Child Left Behind* legislation, passed by bipartisan support of U.S. Congress in 2001, which strengthens accountability requirements, expands the federal role in monitoring annual yearly progress, and provides sanctions for failing schools.

How the Federal Government Provides Supplementary Funding to States – Congress has provided funds for education since the first *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) legislation produced in 1965. ESEA has been reauthorized every seven years since 1965. The *No Child Left Behind* Act is the most recent reauthorization of ESEA. The federal government's fiscal contribution has never exceeded ten percent of the total national education expenditures. Still, the extent of financial support does not indicate the importance of the federal role: the actual method of allocating funds through the Title I program of ESEA represents a significant commitment to improving the educational opportunities of at-risk students.⁶ In practice, most federal funds are distributed to schools based on the number of enrolled students who qualify for a Title I grant based on socioeconomic indicators.

The current funding targets specific students on a student-level basis. However, unlike the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, the more recent *No Child Left Behind* legislation is *not* an unfunded mandate: states may exercise the right to reject federal funding if they do not want to comply with the accompanying federal regulations for the funds provided. While the state as a governmental unit still retains supreme constitutional authority to govern public education, the reliance on federal dollars creates a new mode of performance accountability. *See the Chapter 4: Finance and Funding for more information on school finance.*

U.S. Department of Education – The U.S. Department of Education is the cabinet-level federal agency responsible for administering federal education policy regulations established by Congress. While the Department has limited regulatory power in shaping federal programs, the President often consults the Secretary of Education for detailed policy recommendations on revising the federal role in education. The U.S. Department of Education primarily targets funding to high need areas in states. This funding is primarily administered through reauthorizations of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (currently called the *No Child Left Behind* Act).

Federal Court System and Relevant Executive Branch Offices – In coordination with the Department of Justice and the Office of Civil Rights, the federal courts monitor district-level desegregation compliance with federal law and judicial decisions. For this reason, every school district must submit rezoning plans for federal authorities to review before their implementation. In addition, the federal courts have made sweeping judgments on physical and learning disability complaints brought against the government, prompting the passage of broad federal legislation. In 1990, the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) dramatically changed the face of public education, as key provisions of the law mandated vast, largely unfunded state and district expenditures to renovate previously inaccessible school facilities. In 2002, in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, the Supreme Court approved the use of publicly funded school vouchers in private schools.

⁶ Kenneth K. Wong, Funding Public Schools: Politics and Policies (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999).

Why the Federal Policymaking Role is Important to Alabama in Dollars and Sense – The current federal funding system is highly advantageous for states like Alabama with a federal tax burden that is lower than the total federal expenditures on the state. This is because the federal method of supplementing state funds is *redistributive*, or intentionally designed to allocate funds to those states with the greatest needs regardless of their overall tax contribution to the federal treasury. As a state, Alabama ranks eighth in the nation on this overall measure of funding from the federal government.⁷ The generous federal contribution is not intended, however, to replace state funding obligations. As shown in Figure 5.1, the state legislature must develop an annual budget and school funding system to provide the bulk of operating revenues to local school districts.

The State Level

In San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez (1973), the state was formally reinforced as the plenary authority for public education in the United States. The Constitution of the State of Alabama, as amended, specifically provides for the establishment and maintenance of a liberal system of public schools open to all children. In governing public schools, the state constitution vests general supervisory authority in a state board of education with the governor as presiding officer. The Alabama State Board of Education and State Legislature have many different responsibilities, including the passage of:

- Accountability standards for local educational agencies
- State salary schedules and related compensation matters
- \succ The minimum length of the school year and the school day
- > Personnel allocations through class size provisions and related staff distribution formulas
- \succ General curricular guidelines and standardized testing policies
- Certification and licensing standards for teachers and administrators
- High school graduation requirements

The state of Alabama employs a unique method of selecting educational authorities. Most states, state boards of education consist of gubernatorial appointees whose presiding officer is selected from within the group.⁸ Yet governance arrangements in Alabama are not consistent with national methods of board selection. Members of the Alabama State Board of Education include the governor and 8 delegates selected through partisan election from specified districts, a political process found in just 5 states. Delegates are elected to four-year, staggered terms from eight districts throughout the state.

•	•	•		
Name of State	State Board Appointed by	State Board Elected by	Chief State School Officer Appointed by	Chief State School Officer Elected by
Alabama	-	Partisan	State Board	-
Arkansas	Governor	-	State Board	-
Delaware	Governor	-	Governor	-
Florida	Governor	-	State Board	-
Georgia	Governor	-	-	Nonpartisan
Kentucky	Governor	-	State Board	-
Louisiana	Governor	-	State Board	-
Maryland	Governor	-	State Board	-
Mississippi	Governor	-	State Board	-
	& Legislature			
North Carolina	Governor	-	Partisan	

⁷ Russell L. Hanson, "Intergovernmental Relations," in *Politics in the American States*, ed. V. Gray and R.L. Hanson, 8th ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2003); See Chapters 1 and 7 for more on accountability requirements.

9 Adapted from Wong, 2003.

6

Figure 5.2: Selecting a State Superintendent and State Board in the South[®]

⁸ Wong, 2003.

Name of State	State Board Appointed by	State Board Elected by	Chief State School Officer Appointed by	Chief State School Officer Elected by
Oklahoma	Governor	-	-	Partisan
South Carolina	Governor & Legislature	-	-	Partisan
Tennessee	Governor	-	Governor	-
Texas	-	Partisan	Governor	-
Virginia	Governor	-	Governor	-
West Virginia	Governor	-	State Board	-
TOTAL	14	2	12	4

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Governor of Alabama – The governor has a legal responsibility to submit an annual budget to the state legislature. Along with the general budget proposal, the governor provides recommendations for education spending and new statewide accountability policies. The governor does not appoint any voting members of the State Board of Education nor the chief state school officer, but is an ex-officio, voting member, as well as the president, of the state board. Gubernatorial authority is limited by (1) the constitutional separation of the governor from a direct policymaking role, (2) the inability for prospective officeholders to run with a unified electoral slate at the polls, and (3) the limited resources of state agencies. In effect, legal constraints make the Alabama gubernatorial office one of the weakest in the country.¹⁰

State Legislature – The Alabama legislature is divided into the Senate and the House of Representatives. The chambers have 35 and 105 members, respectively, whose representational districts are reapportioned every ten years. There exist four standing committees for education-related legislation. As shown in Figure 5.3, each house has a reciprocal committee for specified policy matters, ranging from education reform proposals to the administration of the Education Trust Fund. Several legislators serve on both committees in their house, including those members who are committee chairs.

Figure 5.3: Legislative Committees for the Consideration of Education Bills					
Name of Committee	2004 Committee Chair (District)	Total Members	Oversight		
House Education	Yvonne Kennedy (97th)	15	All education reform proposals from elementary to higher		
Senate Education	Vivian Figures (33rd)	11	education		
House Ways and Means Education Fund Senate Finance and	Richard Lindsey (39th)	15	Education Trust Fund; appropriations; salaries; taxation and revenue law		
Taxation Education	Hank Sanders (23rd)	14			

State Court System – The state court system maintains an integral role in determining adequate levels of school funding. Since 1971, the consideration of education finance cases has largely rested with the state courts, who have closely examined the controversial issues of equity and adequacy.¹¹ Essential governance issues are interwoven in opposing arguments for *ACE v. Hunt* and *Siegelman v. AASB*. In both cases, the state courts did not reverse the centralization of legal authority in state officials. If the governor is presented with unexpected revenue shortfalls in future fiscal years, he or she will be permitted to employ proration, or the process of cutting programs when revenues fall short of

¹⁰ Thad Beyle, "The Governors," in Virginia Gray and Russell L. Hanson, eds., Politics in the American States, 8th ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2003).

expectations, to balance the state budget. For more information on adequacy, equity, proration and school funding, see Chapter 4 on "School Finance."

State Board of Education – The state board of education provides an arena for educational policy deliberation that is distinct from the state legislature. As the governing body of the state educational agency, the state board can establish school districts and empower local authorities to comply with state mandates, funding decisions, and legal statutes. The Alabama State Board of Education also oversees post-secondary (or two-year) colleges in the state. Over the past decade, state boards have increased their influence in the policymaking process, especially in the areas of education finance, academic and fiscal accountability¹¹, statewide academic standards, and the administration of federally funded programs.¹²

Chief State School Officer – In Alabama, one of the most important responsibilities of the state board is the selection of a chief state school officer. The ideal officer balances politics and policy in directing the state education agency and advises the state board on policies for promoting student achievement. The chief state school officer, officially titled the State Superintendent of Education, must:

- Provide administrative, instructional, curricular, and political leadership to the state department of education and local school districts on behalf of the state board
- Disseminate information on state policies and programs to the legislature, state governmental officials, local superintendents and school boards, and the general public
- > Report to the U.S. Secretary of Education on the state's compliance with federal regulations

State Department of Education – The administrative and regulatory responsibilities at the state level are consolidated in a state department of education. The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) carries out responsibilities assigned by the state board, the legislature, and the state superintendent. Typically, state departments are involved in:

- > Planning, implementing, and evaluating instructional programs
- Administering statewide initiatives approved by the state legislature
- Collecting and reporting data that can guide the school improvement process
- \succ Monitoring the academic and financial records of local school districts
- Providing rewards and sanctions to local school districts for compliance with state accountability policies or in response to exceptional individual achievement (*For more information, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments and Standards*)
- > Coordinating a network of regional technical assistance teams across the state
- > Allocating staff members to districts in need of academic and fiscal assistance

State departments of education are at the forefront of school reform efforts across the nation. One of the greatest barriers to improved student achievement is that very few school districts have the capacity to sustain reform efforts on their own and often lack the knowledge and resources to implement appropriate reform strategies.¹³ Consequently, state authorities must "play a stronger role in building district capacity to assist low-performing schools."¹⁴ However, state education agencies face a variety of formidable challenges in their own operation: building their internal capacity, sustaining reform efforts after revenues are depleted, recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, and briefing

¹¹ Academic and fiscal accountability includes school and school system takeover, which is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

¹² Frederick M. Wirt and Michael W. Kirst, *The Politics of Education: Schools in Conflict*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1992).

¹³ Council of Chief State School Officers, *State Support to Low-Performing Schools* (Washington, D.C.: Author, 2003). Available online at http://www.ccsso.org/publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=41

teachers and district administrators on how to use new disaggregated data measures to improve teaching and student learning.

How a Bill Becomes Law in the Alabama State Legislature – Any proposed education legislation must follow the same legislative process regardless of the house in which it is first introduced:

- 1. A bill may be introduced in either the Senate or the House by a member.
- 2. It is referred to a committee for a hearing. The committee studies the bill and may hold public hearings on it. It can pass, reject or take no action on the bill.
- 3. The committee report on the passed bill is read in open session of the House or Senate, and the bill is then referred to the Rules Committee.
- 4. The Rules Committee can either place the bill on the second reading of the calendar for debate before the entire body, or take no action.
- 5. At the second reading, a bill is subject to debate and amendment before being placed on the third reading calendar for final passage.
- 6. After passing one house, the bill goes through the same procedure in the other house.
- 7. If amendments are made, the other house must approve the changes. If the bill passes with an amendment in the other house and the original house does not approve the changes, the bill may be sent to a conference committee composed of members of both bodies. If conference committee agrees to a compromise, a report of the conference committee is sent to both bodies, which must both pass the same bill.
- 8. When the bill is accepted in both houses, it is signed by the presiding officers of each house and sent to the governor.
- 9. The governor signs the bill into law or exercises his veto. If the governor fails to act on the bill, it may become law without a signature. If the governor vetoes the bill, both houses must pass the same bill by a majority for the bill to become law.

How Interest Groups and Labor Unions Influence the Legislative Process - In addition, interest groups have played a leading role in the formation, modification and eventual success or failure of all major legislation in Alabama since 1986. Only four other states have the same domination of the legislative process by special interest groups and labor unions.¹⁵ The Alabama Education Association is recognized by legislators and policymakers alike as the most persuasive and wellfinanced force in state budgetary politics. The influence of special interests has been substantial due to many legislators' reliance on campaign contributions from lobbyists. In the 2002 election cycle, the top three largest political action committees (PACs) contributing to candidates and committees included: the Alabama Education Association (\$3,243,430), the Business Council of Alabama (\$3,028,269) and the Alabama Farmer's Federation/ALFA (\$1,064,868).¹⁶

The Local Level

The legal status of a local education agency (LEA) is defined by the state legislature. Specific governance arrangements vary widely across states and even within state borders. In most areas, local authority is consolidated in school districts, called school systems in Alabama, which are administratively and fiscally independent of any other government. Only a small fraction of school systems lack sufficient autonomy to be counted as separate governments and are classified as a dependent agency of some other government. For the majority of systems, the relevant case law specifies that a school district is:17

¹⁵ Clive Thomas, Juneau Hrebnar, and Ronald Hrebnar, "Interest Groups in the States," in Politics in the American States, ed. V. Gray and R.L. Hanson, 8th ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2003). ¹⁶ According to the Institute on Money in State Politics; relevant data is available at http://www.followthemoney.org. This list

does not include party committees or individual candidate self-financing.

- > A governmental unit with formal perquisites of authority and contractual obligations
- > A territorial unit responsible for the provision of educational services within its borders
- > A legal entity with corporate powers that extend beyond the reach of district constituents
- > A political institution whose members are selected in a manner determined by the state

Local School Board – In most governance arrangements, local school boards monitor the overall performance of the district, establish disciplinary policies, sponsor academic and non-academic initiatives, and approve the distribution of financial resources within the district. By law, the powers of school boards belong only to the board as a whole and can only be exercised at formal meetings.¹⁹ Specifically, local school boards in Alabama are responsible for:¹⁸

- > Setting policy covering all aspects of system operations, including academic achievement
- > Developing and monitoring long-range plans for the school system
- > Allocating financial resources and overseeing expenditures
- Constructing and maintaining school facilities
- > Approving all recommended personnel actions
- > Monitoring the academic and fiscal performance of district schools
- Implementing state and local technology and learning programs

Local Superintendent – Local superintendents manage the operation of all district schools and provide guidance to members of the local school board on educational policy matters. Their role as the leader of the school district is analogous to the chief executive officer of a corporation. Superintendents are responsible for overseeing school leaders and implementing state and federal programs. They must provide instructional and curricular leadership to school leaders based on the priorities of the local school board. In most Alabama districts, the superintendent serves at the pleasure of the school board and can be dismissed without formal arbitration proceedings, although 39 Alabama counties elect their superintendent.²⁰ Alabama is one of the few states that allows for elected superintendents at the local level. Research shows that modern superintendents of both urban and rural school districts confront political conflict with increasing frequency.

How Local Governance Supports High Achievement – Local school boards and superintendents must share a common vision to maximize the success of school reform efforts. The school district is critical to reform efforts through the provision of resources, information, and incentives to facilitate school improvement across the district.²¹ According to the Council of Chief State School Officers and the New England School Development Council, the most current research on high-performing districts and superintendents has also identified the following characteristics for high performance:

- ➤ High expectations for student achievement for all students
- ➤ Data-based decision making
- > The alignment of district curriculum with state assessments
- Quality staff development and capable systems of professional support
- > Fiscal accountability through budgetary development and school board advisement
- > The allocation of resources to innovative programs and initiatives
- > Strong relationships between local schools and the surrounding community

¹⁷ Charles Russo, "The Legal Status of School Boards in the Intergovernmental System." In Patricia F. First and Herbert J. Walberg, eds., *School Boards: Changing Local Control* (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1992).

¹⁸ Russo, 1992.

¹⁹ Council of Chief State School Officers, "Key State Education Policies on PK-12 Education: 2002." Washington, D.C.

²⁰ Alabama Association of School Boards, personal communication, 7 June 2004.

The Increasing Impact of Local Superintendents in Shaping District Priorities – School districts are currently in the midst of a dramatic transformation in their policymaking orientation. As the federal and state authorities have increased their participation in the education policy process, the volume of legislation and educational programs has increased in number and complexity.²³ The number of programs that districts must administer, the complexity of the records that must be maintained, the number of demands that must be accommodated, and the quantity of resources that must be managed have grown dramatically. As a result, superintendents increasingly dominate their school boards due to the reduction of local authority by state officials and the internal growth in administrative capacity of the district.

How the Methods for Selecting Local Authorities are Different – Most local school boards in Alabama, like those in the rest of the nation, are elected. According to the Alabama Association of School Boards, over twice as many local school boards (87) are elected than appointed (42). Where Alabama is particularly unusual is in the number of county systems with both an elected board and elected superintendent (39). This governance arrangement is exceptional because the local school board typically appoints local superintendents so that the local board and superintendent are more likely to share common goals.

Figure 5.4: Methods of Selecting Local School Officials in Alabama ²⁴				
Method of Selection	County Systems	City Systems	TOTAL	
Elected Board and Appointed Superintendent	28	20	48	
Elected Board and Elected Superintendent	39	0	39	
Appointed Board and Appointed Superintendent	0	42	42	
Appointed Board and Elected Superintendent	0	0	0	

Systems Reform – Due to the complexity of education governance arrangements, states and local school systems often have fragmented policy efforts. To resolve this policy dilemma, many state and local officials are relying on systems reform to align all operations, policies and functions of the public education system. Reseraachers contend that policy alignment can lead to increased student achievement and a closing of the achievement gap. Additionally, the *No Child Left Behind* Act adopts systems reform as the primary strategy for improving the public education system. Given systems reform's prominence in educational improvement efforts, it is likely to remain an important method for improving public education when matched with an appropriate governance strategy at the district level.

²³ Daniel DiLeo, "The State-Local Partnership in Education," in *Governing Partners: State-Local Relations in the United States*, ed. R.L. Hanson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998), 109-137.

²⁴ AASB, 2004. At present, roughly one-third (20) of all municipal school districts in Alabama have elected representatives in contrast to all county systems. Since their most recent update of the disaggregated local governance data, an independent school district has been formed in Boaz, Ala.

Emerging Issues in Educational Governance

In an effort to improve the quality of public education, state and district leaders in many states have reinvented how they can best govern and who makes decisions about public schools. During the 1990s and 2000s, several new governance strategies emerged, including reconstitution of schools, state takeovers of schools and districts, charter schools, and P-16 systems. These strategies are not mutually exclusive and can be implemented to some extent in conjunction with each other.

School Reconstitution – School reconstitution "involves creating a new philosophy, developing a new curriculum and hiring new staff at a low performing school."²⁵ As of 2002, 19 states had policies that allowed for reconstitution of schools. District officials rather than state policymakers have implemented the vast majority of reconstitutions around the country. Researchers and policymakers anticipate reconstitution of schools becoming an increasingly more utilized policy approach following the passage of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001. In the new law, schools that do not meet adequate yearly progress for five consecutive years must be "restructured," with reconstitution as one policy option for restructuring. *For more information, see Chapter 7: No Child Left Behind*.

In Alabama, the Mobile County School System reconstituted its five lowest performing schools during the 2004-05 academic year.²⁶ After reconstitution, the five schools received \$5.2 million in additional funding. All staff members in the five schools were invited to reapply for positions in the schools. The funding increase was allocated for performance-based bonuses for teachers, assistant principals, and principals; textbooks and other supplies for students; and extra training for teachers.

State Takeover of Schools and Districts – To hold districts and schools accountable for academic and managerial performance, many states are employing strategies that include sanctions for low performance. The most severe sanction is takeover by state officials or urban mayors. Takeovers often occur in response to financial mismanagement and/or chronically low student performance.

Between 1988 and 2002, there were 49 districts taken over in 19 states and the District of Columbia. As of 2004, 29 states allowed for state takeover of school districts; 23 states allow for state takeover of schools. Alabama allows state takeover of both schools and school systems.²⁷ In Alabama, all state intervention decisions are the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education as a result of the *James Educational Foundation Act of 1995*. Figure 5.5 on page 13 outlines state intervention policies in Alabama.

With the passage of *No Child Left Behind*, several researchers predict that the implementation of takeovers will increase. In the new law, schools that do not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) for five consecutive years must be "restructured," with takeover serving as one potential method of restructuring. *For more information on* NCLB, *see Chapter 7:* No Child Left Behind (*ESEA*).

²⁵ Todd Ziebarth, State Takeovers and Reconstitutions Policy Brief (Denver: ECS, 2004).

²⁶ Mobile County School System, www.mcss.com. The reconstituted schools were called "Transformed Schools."

²⁷ Ziebarth, 2004.

Stage	State Takeover of Schools	State Takeover of Districts
Identification	State Superintendent	State Superintendent
Key Areas	Academic Performance	Academic Performance
		Fiscal Accountability
		School Safety and Discipline
Approval	State Board of Education	State Board of Education
Legislative	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Consent		
Legal Code	Sec. 16-6B-3	Sec. 16-6B-3 through 16-6B-6
Withdrawal	State Board of Education	State Board of Education
Notable Sites of	Litchfield HS (Gadsden City);	Barbour, Jackson, Dale, Lawrence,
Intervention	Lowndes Co. MS; Cloverdale JHS	Greene, and Jefferson County school
	(Montgomery Co.); Russell Co. HS;	systems; Bessemer City and Fairfield
	Cobb ES (Anniston City);	school systems
	Jess Lanier HS (Bessemer City)	

Charter Schools – Charter schools are semi-autonomous public schools managed by educators, parents, community groups or private organizations that operate under a written contract with a state, district or other entity. Charter schools are funded through public dollars and exist in 36 states. Alabama is in the minority of states that does not have charter school legislation. *For more information on charter schools and other school choice options, see Chapter 9: School Choice.*

P-16 Systems – P-16 systems look at education from the perspective of what it takes to adequately educate a child from pre-kindergarten through college.²⁹ P-16 is the most recent effort of policymakers to coordinate the traditionally disconnected levels of early learning, K-12, and postsecondary education within a state. The oversight authority in an integrated system is typically "vested in a P-16 governing board or statutory coordinating board, working with regional and local P-16 councils."³⁰ Alabama has had preliminary discussions regarding P-16 systems but has not developed any organized effort to address this issue. The uniqueness of the strategy is that it encompasses several educational goals in addition to reforming the state governance model³¹:

- > Expanding access to early learning and improving student readiness for kindergarten
- Smoothing student transitions from one level of learning to the next
- Closing the achievement gap between white and minority students
- Upgrading teacher education and professional development
- Creating a wider range of learning opportunities for students in high school
- Improving college readiness and future success in the state economy

²⁸ Kenneth K. Wong, Warren E. Langevin, and Francis X. Shan. "When School Districts Regain Control: The Political Economy of State Takeover of Local Schools and Its Withdrawal." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Ill., September 2004.

²⁹ Carl Kreuger, The Case for P-16: Designing an Integrated Learning System, Preschool through Postsecondary Education (Denver, CO: ECS, 2002).

Available online at http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/34/99/3499.pdf

³⁰ Kreuger, 2002.

³¹ Craciun and Ziebarth, 2002.

Figure 5.6 offers a summary of the emerging education governance reform strategies listed in this chapter.

Key Questions	School Reconstitution	State Takeover	Charter Schools & Contracting	P-16 Systems
What aspects of the education governance system need to be reformed?	School has chronically low-performing student achievement	District or school requires state intervention to restore fiscal or academic performance	Bureaucratic and institutional constraints in current public school system	Continuity between different levels of public education system
Which solution(s) will accomplish this reform?	Reorganizing individual schools with new goals, operations, and possibly staff	Authority over governance and decision making for new authorities	Creating schools that can be operated in isolation of traditional problems	Concentration of authority in a new state board and local councils
How will the solution(s) lead to improved performance of public schools?	Refocus efforts and resources toward sustained improvement in student achievement	Intervention will restore accountability and raise institutional performance	External school leadership, new structure, and motivated faculty will strive for performance	Centralization will facilitate better decisions, policy- making, and coordination of student needs

Figure	5.6:	Understanding	r Fducational	Governance	Reform	Strategies ³²
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³² Adapted by the author from James G. Cibulka and William L. Boyd, *A Race Against Time: The Crisis in Urban Schooling* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003).

Additional Resources

Governmental officials at each level are not alone in resolving dilemmas of governance and management. Policy networks that link public officials, interest group advocates, and academic researchers have played an increasingly significant role in education governance.³³ The Education Commission of the States (ECS) has been at the forefront of discussions on equity, school choice, curricular standards, school-based management, and charter schools. For Alabama and fifteen other Southern states, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has been an external organization that serves state policymakers in regional education initiatives and research since 1948.

Education Commission of the States	Southern Regional Education Board
http://www.ecs.org	http://www.sreb.org
The following national organizations offer research the perspective of their core membership group. The	<i>e-based advice to members and interested parties from</i> <i>ese include:</i>

National School Boards Association	Council of State Governments
http://www.nsba.org	http://www.csg.org
National Conference of State Legislatures <u>http://www.ncsl.org</u>	Council of Chief State School Officers <u>http://www.ccsso.org</u>
National Governors Association	National Association of State Budget Officers
http://www.nga.org	http://www.nasbo.org_

In addition, the following organizations or affiliate groups in Alabama provide excellent information on state-level governance and policymaking concerns:

A+ Education Foundation http://www.aplusala.org_	Alabama Association of School Boards http://www.theaasb.org
Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform <u>www.constitutionalreform.org</u>	Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama http://parca.samford.edu
For the most current academic research on edu	cational governance and policy issues, the fo

For the most current academic research on educational governance and policy issues, the following academic centers are able to offer their advice and research findings:

Center on Reinventing Public Education <u>http://www.crpe.org</u>

Peabody Center for Education Policy http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/pcep/

Consortium for Policy Research in Education <u>http://www.cpre.org</u>

Center on Educational Governance http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/cegov/

This chapter was developed by Warren Langevin, with input from Sally Howell, J.D., of the Alabama Association of School Boards, and Dr. Anita Buckeley Commander and Tracey Meyer of the Alabama State Department of Education.

33 DiLeo, 1998.

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Math, Science and Technology

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Key Policy Points

- Students across the United States, including those in Alabama, rank very low in math and science when compared to students in other countries. As new jobs become increasingly technical, this has grave economic implications for future growth — both for individual students and Alabama as a whole.
- Because college graduates with math and science degrees are in high demand for well-paying jobs, schools are having an increasingly difficult time attracting qualified math and science teachers. This problem is compounded in poor, rural counties in Alabama that are unable to pay teachers above the state salary schedule.
- The Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) is a research-based program designed to help all student in grades K-12 develop the skills necessary for success in higher education and in the workforce. Funding should be provided to expand the initiative to all Alabama schools.
- Surveys of teachers find that educators believe incorporating technology into instruction is a critical issue. The pressure to increase funding for technology will continue to grow in years to come.
- Technology use is uneven in Alabama schools. More affluent schools are outfitting classrooms with state-of-the-art technology but smaller, poorer districts are moving much slower. In addition, middle-range schools find it hard to garner support for technology. Now that more and more schools are networked and relying on technology, consistent technical support staff and professional development are needed. Additionally, sustained funding is essential for technology needs to be updated regularly.

For concise definitions of education-related terms, see the Educationary at the end of this primer.

Overview

Across the nation and in Alabama, students must be prepared for the demands they will face in an increasingly complex world. In today's global society — saturated by technological innovations, scientific inquiry and rapid communications — high school graduates need higher-level skills and knowledge in order to compete and to succeed.

Performance in Mathematics & Science

Third International Math and Science Study – In February 2000, the results from the TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study) were released. With data on half a million 4th, 8th and 12th grade students from 41 countries in 30 languages, the study is the largest and most comprehensive comparative international study of schools and student performance.

12th grade performance — On the assessment of mathematics and science released in 2000, 12th graders in the United States performed significantly below the international average. On the math general knowledge test, U.S. students scored 19th out of 21 participating nations. On the science general knowledge test, U.S. students ranked 16th. In physics, U.S. students ranked at the bottom of the 14 countries participating in that test. And U.S. students ranked 14 out of 15 in advanced mathematics.

The TIMSS study also included information about students' attitudes and activities, including the amount of TV watched, after school jobs, computer and calculator use, and attitudes towards mathematics and science. Those findings include:

- Students in 15 nations (out of 19) reported spending more hours, on average, studying or doing homework per day than their U.S. counterparts.
- U.S. 12th graders spent, on average, the same amount of time watching television or videos as the international average.
- More U.S. 12th-grade students reported that they worked at a paid job-and worked longer hours-than did students in any other TIMSS nation

According to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the math and science curricula in the United States cover a breadth of topics at a superficial level. Additionally, the teaching methods in high-performing countries are based more on problem solving and student generated responses than on the worksheet-based drills that occur in many American science and math classrooms.¹

Nation	Mathematics General Knowledge	Science General Knowledge	Physics	Advanced Math
Australia	522	527	518	525
Austria	518	520	435	436
Canada	519	532	485	509
Cyprus	446	448	494	518
Czech Republic	466	487	451	469
Denmark	547	509	534	522
France	523	487	466	557
Germany	495	497	522	465
Hungary	483	471	_	_
Iceland	534	549	_	_
Italy	476	475	_	474
Lithuania	469	461	_	516
Netherlands	560	558	_	_
New Zealand	522	529	_	_
Norway	528	544	581	_
Russian Federation	471	481	<i>532</i>	533
Slovenia	512	517	523	475
South Africa	356	349	_	_
Sweden	552	559	573	512
Switzerland	540	523	488	533
United States	461	480	423	442
International Average	500	500	500	500

Figure 6.1: 1999 National Average Scores for 12th Grade, Third International Mathematics & Science Study

Source: http://www.nces.ed.gov/timss

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¹ American Federation of Teachers, "Lessons from the World: What TIMSS Tells Us About Mathematics Achievement, Curriculum, and Instruction." *Educational Issues Policy Brief* (Washington D.C., November 1999).

8th grade performance —Students in the United States who took the 8th grade mathematics assessments also performed below the international average and ranked 28th out of 41 participating countries. The TIMSS study found that 8th grade mathematics classes in the United States are not as advanced and not as focused as those in Japan and Germany. Further, topics taught in American 8th grade mathematics classrooms are at a 7th grade level by international standards.

Comparisons between mathematics and science achievement of 8th graders between 1995 and 1999 are made between the nations that participated at the 8th-grade level in both TIMSS 1995 and TIMSS 1999. These results indicate that between 1995 and 1999, there was no change in 8th-grade mathematics and science achievement in the United States.

4th grade performance — American 4th-grade students, however, performed above the international average in mathematics, ranking 12th out of 26 countries. A United States Department of Education study, *Pursuing Excellence*, explains that a combination of factors create an educational environment that nurtures above-average performance in mathematics in the early grades, including, but not limited to:

- American 4th-grade students spend more time in class per week learning mathematics and science than do their average international counterparts
- American students use calculators and computers in mathematics class more frequently than do students in most other TIMSS countries.
- 4th-grade math teachers in America have more university training than their counterparts in most TIMSS countries.
- More American 4th graders believe it is important to do well in math and science and have confidence about their performance in these subjects than their international counterparts.²

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the "Nation's Report Card," is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Both NAEP and TIMSS hold students to very high standards, allowing policymakers, educators, parents, and students to measure more accurately how U.S. students perform in comparison to their national and international peers. Such comparisons are become increasingly important as the U.S. economy becomes more global. In effect, today's students are not just competing with each other for jobs; they are competing with the world's students, and must measure up accordingly.

- The 2003 NAEP Math results show that Alabama is performing below the national average in 4th and 8th grade math.
- The NAEP national average for 4th grade students is 32% at or above proficient.³ For 8th grade students the national average drops to 27% at or above proficient.
- The NAEP results show that 19 percent of Alabama's 4th graders performed at or above proficient, while only 16% of 8th grade math students and 18% of 8th grade science students scored at or above proficient.
- Only two states had lower percentages of 8th grade students scoring at or above proficient than Alabama on the 2003 NAEP math test.
- In terms of trend analysis, at 4th grade 46% of students scored at the basic level (below proficient) and 35% scored *below basic*. By 8th grade, the number scoring at the *basic* level decreased to 37% while the number scoring *below basic* increased to 47%.

 ² Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S. Fourth-Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context (1997), U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
 ³ On the NAEP assessment, the highest level of performance is "advanced," followed by "proficient," followed by "basic," and

³ On the NAEP assessment, the highest level of performance is "advanced," followed by "proficient," followed by "basic," and ending with "below basic" (nces.ed.gov). It is important to note that the "proficient" level can be translated to "at gradelevel," meaning that students scoring at "basic" and "below basic" levels on NAEP have not mastered the skills required of them in their current grade level.

Figure 6.2: Regional Comparison of 2003 Math and 2000 Science NAEP Scores

	AL	U.S	FL	GA	MS	NC	TN	ТХ	
Student Achievement (Percent scoring at or above "proficient")									
4th Grade NAEP Math (2003)	19	32	31	27	17	41	24	33	
8th Grade NAEP Math (2003)	16	27	23	21	12	32	21	25	
8th Grade NAEP Science (2000)	22	30	NA	23	15	27	25	23	
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/									

Current Alabama Initiatives to Improve Math and Science Performance

The state of Alabama has implemented several initiatives designed to enhance instruction and improve student learning in math and science. A few of these initiatives are described below.

Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) – The Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) was created by the State Department of Education to help all students in Grades K-12 develop the math, science and technology skills necessary for success in higher education and in the workforce.

AMSTI provides classroom teachers with the materials, equipment, technology, and supplies needed to deliver high-quality, activity-based instruction. Such resources as labware, chemicals, math manipulatives, graphing calculators and computers with data-collecting probes are delivered to the classroom door, as needed. Such resources enable students to learn math, science and technology through actual hands-on activities and real-life experiences.

AMSTI also provides extensive teacher training linked directly to the resources during twoweek Summer Institutes for two consecutive summers. Specifically, the institutes strengthen content knowledge of teachers, train them to use proven instructional methods and strategies, and help them better assess student progress and use the results to structure future lessons. AMSTI also gives teachers on-site support and mentoring throughout the year. Such support is essential if teachers are to gain the confidence and skills necessary to put their newly acquired knowledge and resources into practice.

A 2004 evaluation of AMSTI shows that the program is working and making a major difference in the way math and science are being taught. The study compared the performance of 20 AMSTI schools and 111 non-AMSTI schools in the nine school systems where AMSTI was implemented in the 2002-2003 school year. The report indicated test scores of students attending AMSTI schools were higher in most cases than scores of students enrolled in non-AMSTI schools. The report shows that students who attend AMSTI schools also made slight gains in reading and writing.

Specific results include:

- Students in AMSTI schools in Grades 3-5 scored 10 points or higher in math and science on the *Stanford 10* than non-AMSTI students.
- Students in AMSTI schools in Grades 7-8 scored 5-7 points or higher in math and science on the *Stanford 10* than non-AMSTI students.
- Students in AMSTI schools in Grades 3-5 and 7-8 scored higher in reading on the Stanford 10 than non-AMSTI students.

The Alabama High School Graduation Exam passing rate of high school juniors taking the math and science portions of the exam increased 5% – 8% after their school became an AMSTI school.⁴

The pilot AMSTI sites include three of the state's 11 regions and were almost entirely funded by federal and private sources: University of South Alabama (USA) in Mobile, University of North Alabama (UNA) in Florence, and University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH). As of July 2004, there were 72 official AMSTI schools with all teachers of math and science trained (1,600 teachers and administrators). This provides 42,000 students with the teaching and tools needed to excel in math, science and technology. This funding for AMSTI expires in mid-2005.

Mobile Math Initiative – The Mobile Math Initiative (MMI) is an innovative research-based program that that relies heavily on intensive professional development for teachers. The initiative is a partnership between the Mobile Area Education Foundation and the Mobile County Public School System, the Alabama State Department of Education, SERVE, SARIC, BellSouth, the Disney Foundation and the University of South Alabama. Students and teachers participating in MMI use math in reading, language development, creative writing and art to deepen understanding and improve learning.

At Maryvale Elementary, one of four pilot sites for the MMI, 95% of students are on free or reduced lunch. However, there is no achievement gap (*For an explanation of traditional achievement gaps in Alabama, see Chapter 3: Closing the Achievement Gap*). The school's average score on the SAT-9 in 2003 was 64, well above the state average of 50 and even higher than some of Mobile's more affluent schools. Currently, the MMI is being piloted in other school districts across Alabama, including Decatur City Schools, Hoover City Schools and Montgomery County Schools.

Other locally based math and science initiatives include:

- Greater Birmingham Mathematics Partnership and TEAM Math in Auburn
- The Hands On Activity Science Program, which is a nationally recognized model for elementary science instruction that was developed by North Alabama districts via University of Alabama in Huntsville.
- The Science in Motion mobile lab facilitated through the 11 regional in-service centers to provide professional development to science teachers.

Despite the emergence of local and regional initiatives, Alabama still lacks funding for a systematic approach towards implementing and funding math and science initiatives. Unlike the statewide reading initiative, there is no full-scale implementation of math or science related interventions. Based on the state-level picture painted by the NAEP data, and the promising results attained by the 42,000 AMSTI students, there are indeed great opportunities to initiate a coordinated, systematic state-wide program to enhance the math and science learning of all students in Alabama.

The Role of Standards and Accountability

Over the past decade, and in response to No Child Left Behind, states have adopted standards and implemented accountability measures that demand results from students, educators and schools. But the attention focused on accountability may not be matched with the support students, teachers and schools need. In order to meet the benchmarks set by the federal legislation, states should have clear and specific standards and aligned assessments in all the grades and subjects tested (*See Chapter 1 on Accountability, Assessments, and Standards*).

⁴ Alabama State Department of Education, http://www.alsde.edu

How does Alabama Compare? – Only three states provide clear and specific standards in all core subjects at all grade levels. Interestingly, Alabama only falls short in high school science. Alabama is among the seven states that provide extra funding for all low-performing schools and is among the nine states that finance remediation for failing students. The most notable is provided by the High Hopes program, which received \$5.8 million in FY 2005. Finally, Alabama is among the 18 states that require an exit exam for a diploma. However, the science and math content is based on standards below a 10th grade level.⁴

Education Technology in Alabama

As the need for innovative technology grows increasingly more important in students' everyday lives, it is necessary that schools across the nation prepare students for this technological age. The federal *No Child Left Behind* Act calls for a revision of the national technology plan, the third such rewriting of the plan since 1996. The plan is intended to set a nationwide strategic direction for technology's place in schools. Administration officials, who are gathering input from K-12 and college educators, business officials, students, and others before revising that blueprint, predict the new strategy will underscore the goals of the federal education law.

Data on the use of technology in Alabama's classrooms was gathered through surveys of teachers and administrators, namely *Indicators for Measuring Progress in Advancing Classroom Technology* (*IMPACT*) and Taking a Good Look at Instructional Technology (TAGLIT).⁶ Key findings as of November 2003 include:

- > 80% of respondents said Internet connectivity in their schools is generally reliable, and 60% said they are able to search their library media center from their classrooms.
- > 64% of respondents indicated that they are involved in inquiry-based projects using technology, and 56% report student work on technology projects that reflect real-world issues.
- > 34% of responding teachers say their instruction routinely includes a variety of technology tools, and 50% of the teachers responding to the TAGLIT survey indicated they either do not use or are just beginning to use technology in their teaching and learning.
- > 70% of IMPACT respondents believe their school systems offer adequate technology professional development, yet 90% indicated that professional development is limited in duration from 0 to 9 hours.
- Since 2000, the ratio of students per computer has dropped from 11.5 students per computer to 8.2 students per computer. Nationally, the target ratio is 5 students per computer.

Technology Standards for Administrators. In an effort to support technological advancement in schools, the Alabama State Board of Education approved several standards for school administrators, but the main emphasis was placed on assessment and evaluation. School administrators must demonstrate the following abilities concerning technology and effective assessment and evaluation:

- > The collection, analysis and interpretation of data and communication of findings to improve instructional practice and student learning
- The use of assessment of staff knowledge, skills and performance in using technology to facilitate quality professional development and guide personnel decisions

⁵ Alabama Course of Study for Science and Mathematics, Alabama State Department of Education. Found online at http://www.alsde.edu

⁶ Indicators for Measuring Progress in Advancing Classroom Technology (IMPACT) is a survey designed to measure the extent to which educators and teachers are meeting the state's objectives for integrating technology across the curriculum. Taking a Good Look at Instructional Technology (TAGLIT) survey was developed to help principals and other school leaders gather, analyze and report information about how technology is used for teaching and learning in their schools.

Assessment and evaluation of, using multiple methods, appropriate uses of technology resources for learning, communication and productivity

Technology Standards for Teachers. The Alabama State Board of Education also approved standards for Alabama's teachers. The standards include, but are not limited to, these abilities:

- > To use technology tools for instruction, student assessment, management, reporting purposes and communication with parents/guardians of students
- > Facilitate students' individual and collaborative use of technologies to locate, collect, create, produce, communicate and present information
- To design, manage and facilitate learning experiences and incorporate technologies that are responsive to diversity of learners, learning styles and special needs of all students
- Evaluate students' technology proficiency and students' technology-based products within curricular areas

Professional development opportunities offered throughout the year give teachers the option to increase their knowledge of technology to meet standards outlined in Alabama's Technology Course of Study.

Although standards and statistics indicate that there have been improvements in public school technology, Alabama continues to lag behind most states. *Education Week* found that only two states-Maine and Pennsylvania-are providing state money for programs that distribute laptops or handheld computing devices. Michigan also has a wireless handheld and laptop computer program, but because of cuts in spending, the "Freedom to Learn" program is being funded only by federal dollars this year.⁵

Alabama provides a per-teacher allocation of \$181 for technology in public schools. Schools can combine the money or allow individual teachers to spend it as they choose for technology-related purposes in their classrooms. The money was eliminated from the education budget in FY2004 due to a statewide financial crisis. However, the Alabama State Legislature restored these funds to their previous level for FY 2005.

Compared to other states in the Southeast, Alabama has the highest ratio of students per instructional computer, and the state also maintains the highest ratio of students per instructional computer in high-poverty schools.

The main obstacle for technological advancement in Alabama's public schools is inadequate funding. Middle-range schools seem to bear the largest burden concerning technological advancement. Many extremely poor schools obtain grants to support their hardware and software needs, while the more affluent districts garner parental support to meet their technological needs. However, systems that fall in the middle of this range find it hardest to lower their student per computer ratios. Further, the lack of relevant and sustained professional development and technological support results in some computers being under-utilized or not being used at all.

⁵ "Global Links: Lessons from the World," Technology Counts 2004, Education Week, May 2004.

Figure 6.4: National and Regional Comparisons of Technology Use and Access

	U.S.	AL	GA	KY	NC	SC	TN
ers							
Statewide	4.0	4.9	4.1	3.9	4.6	4.0	4.5
High-poverty schools	4.2	5.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.7	-
High-minority schools	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.6	4.4	3.7	-
Classrooms	7.9	8.2	7.2	7.4	9.0	7.7	7.9
Computer labs	12.6	15.6	16.4	11.1	13.6	11.3	18.2
Libraries/media centers	57.0	61.6	65.4	46.6	58.5	54.5	73.6
Windows 3.1 or 95	23.0	25.0	27.0	36.0	26.0	28.0	29.0
Windows 98	48.0	58.0	46.0	38.0	55.0	53.0	52.0
Windows 2000, NT, or XP	29.0	17.0	27.0	26.0	19.0	19.0	19.0
Statewide	4.8	5.7	4.6	4.2	5.6	4.5	5.8
High-poverty schools	5.3	6.0	4.5	5.1	4.9	4.7	_
High-minority schools	5.6	5.1	4.6	7.9	5.3	4.8	_
Statewide	4.3	5.3	4.6	4.2	5.1	4.2	5.1
High-poverty schools	4.7	5.7	4.4	4.4	4.7	4.3	_
High-minority schools	4.9	4.9	4.4	5.4	5.1	4.4	_
Classrooms	8.4	9.5	7.8	8.8	10.7	8.7	8.6
Computer labs	13.2	17.7	17.7	11.9	14.3	11.7	19.7
Libraries/media centers	56.7	64.3	66.9	51.2	57.5	54.5	73.3
Statewide	98.0	97.0	98.0	99.0	98.0	99.0	99.0
High-poverty schools	98.0	98.0	99.0	99.0	99.0	98.0	_
High-minority schools	97.0	96.0	98.0	100.0	98.0	98.0	_
Statewide	92.0	94.0	93.0	95.0	95.0	97.0	94.0
High-poverty schools	93.0	95.0	96.0	97.0	95.0	97.0	_
High-minority schools	91.0	96.0	96.0	94.0	93.0	96.0	_
Statewide	80.0	75.0	81.0	75.0	78.0	89.0	58.0
High-poverty schools	78.0	74.0	81.0	73.0	75.0	86.0	_
	70.0	75.0	05.0	500	72.0	06.0	
High-minority schools	79.0	75.0	00.0	30.0	75.0	00.0	_
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	U.S.	AL	GA	KY	NC	SC	TN
PDAs and Laptops							
State finances wireless/handheld technology program for teachers or students (2003-04)							
Percent of schools with handheld PDAs for teachers (2003)	7.6	9.6	8.2	6.5	8.0	9.1	2.7
Percent of schools with handheld PDAs for students (2003)	3.5	2.8	3.6	3.5	3.4	7.9	1.4
State finances student laptop-computer program (2003-04)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Percent of instructional computers that are laptops (2003)	12.4	5.8	13.9	6.2	10.1	10.3	10.4
ource: Technology Counts 2004, Education Week, May 2004							

Distance Learning

As in other states, some Alabama schools can offer courses that other schools are not able to offer. For example, a suburban school may be able to offer French, Chinese, Russian History, Physics and a host of AP courses while a rural school may not be able to offer any of these. Distance learning through modern technology allows students at this rural school (or any other school in the state) access to the same course offerings as the students in the suburban school. Through video and online courses, students have the possibility of learning almost any subject matter. Online distance learning classes have also become a popular means of offering college-prep courses such as foreign language or upper level math to high school students.

Career/Technical Education

Alabama's Career/Technical Education (CTE) Program serves more than 160,000 Alabama students who take one or more courses in 2,138 programs in schools across Alabama. According to SDE figures, nearly half of all Alabama high school students enroll in at least one CTE Program.⁶

Goals of Alabama's CTE Program are:

- Improve the image of Career/Technical Education
- Provide relevant and focused professional development
- > Establish and maintain effective partnerships to promote workforce development
- Provide leadership for the continuous development and utilization of rigorous, progressive and research-based Career/Technical Education curricula
- Recruit and retain highly qualified career/technical teachers and administrators
- Increase the academic skills of career/technical students
- > Meet or exceed the minimum requirements of state and federal legislation
- > Improve articulation with postsecondary education
- Enhance and support the use of technology

⁶ "Career/technical Education annual report," Alabama State Department of Education, 2004.

In 1997, the CTE Program at the SDE embarked on a five-year process to obtain Business/ Industry Certification (BIC). This process involved providing retraining to more than 2,500 teachers, the expenditure of \$20 million in bond funds to provide the same equipment used in the workplace and an additional \$22 million annually in federal funds to implement the plan. By December 2003, all of Alabama's CTE programs were business/industry certified.

Additionally, Alabama's CTE program is the only state-level education organization to achieve International Organizations for Standardization (ISO) certification. This process recognizes organizations that can link business objectives with operating effectiveness. These two certifications — BIC and ISO — are important tools used by the Alabama Development Office and the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama to recruit new industries into the state.

Conclusion

Alabama has developed some innovative strategies to improve performance in Math, Science, and Technology; however, the state can do more to prepare students for the increasingly technologically oriented jobs of 21st century.

This chapter was developed by Sheneka Williams and Patrick Schuermann.

Additional Resources

National Contacts

Third International Mathematics & Science Study National Center for Education Statistics <u>http://nces.ed.gov/timss</u>

The National Assessment of Educational Programs National Center for Education Statistics <u>http://nces.ed.gov/nces</u>

American Federation of Teachers Standards and Accountability Measures <u>http://www.aft.org</u>

Technology Counts 2001: The New Divides http://www.edweek.org/sreports/tc01/tc2001 default.html

Technology Counts 2004: Global Links http://www.edweek.org/sreports/tc04/article.cfm?slug=35exec.h23

"Computers and Classrooms" Report Educational Testing Service Rosedale Road, Princeton, NJ 08541-0001, 609-734-5694 <u>http://www.ets.org</u> National Science Foundation 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22230, 703-306-1234 <u>http://www.nsf.gov</u>

The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund US Department of Education http://www.ed.gov/Technology/TLCF/

State Contacts

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Cynthia Brown, Curriculum Coordinator, Classroom Improvement, 5351 Gordon Persons Building, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101 <u>cbrown@alsde.edu</u>

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Alabama Career Technical Education Program: http://www.alcareertech.org

No Child Left Behind

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Key Policy Points

- Many of the components of No Child Left Behind were previously required of states and school districts under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994.
- > Generally, NCLB has increased the federal funding for Alabama's education system.
- No Child Left Behind holds states accountable for increased federal funding to states, but states will not lose money if they fail to meet the AYP goals.
- Alabama has an altered timeline for implementing the regulations under No Child Left Behind because Alabama's previous assessment system, created following the 1994 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), is in transition to meet requirements for a Compliance Agreement under the 1994 ESEA, or the *Improving America's Schools* Act.
- > NCLB holds all states responsible for ensuring that all students are held to the same high standards and gives states flexibility in determining their standards.
- NCLB regulations are intended to decrease the achievement gaps between minority students, low-income students and their peers.

For concise definitions to education-related terms, see the Educationary at the back of this primer.

Background of No Child Left Behind

On January 8, 2002, the revised *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* was signed into law with the support of both Democrats and Republicans in Congress. The intent of the law is to ensure that states receiving federal subsidies for public education show progress in academic achievement among all groups of students, especially poor and minority students. NCLB was built on the foundation of the 1994 reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, which aspired to the same goal but which lacked the "teeth" to make states comply. This new law, which combines requirements, incentives and resources, poses enormous challenges to the states. *NCLB* requires states to expand testing, renovate accountability systems and ensure that each classroom is staffed by a teacher qualified to teach in his or her subject area. The law places more pressure on states to make definite progress each year in raising the percentage of students deemed proficient in various subjects and in narrowing the test-score gap among students of different racial and economic backgrounds. States are also required to incorporate scientifically based research to improve school quality and student performance. In sum, *NCLB* holds states receiving federal funding responsible for ensuring that all students are held to high standards and high levels of achievement. And the message is clear: states must show progress in student achievement in order to continue to receive federal funds.

	1994 ESEA Law	2002 ESEA Law (NCLB)
Standards and Assessments	States are required to develop state-defined assessments and identify schools in need of improvement	The same as ESEA 1994
Data Collection	States are required to collect data on the achievement of all students including subgroups (e.g., economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, children with limited English proficiency and children from each major ethnic and racial group)	The same as ESEA 1994, however, under NCLB states are required to publicly report the disaggregated data (by the different student subgroups)
Testing	<i>Required three times: once in grades</i> 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12	Beginning in 2005-06, states are required to test each year from grades 3-8 and once in grades 10-12
Accountability	States set up their own accountability systems. There was no specific focus on closing the achievement gaps.	Each state and district is responsible for ensuring that students meet the state standard for proficient by 2013-14. Schools must disaggregate the data to ensure that all student groups are making adequate progress and closing the achievement gaps.
Consequences	States set up their own accountability States were supposed to develop systems for requiring change in low-performing schools.	States, schools and districts are required to focus attention and resources on schools identified as needing improvement. Parents have options of transferring their children to higher performing schools or receive supplemental education services at school expense.
Teacher Quality	Not included	Requires states to define a qualified teacher and to ensure that low-income and minority students are not disproportionately taught by inexperienced, unqualified or out-of-field teachers.

Alabama was one of many states that did not comply with the 1994 ESEA requirements. As a result, Alabama is one of five states operating under a Compliance Agreement that will enable it to meet the Title I (see Figure 7.3) requirements under the 1994 ESEA. Since Alabama is transitioning from an earlier assessment system that does not comply with Title I requirements, the state has a unique time-line for meeting the *NCLB* requirements that does not correspond with federal guidelines or the time-line for the majority of states.

¹ ESEA: Myths versus Realities - Answers to Common Questions about the New No Child Left Behind Act (Washington D.C.: The Education Trust, 2001).

NCLB Funding

Funding for *No Child Left Behind* is divided into 10 categories or "titles" (see Figure 7.3). States are awarded grants-in-aid in these categories to fund programs and initiatives that fit within the title guidelines. Should states choose to receive this funding, they are bound to the requirements listed on page 3 and ultimately must show progress in student achievement in all subgroups of students.

NCLB Not an "Unfunded Mandate" – Critics of *NCLB* claim that the law is an unfunded mandate by the federal government and that the lack of additional dollars allocated to states to meet the stringent requirements will have a negative impact on student achievement. However, the General Accounting Office (GAO) recently released a report examining federal statues enacted and final rules issued in 2001 and 2002 to determine whether they are "unfunded mandates." *No Child Left Behind* was included in this study.

The GAO defines an unfunded mandate as "federal statutes and regulations that require nonfederal parties to expend resources to achieve legislative goals without being provided federal funding to cover the costs."² *NCLB* does not meet this definition because the requirements of the law are a condition of federal financial assistance and because "any costs incurred by state, local or tribal governments would result from complying with the conditions of financial aid."³ In other words, states must meet the *NCLB* requirements only if they choose to receive financial assistance under *NCLB*. Because states can refuse the federal dollars, *NCLB* is not considered a mandate.

NCLB Increases Alabama Funding – The funds Alabama received under *No Child Left Behind* are used for Title I programs, the Alabama Reading First Initiative, and programs to improve teacher quality. Figure 7.2 below shows the growth of Alabama's education spending under *NCLB*.

Figure 7.2: Total Funds Received By Alabama Under No Child Left Behind					
2001 Actual	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	2005 Estimate	FY 2001 to 2005 Percent Change
\$205,375,104	\$271,263,779	\$308,876,964	\$319,927,232	\$324,577,324	+38%

Figure 7.3: Summary of No Child Left Behind (2002-2003)

Title I	Intended to ensure that ALL children have the opportunity to obtain a high-quality
Aid for Disadvantaged	education by focusing on:
Children	 Challenging state academic standards, high quality assessments and
	high-quality accountability systems
	High-quality teachers, programs and instructional materials (based on
	scientifically-based research)
	Closing the achievement gap and improving low-performing schools
	Reading First programs and increasing parental involvement

Alabama received more than \$160 million in Title I funding*

² "Unfunded Mandates: Analysis of Reform Act Coverage" (Washington D.C.: General Accounting Office, May 2004).

³ General Accounting Office, May 2004.

⁴ Overview of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts: School Year 2001-02. National Center for Education Statistics (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Title II	
Teacher Quality, Principal	Intended to improve student achievement through:
Quality and Instructional	 Improving teacher and principal quality
Technology	 Increasing professional development programs focused on math and science education
	Aligning mathematics and science curricula with state and local standards
	Alabama received \$45.2 million in federal funding to support skilled educators*
Title III	
Language Instruction for	Intended to improve the achievement of English language learners (ELL) by:
Limited English	 Holding schools accountable for the progress of ELL students
Proficient and Immigrant Students	 Establishing annual goals and objectives to raise the English proficiency of English language learners
	 Requiring the language instruction curricula used to teach the English language learners to be effective and grounded in scientifically based research
	Notifying the parents of the child's program placement
	Alabama received \$380,000 in federal funding*
Title IV	
Safe Schools and	Intended to provide a safe and drug-free learning environment for the students
After-School Learning	and school personnel through:
Opportunities	Development of appropriate drug and violence prevention programs
(21st Century Schools)	Increasing parental and community involvement in drug and
	violence prevention
	Increasing counseling, mentoring and referral services Alabama received \$4.5 million to support safe and drug-free schools*
Title V	
Promoting Informed	Intended to provide school choice options to parents and keep parents informed
Parental Choice and	of their child's learning progress and school environment. These funds are flexible
Innovative Programs	and intended to support states and LEAs in implementing educational reform
	initiatives and school improvement initiatives.
	Alabama received approximately \$5.7 million in federal funding*
Title VI	
Student Testing and	Intended to assess students' academic knowledge through tests aligned with the
Assessment	core curricula. Funds may be used to develop appropriate and aligned assessments.
	Alabama received approximately \$10.5 million in federal funding*
	The Indian Education program supports the efforts of local school districts, Indian
Rural and Native	unders and organizations, possecondary institutions, and other entities to meet the
	Alaska Native students so that they can meet the same challenging state student
	academic achievement standards as all other students.
	Alabama received approximately \$1.7 million in federal funding*
Title VIII	Impact Aid provides financial assistance to school districts affected by federal
Impact Aid	activities.
	Alabama received approximately \$3.8 million in federal funding*
Title IX	This section includes general provisions that affect all programs under the
General Provisions/	No Child Left Behind Act as well as including the Unsafe School Choice Option.
Definitions	· · · · · ·
Title X	This program is intended to ensure that homelessness does not cause these
Homeless Children	children to be left behind in school.

Source: Alabama State Department of Education.⁵

* Funding figures are from the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

⁵ Federal program FAQs, Alabama State Department of Education. Found online at: http://www.alsde.edu/html/sections/faqs.asp?section=57&sort=1&footer=sections.
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

*No Child Left Behind*⁶ strengthens the federal accountability provisions to ensure that states, districts and schools effectively teach all students. States are required to set clear timelines for improving student achievement and closing the achievement gaps between low-income and minority students and their peers. One of the accountability requirements aimed at improving student achievement for all students is the reporting of adequate yearly progress (AYP).

States Responsible for AYP Definitions – Each state is responsible for defining what constitutes AYP in increasing student achievement toward the goal of all students reaching proficient levels on the state assessments by 2014. Under *NCLB*, each state sets its own goals for all schools and students. These goals must be the same for each school and for each student subgroup. This ensures that it is no longer acceptable to maintain low expectations for previously low-performing schools or for previously low-performing groups of students.



Figure 7.4: Adequate Yearly Progress in Alabama

Under NCLB, progress will be expected from all student groups. The 2003-04 academic year is established as the baseline year for measuring "Adequate Yearly Progress." By 2013-14, 100% of students from each subgroup will be expected to reach proficiency in all subjects. For more information on established starting points from 2003-2004, please visit the Alabama State Department of Education's website at http://www.alsde.edu and see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments and Standards.

⁶ No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, United States Congress. Found online at: http://www.ed.gov/policy/else/leg/esea02/index.html.

The state must establish a starting point for the percentage of students who must be at the proficient level. The level may be based on the lowest achieving schools (i.e., schools at the 20th percentile) or lowest achieving demographic subgroup in the state (e.g. economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, children with limited English proficiency, and children from each major ethnic and racial group). After the starting point and target year are set, the state must raise the proficiency level in gradual increments to reach the 100 percent of students performing at the proficient level by 2014.

Proficiency Targets Set for All Students – Specific proficiency targets must be set for all public school students, including the subgroups to ensure that all children are making progress. *All* students (regardless of subgroup membership) are held to the *same* high standards. Achieving gains in proficiency within each subgroup constitutes adequate yearly progress for each state. Therefore, if at least one subgroup does not meet the AYP target, the school does not meet its AYP objective.

AYP Not Measured Only by Testing – States must choose another academic indicator in addition to standardized tests to be included in the AYP formula. For elementary schools, states have several options. However, the academic indicator for secondary schools is graduation rates. States may add additional indicators, but these indicators may only assist in identifying more schools in need of improvement and not reduce the number of schools identified for improvement based on the two required indicators. In Alabama the additional academic indicators will include reaching or making improvement toward the following goals:

- 95% attendance rates for Grades 3-8
- High school graduation rate (90 percent goal)

Figure 7.5: Safe Harbor Provision

NCLB provides a safe harbor for schools that meet AYP goals overall, but where one or more subgroups fail to make AYP. The Safe Harbor provisions is relative to the baseline year (2003-2004) and will be applicable in 2004-2005 and subsequent years. Schools will meet AYP under safe harbor if:

- The percentage of students in each subgroup who failed to reach proficient level has decreased by at least 10 percent
- \succ For secondary schools, the targeted increase in graduation was met
- \succ For elementary schools, progress on the state's other academic indicator was met
- Progress was met on any additional indicators adopted by the state

There are two ways for a school to make AYP:

1. If a school's actual achievement is at or above the state goal in a given year for all subgroups

2. If a school or group of students does not meet the AYP goals, but the number of students below proficient is reduced by 10 percent (see Safe Harbor Provision in Figure 7.5). Therefore, schools may make AYP if they make adequate progress towards their goals

Establishing Baselines for AYP – In Alabama, the results of the 2003-2004 assessments will be used to establish the baselines for AYP determinations (i.e., the proficiency/achievement levels). The starting point will be determined by choosing the higher of the following two scores:

1. The score of the school at the 20th percentile of all Alabama schools (Schools will be ranked lowest to highest based on test scores and then divided into percentiles based on the number of schools). For example, if ABC Junior High ranked at the 20th percentile and the school's average SAT-10 score was 27, the state starting point for determining AYP would be 27. Schools scoring above would have made AYP. Those scoring below would not meet AYP goals for 2003-2004.

2. The score of the lowest performing subgroup in the state. For example, if the state average SAT-10 score for students with disabilities was 25, then that score would be the starting point for AYP.

Alabama Assessments for AYP – For the 2003-04 school year, those schools or school systems scoring at or above the baseline in all subgroups will be considered to have made AYP, while the schools or school systems scoring below the baseline in one or more subgroups will not have met AYP based on the following assessments:

- Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) (Grades 4, 6, and 8)
- Alabama High School Graduation Exam (Grade 11)
- Alabama Alternate Assessment⁷ (AAA) (Grades 4, 6, 8, and 11)

The results for the above assessments will be reported separately for reading and mathematics for all students, including disaggregated results for the required student subgroups. *Reporting disaggregated data simply means that the test scores and other measures must be broken down by race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, students with disabilities, and English language learners.* By disaggregating the data, we are able to tell which students need additional help and in which subject areas.

In Alabama, measurable objectives will be established identifying the minimum percentage of students who must meet or exceed academic content standards. Additionally, 95% of all students in a school must take the assessments. If schools do not meet the AYP academic or participation objectives, states are required to provide assistance. Schools receiving Title I funds must also inform the parents of the children attending a school labeled as "needing improvement." If schools do not improve after six years, states are responsible for providing graduated sanctions during that period to ensure the necessary fundamental changes in instruction are made.

For more information on assessments in Alabama and around the country, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments and Standards.

Assessment and Accountability

NCLB uses standards, assessments and accountability systems as a way to equalize educational opportunity. States must adopt high-quality assessments that are aligned with their academic standards and curriculum so that the assessment results reflect what the students should know and be able to do. All students in the same grade level throughout each state must take the same test once a year. By testing students each year, states can assess how well teachers are teaching and students are learning.

Figure 7.6: Alabama ⁴	's Academic Achievement Levels	
Level IV	Exceeds academic content standards	proficient
Level III	Meets academic content standards	proficient
Level II	Partially meets academic content standards	not proficient
Level I	Does not meet academic content standards	not proficient

States submitted their accountability plans for approval and review in January 2003. These accountability plans included goals for student performance, assessments for measuring the students' progress toward these goals, methods for identifying schools and districts that do not meet their AYP targets, methods to inform parents on the status of their schools and school choice options for students in failing schools.⁸ Although *NCLB* delineates many requirements that must be met in the state accountability systems, the law also allows considerable flexibility for states to devise their own specific plans.

In their individual accountability plans, states are required to set clear timelines on improving student achievement with the specific goal of closing achievement gaps. States have expressed concern about closing certain achievement gaps. Specifically, states have been particularly concerned with demonstrating AYP for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELL) because of the way these subgroups are defined and constituted. The ELL subgroup cannot reach 100 percent proficiency because a portion of ELL students will by definition always be below proficiency. Recent changes to the law have mitigated this by allowing states to include scores of ELL students for two years after they become proficient and exit the ELL program (see page 10). Also, adopting the appropriate assessments and testing accommodations for ELL students and students with disabilities may present the state with additional monetary difficulties as well as curricular-alignment difficulties.

Alabama and Assessments – According to the Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama's accountability program will be based primarily on academic assessments. Significant changes are occurring in Alabama's assessment system; however, changes will be implemented gradually. Newly developed criterion-referenced assessments will be phased in as they are developed. Criterion-referenced tests compare a student's performance to a specific standard of acceptable performance instead of the performance of other students (i.e., norm-referenced). For a detailed explanation of criterion- and norm-referenced testing, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments, and Standards.

Students in grades 3-11 will be given the Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Edition along with a set of questions developed by the State Department of Education to accurately measure student knowledge of the state courses of study. Together, these criterion-referenced items are known as the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT). The following list indicates the grades that academic assessments will be given after the assessments are fully phased into the Accountability system following the 2004-05 school year.

⁸ From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 2 of the No Child Left Behind Act (Washington D.C.: Center on Education Policy, 2004).

- Passing all required subject areas of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE). Students begin taking the AHSGE in 10th grade and have multiple chances to pass all subject areas.
- Reading
 Grades 3-8 and 11
 Mathematics
 Grades 3-8 and 11
- Science Grades 5, 7, and 11

For more information on how these assessments will be phased into the state accountability system, see Chapter 1: Accountability, Assessments, and Standards.

In addition to state assessments, *No Child Left Behind* requires that as a condition of receiving federal funds, states administer the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math and reading assessments to a sample of fourth and eighth-grade students in the state every two years beginning in 2002-03.⁹ This data will allow Alabama to compare the performance of its students with the performance of students from other states.

Assessment of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners — Although all students are held to the same high standards under NCLB, Alabama may use an alternative assessment for students with disabilities. The Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA) is used to measure the student's mastery of his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and benchmarks. The alternative assessment appropriately accommodates the student's needs so that the assessment accurately measures the students' proficiency level. The four academic achievement levels are used when reporting the scores for the Alabama Alternate Assessment. Students who are severely cognitively disabled are exempt from the testing.

Approximately 1% of students enrolled in Alabama's public schools qualify as English language learners (ELL). According to data from the Alabama State Department of Education, this population is growing each year. Although *NCLB* allows states to test ELL students in their native languages to assess content knowledge, Alabama has concluded that it is not "practicable" to consider assessing students in a language other than English.¹⁰ However, Alabama is working with the United States Department of Education to investigate other alternative assessments to ensure appropriate testing of English language learners.

As of 2004, states are allowed to include in the ELL subgroup students who have attained English proficiency for up to two years. This is an option for states and would give states the flexibility to allow schools and local education agencies (LEAs) to get credit for improving English language proficiency from year to year.

Alabama and Accountability – In compliance with *NCLB*, all of the required subgroups must be included in Alabama's accountability system and the schools and school systems will be held accountable for progress of each student subgroup (i.e., economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, children with limited English proficiency and children from each major ethnic and racial group). A minimum number of 40 students are required for inclusion in the accountability calculation for a school or school system. For example, if a school has only 35 students classified as special education, this group will not be included in the accountability system for that school. These 35 students will,

⁹ No Child Left Behind: A Parents Guide, Office of Secretary, Office of Public Affairs, (Washington D.C.: United States Department of Education, 2003).

 ¹⁰ Consolidated State Application for state grants under Title IX, Part C, Section 9302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Public Law 107-110). E. Richardson (Montgomery: Alabama State Department of Education, 2002).
 ¹¹ Richardson, 2002.

however, be calculated at the system level for inclusion into the system accountability system. Also, no scores will be reported for student subgroups with less than 10 students in order to protect the privacy of each student.¹¹

The accountability system will hold schools and school districts separately accountable for the performance of all subgroups in reading, math, writing, science and for passing all required subject-area tests of AHSGE).¹²

Schools and School Systems in Need of Improvement, Rewards and Sanctions

Each state is required to develop its own system of rewards and sanctions to ensure that all public schools and school districts receiving Title I funds are held accountable for meeting AYP. States must identify a school system in need of improvement if the district does not make adequate yearly progress two years in a row. The state must require the district identified in need of improvement to develop an improvement plan and must provide technical assistance to both the district and the school as the improvement plan is implemented. Each year, schools will be assessed to determine whether or not they are categorized as needing improvement.

If a school system does not make adequate yearly progress two years after the identification as a district in need, the state must authorize students to transfer to a higher performing school in another district and provide transportation. Figures 7.7 and 7.8 below describe the corrective action options available to states and schools in greater detail.



Figure 7.7: Corrective Action Options for States for System-Level Consequences

¹² Alabama Education News (Montgomery: Alabama Department of Education, April 2004).

Year of Failure to Make AYP	School Improvement Year	Corrective Action Options
1st Year		• Develop and implement an appropriate school improvement plan that directly impacts areas for which AYP was not made
2nd Year	Year 1	 Implement high-quality professional development Develop and implement an intensive and focused instructional program Implement supplemental educational services Any school receiving Title I, Part A funds must offer public school choice
3rd Year	Year 2	 Replace school staff who are relevant to failure to make AYP Decrease school-based decisions and assign a district-level staff person to oversee day-to-day operation of school's instructional program Decrease operational and/or instructional management authority at school level Any school receiving Title I, Part A funds must budget and allocate not less than 10% of its Title I for professional development Also, schools may implement corrective actions from Years 1 and 2 above
4th Year	Year 3	 Appoint an outside expert to oversee the day-to-day management of the school and to advise in decisions that impact making AYP Also, schools may implement corrective actions from Year 1 through 3 above
5th Year	Year	 Restructure the governance of the school and/or LEA Replace or restructure personnel Any other major restructuring of school governance is at the discretion of the State Department of Education Any school receiving Title I, Part A funds must continue to offer schools choice and implement supplemental education services

Figure 7.8: Corrective Action Options for Schools in Alabama

As of July 2004, Alabama was still in a transition phase regarding rewards and sanctions. The following governing principles for the rewards and sanction system have been defined and approved by the State Board of Education, although no specific targets and monetary rewards were determined at the release date of this chapter:

¹³ G. Turner, State Accountability Committee Report to Alabama State Board of Education, 2003.

Principles Governing Rewards -

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- 1. Rewards should apply to all schools that meet or exceed their annual measurable objectives or other growth expectations in accordance with the state's Accountability Plan.
- 2. Rewards should affirm professionalism and boost teacher morale.
- 3. Rewards should enhance the climate of a school.
- 4. Priority for rewards should be given to schools that face the greatest challenges.
- 5. A school's total faculty should make decisions about the use of cash awards.
- 6. The magnitude of the rewards should parallel the magnitude of the improvement.
- 7. Schools should be rewarded for substantially outperforming other schools with similar demographics.
- 8. Schools should be rewarded for substantial gains among subgroups that traditionally have been low performers, e.g. special education students, minority students, economically disadvantaged students, English language learners.
- 9. Options for the use and/or type of reward should be linked to school status, e.g., targeted professional development as determined by academic deficiencies for lower performing schools, recognition as a "lighthouse school" for higher achieving schools.
- 10. LEAs will be eligible for non-monetary rewards.

Principles Governing Sanctions –

- 1. Sanctions should result in increased learning opportunities for students.
- 2. The primary response to schools that are not making progress should be intensive support.
- 3. Sanctions should establish a priority for support that targets state assistance beginning in the first year of failure to make AYP.
- 4. Sanctions should fit the severity of the situation.

School Choice and Supplemental Services

No Child Left Behind provides funding for schools to develop and implement appropriate supplemental services and choice options. All Title I schools that are identified for improvement for the first year and subsequent years are required to give all students in these schools the option of transferring to a higher performing school in the district. If a school district does not have adequate capacity at the receiving schools, cooperative agreements with other school districts may be created to enable students to transfer to other districts; however, inter-district transfers are not compulsory under *NCLB*.

Figure 7.9: School Choice Quick Facts

- Less than 10% of school districts in the majority of the states have schools that were offering choice
- More urban school districts have at least one Title I school offering choice under NCLB than suburban or rural districts
- More identified schools in urban and suburban schools districts offer public school choice than the identified schools in rural districts
- Only about 1% of eligible students transferred schools in 2002-3 school year and 2% transferred in the 2003-4 school year under the school choice option

Source: Center on Education Policy, 2004¹⁴

NCLB requires that funds be earmarked to provide transportation and meet other costs associated with carrying out the choice provision under *NCLB*. Also, when offering school choice options is not feasible, schools identified for improvement for the first year may opt to offer supplemental services. Examples of supplemental services include in-school and after-school tutoring, enrichment activities and other academic support.

Figure 7.10: Supplemental Services Quick Facts 2002-03

- On average, rural districts have two approved supplemental service providers available to students, urban districts have six and suburban districts had five
- Approximately 46% of students who were eligible to participate in supplemental services actually received them
- Nationally, districts are encountering a variety of logistical issues in arranging the supplemental services

Source: Center on Education Policy, 2004

Schools and districts will not be required to offer school choice or supplemental services if they are not receiving federal funds under Title I. By accepting federal money under Title I, schools and districts agree to implement appropriate corrective actions if schools do not make AYP for a given year. Also, Title I schools will not lose or be deprived of federal money if states or schools do not reach their achievement goals; *NCLB* does not apply monetary penalties to schools in need of improvement, but instead provides funding for support services for such schools.¹⁵

Teacher Quality

Research has shown that no other aspect of schooling may have more of an impact on a student's education than the teachers.¹⁶ One of the goals of *NCLB* is to increase student achievement through elevating the quality of teachers, principals and staff through recruitment, hiring and retention strategies. According to *NCLB*, states must define a "highly qualified" teacher and devise a plan to ensure that all teachers teaching core academic subjects are "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

NCLB defines a "highly qualified" teacher as having a college degree, the ability to demonstrate content knowledge in their subjects and licensed or certified by their respective states. States may add to this definition. Figure 7.11 summarizes the *NCLB* requirements for highly qualified teachers.

¹⁴ Center on Education Policy, 2004.

¹⁵ ESEA: Myths versus Realities-Answers to Common Questions About the New No Child Left Behind Act (Washington D.C.: The Education Trust, 2003). Found online at: http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/D90C064A-C788-466C-992F-DD588C073B25/0/ESEAMyths.pdf. Ten Facts Every Parent Should Know About the No Child Left Behind Act (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Found online at http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/tenfacts/tenfact-nclb.pdf.

¹⁶ Telling the Whole Truth (Or Not) About Highly Qualified Teachers (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2004). ESEA: Myths versus Realities-Answers to common questions about the new No Child Left Behind Act (Washington D.C.: The Education Trust, 2003).

Figure 7.11: High	ly Qualified	Teacher Provisions in No Child Left Behind
New Teachers	Elementary	 <i>Requirements:</i> Bachelor's degree Demonstrate knowledge in subjects and in teaching by passing a rigorous test
New Teachers	Secondary	 <i>Requirements:</i> Bachelor's degree Demonstrate knowledge in subjects and in teaching by passing a rigorous test or holding an subject specific degree, an advanced subject degree or advanced certification
Not-new Teachers	Elementary	Requirements: • Bachelor's degree
Not-new Teachers	Secondary	• Demonstrate subject knowledge on a rigorous test or completion of a high objective uniform state standard evaluation (HOUSSE)
Source: No Child Left Behi	nd, 2001. ¹⁷	

Why Do We Need "Highly Qualified" Provisions? - States must also determine the tests that will be used for teacher certification and the level of proficiency that is required to be defined as "highly qualified." NCLB requires the schools and states to publicly report various aspects of teacher quality. One of the purposes for focusing on teacher quality is to ensure that low-income and minority students are not assigned to inexperienced, unqualified or out-of-field teachers more often than their peers. If low-income and minority students are consistently instructed by teachers that are not defined as "highly qualified," the state must develop a plan to address the problem and publicly report on its progress.

Although the teacher requirements for NCLB are encouraging states and districts to develop policies to improve hiring, tracking and training of teachers, implementation is generally slow among the states. States have been struggling with implementing various aspects of the teacher quality requirements such as defining "highly qualified," developing an alternate definition for veteran teachers and funding a system to track the teachers' requirements.¹⁸ Certain districts have encountered greater difficulties with meeting the teacher quality. For example, attracting and retaining teachers who are highly qualified under NCLB is difficult in high-poverty schools, high-need subjects and rural areas.

In 1999, a federal appeals court upheld an Alabama Supreme Court decision to keep in place a consent decree from 1985 prohibiting mandatory testing of teachers by subject in Alabama until 2005. The court ruled that the statewide test used in the 1980s was racially biased and discontinued its use for certifying teachers.¹⁹ This ruling made it difficult for Alabama to meet the teacher testing provisions of No Child Left Behind. However, Alabama reached an agreement with the Educational Testing Service to administer the PRAXIS II, a series of subject-specific test offered in a wide range of subjects, on a voluntary basis to teachers. Until 2005, this test is used only to attain highly qualified status, and is one of three options given to veteran teachers (see Figure 7.11 above).

In September 2004, the State Board of Education approved an amended consent decree giving permission to the Alabama State Department of Education to begin administering the PRAXIS II to measure subject-matter knowledge of teacher certification candidates. After a 12-month data collection period, the PRAXIS II tests will be used for actual certification of teachers wanting to work in Alabama classrooms.

¹⁷ No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. United States Congress. Found online at

 ¹⁰ Vio Child Left Bernard Act of 2007. Oniced States Congress Found online at http://www.ed.gov/policy/else/leg/esea02/index.html).
 ¹⁸ Telling the Whole Truth (Or Not) About Highly Qualified Teachers, The Education Trust, 2004.
 ¹⁹ Allen, et. al. v. Alabama Board of Education, et. al. CV-81-697-N (1999).

New Teachers	Elementary	 Holds a teaching certificate, teaching the grade level appropriate for the certification and one of the following: Passed appropriate state subject matter test and/or has earned at least 12 semester hours of credit in each of four core disciplines Holds an advanced certificate in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, or an area of Special Education that includes elementary grades Has 5 years of full-time teaching in the discipline and holds a valid National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certificate in the specific discipline or in a broad category
New Teachers	Secondary	 Holds a teaching certificate, teaching the grade level appropriate for the certification and one of the following: Passed appropriate state academic subject test in each of the academic subjects taught and/or holds an academic major and is teaching in the areas of English or science Has undergraduate academic major in each subject taught or has a graduate degree in each of the subjects she/he teaches Completed coursework equivalent to an undergraduate academic major (32 semester hours in the academic area with at least 19 upper division hours) in every subject she/he teaches Holds a Class A or Class AA Professional Educator Certificate endorsed in every subject she/he teaches Has 5 years of full-time teaching in the discipline and holds a valid National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certificate in the specific discipline or in a broad category appropriate to the specific discipline
Not-new Teachers	Elementary	 Holds a teaching certificate and one of the following: Passed appropriate state subject matter test Earned at least 12 semester hours of credit in each of four disciplines: English language arts including reading and writing, mathematics, science, and social studies Holds an advanced certificate in an area closely related to elementary education and has ten or more years of full-time teaching experience at the elementary level Has 5 years of full-time teaching in the discipline and holds a valid National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certificate in the specific discipline Satisfied requirements of Alabama's "high objective uniform state standard of evaluation
Not-new Teachers	Secondary	 Holds a teaching certificate and has one of the following: Passed an appropriate state academic subject test or holds a certificate with appropriate coursework in English, science or social science Completed an undergraduate academic major in each subject taught or earned a graduate degree in each of the subjects she/he teaches or advanced certification in each subject taught Has completed coursework equivalent to an undergraduate academic major (32 semester hours in the academic area with at least 19 upper division hours) in every subject she/he teaches

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Source: No Child Left Behind, 2001.17

To sum up the table above, Alabama teachers who are not "highly qualified" by this definition have three options:

Complete additional coursework

- Alabama Highly Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) Model Teachers submit a portfolio of professional experience, college coursework, lesson plans, and recognition. An independent evaluator who determines whether the teacher meets state standards reviews portfolios. A recent review of HOUSSE plans by the National Center for Teacher Quality rated Alabama with a B+ for their HOUSSE standards.²⁰
- > Subject-Specific Testing The State Department of Education has an agreement with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to administer its subject-specific test (the PRAXIS II) to teachers on a voluntary basis only for the purpose of meeting the highly qualified standard.²¹ Until now, the state of Alabama has had no provision for the testing of teachers in subject area or pedagogical knowledge.

According to the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, some of the state's alternative routes do not require the intensive professional development and supervision required by the law for candidates to be considered highly qualified.²² The emergency certificate will not meet the highly qualified teacher definition.

How Many Alabama Teachers Are Highly Qualified? - A 2004 Education Week report states that 65% of Alabama secondary teachers have a major in the core academic area in which they teach, which is one indication of a highly qualified teacher. Many other criteria were used by Education Week to grade teacher quality in states including percentage of teachers with full certification, offering alternative-route teacher recruitment efforts, professional support and training, and accountability for teacher quality to name a few. Education Week awarded Alabama a 'C' grade in its efforts to improve teacher quality based on these criteria and others.²³

The NCLB Act now requires state to report the number of its "highly qualified" teachers. The Education Trust, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy organization for poor and minority students, reported the first results on the percentage of classrooms in each state taught by highly qualifiers teachers. This report illustrated that Alabama has an exceptionally low initial report rate of 35% of teachers considered to be "highly qualified." Because each state sets its own standards, the Education Trust determined that Alabama had more stringent requirements and more reliable data than other states

²⁰ C. Tracy and K. Walsh, Necessary and Insufficient: Resisting a Full Measure of Teacher Quality (National Council on ²⁴⁷ C. Tracy and K. waish, *Ivecessary and Insufficient: Resisting a Full Measure of Teacher Quality* (National Council Teacher Quality, 2004). Found online at http://www.nctq.org/nctq/images/nctq_report_spring2004.pdf.
 ²¹ *Highly qualified teacher* "*Definition Analysis*, (Chapel Hill: Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2000-2003). (http://www.teachingquality.org/policy/esea/DefinitionAnalysis.htm).
 ²² Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2000-2003.
 ²³ "Count Me In: Quality Counts 2004" (Education Week, 2004). Found online at http://www.found.com/measure.com/search/ac04/uncerta/search/s

http://edweek.com/sreports/qc04/reports/qualityt1.cfm).

(see text box below). Interviews with ALSDE staff indicate that the 35% number will increase dramatically, perhaps doubling during 2004-2005 academic year due to the introduction of the PRAXIS II and the creation of the Alabama HOUSSE model. The Education Trust went on to commend Alabama for its data collection efforts, reflecting that the low numbers from Alabama were at least accurate. Alabama, for example, used a rigorous definition of "academic major" which excluded most education majors. For comparison, other states in the region and their grades are listed below:

State	% of classroom taught by a "highly qualified teacher"
Louisiana	unavailable
Tennessee	unavailable
Mississippi	85
Georgia	94
Alabama	35.3
South Carolina	83
North Carolina	83

"A few states have been forthright with their teacher quality data. but that some states have no data and most have questionable data reflects a shameful inattention to basic issues."

— Telling the Whole Truth (Or Not) About Highly Qualified Teachers Education Trust, 2003

The teacher quality story, however, is not just told in tidy statewide aggregate figures. In the spirit of *No Child Left Behind*, groups such as the Public Education Network and The Education Trust demand that highly qualified teacher statistics be broken out, or disaggregated, at the system level. Key questions that educators and policymakers should ask include:

- Are the percentages of highly qualified teachers relatively the same between Alabama's county and city districts?
- > Are the percentages of highly qualified teachers relatively the same between Alabama's high-wealth and low-wealth districts?
- Are the percentages of highly qualified teachers relatively the same between Alabama's racially identifiable districts?
- > Are the percentages of highly qualified teachers relatively the same between Alabama's high-performing and low-performing districts?

Answering these types of questions allows educators and policymakers to see the impact of teacher labor markets on student achievement and allow for flexible policy responses to low concentrations of high quality teachers.

Reading First

According to the U.S. Department of Education, *No Child Left Behind* provides more than \$1 billion to assist children in learning to read. Specifically, *NCLB* provides more than \$15.5 million in funding for the Reading First programs to assist Alabama in implementing comprehensive reading instruction, which is grounded in scientifically-based research, for all children in grades K-3. Scientifically-based research is defined as research that applies rigorous, systemic and objective procedures to obtain valid and sound knowledge. The Reading First program is intended to assist teachers in identifying students at risk of reading failure. The program allows for early intervention and effective early instruction to aid in achieving reading proficiency.

Alabama was one of the first three states to receive a multi-million dollar federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education Reading First program. The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), which is the Alabama State Department of Education's nationally recognized K-12 reading program, was the foundation for Alabama's Reading First program. Alabama allocates the Reading First funding to schools with large numbers of students scoring below grade level on reading and with high percentages of families below the poverty level.²⁴ See the Chapter 8: Reading and Writing for more information on the Alabama Reading First program.

Conclusion

NCLB is targeted at closing the achievement gaps and opportunity gaps between low-income students, minority students and their peers. The increased support and funding from *NCLB* are valuable tools in building the academic achievement of Alabama's students. Alabama may effectively use *NCLB* to decrease the achievement gaps and increase the academic achievement of all children by:

- 1. Establishing clear and consistent goals for all students
- 2. Measuring whether students are attaining the goals
- 3. Publicly reporting the results of student achievement
- 4. Placing highly qualified teachers in each classroom
- 5. Providing teachers with effective professional development and support
- 6. Holding schools accountable for raising student achievement

This chapter was developed by Caroline Watral and Eric Houck.

²⁴ Alabama One of Three States to Receive Federal Reading First Grant (Montgomery: A+ Education Foundation, 2002). Found online at http://www.aplusala.org/libr/ednews/2002/en02-jun28.asp.

Additional Resources

By Organization:

Alabama's State Board of Education Adopted state model for highly qualified teachers on June 26, 2003: ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/ 66/SBE_Alabama_Model_for_Highly_Qualified_Teachers.pdf

Council of Chief State School Officers CCSSO Resource on NCLB: www.ccsso.org/federal_programs/NCLB/index.cfm

Education Commission of the States (ECS): No Child Left Behind Database: www.ecs.org/nclbsurvey

State Accountability and Consolidated Plans: www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/42/65/4265.htm

State Performance Indicators (2002): www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/32/12/3212.htm

Education Trust www.edtrust.org

No Child Left Behind www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov

U.S. Department of Education NCLB Contacts and Information: <u>http://www.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html</u>

What Works Clearinghouse on Education Research <u>www.w-w-c.org</u>

The White House www.whitehouse.gov

By Topic:

Adequate Yearly Progress www.nclb.gov/start/facts/yearly.html

Accountability www.nclb.gov/next/faqs/accountability.html

NAEP http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/

National Reading Panel www.nationalreadingpanel.org/

Reading First www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst

School Choice www.nclb.gov/next/faqs/choice.html#1

Supplemental Educational Services www.nclb.gov/parents/supplementalservice.index.html

Reading and Writing

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Key Policy Points

- There is an increasing emphasis nationally and in Alabama on reading and writing as the keys to all other learning.
- New research on how children best learn to read and write is impacting instruction across the United States.
- > On average, Alabama students consistently score at or below the national average on the Stanford-10 and below the national average on such reading and writing assessments as the the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). SAT-10 is a norm-referenced test (see Chapter One on Accountability, Assessments, and Standards) that compares students to a group of peers. NAEP is a rigorous criterion-referenced test designed to truly measure what students should know and be able to do at the end of each course.
- African American students, special education students and students living in poverty in Alabama score well below the national and state averages on these assessments.
- Alabama has created a whole-school reform model for improving the teaching and learning of reading — the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI).
- Alabama has instituted a diagnostic assessment of reading progress for K-2 students that can be used to guide instruction throughout the school year.
- > Early evaluations indicate that ARI schools are showing more rapid gains than non-ARI schools, but schools must have in place all of the critical elements to show sustained and significant improvements.
- In addition to the ARI, Alabama is addressing the changes necessary in the preparation of future to improve reading instruction.
- Alabama is addressing improvements in student writing through the establishment of rigorous standards and a criterion-referenced test given in grades 5, 7, and 10 to measure student progress in the acquisition of writing skills.

For definitions of key education-related terms, including those found in this chapter, please see the Educationary in the back of this primer.

Overview

Reading is a fundamental skill that all children must master in order to succeed academically and thrive in the workplace. Research shows that if a child is not reading at grade level by third grade, it is considerably more difficult for them to learn to do so. This places a significant importance on reading instruction in the early grades. Studies indicate that effective reading instruction must blend phonemic awareness, or recognizing letter sounds, with an emphasis on fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Research indicates that 20 - 40% of students require intensive, expert teaching in order to read on grade level. Teaching reading, then, has become "rocket science," and all teachers need support and training to be able to teach all children to read well.

Though Alabama's students are making progress academically, test scores indicate that Alabama is not keeping up with the rest of the nation. In 2002, nearly 50% of 4th grade students in Alabama fall into the "below basic" skill level on the reading section of NAEP, and approximately 80% of 4th and 8th graders fail to reach proficiency in reading. Less than 5% of Alabama's students are reading at an advanced level.¹

Figure 8.1: Student Percentage at NAEP Achievement Levels, Reading, Grade 4*



NOTE: The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500, with the achievement levels corresponding to the following points: *Below Basic*, 207 or lower; *Basic*, 208-237; *Proficient*, 238-267; *Advanced*, 268 or above.

*Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.

Figure 8.2: Student Percentage at NAEP Achievement Levels, Reading, Grade 8



NOTE: The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500, with the achievement levels corresponding to the following points: *Below Basic*, 242 or lower; *Basic*, 243-280; *Proficient*, 281-322; *Advanced*, 323 or above.

1 National Center for Educational Statistics, http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/

Second only to reading in importance is the skill of writing. According to the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, "If students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details, wrestle with the fact, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate to someone else. In short, if student are to learn, they must write."²

On NAEP writing assessments, Alabama 4th and 8th grade students again score consistently below the rest of the nation. Further, less than 20% of all students in grades 4 and 8 reach the "proficient" level in writing. Only 1% of these students reach the "advanced" level.³





Alabama has taken proactive steps to address reading and writing achievement. This chapter will discuss three such efforts: the Alabama Reading Initiative, the Alabama Reading First Initiative and the inclusion of the Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing in the statewide accountability system.

Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI)

In the late 1990s, the Alabama State Department of Education (SDE) analyzed test results from the statewide Stanford-9 and discovered that more than 100,000 students were not reading at grade level. Instead of making excuses, the department convened a reading panel to study the recent research on reading and to create a program to improve the teaching of reading at the K-12 level. That program, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), is now one of Alabama's greatest achievements, receiving recognition from the White House, several states, and numerous national organizations and publications. In 2000, the Education Commission of the States, a research organization that serves governors, policymakers, educators and business leaders, awarded Alabama the State Innovation Award for the ARI.

The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) is not merely a program designed to improve reading scores within the state; instead, it is a comprehensive model for whole-school reform centered on literacy, and it is changing the way schools operate. The ARI is unique because it focuses on giving teachers the knowledge, skills and support needed to help all students to learn to read and to comprehend what they are reading. This initiative is not just about improving reading in the early grades or intervening with struggling readers. It is about students reading every day all the way through high school graduation, not only for understanding, but also with the ability to apply what they've read in all their subjects.

Schools participating in the Initiative are required to meet five criteria:

- > Schools must set a goal of 100% of students reading at grade level.
- At least 85% of teachers and the principal must attend a summer institute on instructional practices.
- > Teachers must agree to adjust their reading instruction.
- The faculty must be willing to model their reading instruction to visitors from other public schools.
- > The entire school community must be willing to undergo external evaluation.

Once 85% of a school faculty has committed to the ARI, the faculty and principal of the school attend an intensive summer workshop to learn the skills required to teach reading to all students. This training is enhanced by additional training throughout the year and frequent classroom visits from trained ARI instructors, allowing teacher to learn a concept, see it modeled and then practice with his or her own students.

The Initiative was first implemented in sixteen public schools in 1998. The first two summer institutes, held in 1998 and 1999, were funded through \$1.5 million in donations from private organizations, businesses and government officials. The State Legislature appropriate \$6 million for the ARI in 2000, and the ARI grew rapidly to more than 400 schools in 2003-2004. Growth was so rapid, in fact, that it outpaced the funding for the program, and expansion of the ARI was frozen by the State Board of Education in 2003-2004.

Expanding the ARI – In the 2005 fiscal year, Governor Bob Riley and the state legislature budgeted \$40 million to fully implement and expand the ARI to every K-3 classroom. Plans for this expansion are as follows:

- In 2004-2005, the current ARI schools (376) will receive funding for a full-time reading coach, a critical element to the success of teachers and students. The state will hire additional regional reading coaches and principal coaches and provide professional development to support the current ARI schools adequately. Finally, funds will be used to provide after-school and summer school programs for the 50 lowest performing schools. Expenditures for these efforts will represent \$30.2 of the \$40 million.
- In Summer 2005, 274 news schools will be incorporated into the ARI. Funds will be provided for preparation and delivery of training for teachers and principals. Priority will be given to schools with the greatest need and total faculty participation; schools with principal and central office commitment to participate; and schools from the 24 school systems with no ARI schools. During the 2005-2006 school year, teachers will receive in-class support from ARI staff and on-site reading coaches. The cost of the summer academies and subsequent follow-up training will be approximately \$8 million.
- The remaining \$1.7 million of the \$40 million allocation will be used to build the infrastructure and support in the State Department of Education to implement the ARI in all K-3 classrooms.

Incorporating ARI into Teacher Preparation – A key step to ensuring a quality reading initiative is to integrate the standards and instruction methods for the initiative in statewide teacher preparation programs. The majority of Alabama colleges and universities offering teacher education programs have done this by requiring specific courses in reading instruction and an intensive field experience observing and using ARI instructional strategies.

In 2004, the SDE convened a Knowledge and Skills Committee to review and update the required knowledge and skills for teachers of reading and reaching coaches. These recommendations were based on lessons learned in ARI classrooms statewide, as well as current research on which instructional strategies prove most successful with students. Key elements of these new guidelines include:

- Phonemic Awareness: Teachers of reading must know how to teach students to notice, identify, think about, and manipulate the sounds (phonemes) of the English language.
- > **Phonics Instruction:** Teachers must know how to enable students to understand the relationship between letters of written language and the sounds of spoken English.
- Fluency: Teachers must know how to develop fluent readers who can concentrate on building meaning.
- Vocabulary: Teachers much know how to increase students' vocabulary so that word meaning is not an obstacle to comprehension.
- Comprehension: Teachers must know how to teach students to understand a variety of texts according to the purpose of reading.

⁴ Alabama State Department of Education, "Essential Skills of Teachers of Reading" (Montgomery 2004).

⁵ Moscovitch, Ed. "Evaluation of the Alabama Reading Initiative" (Cape Ann, Massachusetts 2004).

- Assessment: Teachers much know how to use assessment instruments, procedures, and data as an integral part of teacher reading.
- Instructional Strategies: Teachers must implement a variety of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs and maximize learning for all.⁴

All teacher preparation programs in Alabama are required to incorporate these guidelines into their curriculum to ensure that future teachers will have the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective teachers of reading to both struggling and successful students. This should ensure that "newly minted" teachers are better prepared to teach reading.

Every three years, teachers and principals in ARI schools participate in recertification, which includes summer training sessions and follow-up sessions in classrooms during the school year. Anecdotal evidence from interviews indicates that teachers and principals have a strong appreciation for the new ARI recertification program, in which training takes place at the schools and demonstrations are done with their own students. Teachers further report having more success implementing the concepts of the ARI after the recertification process. They found it was easier to absorb lessons and put them to use when they had time to try new ideas with students for a period of time before moving on to a new concept several weeks later.⁵

Key Components of the ARI – Many states have designed reading initiatives, but most lack all of the elements that have made the ARI so successful: training modules for teachers, strong emphasis on ongoing professional development for teachers, data-driven instruction, and full-time reading coaches to assist teachers and intervene with struggling readers.

Throughout its five years of implementation, the Alabama Reading Initiative has undergone a constant refining and retooling process to meet the changing needs of students, teachers, principals and school systems. Some of the key lessons learned have become the essential ingredients for success:

- Training cannot be a one-time occurrence
- Continuous teacher support is critical

- The principal is a key element to success
- Full-time reading coaches are necessary
- Small-group instruction improves achievement
- Student progress must be monitored consistently in order to tailor instruction to meet the needs of individual students

Professional Development – Legislators often ask the question, "If colleges of education are doing their job, why do we need to invest in professional development programs like the ARI?" Research shows that investing in high quality, ongoing professional learning for teachers has one of the greatest returns on investment, as it yields significant gains in student achievement. Effective teachers need continuous learning opportunities and access to information and new skills. Knowledge workers in business do not learn everything they need to know before they enter the workforce, and neither do teachers. They must have the high-quality support and ongoing training that professionals in other fields expect and receive.

To that end, ongoing professional development for principals and teachers is the cornerstone of the Alabama Reading Initiative. Much of the professional development for teachers is "jobembedded," meaning that it takes place at their own schools, often in their own classrooms, allowing them to try out new methods of teaching with the support of their peers and reading coaches.

Principal Leadership – Evaluations of the Alabama Reading Initiative determined that while some schools enjoyed great success, others seemed to lose steam. The difference between the two school types was principal leadership. Put simply, it wasn't enough for a principal to have the right combination of education and experience; principals needed to be able to see the "big picture" of literacy development in order for student achievement to rise. If the principal lacked this critical vision, or was unprepared for this new leadership role, the students' scores generally remained the same (*See Chapter 10 on School Leadership*).

Several steps were taken to address this gap in principal leadership. The Alabama Leadership Academy (ALA) worked with more than 660 school teams at regional in-service centers to help principals learn how to make the transition from building administrators to instructional leaders, all centered around the goal of raising student achievement in reading and writing.

Another important step taken to improve principal leadership was the development of the role of principal coach. The SDE budgeted for four principal coaches during the 2003-2004 school year. Each coach serves approximately one-fourth of the state, or about 33 schools undergoing the year long recertification process. These principal coaches are all principals themselves, with successful track records as "literacy leaders" within their schools. They have been "loaned" to the ARI for the year to provide direct support to their principal peers.

The principal coaches have helped their peers learn how to do classroom evaluations, how to conduct grade-level data meetings and how to guide discussions among teachers regarding their experiences with the ARI. Principals are now able to walk into classrooms armed with the knowledge of what they should be seeing in terms of quality reading instruction.

On-site Reading Coach – Early evaluations of the ARI showed that reading coaches are critical to success. Reading coaches spend half their time working in small groups with struggling readers and assessing their progress. The other portion of their time is spent modeling instruction for teachers and working with teachers to develop intervention strategies for struggling readers. Because the reading coach devotes his or her time to reading instruction, the school is able to stay up-to-date on emerging research, available materials and instructional techniques.

In 2003-2004, approximately two-thirds of schools had full-time reading coaches, many of which were funded with local monies. In 2004-2005, current ARI schools (424) will receive state funding to hire a full-time reading coach.

Small Group Instruction – Research shows that small group instruction is effective for students of all ability levels, especially at the elementary level.⁶ Yet most of today's teachers were trained in whole-group instruction, where concepts are taught to the entire class at the same time. This method does not take into consideration the various learning styles of students or the skill levels of students.

⁶ Lou, Y., Abrami, P., & Spence, J. (2000). "Effects of Within-Class Grouping on Student Achievement: An Exploratory Model." *The Journal of Educational Research*, 94(2), 101–112.

⁷ Moscovitch, 2004

Interviews with teachers who use small group instruction reveal that when students are divided into small groups within a classroom, students have a greater opportunity to engage in the tasks they are asked to perform, behavior problems associated with inattentiveness during large-group instruction are reduced, and individual academic needs can be met. Further, small groups encourage students to work together to solve problems and complete assignments, resulting in higher levels of peer coaching, collaboration and learning.

Recent evaluations show that the more time spent on small-group instruction, the better: 87% of "outstanding" ARI schools spend one to two hours per day on small-group instruction. Unfortunately, only 64% of struggling ARI schools devoted that amount of time to small groups, and 21% of struggling schools report spending less than one hour per day in small groups.⁷ It is clear that ARI schools need more professional development and support so that the use of small group instruction can be expanded.

Monitoring Progress – During the 2002-2003 school year, more than 300 Alabama Reading Initiative schools piloted the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment. This exam, administered at least three times during each school year, assesses elementary reading proficiency. It is now required in grades K-2 and optional in Grade 3. More than 80% of all third grade classrooms used DIBELS in the 2003-2004 school year.

Previously, schools and school systems had to wait until the summer release of SAT-10 data to gauge student performance. Because DIBELS data is readily available during the school year, principals and teachers are able to use DIBELS scores to determine student progress and alter instruction to meet the individual needs of each student. Interviews with Alabama school system administrators and teachers illustrate that using DIBELS to assess both student learning and teacher performance is having a positive effect on student achievement (*See Chapter Three on Accountability, Assessments and Standards*).

Results – The scale and scope of the ARI in unlike any other reading program in the nation. According to outside evaluator Ed Moscovitch of Cape Ann Economics, "Because its leadership of constantly re-inventing the program by building on past experiences and developing new solutions to the increasingly complex business of school turnaround, it is undoubtedly on of the most exciting — and most important — reform efforts in the country."⁸

In terms of student achievement, students in ARI schools have made gains on the Stanford-10 that are approximately twice those of non-ARI schools. This holds up no matter which measurement is used: race, poverty, or outstanding versus struggling schools. It is also important to note that students attending ARI schools are making lasting gains: their scores consistently outperform those of their non-ARI counterparts through the eighth grade and across all subjects. However, it must be noted that though ARI schools consistently outperform their non-ARI counterparts, the test score gains are not as great as would perhaps be expected given the far-reaching aspects of the program.⁹ To address this concern, the ARI staff has made adjustments to the content of the training, professional development and the delivery of technical assistance to support the effective implementation of the program.

Preliminary analysis of DIBELS data shows that ARI schools made greater gains in reading proficiency than non-ARI schools. Further, schools participating in the Alabama Reading First Initiative (ARFI, see page 10) made even larger gains.¹⁰

⁸ Moscovitch, 2004 ⁹ Moscovitch, 2004 ¹⁰ Moscovitch, 2004

Alabama Reading First Initiative (ARFI)

The Alabama Reading First Initiative (ARFI) is the federally funded component of ARI. Due to the unique aspects of the ARI, as well as its impact on students, Alabama was one of the first three states to be awarded Reading First funds from the United States Department of Education as part of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001. Reading First channels more than \$1 billion to states to improve literacy through programs grounded in scientifically based research.

In June 2002, Alabama was awarded \$102 million for the next six years to fund ARFI, which is structured on the principles of ARI and designed to assist teachers and principals in identifying and helping struggling readers in grades K-3 in high-poverty, high-minority schools. Approximately 80% of these funds, or \$12.5 million, is provided directly to schools in the form of grants for full implementation. The remainder of the funds is designated for technical assistance to ARFI schools and professional development to all K-3 teachers in Alabama.

Components of ARFI – Under federal guidelines, school systems are eligible for ARFI if they have a large number of students scoring below grade level on reading on the SAT-10 and high percentages of families below the poverty level. As a result, ARFI schools tend to be in poor rural and urban areas with a large minority population. Based on these criteria, 28% of all school systems in Alabama (or 36 out of 129 total systems) were eligible to apply for ARFI funds.

Built upon the early success of ARI, ARFI improved several areas to better serve high-minority, high-poverty schools. These new elements include increased professional development for principals, teachers and reading coaches; funding for research-based curriculum materials; uniform assessment using DIBELS; and increased reading support staff at the state level.

In January 2002, 17 school systems received ARFI grants. Many school systems that were unsuccessful in the first round of funding were not only encouraged to reapply in a second or third cycle, but were given intensive technical assistance to help improve their grant application. By late 2002, the remaining eligible systems received ARFI grants.

Schools selected for ARFI funding must use their funds to:

- ➤ hire a full-time reading coach
- > purchase and implement a scientifically based reading program
- > purchase and use scientifically based assessments to determine student progress
- > provide \$1,000 per teacher for professional development

Results – Early DIBELS results show that ARFI is having a significant impact on student achievement in the high-poverty, high-minority schools where it has been implemented faithfully. There is a tremendous level of accountability for ARFI schools, as they must show progress with all students in order to keep their federal funding. A list of DIBELS results for the top performing ARFI schools is included in Appendix C.

Writing

The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, an 18-member panel of educators organized by The College Board, issued a report on the status of student writing. The report, entitled *The Neglected* "*R*," calls for a writing revolution in order to reverse current trends in classrooms across the country. Among the Commission's findings: Most fourth graders spend less than three hours a week writing, which is approximately 15% of the time they spend watching television; nearly 66% of high school seniors do not write a three-page paper as often as once a month for their English teachers; 75% of seniors never receive a writing assignment in history or social studies; and the senior research project has become an "educational curiosity," something rarely assigned because teachers do not have the time to correct such projects.¹¹

In Alabama, there are several measures to ensure an emphasis on writing. The Alabama Language Arts Course of Study ensures that writing is taught at all grade levels. The Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing, a rigorous criterion-referenced test administered in 5th, 7th, and 10th grades, determines how well students can write. Finally, both the ARI and the ARFI rely heavily on writing, introducing journaling and story-mapping¹² in Kindergarten and requiring a writing component in every grade.

Language Arts Course of Study – According to the Alabama Language Arts Course of Study, specific writing objectives for Alabama students include demonstrating such effective compositional strategies as introductions, main idea development, and closings; understanding of the pre-writing, or drafting, process; and mastering the five-step writing process. These skills are introduced in English class in 2nd grade and expanded each year through 12th grade.

Direct Assessment of Writing – The Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing was first implemented in 5th grade in 1991, in 7th grade in 1992, and in 10th grade in 2004. Students in these grades are tested in writing mechanics, sentence formation, and grammar and usage. The assessments are scored on a four level rubric: students scored at Level I have not met the standard; students at Level II are close to meeting standards, those at Level III have met the standards and students scoring at Level IV have exceeded the standards.

The assessments are graded against a rubric to ensure consistency. Two readers review each assessment, awarding points from 0 - 4 for holistic composition (based on how well the paper addresses purpose, audience, content and organization) and analytic composition, which includes grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence formation. In 2002-2003, if there was a split score, the student received the lower of the two scores. In 2003-2004, this method was changed to award the student the higher of the two scores.

In 2003, student scores on the Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing confirm that writing has been neglected in the state. Only 40% of all 5th grade students met the standards and only 38% of all 7th grade students met the standards. As demonstrated on page 12, the numbers are much more disturbing when disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.¹³

¹¹ The Neglected 'R': The Need for a Writing Revolution. National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges. (Washington, D.C. 2003)

¹² This instructional strategy requires students to create a "map" of each story they read, identifying main character, plot, and key vocabulary words. This incorporates writing into the process of learning to read.

¹³ Alabama State Department of Education, www.alsde.edu

	Number Tested	% in Group	% Meeting Standards
All Students	56,233	100	40.78
Special Education Students	7,371	13.11	12.9
American Indian/Alaskan Native	467	0.83	52.25
Asian/Pacific Islander	487	0.87	57.29
Black	20,811	37.01	29.33
Hispanic	1,027	1.83	31.0
White	33,372	59.35	47.8
Limited English Proficient	632	1.12	18.
Free/Reduced Lunch	29,608	52.65	30.9

Figure 8.7: 2002-2003 State Totals — Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing: Grade Seven

	Number Tested	% in Group	% Meeting Standards
All Students	57,499	100	38.72
Special Education Students	7,293	12.68	10.02
American Indian/Alaskan Native	532	.93	40.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	466	.81	50
Black	21,077	36.66	25.66
Hispanic	906	1.58	28.37
White	34,469	59.95	46.79
Limited English Proficient	504	.88	13.1
Free/Reduced Lunch	27,433	47.71	27.42

The Direct Assessment of Writing was added to the statewide Accountability System in the 2001-2002 school year, which prompted schools and school systems to focus on writing with great intensity in order to remain "in the clear" for student writing. Now, teachers are receiving professional development in writing and students are spending more time on writing exercises. As a result, many schools across the state report making headway on improving student writing. During the development of the new statewide assessment system and the introduction of adequate yearly progress (AYP) reporting, the Direct Assessment of Writing was administered but not included in the accountability system. In 2006, the exam will once again be included in the accountability system.

Conclusion

While the rest of the nation grapples with ways to address poor achievement in reading and writing, Alabama is making headway — and headlines — with measures to ensure these critical subjects are not only taught, but taught well to all students. The state-funded Alabama Reading Initiative and the federally funded Alabama Reading First Initiative can have lasting impact on this and future generations of Alabama students. For the first time in state history, high-poverty and high-minority schools are succeeding in teaching all children to read at grade level. As one elementary school teacher explained, "I think it's all about changing a school, that changes a community, that changes a whole city, that changes a state, that changes a whole nation of readers."¹⁴

¹⁴ Cynthia Henderson, interview with President George W. Bush, May 2004.

Additional Resources

Alabama Reading Initiative http://www.alsde.edu/html/sections/section_detail.asp?section=50&footer=sections

Alabama Reading First Initiative <u>http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/index.html</u> http://www.alsde.edu/html/sections/section_detail.asp?section=90&footer=sections

National Assessment of Educational Progress <u>http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/</u>

National Commission on Writing in America's Schools <u>http://www.writingcommission.org</u>

This chapter was developed by Lauren Pachucki and Jennifer Pyron.

Appendix A Spring 2004 DIBELS – LEA Performance

Overall Percent at Benchmark		Overall Percent at Benchmark	
63%	State Average	63%	Fayette County
93%	Mountain Brook City	63%	Colbert County
87%	Guntersville City	62%	Washington County
85%	Muscle Shoals City	62%	Dekalb County
85%	Arab City	62%	Eufaula City
84%	Andalusia City	62%	Franklin County
84%	Vestavia Hills City	62%	Huntsville City
83%	Brewton City	62%	Scottsboro City
82%	Homewood City	62%	Roanoke City
80%	Madison City	61%	Selma City
79%	Oneonta City	61%	Clay County
78%	Autauga County	61%	Talladega County
78%	Calhoun County	61%	Florence City
78%	Jacksonville City	61%	Fairfield City
77%	Alexander City	61%	Lawrence County
77%	Lamar County	61%	Houston County
77%	Demopolis City	60%	Haleyville City
76%	Troy City	60%	Elba City
73%	Thomasville City	60%	Walker County
73%	Jasper City	60%	Anniston City
73%	Conecuh County	60%	Tarrant City
73%	Madison County	60%	Albertville City
73%	Cullman City	60%	Attalla City
72%	Tallassee City	60%	Piedmont City
72%	Hartselle City	60%	Cullman County
71%	Etowah County	59%	Marshall County
71%	Coffee County	59%	Crenshaw County
71%	Auburn City	59%	Sumter County
71%	Oxford City	59%	Geneva City
71%	Elmore County	59%	Lowndes County
71%	Covington County	58%	Clarke County
71%	Jackson County	58%	Phenix City
71%	Winston County	58%	Barbour County
70%	Henry County	58%	Decatur City
69%	Dothan City	58%	Monroe County
69%	Limestone County	58%	Pell City
69%	Dallas County	57%	Cherokee County
69%	Hoover City	57%	Coosa County
69%	Tuscaloosa County	57%	Marion County
68%	Montgomery County	57%	Sylacauga City
68%	Choctaw County	57%	Tuscumbia City
68%	Shelby County	55%	Chilton County
67%	Bibb County	55%	Talladega City
67%	Lee County	55%	Ozark City
67%	Chambers County	54%	Opp City
66%	Baldwin County	53%	Blount County
66%	Lauderdale County	53%	Mobile County
66%	Morgan County	53%	Sheffield City
66%	Marengo County	52%	Escambia County
66%	Pickens County	52%	Linden City
66%	Enterprise City	51%	Perry County
64%	Geneva County	49%	Tallapoosa County
64%	Opelika City	49%	Russell County
64%	St. Clair County	48%	Birmingham City
64%	Wilcox County	48%	Greene County
64%	Cleburne County	47%	Hale County
63%	Butler County	46%	Russellville Citv
63%	Pike County	46%	Macon County
63%	Athens City	46%	Bessemer City
6.3%	Jefferson County	45%	Bandolph County
63%	Tuscaloosa City	40%	Lanett City
630%	Daleville City	/0 //2%	Bullock County
630%	Winfield City	40 /0 /10/_	Midfield City
630%	Dale County	9/0/_	AIDB
630%	Ft Pavne City	24 /0	ססוה
630%	Gadsden City		
0070	duddudir oity		

Appendix B DIBELS 2003-04 – Gains by LEA

Fall	Spring	Gain	
/ 0 0/2	62%	1/10/2	State Average
4 3 %0	64%	31%	Wilcox County
37%	68%	31%	Montgomery County
45%	73%	28%	Conecuh County
36%	63%	28%	Pike County
61%	87%	26%	Guntersville City
51%	77%	26%	Alexander City
36%	61%	25%	Fairfield City
41%	66%	25%	Marengo County
47%	71%	24%	Covington County
41%	64%	24%	Geneva County
41%	64%	23%	Opelika City
60%	84%	23%	Andalusia City
25%	46%	22%	Macon County
39%	60%	21%	Anniston City
50%	70%	21%	Henry County
42%	63%	21%	Fayette County
63%	83%	21%	Brewton City
50%	71%	21%	Jackson County
39%	59%	20%	Geneva City
43%	63%	20%	Ft. Payne City
40%	60%	20%	Albertville City
50%	69%	20%	Dothan City
41%	60%	19%	Haleyville City
38%	57%	19%	Coosa County
58%	77%	19%	Demopolis City
40%	59%	19%	Marshall County
58%	77%	19%	Lamar County
45%	64%	19%	Cleburne County
53%	71%	18%	Etowah County
50%	69%	18%	Tuscaloosa County
42%	60%	18%	Walker County
35%	53%	18%	Sheffield City
34%	52%	18%	Linden City
48%	66%	18%	Pickens County
43%	61%	17%	Lawrence County
38%	55%	17%	Chilton County
45%	62%	17%	Franklin County
52%	69%	17%	Dallas County
43%	60%	17%	Piedmont City
62%	78%	17%	Autauga County
42%	59%	17%	Lowndes County
47%	63%	17%	Iuscaloosa City
38%	55%	16%	Uzark City
55%	71%	16%	Uxford City
43%	59%	16%	Sumter County
62%	78%	16%	Calhoun County
53%	69%	16%	Limestone County
44%	60%	16%	Tarrant City
52%	68%	15%	Choctaw County
46%	61%	15%	Clay County
38%	53%	15%	Mobile County
70%	85%	15%	Muscle Shoals City
42%	58%	15%	Pell City
56%	/1%	15%	Elmore County
39%	53%	15%	Blount County
51%	66%	14%	Enterprise City
49%	63%	14%	Jefferson County
5/%	/2%	14%	Hartselle City
31%	46%	14%	Bessemer City
4/%	61%	14%	Seima City
/1%	85%	14%	Arab City
52%	66%	13%	iviorgan County
49%	62%	13%	Dekalb County
49%	63%	13%	Colbert County

Overa	all Percent		
Fall	Spring	Gain	
49%	62%	13%	Roanoke City
38%	51%	13%	Perry County
48%	61%	13%	Houston County
54%	67%	13%	Bibb County
51%	63%	13%	Butler County
49%	61%	12%	Talladega County
59%	71%	12%	Auburn City
47% 54%	6U%	12%	Chambors County
04%0 450/a	57%	12%0	Cherokee County
36%	48%	12%	Birmingham City
59%	71%	12%	Coffee County
52%	64%	12%	St. Clair County
51%	63%	12%	Dale County
51%	63%	12%	Daleville City
51%	63%	12%	Winfield City
35%	46%	12%	Russellville City
59%	71%	12%	Winston County
40%	37%0 78%	12%0	lacksonville City
51%	62%	11% 11%	Washington County
65%	76%	11%	Trov City
50%	61%	11%	Florence City
63%	73%	11%	Thomasville City
44%	54%	11%	Opp City
68%	79%	11%	Oneonta City
72%	82%	11%	Homewood City
46%	57%	10%	Marion County
62%	/3%	10%	Cullman City
32%0 830/a	03%	10%	Mountain Brook City
62%	72%	10%	Tallassee City
37%	48%	10%	Greene County
52%	62%	10%	Huntsville City
63%	73%	10%	Madison County
47%	57%	9%	Sylacauga City
57%	66%	9%	Baldwin County
59%	68%	9%	Shelby County
/2%	80%	9%	Manroe County
49%0 57%	56%	9%	Lauderdale County
53%	62%	8%	Fufaula City
35%	43%	8%	Bullock County
53%	60%	8%	Elba City
50%	58%	8%	Decatur City
76%	84%	8%	Vestavia Hills City
38%	45%	7%	Randolph County
62%	69%	7%	Hoover City
43%	49%	/%	Iallapoosa County
52%0 67%	58%0 720%	6%	Lasper City
35%	41 %	6%	Midfield City
41%	47%	6%	Hale County
53%	58%	5%	Phenix City
55%	60%	5%	Attalla City
44%	49%	4%	Russell County
57%	62%	4%	Scottsboro City
63%	67%	4%	Lee County
56%	59%	4%	Crenshaw County
6U%	03%0 55%	3%	Athens Uity
50%	520%	U%0 _10%	Clarke County
46%	440%	-1%0 -10/n	Lanett City
54%	52%	-2%	Escambia County
39%	24%	-15%	Institute For Deaf

Appendix C *Alabama Reading First Initiative Top Performers, Spring 2004*

School	Average Percent at Benchmark in Spring 2004
	63 %
Southside	86%
Calcedeaver	84%
Evergreen	84%
Kinterbish	82%
Forest Hills	80%
Sweetwater	79%
Edward Bell	79%
	School Southside Calcedeaver Evergreen Kinterbish Forest Hills Sweetwater Edward Bell

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Key Policy Points

- > There is wide variation between the types of school choice available to students in states across the nation. The concept of school choice encompassess both public and private options, which vary by law in their requisite funding and accountability provisions.
- School choice refers to magnet schools, open enrollment, charter schools, vouchers, credits and deductions, private/independent schools and homeschooling.
- The *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 is the first federal education policy to openly promote public school choice by requiring states to provide alternative options for students at low-performing schools.
- Currently, many students in Alabama have the option to attend magnet schools, private schools, transfer to higher performing schools, and the formal option of registering as a home-schooled student.
- Alabama is one of only nine states without charter school legislation. Charter schools exist in 36 states.

For concise definitions of key school choice terms and concepts discussed throughout this chapter, the reader should refer to the Educationary in the back of this notebook.

Overview

In 1962, economist Milton Friedman asserted that introducing school choice in the public school system would encourage competition, flexibility, efficient spending and diversity, which would in turn spur improvement in public schools.¹ States across the nation have since explored various forms of school choice to expand available school options for students, including magnet programs, charter schools, tax credits and vouchers. Forty years after Friedman's initial work on school choice, the federal *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* Act of 2001 increased opportunities for choice in public schools by providing transfer options to students in failing schools that receive Title I funds (*for more information on the titles involved in NCLB funding, please see Chapter 7 on No Child Left Behind)*. In Alabama, school choice remains a part of education reform discussions, although it has never received critical attention in legislative sessions due in large part to organized political resistance. For example, while many of the

¹ Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

Southern states have enacted charter school legislation, there have been no organized efforts to pass such legislation in Alabama. The Alabama Education Association, a strong political force in Alabama, has voiced opposition to the introduction of charter school legislation in Alabama.

This chapter will provide an overview on school choice options. At the conclusion of this section, Figure 9:1 presents information on school choice options in the 16 states of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).² This table allows comparisons to be made between school choice options in Alabama and other regional peer states.

Types of School Choice

The concept of school choice refers to a variety of schooling methods that allow families to choose a school for their child beyond the student's assigned public school. The types and extent of school choice options vary widely by state.

Magnet schools are public schools that offer distinct curricular options and instructional approaches to draw students from a variety of neighborhoods in a metropolitan area. Typically, magnet schools offer specialized educational opportunities to all students in a district or surrounding districts to promote voluntary racial and socioeconomic integration, as well as to focus on specialized curricula. Several factors promote racial and socioeconomic balance, including rigorous admissions criteria, lotteries for open seats in the school and percentages of enrollment allocated for neighborhood residents.

- **In the Nation:** In the 2001-2002 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) recorded 1,736 magnet schools operating in 28 states. Magnet schools educated 3.0% of all students attending public schools.
- **In the Region:** In the 2001-2002 school year, NCES reported 1,200 magnet schools operating in the 16 states of the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB). Magnet schools are most visible in North Carolina (165) and Virginia (166). On average, magnet schools enroll 3.6% of all public school students in the region.
- > In Alabama: In the 2001-2002 school year, NCES reported that Alabama had 41 magnet schools responsible for educating 3.0% of the public school students in the state. Magnet schools in Alabama focus on specialized academic and nonacademic interests, including the arts, technology, math, science, international studies and accelerated disciplinary coursework. Two magnet schools in the state, the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham and the Alabama School of Mathematics and Science in Mobile, are unique because they are open to any state resident and do not fall under the governance of a local school district. Both schools receive funding directly from the state legislature.
- > What the Research Says: A federally funded, national study of magnet schools found that, on average, minority students represent a larger percentage of students in magnet schools (73%) than in non-magnet schools (39%).³ However, the same national study reports that there are consistent similarities between magnet and non-magnet schools in the proportion of: 1) students eligible for free and reduced price lunches, 2) students categorized as Limited English Proficiency, and 3) students who have Individualized Education Plans. In terms of academic achievement, a 1997 study

² The SREB is comprised of the following 16 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. ³ U.S. Department of Education, Evaluation of the Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 1998 Grantees, Policy and Program

Studies Service (Washington, D.C.: Author, 2003).

⁴ Corrine M. Yu, William L. Taylor, Ellen Goldring, Claire Smrekar, and Dianne Piche, *Difficult Choices: Do Magnet Schools Serve Children in Need*? (Washington, D.C.: Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights, 1997).

of magnet schools in three urban areas found that students at magnet schools achieve higher scores than a comparable sample of students in neighborhood schools on state assessments in math, reading, science and social studies.⁴

Open enrollment allows students to enroll in a public school that is outside the boundaries of their immediate enrollment zone. There are two distinct types of open enrollment policies, depending on district and state policy and the availability of space within existing schools: students can choose a public school within the local school district (intra-district) or in a public school that is not within the district (inter-district). States are responsible for determining whether districts may adopt an open enrollment policy (voluntary) or whether districts must implement open enrollment options (mandatory). Currently, the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 requires districts to offer intra-district transfer options to students in schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years (*For more information on NCLB and AYP, see Chapter 7: No Child Left Behind*).

- In the Nation: Most school districts offer intra-district open enrollment options to students who have approved needs that can be better served in a different school within the district that may be outside their attendance zone. Across the nation, 30 states have voluntary inter-district open enrollment policies, while 17 states have mandatory inter-district open enrollment policies. Every state has passed mandatory intra-district open enrollment policies for students assigned to schools that fail to meet academic performance standards. The policies vary by integration requirements, availability of space in transfer schools, transportation funds provided and approval of school boards.⁵
- In the Region: In the SREB region, seven states have voluntary inter-district open enrollment policies and six states have mandatory inter-district open enrollment policies. Alabama and three other states in the region (Maryland, North Carolina and Virginia) have not enacted open enrollment policies to supplement the federal NCLB requirements.
- In Alabama: Alabama has not enacted open enrollment policies for intra- or inter-district transfers beyond the federal mandates of NCLB.
- What the Research Says: The limited research on open enrollment has focused on the changes in school populations after the voluntary implementation of a choice policy. For example, a study of Massachusetts' inter-district open enrollment policy found that schools receiving transfer students from other districts increased in racial diversity, while school districts losing significant numbers of students eventually responded with formal improvements to retain students.⁶

Charter schools are publicly funded schools operating under contracted terms that provide greater latitude for organizational innovation in exchange for specified performance results. In most cases, state or district educational authorities enter negotiations with prospective contractors and reach a formal legal agreement. The formal agreement defines school organization and management procedures, including flexibility in budgeting, hiring of teachers and development of instruction and curriculum. Among school choice options, policymakers consider charter schools the most accountable because they can be closed if they fail to meet the terms of their contract.

In the Nation: Currently, 41 states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation enabling the establishment of charter schools. In the 2001-2002 school year, NCES reported that 2,358 charter schools were operating in 36 states and the District of Columbia. Nationally, charter schools

⁵ Education Commission of the States, Open Enrollment: 50-State Report (Denver: Author, 2003). Available online at

http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=268; See Chapter 7 for more information on No Child Left Behind.

⁶ S. L. Aud. Competition in Education: A 1999 Update of School Choice in Massachusetts. White Paper No. 6, Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research (1999).
enrolled 1.2% of students who attended public schools in the 2001-2002 school year. Charter schools are most visible in Arizona (370) and California (350).

- In the Region: Only three of the SREB states have not passed charter school legislation These are Alabama, Kentucky, and West Virginia. The most current records of the U.S. Charter Schools organization document 715 schools serving approximately 169,100 students in the SREB region.
- In Alabama: Alabama has not enacted charter school legislation. In comparison to national developments, the consideration of charter schools as a school choice option has only recently emerged in the state legislative arena. In 2004, legislation was introduced that would have created charter schools "as an alternative means of education." The proposal included many of the standard features of charter school legislation (related to the core issues of management, conditions of employment, revenue structuring, and student transportation) with one important difference: local educational authorities would not be able to approve or reject the redirection of local revenues to a new charter school. However, the proposal did not receive significant consideration on the House floor.
- What the Research Says: The research on charter schools has not provided definitive evidence that charter schools significantly improve student academic achievement. While some research shows that students in charter schools have comparable or slightly lower test scores than do students in traditional public schools,⁷ other case studies report dramatically improved student achievement among minority students and students in poverty, fewer discipline problems, and higher graduation rates than non-charters.⁸

Vouchers are payments made directly to a parent or an educational institution by public or private sources to be used for the expenses of a child's education. When vouchers are publicly funded, general tax dollars cover all or part of the expense of a child's K-12 education at both public and private schools.

In the Nation: Only the states of Colorado, Florida, Maine, Ohio, Vermont, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia support publicly funded voucher programs. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) reports that the publicly funded voucher programs differ by state:⁹

Pupils Eligible for a Publicly Funded Voucher	Geographics Area
Students from low-income families enrolled in low-performing schools	CO, Washington D.C.
Students from low-performing schools	FL
Students from low-income, large urban systems	OH, WI
Students who live in communities without a public school	ME, VT

In addition, private foundations have funded voucher programs in many states.

In the Region: In the SREB region, only Florida operates a publicly funded voucher program based on the results of an academic accountability system. Under state law, each public school receives a grade, from A to F. Schools that receive "top-performing" and "improving" status for meeting performance expectations receive additional state funding. Students attending schools that receive an F in two out of four years may receive a scholarship worth at least \$4,000, which can be used to attend a higher scoring public school, a private school or a parochial school. As of the 2002-

⁷ R. Zimmer, R. Buddin, D. Chau, G. Daley, B. Gill, C. Guarino, L. Hamilton, C. Kropp, D. McCaffrey, M. Sandler, & D. Brewer.. Charter school operations and performance: Evidence from California. (RAND Corporation. 2003).

⁸ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. *Innovations in Education: Successful Charter Schools* (Washington, D.C., 2004).

⁹ Todd Ziebarth, Vouchers, Tax Credits and Tax Deductions Policy Brief (Denver: ECS, 2004).

03 school year, students at 10 public schools in Florida were eligible to receive opportunity scholarships: 577 students used their voucher to attend a private or parochial school, while 900 students covered the cost of attending a high-performing public school with a voucher. In 2001, Florida policymakers further enacted a law to allow students with disabilities not making progress in public schools to attend the private or parochial school of their choice using publicly funded vouchers. The amount of the voucher depends on a student's specific disability. As of the 2002-03 school year, almost 9,000 students were using such vouchers. Nonetheless, Florida's voucher program is being challenged in court.¹⁰

- In Alabama: The debate over school vouchers in the state of Alabama is particularly divided along partisan lines. In 2000, four Republican lawmakers sponsored legislation to create a Student Opportunity Scholarship (SOS) school voucher program. Under the plan, publicly funded vouchers were proposed for students attending low performing public schools that had been on academic "alert" status for two or more years. The proposal did not attract the support of a bipartisan coalition necessary to bring the bill to a formal vote. Since the U.S. Supreme Court's favorable ruling on the use of publicly funded vouchers in private parochial schools, vouchers have garnered bipartisan support from lawmakers, as well as conservative special interest groups. However, in recent legislative deliberations, voucher proposals have not been received by the majority of Alabama lawmakers as viable solutions to the state's foremost challenge of improving student achievement.
- What the Research Says: The research on voucher programs has not provided sufficient evidence to suggest that they positively impact student academic achievement. The General Accounting Office of the federal government reviewed the research on voucher programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland and found that the impact of the initiatives on student academic achievement could not be determined because the studies were not consistent.¹¹ Also, studies that have examined privately funded voucher programs have produced findings that cannot be generalized due to the nature of the small-scale data sets.¹² However, the research does suggest that the current voucher programs in existence have predominantly served low-income minority students.

Tax credits and deductions compensate parents for a portion of the expenses incurred by sending their children to a private school. In other cases, tax credits and deductions allow taxpayers to redirect their tax dollars to scholarship-granting organizations that award the contributions to students through private school scholarships.

In the Nation: ECS reports that tax credit and tax deduction programs have taken one of two forms.¹³ In the first form, states grant tax credits or tax deductions to parents for their education-related expenses (i.e., Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota). In the second form, states grant tax credits or tax deductions to persons or groups that contribute money to an organization that then distributes the contributions in the form of student scholarships or public school grants (i.e., Arizona, Florida, Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico).

In the Region: In the SREB region, only Florida has enacted legislation for tax credits or tax deductions. In 2001, Florida lawmakers enacted a law to provide a tax credit for corporations that donate money to scholarship funding organizations. The law requires scholarship-funding organizations.

¹⁰ Ziebarth, 2004.

¹¹ U. S. General Accounting Office. School vouchers: Publicly Funded Programs in Cleveland and Milwaukee. GAO-01-914. (August, 2001).

¹² U. S. General Accounting Office. School Vouchers: Characteristics of Privately Funded Programs. GAO-02-752.

⁽September, 2002). ¹³ Ziebarth, 2004.

izations to use 100% of such contributions for scholarships for children who qualify for the federal free or reduced lunch program. Scholarships may be used to cover tuition or textbook expenses for, or transportation to, an eligible nonpublic school or transportation expenses to a public school that is located outside the district in which the student resides. The amount cannot exceed \$3,500 for a scholarship awarded to a student enrolling in an eligible nonpublic school and \$500 for a scholarship awarded to a student enrolling in a public school that is located outside the district in which the student resides. Corporations may not contribute more than \$5,000,000 to any single scholarship funding organization, and the amount of the tax credit may not exceed 75% of a corporation's tax due for the taxable year. The total amount of tax credits cannot exceed \$88,000,000 per fiscal year, and at least 5% of the total statewide amount authorized for the tax credit is reserved for corporations who meet the definition of a small business.¹⁴

> In Alabama: Alabama does not have legislation to enact tax credits or tax deductions.

> What the Research Says: There is not any significant research on tax credits and deductions.

Private/Independent schools consist of privately funded institutions with a diverse set of orientations and affiliations. NCES found that of all students attending a private school in the 1999-2000 school year, 30% attended a Catholic school, 49% attended a non-Catholic religious school, and 22% attended a nonsectarian private school.¹⁵

- In the Nation: In the 1999-2000 school year, NCES reported that there were 5.2 million students enrolled in the nation's private schools. Private school students represented approximately 10% of the total elementary and secondary enrollment in the United States.¹⁶
- In the Region: In the 1999-2000 school year, NCES reported that there were 8,149 private elementary and secondary schools in the SREB region. The private schools in the region enrolled approximately 1.5 million students or 8.9% of school-aged children on average over the past decade. A recent analysis by an economist at Duke University has concluded that private schooling in the South has increased in importance since 1960, contrary to the overall national trend, due to the relatively low representation of Catholic families, an economic trend of rising affluence, and successful school desegregation efforts. With rural counties that have very high percentage of minority residents, the number of white families enrolling their students in private schools is particularly high, compared to demographically similar areas outside of the region.¹⁷
- In Alabama: In the 1999-2000 school year, NCES reports that Alabama had 374 private schools. These private schools enrolled 73,352 students, or approximately 9% of all school-age children in the state. In Alabama, more than half of white students in the non-metropolitan counties of Sumter, Wilcox, Greene, Bullock, Lowndes, Perry, and Choctaw were enrolled in segregated private schools for the 1999-2000 school year.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ziebarth, 2004.

¹⁵ National Center for Education Statistics. Private School Universe Survey: 1999-2000. Retrieved June 1, 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001330.pdf

¹⁶ National Center for Education Statistics. Private School Universe Survey: 1999-2000. Retrieved June 1, 2004 from: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001330.pdf

¹⁷ Charles T. Clotfelter, "Private Schools, Segregation, and the Southern States" *Peabody Journal of Education*, 79, 2 (2004): 74-97.

¹⁸ Clotfelter, 2004.

> What the Research Says: There is no definitive research on student achievement levels in private versus public schools. The Alabama State Department of Education maintains a list of registered private schools but does not record student achievement data for those schools.

Homeschooling provides an alternative form of education for children whose parents or guardians prefer home instruction compared to formal K-12 public or private schooling.

In the Nation: According to NCES, 1.7% of the school age population, or approximately 850,000 students, were homeschooled in 1999. Four out of five or 82% of homeschoolers were homeschooled only and one out of five or 18% of homeschoolers were enrolled in public or private schools part time. A greater percentage of homeschoolers compared to non-homeschoolers were white, non-Hispanic in 1999, 75% compared to 65%. The household income of homeschoolers in 1999 was no different than non-homeschoolers. However, parents of homeschoolers had higher levels of education than did parents of non-homeschoolers. In the NCES study, parents gave a wide variety of reasons for homeschooling their children. These reasons included being able to give their child a better education at home, for religious reasons, and because of a poor learning environment at school.¹⁹

In the Region: The homeschooling data for states in the SREB region in Figure 9:1 represents the categories the Home School Legal Defense Association has provided for each of the states in terms of the requirements and regulations for home schooling. The categories include:

- No Parental Notice Required: no state requirement for parents to initiate any contact with state educational authorities
- > Low Regulation: state requires parental notification only
- Moderate Regulation: state requires parents to send notification, test scores, and/or professional evaluation of student progress
- High Regulation: state requires parents to send notification or achievement test scores and/or professional evaluation, plus other requirements (e.g. curriculum approval by the state, teacher qualification of parents, or home visits by state officials)

In Alabama: The Home School Legal Defense Association reports that students in Alabama have two options for homeschooling: the church school option and the private tutor option. Under the church school provision, churches can establish different church schools within each home or parents can enroll their children in an existing church school provision, churches can establish different church schools within each home or parents can enroll their children in an existing church school provision, church school but teach them at home. Parents must file student attendance in a church school with the local public school superintendent. Under the private tutor provision, children may be homeschooled by a state-certified tutor. As of August 2003, students who are homeschooled in Alabama are not required to take standardized tests for accountability.

¹⁹ National Center for Education Statistics. Homeschooling in the United States: 1999. Retrieved June 1, 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001033.pdf.

Federal Choice Guidelines in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2001 is the first federal education legislation to provide significant support for public school choice options. All Title I schools that are identified for improvement for the first year and subsequent years are required to give all students in these schools the option of transferring to a higher performing school in the district. If a school district does not have adequate capacity at the receiving schools, cooperative agreements with other school districts may be created to enable students to transfer to other districts; however, inter-district transfers are not compulsory under *NCLB*. The school district is required to notify all parents in a failing school of their school choice options.

The school district must provide or pay for student transportation to the new school of choice. The school district may use up to 15% of its Title I allocation to pay for the transportation. If the student's original school meets adequate yearly progress and is taken out of school improvement, the student may return to the original school or remain at the new school until the completion of the last grade in that school. The school district is not required to provide or pay for transportation if a student decides to stay at the new school.

In Alabama, 45 schools were identified for school improvement in the 2003-2004 school year. In turn, the students in each of these schools are eligible to transfer to a school not identified as failing. In Montgomery County, for example, eight schools out of 63 were identified as failing in the 2003-2004 school year. District administrators at Montgomery County report that approximately 200 students out of these eight schools opted to transfer schools. District administrators state that the district has not had any problems finding placement for students opting to transfer. The challenge that has arisen for administrators in Montgomery County is that the district must put aside 5% of their federal Title I funds for transportation. However, the school district is not using that amount for transportation and now lacks access to the funds to use for other purposes.

Conclusion

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The array of school choice options varies across the country but currently only affect a small number of school-age children. Policymakers in Alabama should continue to monitor the progress of the school choice movement, while understanding that the major national, regional, and local efforts for education reform will continue to focus on standards-based reform.

Additional Resources

Education Commission of the States: Choice http://www.ecs.org

Home School Legal Defense Association <u>http://www.hslda.org/laws/default.asp</u>

U.S. Charter Schools http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/index.htm

U.S. Department of Education: Office of Non-Public Education http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/nonpublic/index.html

This chapter was developed by Anna Nicotera and Warren Langevin.

Appendix A: School Choice Options in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) States

	Public Options			Private Options			
	Magnet Schools ¹	Open Enrollment ²	Charter Schools ³	Vouchers ⁴	Tax Credits/ Deductions⁵	Private Schools ⁶	Home Schooling ⁷
Alabama	41 Schools (3% of Students)	No	No	No	No	374 Schools (9.1 % of Students)	Low Regulation
Arkansas	7 Schools (1% of Students)	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	11 Schools (1,486 Students)	No	No	192 Schools (5.8% of Students)	Moderate Regulation
Delaware	2 Schools (0.9% of Students)	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	13 Schools (5,262 Students)	No	No	96 Schools (16.7 % of Students	Low Regulation
Florida	Data Unavailable	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	258 Schools (53,350 Students)	10 Schools (577 private schools & 900 public schools) & 9,000 special education students	Law enacted in 2001 for taxes to provide scholarships to private schools	1,545 Schools (8.2% of Students)	Moderate Regulation
Georgia	62 Schools (3.6% of Students)	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	36 Schools (15,117 Students)	No	No	592 Schools (8.2% of Students)	Moderate Regulation
Kentucky	35 Schools (4.3% of Students)	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	No	No	No	368 Schools (16.3% of Students)	Low Regulation
Louisiana	74 Schools (6.3% of Students)	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	16 Schools (4,631 Students)	No	No	434 Schools (16.3% of Students)	Moderate Regulation
Maryland	Data Unavailable	No	1 School (184 Students)	No	No	701 Schools (14.5% of Students)	High Regulation
Mississippi	5 Schools (0.5% of Students)	Mandatory Inter-district	1 School (334 Students)	No	No	207 Schools (9.3% of Students)	Low Regulation
North Carolina	165 Schools (8.3% of Students)	No	95 Schools (21,030 Students	No	No	588 Schools (1.3% of Students)	Moderate Regulation
Oklahoma	No	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	12 Schools (2,197 Students)	No	No	179 Schools (4.7% of Students)	No Parental Notice Required
South Carolina	25 Schools (2.3% of Students)	Voluntary Inter-district	19 Schools (3,500 Students)	No	No	326 Schools (7.9% of Students)	Moderate Regulation
Tennessee	18 Schools (1.2% of Students)	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	4 Schools (Students Unavailable)	No	No	533 Schools (9.3% of Students)	Moderate Regulation
Texas	Data Unavailable	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	241 Schools (60,562 Students)	No	No	1,281 Schools (5.3% of Students)	No Parental Notice Required
Virginia	166 Schools (11.4% of Students	No	9 Schools (1,440 Students	No	No	582 Schools (8.1% of Students	Moderate Regulation
West	0 Schools (0% of Students	Mandatory Intra-district & Mandatory Inter-district	No	No	No	151 Schools (5.2% of Students	High Regulation

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- ¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (May 2003). Overview of public elementary and secondary schools and districts: School year 2001-02, http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/overview03/table_09.asp.
 ² Education Commission of the States. (2004). Open enrollment: 50-State report, http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=268.
 ³ U.S. Charter Schools, http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/index.htm, 2004.
 ⁴ Education Commission of the States (April 2004). Youchars tax credits and tax deductions. http://urupu.ecs.org/clearing.

- ⁴ Education Commission of the States. (April 2004). Vouchers, tax credits and tax deductions, http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/51/21/5121.htm.
- ⁵ Education Commission of the States. (April 2004). Vouchers, tax credits and tax deductions, http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/51/21/5121.htm.
- ⁶ National Center for Education Statistics. (August 2001). Private School Universe Survey: 1999-2000, http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001330.pdf. & National Center for Education Statistics. (2000). Estimated student membership, number of teachers, revenues, expenditures, and pupil/teacher ratio, for public elementary and secondary schools, by state, for grades prekindergarten through 12: School year 1999-2000/Fiscal year 2000, http://nces.ed.gov/quicktables/Detail.asp?Key=385.
- 7 Home School Legal Defense Association, http://www.hslda.org/laws/default.asp, 2004.

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Key Policy Points

- Research shows that effective school leadership is essential to developing and sustaining a school culture that produces improved student achievement.
- Policymakers and educators need a comprehensive compilation of data concerning principal quality in Alabama to determine how school systems are performing in recruiting and retaining high quality, effective principals. Currently no such data is available in Alabama for principals.
- Administrator preparations programs at Alabama's higher education institutions must be redesigned to align with the standards set by Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).
- > The Alabama standards for accrediting administrative training programs, administrative evaluation and administrative professional development are not aligned around a vision of principals as leaders focused on student achievement.
- Alabama does not link student achievement to the re-certification of principals. The leadership standards used in the leadership development and evaluation process focus on inputs rather than student outcomes.
- Financial support for the Alabama Leadership Academy (ALA), the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI); and the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI is critical for sustaining and expanding the professional development of TI); principals.

For concise definitions of key school leadership terms and concepts discussed throughout this chapter, the reader should refer to the Educationary located at the end of this notebook.

Overview

Demands for increased student achievement, greater accountability and school-wide reform dominate conversations in education at the national, state and local levels. Pressures for reform have shifted the focus from students to teachers and most recently to principals and district personnel. There is a widespread belief that better school leadership is needed if the ambitious achievement standards for student learning are to be realized.

Educational accountability and research have changed what successful school leaders need to know and be able to do. Developing principals who are effective at their job requires changes in how school leaders are prepared, developed and supported. Researchers and educators alike understand that the leadership skills of both superintendents and central office personnel are vital for improving student learning and teacher instruction. However the focus of this chapter is on the principal, as the principal is the school leader who has the most direct influence on instruction and learning. Included in this chapter are a general overview of the changing role of the principal, the current research on characteristics of quality administrative leadership and administrative training, and the distribution of those qualities in Alabama. Armed with this information, policymakers can better understand of the necessity of improving school leadership in Alabama.

School Leadership

Educational research examines the link between skilled administrators and school effectiveness. This research consistently shows that effective administrative leadership is critical in developing and sustaining school-level conditions necessary for improved student learning. Studies from university research centers and education think tanks comparing high- and low-achieving schools with similar demographics report the same conclusion: schools that are closing the achievement gaps between students of different races and socioeconomic groups and improving learning among all students are schools with highly effective leaders. *See Chapter 3 on "Closing the Achievement Gap" for more information on strategies to address achievement gaps.*

Because the effectiveness of a school depends largely on the leadership skills of the principal, it is vital to provide principals with the necessary skills and experiences that are relevant for functioning as a true school leader. Determining the specific leadership skills and experiences that are characteristics of a quality administrative leadership requires an understanding of the complex role of the principal.

New Challenges and Changing Expectations for Principals – Across the United States, state legislatures are responding to the demands of a global economy and the rising expectations in the workplace by setting higher standards for schools. In the era of *No Child Left Behind*, policymakers and the public expect all students to learn at high levels. Our increasingly complex, knowledge-based society has affected many changes in the way administrators must lead their schools.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) describes today's effective principal as being prepared to focus time, attention and effort on changing what students are taught, how they are taught, and what they are learning.¹ Increasingly the ultimate responsibility of the success or failure of the school lies with the principal. This is a challenge that requires school leaders with skills and knowledge that surpass the traditional school managers of the past. Historically, school administrators were expected to serve as building managers as schools grew in size and as curriculum and other services became formalized by states. Contemporary expectations for educational leaders have shifted from school management to a focus on student learning.

Principals must respond to an increasingly complex school environment that includes such concerns as complicated policy initiatives, changing demographics, the incorporation of data analysis into decision-making and a growing focus on testing. Most importantly, principals are responsible for developing a shared school vision that sets the direction for improving school operations and instructional practices with the common goal of raising student achievement.

¹ Bottoms, G., & O'Neill, K., Preparing A New Breed of School Principals: It's Time for Action (Southern Regional Education Board, 2001). Found online at http://www.sreb.org/main/Leadership/pubs/01V17_Time_for_Action.pdf.

Characteristics of Quality Administrative Leadership – Research by the SREB on the relationship between administrative leadership and student learning suggests today's effective school leaders must have the skills to:

- Create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible
- > Set high expectations for all students to learn high-level content
- Recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement
- Create a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult
- Use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement
- > Keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement
- Make parents partners in their student's education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration
- Understand the change process and have the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively
- Understand how adults learn and know how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students
- > Use and organize time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement
- > Acquire and use resources wisely
- Obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for their school improvement agenda
- Continuously learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices²

School leaders who do not demonstrate these characteristics are unlikely to succeed in today's performance-driven educational environment.

In order to meet the many demands of the job and to focus on student learning, principals in today's effective schools must share leadership. School leaders have traditionally seen themselves positioned at the top of the school organizational chart. However, they are now expected to place themselves at the center of a complex organizational structure. Principals are now expected to distribute many of their leadership responsibilities among qualified support personnel in order to focus on the most important aspect of schooling: learning and instruction.

In 1996, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed a set of leadership standards for school leaders. These standards are based on research and wide consultation and have been adopted by a majority of the states. The standards present a common core of knowledge that can be used as the criteria by which to judge the quality of effective school leadership. The broad consensus on leadership standards forged by ISLLC make them an excellent benchmark for assessing the school leadership development, certification, and assessment programs in Alabama.³

² SREB, 2001

³ Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for School Leaders (Washington, D.C., Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). Found online at http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/isllcstd.pdf.

School Leadership in Alabama

The SREB has proposed six actions that will result in getting a quality leader in every school. These recommendations are a compilation of research and lessons learned from direct experiences in helping schools, universities and state agencies rethink and redesign educational leadership programs. The actions that state policy-makers, universities and local systems need to take include:

- 1. Make the local system a full partner with university in the selection, support and preparation of the most promising future school leaders. Tap candidates with demonstrated performance and passion for helping students meet high standards.
- 2. Develop a state policy that defines the conditions that a leadership preparation program must meet if it is to continue preparing school leaders. Require performance measures and external validation of meeting standards.
- 3. Require preparation programs to focus on field-based experiences that are integrated with other parts of the program and provide opportunities for future principals to lead school improvement efforts.
- 4. Move to a two-step system that bases initial licensure of principals on demonstrated mastery of essential competencies in a school setting and professional licensure on performance and positive impact on school and classroom practices and student achievement;
- 5. Open up the system that licenses principals to provide an initial license to promising candidates who have gained necessary leadership competencies through training and work experiences.
- 6. Create or redesign leadership academies to prepare system-level and school teams that can support continuous school improvement, especially in low-performing and struggling schools. Enlarge the scope of the academies' work to include building the capacity of schools systems to create working conditions that support continuous improvement.

These actions are from two reports published by SREB (2002 and 2004) that analyze state progress on the key indicators. States are rated as having made no, little, some, promising or substantial progress.4

How is Alabama doing? - The chart below is 2004 data gathered by the SREB⁵. It indicates that Alabama has significant work to do in preparing, developing and supporting its school leaders:

Figure 10.1: Alabama's Path Toward Providing A Quality Leader in Every School				
	Identifying future school leaders	no progress		
	Redesigned preparation programs	some progress		
	Incorporation of school-based experiences	some progress		
	Licensure based on improvement	little progress		
	Alternative pathways to initial licensure	some progress		
	Providing academies to support leadership teams	promising progress		

⁴ The following reports were used to create this chart: O'Neill, K., Fry, B., Hill, D., & Bottoms, G., Good Principals Are The Key to Successful Schools: Six Strategies to Prepare More Good Principals (SREB, 2003) and "Progress Being Made in Getting A Quality Leader in Every School," Challenge to Lead (SREB, 2004).

Recognizing that Alabama has much work to do to accomplish the goal of providing quality school leaders, the State Board of Education and the Governor have made leadership a key policy area. A task force made an initial set of recommendations to the State Board of Education in the spring of 2004. The SDE and Governor expect to act in 2005 on policy recommendations from additional task forces.

Recruiting School Leaders – There is conflicting evidence about the supply of principals to lead Alabama's school. Alabama is expected to need 1,080 additional principals by 2010.⁶ Individual school districts are having difficulty recruiting and retaining principals. Public school systems compete with various forms of private education, both commercial and non-profit, for able leaders.

Nevertheless, while the need is predicted to be great, state data from Alabama provide no evidence of an impending crisis, as Alabama's higher education institutions are certifying a significant number of potential principals. During the 2001-2002 academic year, for example, 584 certificates⁷ were awarded to potential principals. Superintendents in the 16 SREB states reported that the number of certified principal candidates is plentiful. They observed that the problem was a lack of qualified principals.8

The SREB cites university and state certification practices as contributing to the quantity versus quality dilemma. Many "certified administrators" are teachers who have earned master's degrees in school administration but who do not intend to become principals. These teachers considered the administration degree the easiest route to master's-level pay. Others who earn the degree may want to become principals but lack leadership qualities. Still others may have potential but their preparation programs did not prepare them to succeed.9

Both anecdotal and empirical evidence collected by the National Association of Secondary School Principals indicate that Alabama's certification programs do not distinguish between those principals that have merely completed the requirements and those that actually have the skills and abilities to lead schools.¹⁰ Districts making progress in addressing the shortage of principals with the skills and knowledge to lead schools to excellence have a state policy for selecting principal candidates. Alabama does not have such a policy, however, individual school systems are using innovative approaches to creating a pipeline for strong principals. For example, Talladega County coordinated with Samford University in Birmingham to identify teachers with the skills, knowledge and desire to become principals. By targeting these teachers, Talladega County was able to facilitate their enrollment in administrator preparation programs and streamline their entry into school leadership positions.

Preparing Principals – School leaders who are prepared to lead schools focused on student learning need to be trained to face the many challenges posed by this era of higher standards and greater accountability. Identifying what should be included in a quality administrative training program has proven to be a challenge as the role of the administrator has changed to meet the needs of modern society.

School systems remain dependent on higher education programs to supply new school leaders. Therefore, it is very important that the accreditation rules adopted by a state are based upon a recognized set of standards that define exemplary administrative training program. The SREB proposes a set of components that should be included in any accredited higher education institutions coursework for training administrators. These components are listed in Figure 10.1.

⁶ State Occupational Projections Long-Term: 2000-2010. Found online at

http://www.projectionscentral.com/projections.asp?page=DisplayResults.

⁷ SREB, 2003

⁸ SREB, 2003 9 SREB, 2003

¹⁰ Goodwin, R., Cunningham, M., & Childress, R., The Changing Role of the Secondary Principals (NASSP Bulletin, 2003). 26-42.

Figure 10.2: SREB Recommendations for Principal Training Programs¹¹

Focus on developing leaders, not managers, who can improve curriculum, instruction and student learning
Connect administrative training to learning experiences that apply leadership to solving field-based problems
Use data for decision-making purposes as well as for improving student learning
Develop skills for effectively distributing leadership tasks
Establish an academic environment with high expectations
Provide an integrated internship rather than an internship that is conducted at the end of the training program
Require a meaningful, long-term mentorship experience

Alabama has a traditional and an alternative licensure system for certifying principals to lead schools grades P-12. Fourteen higher education institutions in Alabama award traditional Educational Administrator Class A certificates. Alabama's alternative licensure policy permits the licensure and certification requirements to open the principal pipeline to more candidates from other fields.

A review of Alabama's current accreditation rules and the coursework offered by Alabama's higher education institutions for certification of principals indicates that they are based on a managerial perspective of educational administration rather than on learning and instruction. This distinction is important because of the growing accountability for student academic performance.

When compared to the SREB components of a quality administrative training program, Alabama's administrator accreditation rules are lacking in several areas. They do not:

- Require a formal mentoring program for aspiring or practicing administrators. Leadership training programs that include a formal, long-term mentoring component have a higher rate of success in the development of effective school leaders dispositions than those without.
- Focus on the primary purpose of schooling: quality instruction and student learning. A review of course titles for the principal certification programs indicated that the programs are still based on managerial approaches to school administration. The higher education programs that train administrators need to be redesigned on the basis of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards and the Southern Region Board of Education recommendations for quality certification programs rather than the list of knowledge and skills presented in Alabama's current accreditation rules or the revised accreditation rules, *Rules of the State Board of Education*.

Require an integrated internship component in accredited higher education administrative training programs. Under the Alabama Department of Education guidelines, administrative training programs can elect to offer an internship limited to a capstone project at the end of the program. A more powerful leadership development program would place the internship component at the center of the program. The learning that apprentice leaders gain would then be in the context of the internship experience rather than a separate aspect of the program.

Professional Development for Alabama Principals – Ongoing public K-12 professional development is an important source of leadership improvement. Each school in Alabama is required to prepare a professional development plan for all of its professional employees, including the principal, which is linked to the local improvement plans for that school and district. In addition, if the school is receiving federal funds, the plans must be linked to performance goals that arise from *No Child Left Behind*.

Several professional development opportunities are available for principals in Alabama that focus on developing leadership skills. Principals and teacher leaders can participate in the Alabama Leadership Academy (ALA), a program created by the Alabama State Department of Education to arm school leaders with the skills, knowledge and staying power to create and sustain positive change. Principals of schools involved in the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and/or the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) participate in intensive professional development designed to help principals and teachers strategically improve student achievement in reading, math, science and technology. However both the ALA and AMSTI need substantial increases in funding in order to make these opportunities more widely available.

Alabama Leadership Academy (ALA) – Launched in mid-2001, the Alabama Leadership Academy (ALA) was the first statewide effort by the Alabama State Department of Education to provide ongoing professional development for principals of low-performing schools. In the 2004-2005 school year, the ALA will organize statewide training for principals of all schools that focuses on preparing leaders to address student achievement needs in reading and math.

The emphasis of the ALA is on improving student achievement by making instruction the principal's top priority. A key component of the ALA has been shifting the focus from individual principals to school teams comprised of the principal and several lead teachers. The rationale for this shift is to help principals be successful by developing a team of highly effective leaders within the faculty, as well as to develop a highly qualified pool of future principals for Alabama schools.

The potential exists for organizing and expanding the impact of the ALA to all school districts through the 11 regional inservice centers that are housed at eleven of Alabama's higher education institutions. These centers are organized to provide regional support to schools and school districts and are coordinated through the Department of Education. Due to variations in funding, these eleven regional inservice centers differ greatly in professional development opportunities, staffing, and space availability. The goal should be that local systems create the capacity to identify and support leaders for each school.

Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) – The nationally recognized Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) provides training for district office personnel, principals, classroom teachers, and reading coaches with the purpose of improving reading instruction and achievement. ARI training emphasizes the development of principals' instructional leadership skills for supporting teachers in the classrooms. Anecdotal evidence suggests that principals who participate in the ARI leadership training develop skills that extend beyond implementing the reading program. Principals learn how to effectively monitor progress of individual students and to use data to make decisions focused on student learning.

Alabama schools that have participated in ARI have seen improved student achievement and closed achievement gaps. However, outside evaluators for ARI have concluded that the level of academic achievement correlates with the principal's skill as an instructional leader. In schools where ARI was not effective at improving student achievement in reading, leadership was weak. One challenge to the successful implementation of ARI is the frequency of principal turnover. The instructional leadership skills and level of involvement of the principal are crucial to the success of the program. ARI reports that leadership transitions have already occurred in 10 of the original 16 participating schools. When filling principal positions vacated in a school where ARI has grown roots, districts should make thoughtful matches between the candidate for principal and the candidate's commitment to ARI as an instructional leader in order to assure continuity in the ARI program. *For more information on the Alabama Reading Initiative, see Chapter 8 on Reading and Writing.*

Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) – The Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) was created by the Alabama State Department of Education to help all students in Grades K-12 develop the math, science and technology skills necessary for success in higher education and in the workforce. AMSTI provides resources to Alabama principals and teachers in the form of materials, equipment, technology, and supplies; extensive training linked directly to these resources; and on-site support and mentoring throughout the year.

A 2004 evaluation of AMSTI revealed that the mean score in grades 3-8 on the science section of the SAT-10 for students in AMSTI schools was 13 points higher than students in schools without AMSTI. Alabama has not seen statewide impact of AMSTI due to its limited implementation in the state. However, like ARI, evaluators concluded that the rate of academic improvement is directly related to the strength and skills of the principals. *For more information on AMSTI, see Chapter 6 on Math, Science and Technology.*

Compensating Principals – In today's environment of high stakes accountability, even the most dedicated leaders must believe they have a chance to succeed. Principals must have the authority to make difficult decisions that are necessary to raise student achievement and they must be compensated on levels equal to professionals in other fields.

Currently in Alabama the Minimum State Salary Schedule has a salary increment for elementary principals of 1.22 times that of teacher salary pay and 1.33 for secondary principals. There is no distinct weight for middle school principals. Local systems determine any compensation above the salary schedule. This means that the more well funded school systems are able to use local funds to attract and retain high performing leaders and those with less substantial tax bases are not able to compete. Often these are the poor and rural county systems that would benefit the most from strong school leaders and this contributes to lack of access to quality education for some of Alabama's children.

Figure	re 10.3: Range of principal salaries in Alabama, 2002 ¹²					
		А	verage Salary			
	Level of education	Dr.	6 years	M.S.	B.S.	
	County total	\$67,560	\$63,719	\$58,614	\$56,094	
	City total	\$73,215	\$66,972	\$62,907	\$53,384	
	State total	\$70,322	\$64,891	\$59,925	\$54,739	

(Alabama Department of Education, Annual Report 2002, http://www.alsde.edu/AllReportCards/02_Annual_Report.pdf)

¹² Alabama Department of Education, *Annual Report 2002* (Montgomery, Alabama, 2003). Online at http://www.alsde.edu/AllReportCards/02_Annual_Report.pdf

Performance Contracts – In 2002 Alabama passed legislation requiring that all principals hired from that date forward be employed under contract. They retain the tenure earned as a teacher and if they are not reemployed as principals they may return to teaching. Prior to that, superintendents were the only administrators without the right to earn tenure. The law did not address the tenure provisions for other central office personnel. The Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools estimates that as of 2004, almost 50% of principals were employed by contract. Contract principals often must fulfill performance requirements and some systems are providing performance-based compensation incentives.

Evaluating Principals — The Professional Educators Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) for Principals is the tool used to evaluate the performance of Alabama's principals. The final evaluation system report rates principals on a scale of 0 to 4 on 13 performance areas. Composite scores — the sum of the rating for each area — can range from 0 to 52. "Satisfactory" performance is set at a score of 36 or higher. Scores of 33-35 are designated "Unsatisfactory but Remedial," and scores below 33 are Unsatisfactory (see Figure 10.7).

ure 10.4: Number of principals in each rating category, 1999-2000				
Performance Rating Sc	core Range	Number of Principals		
Satisfactory Performance 36	6 to 52	327		
Unsatisfactory but Remedial Performance 33	3 to 35	27		
Unsatisfactory Performance Be	elow 32	22		

The data for the 1999-2000 school year indicate that the performance of 87% of the principals evaluated that year was satisfactory (see Figure 10.7). It could be concluded from this data that 87% of the principals are successful in their efforts of educating students. However, Alabama's rankings on student assessments indicate that this is not the case, suggesting that the PEPE evaluation system is not as rigorous as it should be nor is it focused on student learning.

Furthermore, a review of the PEPE evaluation indicated that while the evaluation uses a variety of indicators of principal performance, student academic performance was not one of the indicators. This is significant because the new policy environment created by the *No Child Left Behind* Act holds schools and districts accountable for, among other things, the academic performance of students. *See Chapter 7 for more information on* No Child Left Behind.

Conclusion

Even with the commendable efforts to improve school leadership in Alabama, little is known about the quality of Alabama's school leadership. The ALSDE does not have available a good supply of data on the nature of its school leaders. Information that is important in predicting the need for leadership training and development is not formally collected and analyzed. Figure 10.9 suggests areas in which Alabama should collect data in order gain a better understanding and measure of the quality of Alabama's school leaders.

Figure	10.5:	Data Collection Requirements
	Indivi	dual Data
		Qualifications
		Degrees held
		Years of experience
		Previous experience
		Certification
		Ongoing professional development
		Student achievement by principal
		Results of administrator evaluations
		Age
		Gender and nationality
	Syste	m Data
		Salary by region
		Performance of principals from each certifying institution
		Length of time to fill a vacancy
		Turnover rates

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The lack of data on the nature of current and potential school leaders makes it difficult for policy makers and analysts to project immediate and long-term leadership development and further training needs. Without a well-planned effort to study leadership improvement findings in Alabama, there is little hope of making significant strides in improving the school leadership inadequacies that hinder Alabama from improving student achievement.

Policymakers and practitioners need to make developing educational leaders a priority if they hope to improve student achievement. Not only is strengthening current leadership in Alabama a great need, but preparing future leaders is also of great importance.

This chapter was developed by Christina Hart, Albert Boerema and Caroline Novak.

Teaching Quality

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Key Policy Points

- Existing research has powerfully demonstrated that teacher effectiveness has a dramatic impact on student achievement, especially for high poverty schools.
- Providing a well-prepared, qualified and caring teacher in every classroom in Alabama is critical if the state is to meet the goals of *No Child Left Behind* and allow all children to graduate from high school with a meaningful degree.
- Teachers need to be developed throughout the continuum of their career from their entry into teacher education to their entry into the classroom and finally throughout their career in the classroom. Policymaking can influence teaching quality at each step in the teaching continuum.
- In Alabama, approximately one out of five teachers leave the profession after two years and many more leave teaching shortly thereafter. One of the main reasons for high turnover is the lack of teacher support after entering the classroom. Induction and mentoring programs have proven effective in other parts of the country in reducing teacher turnover. Alabama twice has piloted an induction and mentoring program, the most recent of which remained unfunded as of fiscal year 2005.

- Many professions including business, law and medicine require effective and ongoing professional development. Research has demonstrated that educators should also receive strong professional development that involves ongoing access to learning techniques and professional opportunities. Alabama directly funded professional development at only \$60 per teacher per year in 2004-2005.
- One of Alabama's best examples of state-sponsored professional development is the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), which provides strong professional development in reading for all teachers in ARI schools. Like ARI, the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) also has a strong staff development component for math and science subjects.
- Prior to 2004, there was no comprehensive data on teaching quality in Alabama to help policymakers determine how school systems are recruiting and retaining high quality, effective teachers. As a result, there has been no way to tell if some students in Alabama get better teachers than others. A systematic and statistically significant evaluation of all Alabama educators is now possible under the Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) Program. This evaluation, however, does not incorporate teacher testing or student achievement.
- > There is a growing national trend toward adjusting teacher compensation systems as a means to improve teaching quality and to compensate teachers as professionals. These compensation systems reward teachers who acquire additional knowledge and skills (e.g. National Board Certification), teach in high-need schools or subjects, and make significant gains in student achievement.

For definitions of key education-related terms, including those in this chapter, please see the Educationary in the back of this primer.

Overview

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To improve public education in Alabama, the state must improve teaching. Put quite simply, good teaching matters most to student academic achievement. Existing research has powerfully demonstrated that teacher effectiveness has a dramatic impact on student achievement, especially for high-risk children. In Tennessee, researchers found that, all else being equal, students assigned to the most effective teachers for three years in a row performed 50 percentile points higher on a 100-point scale than comparable students assigned to the least effective teachers for three years in a row.¹ In another prominent study published in 2002, researchers concluded from extensive data in Texas that having a high-quality teacher throughout elementary school can "substantially offset or even eliminate the disadvantage of low socio-economic background." This study also found that teacher quality accounted for a 7% variance in student performance — a high figure.²

As states move into a new era of educational reform, highlighted by the passage of the *No Child Left Behind* Act in 2001, the impact of teaching quality has increasingly been measured by student academic achievement. Good teachers get students to learn. A great deal of research is being conducted in order to determine which teachers get results — and what qualities those teachers possess — in hopes of crafting policies that will lead more teachers to similar success. However, there is much known now about policies and efforts that can improve teaching quality and student achievement.

¹ W. L. Sanders and J. C. Rivers, Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement,

University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center (Knoxville: 1996).

² E. Hanushek, J. Kain, and S. Rivkin, *Eight Facts about Teacher Pay and Teacher Retention in Texas Public Schools* (Working Paper 8599) (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2001).

Alabama has taken several important steps to improving teaching quality in the state. The establishment of and investment in the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), which has a strong staff development component, is an important example of the state's initial commitment to teaching quality (*for more information on the Alabama Reading Initiative, see Chapter 8: Reading and Writing*). Recently, the state revised its standards for colleges that prepare future teachers, another important quality control measure. What the state lacks, however, is a comprehensive teacher development system that addresses a teacher's career path from the time teachers enter college to the time they enter the teaching profession and beyond. Alabama's long-range goal should be to guarantee that every student in every public school has thoroughly prepared teachers in every subject — teachers who are well-paid, supported with high quality professional development and held accountable for improving student achievement.

To reach this goal, Alabama must address each of the critical areas listed below and link them together in a way that holds each part of the system accountable for the success of the whole:

- Recruitment of talented people into education careers
- Careful screening of candidates who seek to enter teacher training
- > Better initial preparation of teachers at Alabama's colleges and universities
- > Higher certification and licensing standards, including alternate certification approaches
- Support programs for new teachers
- Adequately funded, on-going professional development targeted at individual school and student needs
- Retention strategies to keep the best and brightest in teaching
- School conditions that maximize teaching and learning

Figure 11.1: The Teaching Continuum Necessary to Developing the Best Teachers:



This chapter will examine where Alabama stands in building this type of cohesive support system so that every student receives a qualified, capable and caring teacher.

Teacher Demographics

To fully assess teaching quality, states first collect and report basic information about their teacher corps and make that data public through print and electronic documents. States typically report this data as a state total and by district, so that educators, policymakers and parents can compare the distribution of teachers in districts to one another. Users of this information also seek to determine if a district or state teacher corps is changing over time. Additionally, categories of this data should be broken out along the following dimensions: geography, high-wealth versus low-wealth; high performing versus low performing; districts which are racially identifiable versus districts which are racially integrated.

Total Teachers	47317	100.00 %
Male	9,267	20%
Female	38,050	80.%
White	37,059	78.%
Black	9,603	20.%
Hispanic	75	0.16%
Asian	115	0.24%
Native American	115	0.24%
Not Reported	351	0.74%
Bachelor's	22,611	48%
Doctorate	234	0.49%
Master's	25,628	54.%
Six-year	2,250	5%

Figure 11.2: Alabama Teachers Demographics 2003-2004

Understanding comprehensive teacher demographics has strong policy implications. While Alabama has basic information on teachers as documented in Figure 11.2, other important teacher data, such as teacher preparation, level of professional development, years of service, and subjects should be more readily available and accessible. In 1999, the Alabama Task Force on Teaching and Student Achievement released a report, *Teaching and Learning: Meeting the Challenge of High Standards in Alabama*. The task force's second recommendation to state policymakers was:

"Develop a comprehensive teacher database for making strategic decisions. Alabama's current teacher information system is incomplete and technologically inadequate. To anticipate teacher supply and demand and assure a well-qualified teacher for every teaching assignment, the State Department of Education must have resources to develop and maintain a comprehensive teacher information database."

-Teaching and Learning: Meeting the Challenge of High Standards in Alabama

A+ Task Force on Teaching and Student Achievement, 1999

Recruitment

Source:

Need for Stronger Teacher Recruitment Efforts – Alabama can be proud of its many excellent, caring and knowledgeable teachers. But the state needs more of this type of teacher. According to a recent study published by The Teaching Commission, "far too many of those entering the profession do not have the skills or knowledge base needed to succeed."³ One study found that college graduates with SAT or ACT scores in the bottom quartile were more than twice as likely as those in the top quartile to have majored in education.⁴ Moreover, students with the highest grades and test scores were least likely among their peers to enroll in education classes or teacher training programs.⁵ Just 14 percent of college graduates with education majors had SAT or ACT scores in the top quartile compared with 26% of social science majors and 37% of those who majored in mathematics, computer science or natural sciences.⁶ The *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 underscores the importance of focusing on recruitment and retention by establishing the Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund to increase the number and quality of principals, assistant principals and teachers in schools (for information on teacher retention see page 15 of this chapter).

³ "Teaching at Risk: A Call To Action," The Teaching Commission (New York: Reinventing America's Schools, 2004).

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2002* (Washington, D.C.: 2002).

⁵ Lowell Milken, Growth of the Teacher Advancement Program: Teaching as the Opportunity 2002 (California, 2002).

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Policy Planning and Innovation, Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge:

The Secretary's Second Annual Report on Teacher Quality (Washington, D.C., 2003).

Recruitment Strategies – In order to bring top talent to the teaching profession, intentional and innovative efforts are becoming increasingly important.

Targeted Recruitment and Financial Incentives: One strategy with proven success is targeted recruitment among specific populations of potential teachers. Such an approach has been especially effective in bringing more minority teachers into the profession and in recruiting teachers who have the explicit interest, commitment and life experience to teach successfully in hard-to-staff schools in inner city and isolated rural areas.⁷ Targeted recruitment efforts can include financial incentives that encourage prospective teachers to enter the teaching field. Forms of financial incentives that are becoming increasingly popular include college scholarships and loan-forgiveness programs, signing bonuses, assistance with moving expenses and housing subsidies. Although several of these financial incentives have been raised in legislative sessions, Alabama has no state policy regarding these types of financial incentives.

Recruiting Mid-Career Professionals: When adequate incentives are provided, states and districts are succeeding in their efforts to recruit mid-career professionals in other fields to become teachers. For these more senior candidates, the most important incentive seems to be ease and rapidity of entry into the classroom. Consequently, efforts to attract mid-career professionals into teaching usually involve an alternative teacher preparation program that enables them to begin teaching after a brief initial training period, and to earn a full-time teacher's salary right away.

North Carolina has received national recognition for its NC TEACH initiative. More than 1,000 midcareer professionals have become licensed teachers since the program's inception in 2000. NC TEACH offers an alternative path into teaching that blends preparations, training and on-the-job support. In 2003, the program produced more high school math and science teachers than any other education program in the state. More importantly, 80% of the teachers it has produced were still in the classroom in 2004.⁸

Alabama offers alternative certifications to mid-career individuals interested in transitioning to the teaching profession. One such program is the Mathematics and Science Scholarship/Loan Program for Alabama Teachers (MSSPAT), which provided up to \$2,000 per semester for up to six semesters for prospective teachers in mathematics or science. Newly certified teachers who accepted positions in low-income school systems were not required to repay the funds. This program was not funded for fiscal year 2005. Alabama also offers the "Troops to Teachers" program, which provides opportunities for retired military personnel to enter the teaching profession.

Teacher Compensation in Alabama – Competitive pay and good working conditions factor into both the recruitment and retention of good teachers. The current pay structure for Alabama teachers is based almost entirely on teacher certification and cumulative public school teaching experience (for more information on certification see page 10 of this chapter). The matrix below represents the minimum state requirements for teacher salaries. Additional salary provisions beyond requirements are determined and funded at the school system level.

As indicated by Figure 11.3, Alabama teachers primarily are paid according to a salary matrix that only factors years of experience and education history. The current Alabama pay structure offers limited room for growth based on performance, the unique skills of each individual teacher, and the

^{7 &}quot;Teacher Recruitment/Retention Issue Brief," Education Commission of the States, 2004. www.ecs.org.

⁸ "North Carolina to be Honored for Service to Education," news release, Education Commission of the States, 2004. Found online at www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/52/36/5236.htm.

needs of local schools and school systems. While compensation is an important factor for teacher recruitment (as in most professions), it is important to realize that competitive salaries are necessary but not sufficient to attract and retain effective teachers.9

		Ту	pe of Certifica	ation	
	Non Degree ¹⁰	Bachelors	Masters	6 Year	Doctoral
Salary as % of BS degree	100%	100%	115%	124%	133%
Years of Public School Exp	<i>perience</i>				
0 to < 3	\$ <i>29,538</i>	\$ 29,538	\$ <i>33,968</i>	\$ 36,627	\$ 39,286
3 to < 6	32,491	32,491	37,364	40,288	43,213
6 to < 9	33,913	33,913	39,000	42,063	45,104
9 to < 12	34,368	34,368	39,524	42,617	45,710
12 to < 15	34,992	34,992	40,240	43,391	46,541
15 to < 18	35,791	35,791	41,129	44,380	47,600
18 to < 21	36,253	36,253	41,690	44,953	48,216
21 to < 24	36,715	36,715	42,224	45,527	48,832

Figure 11.3: 2002-03 Alabama Minimum Teacher Salary Matrix for 2004-2005

Alabama instructional staff were paid \$38,774 on average in fiscal year 2002 while the national average for instructional staff was \$46,706. The Southeast average for all instructional staff was \$41,031.¹¹ It should be noted that these figures do not factor cost of living. Because of the relatively low cost of living in Alabama, the state would perform significantly better versus its peers if these compensation figures took cost of living into account. Alabama has legislation in place through the National Average Teacher Pay Bill, to earmark additional funds for teacher salaries during periods of economic growth until Alabama salaries match the national average.

Alternative Compensation Systems – New ways of compensating teachers have emerged that offer opportunities to improve student learning while compensating teachers professionally. These alternative compensation efforts seek to pay teachers based on their knowledge and skills, a school or school system's need for quality instruction and performance. In order to be effective, all compensation methods should be aligned with state and/or district goals of ensuring that all children, regardless of location or subject have a qualified and effective teacher in the classroom. These systems include compensation based on:

- **Teacher Knowledge and Skills** This form of compensation seeks to compensate teachers for what they know and what they can do. It includes offering additional compensation for National Board certification, certain forms of professional development, becoming a mentor for novice teachers, and other knowledge and skills that may be important to the state or school system.
- **Market Forces** This form of compensation seeks to compensate teachers based on the needs in the teaching profession. It includes offering additional compensation to teachers who teach in hard-to-staff schools (usually urban or rural settings) and hard-to-staff subjects such as science, math, foreign language, English as a second language and special education.

9 Eric Hirsch, Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, personal interview, 2004.

¹⁰ The "non degree" classification refers to teachers who have alternative teacher certifications or alternative degrees.

¹¹ "Estimates of School Statistics," National Education Association, 2003.

Teacher Performance – This form of compensation seeks to compensate teachers for their impact on raising student achievement as measured by student assessments, meeting school or district objectives, or for a variety of other performance indicators. This form of compensation has received increasing attention as the movement to improve education has focused increasingly on student achievement outcomes.

These compensation systems are not mutually exclusive and can be implemented in conjunction with each other. For example, the Denver Public Schools district has piloted an overhaul of its teacher compensation matrix. Under this new system, teacher compensation is based almost entirely on the three forms listed above.

Innovative Teacher Recruitment Programs – Some states, including North Carolina and South Carolina, have developed innovative teacher recruitment programs to attract top young individuals to the teaching profession.¹²

North Carolina: Since 1986, North Carolina has administered the Teaching Fellows Program, which offers 400 high achieving high school students each year a \$20,000 college scholarship in exchange for a commitment of four years of teaching after college. The typical fellow has an SAT score of 1100 and ranks in the top 10% of his or her graduating high school class. The Teaching Fellows have received high marks from principals across North Carolina.¹³

South Carolina: Comparable to North Carolina, South Carolina started the "Teacher Cadet" program in 1986, which allows high school junior and seniors with at least a "B" average the opportunity to take an honors course that allows them to spend time in classrooms working with students, shadow principals and teachers, and study the latest education research. Since its inception, more than 22,000 high school students have completed the course with about one-third of these students becoming teachers themselves.¹⁴

Teacher Preparation

Admission into Teacher Preparation Programs – Alabama has 29 colleges and universities with teacher education programs.¹⁵ With so many programs in the state, ensuring quality and rigor for all programs is certainly a challenge. Admission to college does not qualify an individual for admission to teacher education in Alabama. Each college or university in the state has clearly defined criteria for admitting undergraduate candidates to teacher education that include the following:

- 1. A formal written application for admission to professional studies
- 2. Minimum GPA of at least 2.50 overall, in professional studies, and in the teaching field
- 3. An interview
- 4. Evaluation of applicant's experience in schools
- 5. A candidate who fails to meet the criteria described above upon initial application may take further work and repeat required examinations in an effort to meet admission standards

Need for Better Preparation of Teachers – A 1996 study by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that teacher preparation in the United States "has historically been thin [and] uneven" compared to other countries.¹⁶ Until recently, many policymakers have

¹³ A+ Education Foundation, 1999.¹⁴ A+ Education Foundation, 1999.

¹² "Teaching and Learning: Meeting the Challenge of High Standards," A+ Education Foundation (Montgomery: 1999).

¹⁵ "Alabama Colleges and Universities with Teacher Education Programs," Alabama State Department of Education (2004).

¹⁶ "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future," National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (Washington, D.C.: 1996).

viewed the training of teachers as a relatively simple, short-term process, with the underlying assumption that the work of teachers lacks the complexity of the work of doctors, architects or engineers. Research has proven this assumption incorrect, especially in the subject of reading. There are optimum points in each child's development when certain teaching and learning strategies are most effective and there are many kinds of "intelligence."¹⁷ Thus, in addition to deep knowledge of the subject(s) they teach, teachers must have expertise in child behavior and development. They must learn how to work effectively with colleagues to optimize student achievement from subject to subject.

Teacher Pre-service Training – The United States is one of only a few nations that does not have a high-stakes evaluation of teacher pre-service (or student teaching) performance. In America, the productivity of the student teaching experience is primarily the responsibility of the university and school system of that student teacher.¹⁸ Alabama is strengthening its standards for the student teacher experience to include a minimum of 150 hours prior to a full semester of student teaching in the classroom under the supervision of a qualified, effective teacher.

Accountability in Colleges of Education – Accountability has become a central component to education reform. Accountability involves holding all stakeholders in the education process, including colleges of education, accountable for helping to produce higher student achievement. Some states have attempted to strengthen teacher education programs through more rigorous admission requirements, more rigorous accreditation standards, more intensive field experience, and greater involvement of the arts and sciences faculty. There has been a movement, both through accreditation and through compliance requirements in the federal Higher Education Act (Title II), to emphasize such outcomes as pass rates on state teacher licensure examinations as appropriate measures of the success of teacher education programs.¹⁹ Many states are also working to align the curriculum and instruction of the education colleges with state goals for improving student achievement at the K-12 level.

In 2004, the State Board of Education revised standards for teacher preparation institutions. Provisions addressed include:

- > 12 hours in each of the four core content areas (language arts, mathematics, science and social studies) for elementary teachers
- > An academic major in one of the four core content areas for secondary teachers
- > Active participation from Arts and Sciences faculty in teacher preparations
- Closer collaboration between colleges of education and schools

In order to effectively increase K-12 student achievement, Alabama teacher preparation programs should also ensure that the curriculum in these programs is aligned with such proven programs as the nationally recognized Alabama Reading Initiative. See Chapter 8: Reading and Writing for detailed information. Alabama prepares report cards on teacher preparation programs. The accountability system for higher education incorporates teacher evaluations through the use of the Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) Program (for more information on PEPE, see the section on Educator Evaluation on page 15). For example, if a percentage of graduates from a given college of education do not receive satisfactory evaluations, that institution can be placed on probation. Another strategy to improve teaching quality would be for teacher preparation programs to be more selective in who receives degrees. For example, holding students to higher standards while enrolled in teacher preparation programs can have strong impact on the overall preparation of education school graduates.

¹⁷ David Sousa, "Is the Fuss About Brain Research Justified?" Education Week (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 1998).

 ¹⁹ "Teacher Preparation/Education Issue Brief," Education Commission of the States, 2004. <u>www.ecs.org</u>.

Alternative Route Preparation Programs – Most states now support alternative teacher preparation programs. The need for teachers to fill vacancies in hard-to-staff schools is often the catalyst for creating such programs. Alternative route programs such as Teach for America (TFA) that are directed primarily to high-need schools and systems have received mixed response. Some researchers claim that alternative route programs can play a critical role in expanding the pool of teachers, especially through providing a pathway for the most capable candidates who would otherwise be lost to the profession. Critics argue that the programs can shortchange teacher candidates and the students they teach because the preparation, particularly the pedagogy, is inadequate.²⁰ However, there is moderate support in the research that alternative route programs produce teachers who are as effective as traditional teachers. A study of the most nationally recognized alternative route program, TFA, demonstrated that math teachers through TFA have been shown to be more effective in improving student achievement than their traditional counterparts. At the same time, TFA teachers on average performed about the same as traditional teachers in improving student reading achievement.²¹ Many of these programs, including TFA, allow districts to receive low-cost teaching support in some of the highest need areas. Many states support non-university based programs like TFA, of which Alabama has none.

Carnegie Corporation's Model for Teacher Preparation – Carnegie Corporation of New York and other funders are working with selected colleges and universities to stimulate the construction of excellent teacher education programs. Carnegie's reorganization of teacher education programs, called "Teachers for a New Era" includes three broad principles:²²

- > Reliance on research-based evidence for improving student achievement via instruction
- > Active engagement of Arts and Sciences faculty in teacher preparation
- Closer collaboration between colleges of education and actual practicing schools

Through "Teachers for a New Era," Carnegie hopes to develop a new model for teacher preparation that creates significant change in allocation of resources, academic organization, criteria for evaluating participating faculty, internal accountability measures, and relationships with practicing schools.

Teacher Certification and Licensing

A teacher becomes certified — or licensed — when he or she meets all state requirements to teach in a particular state. There is debate over the value of states' teacher certification programs and procedures. While proponents claim that fully certified or licensed teachers are often more capable educators, opponents argue that certification does not guarantee competency and serves as an unnecessary obstacle for otherwise well-qualified individuals who wish to enter the teaching profession.²⁰ Nationally, only 13% of principals and 7% of superintendents believe that certification in their states guarantees that the typical teacher "has what it takes" to make it in the classroom.²³ As a result, it is likely that some principals and superintendents in Alabama, like their national counterparts, believe that certification requirements do not guarantee that a teacher will succeed.

"...a good grasp of one's subject area is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for effective teaching." — *David Monk, cited in SECTQ (2003)*

²⁰ "Eight Questions on Teacher Preparation: What Does the Research Say?" Education Commission of the States (Denver: 2004).

²¹ Paul T. Decker, Daniel P. Mayer, and Steven Glazerman, "The Effects of Teach for America: The Findings from a National Evaluation" Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (Princeton, N.J.: June 2004).

²² "Teachers for a New Era: A National Initiative to Improve the Quality of Teaching," Carnegie Corporation, <u>www.carnegie.org</u>.

²³ "Certification/Licensure Issue Site," Education Commission of the States, <u>www.ecs.org</u>, 2004.

²⁴ A. Duffet and J. Johnson, "Attitudes About Teaching: An Assessment of Survey Data on Attitudes about Teaching, Inducing the Views of Parents, Administrators, Teachers, and the General Public," Public Agenda (New York: 2004).

Alabama Teacher Certification Requirements – There are three main ways for an individual to receive full teaching certification in Alabama:²⁵

1. Alabama Approved Program Approach – Individuals may meet the curriculum requirements for Alabama professional certification by completing a state-approved teacher education program with an Alabama institution of higher education in the area in which certification is desired.

2. Reciprocal Agreements – Individuals who have graduated from out-of-state institutions and/or have been certified in other states may meet curriculum requirements for Alabama professional certification through one of the following options:

- Completion of a teacher education program at an out-of-state, regionally accredited, senior institution accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
- Compliance with the requirements of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification Interstate Contract (NASDTEC Interstate Contract)

3. Other Approaches – There are multiple other approaches for receiving teaching certification. Many of these other approaches are applicable to teachers from other states seeking certification in Alabama.

4. Prospective Teacher Testing Requirements – All prospective teachers seeking to be certified must pass each of the reading, math, and writing components of the Alabama Prospective Teacher Testing Program. An individual who attempts an assessment but does not attain the minimum passing score may satisfy that test requirement through the successful combination of the individual's test performance and grade point average (GPA) on certain courses in the undergraduate core curriculum. If the calculation results in a passing score, the test requirement have been met. The individual must have attained at least a 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale before the formula may be applied. An individual who does not attain a passing score through the combination of the test performance and the GPA may attend and pass a remediation course designed by the Alabama Department of Education to satisfy the test requirement.²⁶

No Child Left Behind and Highly Qualified Teachers – The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 reinforces the necessity of teacher preparation, requiring states receiving funds under Title I to have a "highly qualified" teacher in every core academic classroom by the 2005-06 school year. A "highly qualified" teacher, as defined by the legislation, must be fully licensed or certified by the state and must not have had any certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis. Teachers also must demonstrate subject-matter competency. In Alabama, elementary school teachers will be required to have earned at least 12 semester hours of credit in each of the four core disciplines (language arts, mathematics, science and social studies). For more detailed information about the requirements for "highly qualified" teachers in Alabama see Chapter 7: No Child Left Behind.

²⁵ "Teacher Education and Certification," Alabama State Department of Education, (Montgomery: 2004).
 ²⁶ Alabama Prospective Teacher Testing Program, Alabama State Department of Education, <u>www.alsde.edu</u>, 2004.

Subject-Specific Tests for Prospective Teachers - Requiring subject-specific tests for prospective teachers in the subjects that they plan to teach is becoming an increasingly common policy among states. As of 2004, Alabama had a basic skills test (Alabama Prospective Teacher Testing Program) for all prospective teachers. Alabama was one of the only states in the Southeast to not give subjectspecific tests to new teachers prior to certification.²⁷ Due to a longstanding federal lawsuit, and consent decree that prohibits Alabama from testing teachers in subject areas before 2005, the state has been unable to use subject-specific teacher tests to evaluate prospective teachers before they enter the profession.

In September 2004, the State Board of Education approved an amended consent decree giving permission to the Alabama State Department of Education to begin administering the PRAXIS II to measure subject-matter knowledge of teacher certification candidates. After a 12-month data collection period, the PRAXIS II tests will be used for actual certification of teachers wanting to work in Alabama classrooms.

Academic Major in a Primary Subject or Other Class Assignment - There is widespread agreement that strong subject-matter knowledge is a critical component of successful teaching. There is evidence that subject-specific pedagogical knowledge - how specifically to teach mathematics or reading or history — also is important.²⁸ Therefore, a higher percentage of teachers with academic majors in their subject — as opposed to an education degree — can be an indicator for overall teaching quality. Figure 11.4 below compares data from two reports on the percentages of classrooms in Alabama and comparison states taught by teachers without an academic major in their teaching field. These statistics become more difficult to interpret as education degrees in some states, Alabama included, become more rigorous, incorporating much of the same core subject coursework as an academic major. In Alabama, candidates recommended for undergraduate level certification in middle and secondary will have an academic major that meets requirements for Arts and Sciences graduates. In other words, a Biology teacher at the middle-school or secondary-school levels will have a Biology degree from a college of Arts and Science, as well as a teaching certificate.

State	% of classes ²⁹ taught by teachers <i>without a major</i> in field, 2000 (ET, 2003)	% of secondary teachers <i>with major</i> in the core academic area in which they teach, 2000 (EW, 2003)
Louisiana	40	48
Tennessee	36	57
Mississippi	NA	58
Georgia	31	61
Alabama	23	65
South Carolina	22	74
North Carolina	19	76

Figure 11.4: Teachers With and Without Major in Their Field

Source: Education Trust (2003), Education Week "Quality Counts" (2004)

 ²⁷ Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2003.
 ²⁸ "Teacher Preparation/Education Issue Brief," Education Commission of the States, <u>www.ecs.org</u>. 2004.

²⁹ It is important to note that this column refers to the percentage of classes, while the last column refers to the percentage of secondary teachers (it is generally considered to be more important to have an academic major for teaching secondary classes).

Staged Licensure for Professional Growth – One of teachers' greatest concerns has been the lack of professional opportunities in the job. Policies have emerged that seek to offer greater professional growth incentives and opportunities for teachers (see the Teacher Support and Retention section on page 15 of this chapter for more information on teacher concerns). "Tiered" or "staged licensure" is one such policy emerging in states. Staged licensure confers a limited-time beginning or provisional license to new teachers who pass the requirements for initial certification, a regular or "professional" license to teachers when they demonstrate successful teaching performance, and then may grant an advanced or "master" license to teachers who demonstrate high levels of accomplishment.³⁰ In some states, a teacher who receives certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards automatically qualifies for the highest level of licensure. *No Child Left Behind* sets aside federal funds for states to reform their certification and licensure practices, which includes implementing staged licensure. While Alabama does not have a staged licensure system, states like North Carolina and Texas offer strong opportunities for teacher professional advancement through the state licensure system.

National Board Certification – The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is a nationwide, independent organization that has developed a rigorous national certification process. Applicants for NBPTS, or National Board certification, must complete performance-based assessments, including teaching portfolios, student work samples and videotapes, and undergo thorough analysis of the candidates' classroom teaching and student learning.³¹ Teachers also complete a series of written exercises that probe the depth of their subject-matter knowledge, as well as their understanding of how to teach those subjects to their students. Many states, including Alabama, have worked to develop incentives for teachers to undergo the National Board certification process (see Figure 11.4). Emerging research points to the positive effects that board-certified teachers bring to the classroom in terms of student academic achievement.³² The table on page 14 lists comparisons of NBPTS teachers in Southern states served by the non-profit, non-partisan Southern Region Education Board (SERB).

Southern states have strongly supported National Board certification. Overall, 72% of National Board certified teachers worked in Southern states in 2004, despite the fact that these states only employed approximately 33% of all teachers nationwide.³³ In 2002-2003, Alabama increased state funding for NBPTS by 98%³⁴ by providing \$5 million in 2004.³⁵ Alabama teachers seeking National Board certification can receive support from the state in the following ways:³⁶

- State support for 100% of the \$2,300 fee for up to 200 teacher applicants per year based on a screening process
- Teachers who receive National Board certification also receive a \$5,000 dollar salary increase for the life of the certificate
- > Allowance to use the certification for license renewal and reciprocity with other states

³⁰ "Certification/Licensure Issue Brief," Education Commission of the States, <u>www.ecs.org</u>.

³¹ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, www.nbpts.org.

³² D. Goldhaber, and E. Anthony, *Can Teacher Quality Be Effectively Assessed?* (University of Washington: Center for Reinventing Education, 2004).

³³ Education Week, March 24, 2004.

³⁴ "SERB States Continue to Lead the Nation in Teachers with National Board Certification," *Challenge to Lead* (Atlanta: SERB, January 2004).

³⁵ State of Alabama Budget, 2004.

³⁶ Alabama State Department of Education, 2004.

Figure 11.5: Number of Nationally Board Certified Teachers and State Incentives for Participation in Southern States (Dec. 2003)

	Certificates Issued	State Incentives for Teachers With NBPTS Certification	
Alabama	632	\$5000 salary supplement annually.	
Arkansas	183	Initial bonus increased to \$5000 by 2005. Annual bonus of \$2000 for the life of the certificate.	
Delaware	206	Annual bonus of 12 percent of the state portion of salary for the life of the certificate.	
Florida	4,940	Annual bonus of 10 percent of the prior year's average statewide salary for teachers for the life of the certificate.	
Georgia	1,323	10 percent of the state portion of salary annually for the life of the certificate (calculated annually).	
Kentucky	537	\$2000 annually for the life of the certificate.	
Louisiana	337	\$5000 annually for the life of the certificate.	
Maryland	334	State will provide matching funds, up to \$2000, for the bonuses provided by local boards (Bonuses vary by school system.)	
Mississippi	1,761	\$6000 annually for the life of the certificate.	
North Carolina	6,641	12 percent of the state portion of salary annually for the life of the certificate (calculated annually.)	
Oklahoma	858	\$5000 annually for the life of the certificate. Bonus will increase to \$7000 when funding is available.	
South Carolina	3,225	3,225 \$2000 bonus upon initial certification. \$7500 annually for the life of the certificate.	
Tennessee	91	No monetary bonus provided by the state.	
Texas	141	No monetary bonus provided by the state.	
Virginia	552	\$5000 bonus upon initial certification. \$2500 annually for the life of the certificate.	
West Virginia	151	\$2500 annually for the life of the certificate.	
SERB States	21,912	·	
United States*	32,131		
<i>Source: March 24, 2004, 1</i>	Education Week		

We should connect teacher professional development with teacher preparation standards, student standards, curriculum and assessments to achieve an aligned system of preparing and supporting new and in-service teachers.

— Kurt Landgraf, President and CEO, Educational Testing Service (ETS)

Professional Development

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Successful teaching requires not just a four-year degree, but a commitment to lifelong learning. Hospitals, law firms, and corporations would not expect their employees to have all of the skills needed after emerging from professional school. Teaching should be no different. Like doctors, lawyers, and business people, even the best-trained teachers need to keep up with changes in their subject field and the teaching profession. The *No Child Left Behind* Act also emphasizes the importance of effective professional development and offers significant funding for teachers to engage in such development.

Research on Professional Development – Effective professional development involves ongoing access to learning techniques and professional opportunities. "One-shot" professional development workshops are not an effective means for improving teacher practices. Without follow up to training workshops, up to 90% of the investment in the "one-shot" workshop is lost. Ongoing professional development and regular follow up is crucial of professional development efforts to improve teaching and learning.³⁷

Figure 11.6: What Does Effective Professional Development Look Like?³⁸

- Uses data and the analysis of student classroom work to set priorities
- Concentrates on strategies proven to improve teaching and learning
- Helps teachers learn to constantly assess student progress and use whatever strategies are necessary to make sure all students achieve at high levels
- Provides regular follow-up and support, often by on-site coaches
- Provides opportunities for teachers to learn from each other as they work to improve student learning through observation, frequent grade-level or subject area meetings, book studies and other means.
- Emphasizes a challenging core curriculum focusing on both content knowledge and effective instructional strategies
- Includes an evaluation component to measure the effectiveness of professional development based on results for students
- Matches school and district goals and state standards
- Is led by strong principal leadership within the school

Source: National Staff Development Council, 2004

Professional Development in Alabama – Alabama has established a strong foundation of best practices for effective professional development. In 2000, the Alabama State Board of Education adopted statewide standards for professional development. These standards were modeled on the National Staff Development Council's standards for quality professional development and are intended to help schools and school systems in Alabama incorporate meaningful professional development into their academic calendar. These standards have helped schools across the state move away from the over-reliance on "one-shot" workshops that are often not related to the key teaching challenges facing that teacher or school. Some of Alabama's strongest professional development programs are integrated into the initiatives like the Alabama Reading Initiative (see page 16) and the unfunded Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI).

³⁷ Joellen Killion, "Standards Provide Opportunity for Staff Development," *Results* (Oxford, Ohio: National Staff Development Council, Nov. 1999).

³⁸ Adapted from the National Staff Development Council, 2004.

While Alabama has developed strong professional development standards and practices, there is a state funding shortage for quality professional development. In FY 2005, the state funded a minimal \$60 per teacher for professional development and an additional \$60 per teacher for in-service centers to support professional development. One of the most promising math and science professional development programs, AMSTI, has not received any funding from the state. *For more information on AMSTI, see Chapter 6: Math, Science and Technology.*

Professional Development and the Alabama Reading Initiative – Traditionally, teaching is a very isolating profession. School-based professional development helps break down barriers by involving teachers in ongoing grade-level meetings or study groups with their peers. This type of professional development is called job-embedded professional development. The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) is a good example of job-embedded professional development. The ARI provides teachers in participating schools with initial training followed by ongoing support, a full-time reading coach, technical assistance from state and regional staff and periodic refresher training. ARI was fully funded for grades K-3 in 2004. For more information on the Alabama Reading Initiative, see Chapter 8 on Reading and Writing.

Educator Evaluation in Alabama – Ongoing educator evaluation is an important part of effective professional development. Alabama's main educator evaluation system, Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) Program, is designed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of principals and teachers to help them focus on their professional development needs. PEPE consists of a series of classroom observations conducted by a trained administrator. Teachers are ranked in seven competencies with number grades of 1-4. Administrators have the discretion to give an overall numeric impression of teacher performance.

There is agreement among many policymakers that student achievement should at least be a consideration in teacher evaluation.³⁹ Additionally, evaluation should be reported regularly and integrated into the accountability system. For the most part, PEPE does not meet these objectives. First, it is only based on observation and does not use student performance or growth as a part of the evaluation of a teacher's effectiveness, which could allow teachers and administrators to examine teacher performance in light of student performance. Secondly, PEPE has not been administered regularly and there is inconsistent statistically reliable data. In 2004, PEPE was administered across the state as a comprehensive evaluation of Alabama teachers and principals.

Teacher Support and Retention

There is growing recognition that efforts to retain teachers already in the classroom are at least as important as efforts to recruit new teachers. States across the country are having difficulty retaining teachers in almost all subjects. The attrition rate in the teaching profession is high across the country, with some 40-50% of teachers leaving teaching in the first five years of their career.⁴⁰ In Alabama, after two years of teaching, about one in five teachers do not return to the profession. See Figure 11.7 for more detail on those leaving early from the teaching profession in Alabama. For hard-to-staff subjects like science, about one in four teachers do not return to the profession after two years of teaching.

³⁹ "Teacher Evaluation Issue Brief," Education Commission of the States, 2004. <u>www.ecs.org</u>.

^{40 &}quot;Recruitment/Retention Policy Issue," Education Commission of the States, 2004. www.ecs.org.

Figure 11.7: Science Teachers in the South Not Returning to Profession After Two Years⁴¹

Type of Teacher	Not Returning After Two Years	
Tennessee	36%	
Mississippi	NA	
Georgia	31%	
Alabama	23%	
South Carolina	22%	
North Carolina	19%	

As reasons for leaving the profession, many educators cite a stressful or unsupportive work environment, marked by student and parental apathy, discipline problems, inadequate physical facilities, lack of collegial support, unsupportive leadership, and lack of decision making authority.⁴²

Effective teaching is complex and even the best teachers will not know all they need to when entering their first classrooms. Ongoing support is necessary in order to retain effective teachers. Support is especially important for new teachers. Schools need sound mentoring and induction programs that assess and support teachers as they grow toward becoming expert classroom leaders. In order to address the primary reasons teachers leave the profession (listed above), teachers need opportunities for professional growth and the job satisfaction derived from success with students.

The Research on Mentoring and Induction – Research demonstrates that sustained induction and mentoring programs can contribute to the improvement, success, and retention of new teachers.⁴³ In fact, teachers who don't receive mentoring and encouragement on an ongoing basis are more likely to leave the classroom.⁴⁴ As of 2003, 15 states required and financed mentoring programs. State funding allocation for mentoring and induction programs ranges dramatically from \$40 per teacher in South Carolina to \$3,250 per teacher in California.⁴⁵ North Carolina's induction program requires a mentor for every incoming teacher and provides a salary bonus of up to \$10,000 annually for expert teachers who mentor several novice teachers.⁴⁶ Texas reduced its teacher turnover for teachers who undergo the state induction program after the first year from about 20% to about 12%.⁴⁷

Mentoring and Induction in Alabama – The Alabama State Department of Education encourages school systems to establish mentoring programs that allow an experienced teacher to guide, coach and support a novice teacher's progression into greater levels of competence and confidence.⁴⁸ The State Department of Education twice has piloted a successful mentoring and induction program, the most recent of which was called the Alabama Teacher Induction Program. Conducted in 10 diverse school systems, the pilot concluded in 2003 and the program was not funded by the state in fiscal year 2005. School systems seeking to implement mentor and induction programs will have to fund these programs from local sources unless funds are allocated from the state.

⁴¹ Governor's Commission on Teaching Quality, Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, 2002. The Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama evaluated teacher turnover in all school subjects across elementary, middle, and high school teachers between 1999 and 2001.

⁴² Education Commission of the States, 2004.

⁴³ Richard Ingersoll and Jeffrey M. Kralik, "The Impact of Mentoring on Teacher Retention: What the Research Says," Education Commission of the States, Feb. 2004.

⁴⁴ Thomas Smith and Richard Ingersoll, "Reducing Teacher Turnover: Do Induction and Mentoring Programs Really Help?" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL, April 21-25, 2003.

⁴⁵ "Teacher Quality and Teacher Retention: National Trends Based on Research and Practice," Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2003.

⁴⁶ "Teaching Quality in the Southeast: Meeting the Challenges," The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2002.

⁴⁷ "Mentoring Program Helps Address Teacher Shortage," Texas State Board for Educator Certification, News Release, 9 April 2002.

⁴⁸ "Alabama Teacher Induction and Mentoring Manual," Alabama State Department of Education, 2003.

Hard-to-Staff Schools — The most qualified and capable teachers are often drawn toward opportunities that provide higher salaries and easier working conditions. This means that the most capable teachers typically do not teach at the schools with the highest need for talented teachers, especially schools in rural areas and/or with a high percentage of free-and-reduced lunch students. The effective teachers that do teach in more challenging schools are often rewarded for their effectiveness by being placed in less challenging school environments within the same school system. Research confirms this point: "...the less socially advantaged the students, the less likely teachers are to hold full certification and a degree in their field and the more likely they are to have entered teaching without certification."⁴⁹

Offering salary incentives for exceptional teachers to work in more challenging, higher need areas is one method of ensuring that high-risk children have access to quality instruction. However, these incentives may still not be enough to ensure that veteran, accomplished teachers are willing to teach in such settings.

In addition to teacher salary and bonuses, other factors related to the working conditions in schools with high-risk children include: quality of facilities, school leadership, teacher autonomy, adequate instructional materials, support for professional growth, and professional opportunities. Salary itself is necessary but not entirely sufficient to attract and retain qualified, effective teachers to the highest need areas.⁵⁰ A growing number of states and local districts, including Charlotte, Baltimore, Chattanooga, Denver, and Mobile (AL), offer bonuses to teachers and principals for teaching in hardto-staff schools.

Principal Leadership — The presence of strong principal leadership can powerfully impact teaching within the school. Principals cannot provide effective leadership without a deep understanding of effective teaching practices and without knowing how to organize schools around the work of students. Strong principal leaders instill a culture in their schools that values holding high expectations for all students, evaluating research and data to make decisions, involving teachers in the decision-making process, and focusing on continued learning through effective professional development. For more information on Principal Leadership, see Chapter 10: School Leadership.

Teacher Leadership

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, two of teachers' primary concerns with the teaching profession are: unsupportive leadership and lack of decision-making authority. Both of these concerns directly relate to the issue of leadership and offering teachers appropriate opportunities for professional growth through their teaching careers. Currently in Alabama if a teacher want to move into positions of greater leadership, he or she must almost exclusively move into administrative positions. However, this can only provide career leadership opportunities for a small percentage of teachers. Creating greater and more varied leadership opportunities within the teaching field can stimulate an opportunity to address some of teachers' primary professional concerns. In other states, these leadership roles include mentoring for novice teachers (see page 16 of this chapter), assistance with curriculum development, and peer coaching among other leadership opportunities. Additionally, staged licensure discussed on page 12 of this chapter can offer additional leadership and professional growth opportunities for teachers.

⁴⁹ Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of the State Policy Evidence," Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, October 1999.

⁵⁰ Eric Hirsch, Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, personal interview, 2004.
Conclusion

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Teaching quality is perhaps the most discussed and varied issue in public education. Research tells us that teachers are a crucial factor in determining a child's achievement levels. Having the most capable and effective teachers in all schools — regardless of location — is of the highest priority in education improvement. Teaching quality deals with everything from issues of compensation to teacher support to professional development. Perhaps the best way to look at the issue of teaching quality is by evaluating the effectiveness of each stage of the teaching continuum, including teacher recruitment, teacher preparation, certification, support/retention, and professional development. Each stage of this process is crucial to developing teachers who are in the best position to teach children. The *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 also places a strong emphasis on states developing quality teaching while offering significant funding for states to develop their teaching quality. One of Alabama's key challenges in improving teaching quality will be to continue to align improvement efforts with state goals for raising student achievement. Continued efforts at systemic alignment will yield results for teachers and students.

Additional Resources

National Resources

Education Commission of the States Provides research and analysis on teacher quality issues around the country and in the South www.ecs.org

The Education Trust www.edtrust.org

Education Week's Quality Counts reports <u>www.edweek.com/sreports/qc04</u>

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future *Provides data-driven analysis on teacher quality around the country and in the Southeastern states* <u>www.nctaf.org</u>

National Council on Teacher Quality www.nctq.org

National Staff Development Council <u>www.nsdc.org</u>

The Public Education Network www.publiceducation.org

The United States Department of Education <u>www.ed.gov</u>

Regional Resources

The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality Provides data-driven analysis on teacher quality in the Southeastern states www.teachingquality.org

The Southern Regional Education Board Has a number of reports on teacher quality with a focus on Southern states. www.sreb.org

Wake Task Force on Teacher Excellence "All for All: Teacher Excellence for Every Child" is a report from the Wake Education Partnership that provides data-driven analysis on teacher quality across the nation. http://www.wakeedpartnership.org/Research&Reports/all_for_all.html

State Resources

Alabama Best Practices Center Non-profit, non-partisan organization working to promote promising education practices in Alabama with an emphasis on professional development for teachers and administrators www.bestpracticescenter.org

Alabama State Department of Education <u>www.alsde.edu</u>

The Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama The Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation that exists to collect, synthesize, and report information on issues of public interest affecting state and local government policy in Alabama. parca.samford.edu

This chapter was developed by Eric Houck, John Cannon and Cathy Gassenheimer.

Education•ary

A compilation of education-related acronyms and definitions

Educational Acronyms

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	Alabama'a Altarnativa Accessment
ААА	Alabama's Alternative Assessment
AACTE	American Association or Colleges for Teacher Education www.aacte.org
AALECE	Alabama Association of Licensed Early Care and Education (formerly AALCCC)
AASA	American Association of School Administrators www.aasa.org
AASB	Alabama Association of School Boards www.theaasb.org
AAYC	Alabama Association for Young Children
ABPC	Alabama Best Practices Center www.bestpracticescenter.org
ACCESS	Advocacy Center for Children's Educational Success with Standards
ACE	Alabama Conference of Educators www.goacoe.org
ACHE	Alabama Commission on Higher Education
ACT	American College Testing
ACTM	Alabama Council of Teachers of Mathematics www.dpo.uab.edu/~tsmith/ACTM.htm
ACYF	Administration on Children, Youth and Families
ADA	Average Daily Attendance
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADECA	Alabama Department of Economic and Community
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ADM	Average Daily Membership
AEA	Alabama Education Association www.myaea.org
AEFA	American Education Finance Association
AEIF	Alabama Excellence Initiative Fund
AEIS	Alabama Early Intervention System
ADF	Alabama Department of Finance

AFT	American Federation of Teachers www.aft.org
AHSGE	Alabama High School Graduation Exam
ALEX	Alabama Learning Exchange www.alex.state.al.us
ALSDE	Alabama State Department of Education www.alsde.edu
AMSTI	Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative
AOPA	Alabama Occupational Portfolio Assessment
AP	Advanced Placement
API	Alabama Policy Institute
AREN	Alabama Research Education Network
ARFI	Alabama Reading First Initiative
ARI	Alabama Reading Initiative
ARMT	Alabama Reading and Math Test
ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development www.ascd.org
ASU	Alabama State University
AUM	Auburn University at Montgomery
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
BCER	Business Coalition for Education Reform www.bcer.org
BEOG	Basic Education Opportunity Grant
BOE	Board of Education
CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers www.ccsso.org
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
CLAS	Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools www.clasleaders.org
CRT	Criterion-Referenced Test
CSP	Council for School Performance

CSRD	Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration	NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
CSS0	Chief State School Officer		www.nces.edu
CTFSE	Catastrophic Trust Fund for Special Education	NAESP	National Association of Elementary School Pri www.naesp.org
DIBELS	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills	NASBE	National Association of State Boards of Educa
DOE	U.S. Department of Education www.ed.gov		www.nasbe.org
DYS	Department of Youth Services	NASSP	National Association of Secondary School Prir www.nassp.org
ECE	Early Childhood Education	NBC	National Board Certification
ECS	Education Commission of the States www.ecs.org	NBCC	National Board of Certified Counselors www.nbcc.org
EIP	Early Intervention Program	NBPTS	National Board of Professional Teaching Stand
ELC	Education Leaders Council www.educationleaders.org	NATPR	National Average Teacher Pay Raise Bill
ELL	English Language Learners	NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
ERIC	Education Resources Information Center	NCLB	No Child Left Behind
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act	NEA	National Education Association www.nea.org
ESL	English as a Second Language	NGA	National Governor's Association
ETS	Education Testing Service	NRT	Norm-referenced Test
FV	Fiscal Vear	NSF	National Science Foundation
GEDA	General Education Provisions Act	PARCA	Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama
НЕД		PEPE	Professional Education Personnel Evaluation
HOTS	Higher Order Thinking Skills	Pre-K	Pre-kindergarten
HOUSSE	High Objective Uniform State Standard of	PSAT	Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test
HOUSSE	Evaluation	РТА	Parent Teacher Association
IASA	Improving America's Schools Act	РТО	Parent Teacher Organization
IB	International baccalaureate	REACH	Realizing Every Alabama Child's Hopes
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
IEP	Individualized Education Plan	SAT	Scholastic Aptitute Test and Stanford Achievement Test
INTASC	Interstate New Jeacher Assessment and Support Consortium	SAYRE	Southeastern Association for Year-Round Edu
10	Intelligence Quotient	SDE	State Department of Education
ISLLC	Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium	SDFSC	Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program
к	Kindergarten	SDU	Staff Development Unit
K-12	Kindergarten through Grade 12	SECTQ	Southeast Center for Teacher Quality
LD	Learning Disability	SEA	State Education Agency
LEA	Local Education Agency	SEF	Southern Education Foundation
LEP	Limited English Proficient	SERVE	Southeastern Regional Vision for Education
MEP	Migrant Education Program	SPC	www.serve.org
MSSPAT	Mathematics and Science Scholarship/Loan Program for Alabama Teachers	SREB	Southern Regional Education Board

	(Nation's Report Card) www.nces.edu
AESP	National Association of Elementary School Principals www.naesp.org
ASBE	National Association of State Boards of Education www.nasbe.org
ASSP	National Association of Secondary School Principals www.nassp.org
BC	National Board Certification
BCC	National Board of Certified Counselors www.nbcc.org
BPTS	National Board of Professional Teaching Standards www.nbpts.org
ATPR	National Average Teacher Pay Raise Bill
CES	National Center for Education Statistics
CLB	No Child Left Behind
EA	National Education Association www.nea.org
GA	National Governor's Association
RT	Norm-referenced Test
SF	National Science Foundation
ARCA	Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama
EPE	Professional Education Personnel Evaluation
re-K	Pre-kindergarten
SAT	Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test
ΤΑ	Parent Teacher Association
ТО	Parent Teacher Organization
EACH	Realizing Every Alabama Child's Hopes
ACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
AT	Scholastic Aptitute Test and Stanford Achievement Test
AYRE	Southeastern Association for Year-Round Education
DE	State Department of Education
DFSC	Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program
DU	Staff Development Unit
ECTQ	Southeast Center for Teacher Quality
EA	State Education Agency
EF	Southern Education Foundation
ERVE	Southeastern Regional Vision for Education www.serve.org
RC	Southern Regional Council
REB	Southern Regional Education Board www.sreb.org

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SSTSpecial Services TeacherTCTTeacher Certification TestsTESOLTeachers of English Speakers of Other LanguagesTIMSSThird International Math and Science StudyTOEFLTest of English as a Foreign LanguageUSDDEUnited States Department of Education
www.ed.gov

Education Dictionary

A

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A+ Education Foundation: Established in 1991, A+ is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that advances policies, programs and initiatives in Alabama's K-12 education system that result in high achievement by every child.

Ability Grouping: Organizing students based on achievement rather than perception of ability. Unlike tracking, students remain together for a short period of time — part of the school day, a few days or a few weeks. See *tracking*.

Acceleration: The use of enrichment techniques and activities.

Accountability: Policies developed to hold schools, districts, educators, students and/or parents responsible or accountable for students' academic performance. Students' test scores are often used at a measure for accountability.

Accreditation: The process by which an organization authorizes teacher-education programs.

Achievement Gap: The difference in academic achievement of students of different cultural backgrounds, first languages or socioeconomic statuses and their peers.

Achievement Test: Standardized test that measures a student's knowledge in specific academic areas such as reading, language, mathematics, social studies and science.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): The minimum level of improvement in achievement that states, school districts and schools must make each year.

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams: Tests administered by the College Board in various subjects such as European history, calculus and foreign language. High school students may take these exams in order to receive college credit.

After School Programs: After school programs are established by schools and community organizations to provide safe places and constructive activities to students. Research has linked after school programs to reductions in school discipline problems, teen pregnancy, drug use, violence and drop-out rates.

Age Norms: The average performance of an individual in various age groups.

Alabama Alternative Assessment: Alternative testing method for students with disabilities.

Alabama Public School and College Authority: Established by the Alabama Legislature for the construction, alteration, and improvement of public and other facilities for public education purposes in the State, including the procurement of sites and equipment.

Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT): The criterion-referenced portion of the SAT 10 test that includes questions more aligned with Alabama's standards. The ARMT is part of the statewide accountability system and will be used to determine which schools make Adequate Yearly Progress under *No Child Left Behind*.

Alignment: Process of making content standards, academic assessments and curricular instruction consistent so that they assist students in reaching state standards. See *standards*.

Allocation: Funds are set aside and distributed for a particular purpose.

Alternative Assessments: Other means or assessments than standardized tests to obtain information regarding what students know and areas in need of improvement.

Alternative School: A school created for students who function better in a different environment than a regular classroom. These schools may be institutions geared towards students with behavioral problems, magnet schools created for a special group of talented or interested students to study a limited curriculum, etc.

Alternative Teacher Certification: A way for individuals to become classroom teachers without completing an undergraduate or graduate program in teacher education. Alternative certification takes into account an individual's background and experience and usually requires some professional training in the first years of teaching. Alternative certification is most common in urban school systems that have difficulty hiring enough regularly qualified teachers. For example, Teach for America recruits recent college graduates to teach for two years in needy urban schools. Advocates point out that such programs provide a way for bright, idealistic young people to make a needed and worthy contribution. Critics say teaching requires extensive preparation and that such shortcuts undermine efforts to make teaching a true profession (ASCD).

American College Testing (ACT) Assessment: National college admission examination that includes of tests in English, reading, mathematics and science.

American Federation of Teachers [AFT]: One of the two large teacher unions (the other is the National Education Association). The AFT represents about 1 million teachers, school support staff, higher education faculty and staff, health-care employees, and state and municipal employees. The AFT is affiliated with the AFL-CIO (ASCD).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Federal law passed in 1990 that prohibits the discrimination against any disabled individual. This law applies not only to education services, but also to employment.

Apprenticeship: A structured work placement that combines secondary school and work-based learning activities.

Assessment/Evaluation: A means of measuring the ongoing progress of students, teachers and schools. Teachers and schools may find out what students know and areas in need of improvement. See *standardized tests*.

At-Risk Student: Any child that is in danger of dropping out of school before graduation. Broad categories usually include inner-city, low-income, and homeless children; those not fluent in English; and special-needs students with emotional or behavioral difficulties. Substance abuse, juvenile crime, unemployment, poverty, and lack of adult support are thought to increase a youth's risk factor.

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD): A medical term used to describe students with severe inattention and impulsiveness. The disorder can be treated through medication, psychotherapy, behavior modification and training. The most common medications used to treat ADD are Ritalin, Dexedrine and Aderall.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A medical term used to describe students with inappropriate degrees of hyperactivity, inattention and impulsiveness. See ADD definition above.

Authentic Assessment: A type of student evaluation that requires a student to perform a task rather than select an answer from a ready-made list.

Autism: A neurological disorder that typically appears during the first three years of life. Children and adults with autism may have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions and leisure or play activities.

Average Daily Attendance [ADA]: A measure that may be used in state school aid formulas to calculate state aid.

Average Daily Membership [ADM]: The total number of students (membership) of a school during a reporting period divided by the number of days school is in session during the period. In Alabama, ADM used in the Foundation Program.

B

Basal Readers: Elementary school books that incorporate simple stories and practice exercises to reinforce the materials the students are learning.

Basic Skills: Include reading, writing and mathematics skills.

Behavior Disorder (BD): A term used in special education to describe students whose behavior interferes with their classroom performance. Such students have problems relating to other children and adults, exhibit inappropriate behaviors such as extreme anger, or are severely depressed or have a tendency to develop physical symptoms, etc.

Behavioral Correction Plan: Plan developed to address any needs of a student with continuous disciplinary problems upon return from an expulsion or suspension.

Below Grade Level: Any student performing below the achievement level on a standardized test for his/her grade level.

Benchmarks: Examples of performances that serve as standards against which students' achievement is scored.

Block Scheduling: Reconfiguring the school day by increasing the length of the traditional class period and decreasing the number of class periods a day.

Business/Education Partnerships: School-reform coalitions formed by private businesses and schools or districts.

C

Carnegie Unit: One unit of credit awarded in grades 9 through 12 for a minimum of 150 hours of instruction during the regular school year or 120 hours of instruction during summer school.

Catastrophic Trust Fund for Special Education: A fund administered by the State Department of Education for the purpose of assisting local education agencies providing special education and related services for children with disabilities in catastrophic cases (Code of Alabama, Article II, section 16-39-30: 1991).

Categorical Aid: This may refer to either state or federal aid for public education which is designated for a specific purpose and is restricted to that purpose only (or may not be reallocated to another program).

Character Education: Includes education in basic values or virtues.

Charter School: An independent public school which has greater flexibility in designing programs to improve student learning and in meeting local, state and national education goals. Charter schools are exempt from most state and local rules, policies and regulations; however, charter schools must be approved by local and state boards of education.

Child-Centered Schooling: Education that focuses on the child, not the subject. Instead of using lectures, drills and rote learning, child-centered teaching utilizes individualized instruction and hands-on learning.

Class Rank: The relative position of a student in his or her graduating class, which is determined by Grade Point Average (GPA).

Classroom Management: The way a teacher organizes and administers routines to make classroom life as productive and satisfying as possible. What some people might describe narrowly as "discipline." For example, teachers with good classroom management clarify how various things (such as distribution of supplies and equipment) are to be done and may even begin the school year by having students practice the expected procedures.

Coaching: Educators use this term, commonly used in athletics, to refer to any situation in which someone helps someone else learn a skill. The late Mortimer Adler, who devised the Paideia program, maintained that coaching is one of three basic modes of teaching (the other two are presenting and leading discussions). Coaching is also considered an important part of training programs in which teachers learn new teaching methods. A process in which teachers visit each other's classes to observe instruction and offer feedback is known as peer coaching.

Cognitive Sciences: Area of study that focuses on how people think and learn.

Cohort: A group of students sharing the same experience at the same time. A particular group of people with something in common. For instance, a cohort might be a group of students who had been taught an interdisciplinary curriculum by a team of junior high school teachers. Researchers might want to track their progress into high school to identify differences in success of students in the cohort compared with students who had attended conventional classes in the same school (ASCD).

Collaboration: A relationship between individuals or organizations that enables the participants to accomplish goals more successfully than they could have separately. Educators are finding that they must collaborate with others to deal with increasingly complex issues. For example, schools and school systems often form partnerships with local businesses or social service agencies. Many schools teach students how to work with others on group projects. Some educators call this collaborative learning, although it is more commonly known as cooperative learning (ASCD).

Collaborative Learning: Working with other students in pairs or groups. See *cooperative learning*.

College Board: Non-profit organization that administers the SAT and AP programs.

Community College: Public two-year institution supported by the local community. Community colleges generally offer two types of curricula: transfer — the first two years of work for a bachelor's degree — and terminal — vocational training for employment.

Community Partnerships: Connections between local organizations and schools to help address students' needs and improve achievement.

Comprehensive School Health Program: An organized set of policies, procedures and activities designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of students and staff which has traditionally included health services, health education and an emphasis on a healthy school environment.

Comprehensive School Reform: An approach to school improvement that involves adopting a design for organizing an entire school rather than using numerous unrelated instructional programs. New American Schools, an organization that promotes comprehensive school reform, sponsors several different designs, each featuring challenging academic standards, strong professional development programs, meaningful parental and community involvement, and a supportive school environment (ASCD).

Confidence Interval: Confidence intervals provide more accurate estimates of student performance than raw test scores. The confidence interval is a range within which a student's true score is likely to fall.

Constructivism: Theory of learning that holds that children modify their understanding in light of new information.

Constructed Response: Test questions that require students to write their own responses.

Content Clusters: Groups of items measuring a similar skill on each Stanford 10 subtest. The Content Clusters are useful in identifying students' strengths and weaknesses in meeting specific learning objectives.

Content Standards: Standards regarding what students in K-12th grade should know and be able to do in the core content area.

Contextual Learning: Learning that enables students to test academic concepts via real-world applications. Students acquire knowledge through actual experience.

Continuous Progress: Term used to depict a curriculum model that allows each student to progress at his or her own pace.

Cooperative Learning: An instructional method in which students of all performance levels work together in small groups toward a group goal. Students share responsibility for each other's learning.

Core Knowledge: A school reform movement that emphasizes a solid core curriculum to help children establish strong foundations of knowledge at each grade level.

Courses of Study: Alabama's statewide curriculum is organized into courses of study. These courses of study are linked by subject area through all grade levels and provide an established, sound sequence of learning for students in each academic area.

Creationism: The view that human beings were specifically created by God and did not evolve from other forms of animal life through the process of natural selection. Advocates of scientific creationism believe that the creationist view should be taught alongside evolution in science classes. Opponents argue that creationism is a religious, not a scientific, position. They insist that the only ideas that should be taught in science classes are those that are based on scientific evidence and that are subject to rigorous scientific scrutiny (ASCD).

Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT): Tests that compare a student's performance to a specific standard of acceptable performance instead of the performance of other students. The tests are designed to measure how thoroughly a student has learned a particular body of knowledge without regard to how well other students have learned it. Most nationally standardized achievement tests are norm-referenced, meaning that a student's performance is compared to how well students in the norming group did when the test was normed. Criterion-referenced tests are directly related to the curriculum of a particular school district or state and are scored according to fixed criteria (ASCD).

Critical Thinking: Mental process of acquiring information and evaluating it to reach a logical conclusion.

Cultural Diversity: Recognizing that students come from a variety of ethnic, geographic, economic and religious backgrounds.

Curriculum: The content of an instructional program.

D

Data: Facts or figures from which inferences can be made.

Data-Driven School Improvement: The use of achievement test scores and data to develop strategies for school improvement. **Decentralization:** Transfer of school policymaking and decision-making authority from federal to state level or from state level to districts or local schools.

Decision-making Skills: Thinking skills that enable students to solve problems. Skills include identifying problems, seeking alternative solutions, applying knowledge, evaluating alternatives and selecting courses of action.

De-tracking: doing away with tracking because of evidence that all children are capable of achieving valuable educational goals. See *ability grouping* and *tracking*.

Developmental Stage: The physical, social, biological, emotional, psychological and academic level of an individual child, rather than the actual chronological age.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Any activity involving young children that is based on knowledge of the stages of child development, while understanding that each child is unique and each child's experiences should match his or her developing abilities.

Diagnostic Test: Intensive, in-depth evaluation of a student's skills in a specific area. Diagnostic tests are used to determine the specific learning needs of individual students.

Differentiated Instruction: Teaching to each individual student's learning level.

Direct Instruction: Detailed instruction in specific skills. Instruction proceeds through demonstration of skills, guided practice, feedback and independent practice. The contents and skills are presented in a strict order.

Disaggregated Data: Data broken down by subgroups of students (e.g., by gender, race and age).

Distance Learning: Delivery of instruction via multimedia computers, satellite or teleconferencing when the teacher and the students are in different locations.

Diversity: In education, discussions about diversity involve recognizing a variety of student needs including those of ethnicity, language, socioeconomic class, disabilities, and gender. School reforms attempt to address these issues to help all students succeed. Schools also respond to societal diversity by attempting to promote understanding and acceptance of cultural and other differences (ASCD).

Drills: Targeted, repetitive exercises.

Drop-out Rate: The number of students who do not complete high school.

Drug-Free School Zones: Drug-free areas around schools created by the U.S. Congress and state legislatures in the 1980s. People convicted of possession or of use of illegal drugs in these areas are subject to increased legal penalties.

Dyslexia: Reading impairment, thought to be a genetic condition, in which children transpose letters.

E-Learning: Use of the Internet in instruction.

E-Rate: Reduced rate for Internet access in public schools and libraries under the Telecommunications Act of 1996

Early Childhood Education: The education of young children. Many educators think of early childhood education as including children ages 3 through 7. Recent research information about the brain development of infants is causing many specialists to think of this period of rapid learning as beginning at birth (ASCD).

Early Intervention Programs (EIP): Programs provided from kindergarten through the fifth grade. The programs provide specialized instruction in smaller classes to students who are not performing at grade level.

Earmarking: The practice of reserving budgetary funds for a specific purpose.

Echo Reading: A program in which children read aloud along with an adult.

Education Commission of the States (ECS): A nonprofit organization whose purpose is to help governors, state legislators, state education officials, and others develop policies to improve the quality of education at all levels. The commission was formed in 1965 to help states approach education policy decisions in an organized fashion. Members include 49 states (all but Montana), three territories, and the District of Columbia (ASCD).

Education for Handicapped Children Act (EHA): Law passed in 1975 that states that special needs children have the right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Revised in 1990 to become the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Educational Overburden: Relates to school systems (usually urban school systems) claiming that the higher percentage of lower-income and educational disadvantaged students in their school systems is not only a financial burden, but one which requires special services and additional effort.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): Federal law passed in 1965 that focuses on children from high-poverty communities and students at risk of education failure. The Act authorizes Title I, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Title VII programs.

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD): Disorders characterized by consistently aggressive, impulsive or withdrawn behavior (i.e. schizophrenia). EBDs impair personal, social, academic and vocational skills.

English Immersion: Instruction for bilingual students that is conducted entirely in English. Teachers deliver lessons in simplified English, so students can learn English and other academic subjects.

English Language Learners (ELL): Students who speak a language other than English and have not yet mastered English.

English-only Movement: Attempts to make English the only official language of the United States and to end bilingual education (NCEA).

English as a Second Language (ESL): Most commonly includes immersion as well as support to individuals in their native languages. Classes are typically composed of students who speak many different languages, but are not fluent in English.

Enrichment: Programs that supplement the regular academic curriculum to keep students interested in learning.

Equalization Grants: State funding to provide additional assistance to the poorest school districts. Equalization funding aims to reduce the disparities as to how much can be raised through local tax dollars between the wealthiest and poorest school districts in the state.

Equity: The goal of equity is to achieve a high-quality education for all students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disabilities, or special needs. Studies show widespread inequities in financial support, classroom expectations, texts and technological resources, and quality of teaching, especially in inner cities and among poor populations. Because needs are greater in some situations than others, equal treatment is not necessarily equitable (ASCD).

Evolution: Refers to the theory of natural selection, which is the basis for modern studies of biology. Creationists oppose the teaching of natural selection in public schools, especially if it is not accompanied by the idea of creationism as an alternative explanation of biological differences.

Exceptional Learners: Students with an IQ in the bottom (mentally challenged) or top (gifted) three percent of the population or who have other physical or mental differences that affect learning.

Experiential Education: Education that stresses hands-on experience and activities instead of traditional classroom learning.

F

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Flat Grant Program: State aid formula that allocates an equal sum of dollars to each public school pupil in the state.

Foundation Program: A state equalization aid program that usually guarantees a certain foundation level of revenues or expenditures for each student or group of students, together with a minimum tax rate that each local school system must levy for educational purposes. In Alabama, ADM (average daily membership) is used in the calculation of the foundation program.

Free Lunch Eligibility: The number of students in a school whose family income makes them eligible to receive free lunch under the National School Lunch Act of 1946.

Functional Illiteracy: The inability to read or write well enough to perform many necessary tasks in life, such as writing a check, filling out a job application, reading a classified advertisement, or understanding a newspaper headline (ASCD).

G

General Education Development Exam: The GED exam is a high school equivalency test that was first developed in 1942. The program is administered by the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials of The American Council on Education. As of January 2002, the GED consists of five tests that cover language arts-reading, language arts-writing, social studies, science, and mathematics (ASCD).

Gifted: A term used to describe a student who demonstrates a high level of ability and who needs special instructional services to achieve at a level equal to his/her ability. Gifted students typically have IQ scores in the top three percent of the population.

GOALS 2000: A U.S. Department of Education program that provides grants to states and schools to meet specified national goals.

Grade: An assessment (normally by letter on a scale of A-F) of a student's performance on an examination, project, paper or in a course.

Grade Inflation: Grading in which most students receive grades at the top of the grade scale.

H

Hands-On Math, Science: Teaching math and science by providing students with activities that requires the application of concepts through experiential learning instead of working only with paper, pencil and classroom lectures.

Head Start: A federal program that provides pre-schoolers of low socio-economic status with education, nutrition, health and social services at special centers based in schools and community settings throughout the country. The program is designed to help prepare disadvantaged children for school.

Heterogeneous Grouping: Including students with different ability levels in the same class.

High Stakes Testing: Making a decision based on a single evaluation or test (e.g., an exam given for high school graduation).

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS): The thought processes beyond acquiring and understanding facts (e.g., using facts, taking ideas apart, creating new ideas, critically evaluating ideas, etc.).

Home Rule:

Home Schooling: The practice of teaching children at home rather than sending them to school. The home schooled population is growing in the United States.

Homogeneous Grouping: Grouping students with similar ability levels in the same class.

Horizontal Equity: Equal treatment of equals.

Illiteracy: Lack of the skills needed in a literate society. Whereas literacy once meant minimal ability to read and write, the term is now used to refer to many types of knowledge and skills, such as computer literacy. People may also speak of scientific, mathematical, economic, or musical literacy (ASCD).

Immersion: As used in bilingual education programs, immersion means having students learn a second language by speaking, hearing, and reading it all day (or part of the day), including being taught several subjects in that language (ASCD).

In Loco Parentis: "In the place of a parent." Legal requirement that a teacher act towards a pupil as a parent could be expected to act. Teachers and schools can be held liable for a student when at school.

In-School Suspension (ISS): An alternative to Out-Of-School Suspension for less severe rule infractions. The goal of ISS is to remove students from interactions with their peers.

In-service: Also written as in-service, this is the continuing education needed by people in most professions when they have completed their pre-service training and are employed. In education, in-service training or education is now usually called staff development or professional development.

In-Service Workshop: Workshops attended by teachers and administrators on various topics related to education.

Inclusion: The practice of educating all children in the same classroom, including children with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities. Inclusion classes often require a special assistant to the classroom teacher. In a fully inclusive school or classroom, all of the children follow the same schedules; everyone is involved in the same field trips, extracurricular activities, and assemblies (ASCD).

Independent School: A private school that is not part of a school system and is funded by tuition and private grants.

Independent Study: Self-directed learning program driven by student interest.

Indicator: A statistic, such as the percentage of students attending school daily, used as evidence of success in accomplishing an abstract goal, such as student interest in learning. The long-term results of education are difficult to measure, so people use measurable indicators — such as drop-out rates, honors won, and test scores — to help judge school quality.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A plan developed by a student's parent and teachers that outlines the student's program of study and the particular education services the child receives.

Individualized Instruction: Content and pacing of instruction geared toward students' individual learning styles, abilities, needs and goals.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Basic federal law relating to special education. The law was passed in 1990 and requires public schools to provide a free and appropriate public education to disabled school-aged children ages 3 through 21.

Inquiry Learning: A learning method that involves students using a variation of the scientific method of inquiry to study a topic in depth. Students may be required to analyze real world problems, formulate hypotheses, collect and analyze data and draw conclusions.

Instruction: Refers to the methods that teachers use to convey academic content and materials.

Integrated Curriculum: Academic and occupational subject matter taught together to emphasize the relationships among the disciplines.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Tests: Tests that are intended to measure an individual's mental capacity. However, IQ tests are highly controversial because critics claim the tests only measure a narrow band of intellectual strengths and are biased against minorities. The IQs of about 95 percent of the population are between 70 and 130. Below 70 is considered retarded and above 130 is considered gifted.

Interactive Learning: Communication and interactions between the students and the teachers occurs during the instruction.

Interdisciplinary Learning: Instruction that applies the methodology, subject matter and language from more than one discipline to examine a central issue, problem or topic.

Intersessions: The time-off during sessions in year-round (alternative calendar) schools. Intersessions provide time for remediation and enrichment and allow students who fall behind to get additional instruction.

lowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS): Achievement tests given to students throughout the country. Replaced by the Stanford 10 Achievement tests in Alabama.

J

Job-embedded Professional Development: Continuous learning opportunities for teachers that are part of their everyday activities. For example, grade-level meetings to discuss student achievement data, mentoring, and group curriculum planning.

Job Shadowing: A career exploration activity that entails a student following an employee for a day or more to gain insight into a particular occupation.

Joint Work: Shared responsibility for tasks (e.g., team teaching, curriculum committees or other jobs) that create interdependence among teachers. Joint work promotes on-the-job learning by providing opportunities for interactions among teachers.

Journaling: Informal writing exercise where students record their thoughts and experiences.

K

K-12: This term refers to kindergarten through grade 12 or the educational levels in the public school systems of the state.

L

Lead Teachers: Teachers who have broader responsibilities and higher salaries than other teachers but who continue to work with students as regular classroom teachers, at least part time. The idea for lead teachers was proposed as a way to improve the quality of schooling in 1986 in the report A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century from a task force that included leaders of the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and leaders in business and government. The task force noted that education is different from most professions in that opportunities for career advancement are relatively limited. Despite various efforts to improve the status and rewards of teaching, few of today's teachers hold positions that could be considered lead teacher roles (ASCD).

Learning Contract: An agreement with the school through which a parent or child makes a verbal or written commitment to the student's education.

Learning Disability (LD): A term used to describe a disorder in one of the basic psychological processes. These students may have difficulty in listening, thinking, speaking, writing, spelling or doing mathematical calculations that may be addressed through alternative educational programming and assessment.

Learning Styles: Differences in the way students learn more readily. Scholars have devised numerous ways of classifying style differences, including cognitive style (the way a person tends to think about a learning situation), tendency to use particular senses (seeing, hearing, touching), and other characteristics, such as whether the person prefers to work independently or with others. Advocates interpret research as showing that teaching underachievers in ways that complement their strengths can significantly increase their scores on standardized tests. For example, strongly auditory students learn and recall information when they hear it, whereas kinesthetic youngsters learn best through activities such as role playing or floor games (ASCD).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): A federal procedural safeguard that requires children with disabilities to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with students who are not disabled (inclusion).

Life-long Learning: The idea that, because people in the modern world must continue learning all their lives, schools should teach children how to learn rather than (or in addition to) teaching them fundamental knowledge and skills. Also refers to changing the mission of public schools from teaching only children through age 18 to providing educational opportunities to people of all ages (ASCD).

Limited-English-Proficient/LEP (English Language Learners/ELL) Students: Students who speak a language other than English and have not yet mastered English.

Local Education Agency (LEA): A public board of education, which maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state.

Looping: An informal term for assigning students to the same teacher for more than one school year. Rather than teaching a new group of students at the same grade level each year, teachers stay with the same group of students as they move from grade to grade. The practice is rare in the United States, but has been common for years in some parts of Europe and is now being tried in some schools in the United States. Advocates say it provides for more continuous learning because teachers don't have to take time to learn about an entirely new group of students each year (ASCD).

Μ

Magnet School: A school with strong emphasis in a particular subject area (i.e. music, science, drama, math). Students are selected through an application process instead of being assigned based on residence.

Mainstreaming: Moving a special education student from a special environment into the regular school environment. See *inclusion*.

Maintenance Programs: Assists English as a second language students in maintaining skills in their native language.

Manipulatives: Objects used to help students understand abstract ideas.

Master Teachers: Experienced teachers who mentor new teachers or teachers with less classroom experience to help them become more effective.

Mastery Learning: An instructional practice based on the belief that a student's ability to learn depends on the amount of time he or she spends learning or studying a subject, not his or her ability.

Media Center: School library and technology resource center.

Mentally Challenged: Students with an IQ in the bottom three percent of the population.

Mentor: A role model who offers support to another person. A mentor has knowledge and experience in an area and shares it with the person being mentored. For example, an experienced teacher might mentor a student teacher or beginning teacher. Some student mentoring programs are designed to help at-risk students succeed in school. Acting as role models, mentors spend time with individual students once or twice a week — encouraging, listening, making suggestions, and taking the student to events, activities, or the mentor's place of employment to help the student learn about a career and consider further education (ASCD).

Mentoring: Process by which an older student, teacher or other adult works closely with and advises another student.

Merit Pay: (See Pay for Performance).

Migrant Education: Education programs established to meet the needs of children of migrant workers (e.g., farm laborers), who often move from school to school.

Mildly Mentally Handicapped (MiMH) and Moderately Mentally Handicapped (MoMH): Terms uses in special education to describe students who have below average learning abilities.

Millage Rate: The amount, in terms of mills, levied by a taxing authority to generate revenue.

Multi-age Grouping: A method of assigning students to a classroom by including students of two or more age levels. Typically students remain in the same class until they have reached a specific skill level or the maximum age for a specific group.

Multicultural Education: Inclusion of the contributions of many ethnic, geographic, economic and religious cultures in the educational programming. (See Cultural Diversity).

Multiple Intelligences: Concept of intelligences that includes more aspects of mental ability than IQ. Many educational researchers identify seven intelligences: musical, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Multisensory Activity: Instructional approach that emphasizes all five senses to help students learn (e.g., students may use their fingers to trace letters, follow the text or clap along as words are read).

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Often referred to as the National Report Card. National testing program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Reading and mathematics tests are given to fourth and eighth grade students nationwide. NAEP reports student performance as average scale scores and by achievement level. NAEP has three achievement levels: basic (partial mastery), proficient (solid academic performance) and advanced (superior academic performance).

National Board Certification (NBC): A rigorous program administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that includes performance-based assessments and peer review. NBC takes approximately a year to complete and is the top national certification for educators.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS): An independent, nonprofit organization that awards national certification to teachers who successfully complete a set of rigorous assessments.

National Educators Association [NEA]: One of the two large teacher unions (the other is the American Federation of Teachers). NEA describes itself as America's oldest and largest organization committed to advancing the cause of public education. It also has affiliates in every state and in more than 13,000 local communities across the United States (ASCD).

Network: Technology linked together to enable users to have access to a larger body of knowledge.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act: Law passed in 2001 that emphasizes increased accountability for States, school systems and schools and creates greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools. The law gives more flexibility for States and Local Education Agencies in the use of Federal education dollars. All states must implement statewide accountability systems, and allow students attending persistently failing schools to use Title I funds for supplementary education services (e.g., tutoring, remedial education and after-school programs).

Norm Group: A group of students who serve as a standard against which test companies compare the performance of other students.

Norm-Referenced Tests (NRT): Tests that measure students' performance compared to a large, representative group of students nationwide or the norm group. Standardized tests designed to measure how a student's performance compares with that of other students. Most standardized achievement tests are norm-referenced, meaning that a student's performance is compared to the performances of students in a norming group. Scores on norm-referenced tests are often reported in terms of grade-level equivalencies or percentiles derived from the scores of the original students (ASCD).

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N

On-Site Facilitator: A person from a school or district that is trained in a specific curricular model. The facilitator mentors teachers in using the model.

On-Site Specialist: A specialist at the school site to assist the school staff with the implementation of various school reforms.

Opportunity Gap: Differences in resources available to different schools and groups of students. This is a major contributor to the achievement gap.

Out-of-Field Teaching: Practice through which teachers are assigned to teach subjects that do not match their degrees, training or education.

Outcome Based Education: Goal-oriented plan for education based on the clearly defined results that students are supposed to be capable of demonstrating when they leave school.

P

Pacing: The speed at which information is presented and instruction is delivered.

Paired Reading: A program where two people (usually of different abilities) read together. The stronger reader assists the other with reading.

Parent Involvement: Any program or activity that encourages parents to become involved in their child's education.

Parochial School: A school that is associated with a church or other religious institution.

Pay for Performance (PFP): Teachers are paid on the basis of their demonstrated competence in teaching and success in raising student achievement rather than seniority.

Pedagogy: An approach to schooling, learning and teaching that includes content, instructional methods, teaching strategies and how students learn what is taught. See *instruction*.

Peer Review: Opportunities for teachers to be observed by colleagues. Peer review allows teachers to see how other educators implement reforms or new instructional programs in the classroom; instructional methods may be exchanged between teachers.

Peer Support: The encouragement offered between the students within the classroom or within the cooperative learning group as the group works toward a common goal.

Peer Tutoring: An instructional model in which students teach their peers.

Per-pupil Expenditures: Money spent on each student in a given school district. Since public schools are financed in part by local property taxes, there is a disparity in per-pupil expenditures across the state.

Performance Assessment: Students are evaluated on a variety of things such as their writing, their experiments and their collections of work, rather than on a standardized test alone. They measure students' ability to do something. (See Authentic Assessment).

Performance Criteria: A description of the characteristics that will be judged for a task. Criteria may be holistic, general or specific and are usually expressed as a scoring rubric. (See Rubric).

Performance Indicators: Specific, well-defined skills that are linked to student achievement.

Phoneme: The individual sound made by a letter of the alphabet.

Phonics: A reading instructional strategy to teach letter-sound relationships by having students sound out words.

Portfolio: A collection of student work usually used to assess students.

Postsecondary Options Program (PSO): A program between public schools and public institutions of higher learning. Students may enroll in classes and earn credit hours for both high school graduation requirements and the college or technical school.

Pre-K (Pre-Kindergarten): Refers to any program designed for students before they are eligible for kindergarten.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT): A practice test for students taking the Scholastic Assessment Test. The PSAT is designed to help students identify academic strengths and weaknesses.

Pretest: Test given before instruction to determine a student's level of performance in a given skill.

Praxis I: Academic skills assessment that tests teacher knowledge in reading, math and writing.

Praxis II: Subject assessment tests that are required for teacher certification. Praxis II tests measure knowledge in particular content areas. For most teaching fields, two Praxis II tests are required. In Alabama, teachers can take the Praxis II tests to meet the highly qualified teacher standards.

Privatization: Attempts to bring the marketplace or market forces into public education.

Professional Development: Activities aimed at improving instruction by providing teachers with necessary skills training and information. Professional development activities range from formal courses and seminars to teacher mentoring and collaboration.

Proficiency: When a student masters or is able to do something at grade level.

Progressive Schools: Schools with a child-centered approach. Progressive schools emphasize the whole child concept and experiential learning instead of traditional instruction led by the teacher.

Progress Monitoring: Obtaining student achievement and assessment data.

Proration: A mid-year budget reduction to prevent deficit spending. Proration can occur when revenue estimates are too high or planned expenditures were too great.

Psycho-educational Programs: Programs located on regular education campuses or in special centers, which provide services to students with severe emotional and behavior disorders or autism.

Public School Choice: Students may attend any district school and the students are not limited to only neighborhood schools.

Pull-out: Removing a child from his/her regular classroom setting for remedial or enrichment coursework.

Q

Qualitative Research: Research that uses methods adapted from anthropology and other social sciences, including systematic observation and interviews. Until recently, most educational research was quantitative. Some researchers are now using qualitative methods because they think statistical processes will not produce the understandings they seek. For example, a researcher might spend an entire year visiting a particular school; observing classes, meetings, and conversations; and seeking to identify the way decisions are made and the roles played by various staff members (ASCD).

Quantitative Research: Research conducted in a traditional scientific manner using statistical procedures to compare the effects of one treatment with another. For example, a researcher might compare test scores of students taught using an experimental method with the scores of students taught in a more conventional way. Some researchers now see this approach as limited, so make greater use of qualitative research methods (ASCD).

R

Readiness for School: Being physically, emotionally, socially and academically prepared to learn.

Reading Canon: The complete list of books accepted by a program.

Reading First: Initiative in the *No Child Left Behind* Act that significantly increases the federal investment in scientifically based reading instruction programs in the early grades. The program is intended to ensure that every child can read by the end of third grade.

Reconstitution: Process through which the state oversees a low performing school and replaces all or most of the school staff in a district.

Reflective Practice: Teachers are encouraged to reflect daily on their teaching to understand which practices are most successful and which needs improvement.

Reform Team: A group that provides leadership in the planning and implementation of a school reform model. Such a group may include the principal, an on-site facilitator or specialist, teachers and parents.

Remedial Services: Services designed to provide specialized help to students having difficulty understanding concepts in various instructional programs.

Resource Room: A special education classroom where students can go for additional help mastering academic skills. Some schools offer this resource to any student who desires help in a given subject area, but usually students with learning disabilities or other special needs are assigned to the resource room for a certain number of hours each week (ASCD).

Restructuring: Major changes in the rules, roles and relationships in education.

Retention: Policy that holds back students with failing grades at the end of a school year.

Rote Learning: Learning through memorization of facts or repeatedly performing a task.

Rubric: A guide for scoring student performance.

S

Sampling: In testing programs, a way of estimating how a whole group would perform on a test by testing representative members of the group or giving different portions of the test to various subgroups (ASCD).

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): Standardized test that may be taken by college-bound students to gain admission to college. The SAT tests students' verbal and mathematical reasoning ability.

Scholastic Aptitude Test II (SAT II): Subject Tests: Tests that measure knowledge in high school subject areas such as biology, calculus and American History. The SAT IIs are required or encouraged at many highly competitive colleges and universities.

School Board: Legislative body of citizens who are elected to administer their local school system.

School Choice: Allows parents to enroll their children in the school of their choice.

School Climate: The sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, and organizational structures within a school that cause it to function and react in particular ways. Some schools are said to have a nurturing environment that recognizes children and treats them as individuals; others may have the feel of authoritarian structures where rules are strictly enforced and hierarchical control is strong. Teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students contribute to school climate. Although the two terms are somewhat interchangeable, school climate refers mostly to the school's effects on students, whereas school culture refers more to the way teachers and other staff members work together (ASCD).

School Council: A local school advisory body comprised of the school principal, two teachers, two parents or guardians and two members of the business community. The school councils may advise on a variety of issues, including student achievement goals, curriculum and instruction, school and community communications and local school board policies.

School Improvement Teams: Consists of groups of experienced educators that will be assigned by the Department of Education to assist in diagnosing problems in low performing schools as identified by the Office of Education Accountability. Their responsibilities will include reviewing procedures and curriculum, observing staff and assisting in the development of school improvement plans.

School Resource Officer (SRO): A law enforcement officer placed in a school who serves as a resource for students, parents, teachers and administrators regarding legal issues.

School Counselor: A certified professional who provides guidance to all students. School counselors have various responsibilities ranging from preventative counseling and referrals to community organizations to promotion of positive attitudes and choices and vocational assessment and career exploration.

School Reform: Efforts to improve school performance.

School Social Worker (SSW): Professionals with graduate level training in social work. SSWs may work with parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, psychologists and other school staff members to improve students' overall experience at school.

School-Site Training: A process for training school staff in a new program where a certified specialist comes to the school to train the entire school staff in implementing the reform.

School-to-Work: Programs ranging from on-the-job training to classes taught by local community colleges designed to prepare students to enter the job market.

School Within a School: A special program, charter school or magnet school that is housed within a regular school. Schools within schools allow districts to experiment with innovative programs and teaching methods while using existing resources.

Scope and Sequences: A detailed outline of the goals for a particular curriculum area and the specific objectives for each grade level.

Seamlessness: The philosophy of developing one integrated education system from kindergarten through the workforce. The concept fosters communication and cooperation between local school districts, higher education institutions and the workforce. Seamlessness incorporates the concept of lifelong learning and assists students in transitioning smoothly to different phases of their educational career.

Section 504: Federal law that prohibits discrimination against disabled students.

Self-esteem: Term denoting a widely accepted psychological aim of education. High self-esteem and a positive sense of one's self translates into higher achievement, greater happiness and more civility to others.

Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED): Term used in special education that refers to students whose emotions interfere with their classroom performance. Students with SEDs may have an inability to build and maintain satisfactory relationships with peers or teachers, a general mood of unhappiness and a tendency to develop fears associated with school and personal problems.

Service Learning: Combines community service with a structured school-based opportunity for reflection. Students acquire skills and knowledge through experiential learning while serving their communities.

Severe Behavior Disorder (SBD): Term used in special education that refers to students who display behaviors that seriously interfere with the learning environment and the individual's ability to benefit from it.

Site-Based Decision Making: A method of operating a school system in which many decisions traditionally made at the system or state level are made at the school or site level.

Small Group Instruction: Classroom practice that allows teachers to tailor instruction to groups of students based on skill level. Students are grouped by ability and work with a teacher in these small groups to improve such skills in all areas of curriculum.

Social Promotion: Practice of allowing students who have failed to meet performance standards and academic requirements to pass on to the next grade with their peers without completing or satisfying the requirements.

Socio-economic Status: May be used to describe an individual's or a family's level of wealth and/or education.

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB): Education research lab comprised of the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.

Special Education: Special instruction for mentally challenged or gifted students.

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Special Instructional Assistance (SIA): A state funded program for kindergarten, first and second grade at-risk students. It provides additional funding to the regular instructional program to reduce class size, purchase additional teaching materials and involve parents in their children's education.

Special Needs: A student who has disabilities or is at the risk of developing disabilities that may require special education services.

Staff Development: An activity or process intended to assist educators improve their skills, attitudes, knowledge and/or performance in their roles or to stay up-to-date with research and state law.

Standards: Those requirements either in state law or rules passed by the Alabama Board of Education under which Alabama schools operate. Standards define what students are expected to know and be able to do.

Standards-Based Instruction: Instruction that is specifically geared towards meeting standards.

Standardized Test: A test taken by many students under identical conditions in which the results are compared statistically to standard norms.

Stanford 10 Achievement Test: A norm-referenced test that reflects how well students perform in reading, mathematics, language, science, social science and listening relatively to a nationally representative sample of students in the same grade and tested under the same conditions. All Alabama students take the test at grades three, five and eight.

State Report Card: Report produced for each school in the state of Alabama. School performance is compared to previous school and local school system performance, absolute student achievement standards and comparable school group performance.

Student Empowerment: Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own education in order to improve their achievement.

Student Support Team (SST): A group of educators at a school who meet to discuss academic and behavior problems of specific students. The Student Support Team makes suggestions to the classroom teacher to help the child improve.

Summer School Programs: Remedial and enrichment programs conducted for small groups of students in the summer. Most summer school programs are intended to catch students up to their grade-level peers.

Supplemental Services: Services provided outside the regular school day to help students attain proficiency levels.

Support Services: Assistance that includes transportation, childcare, home visits, translators, home visits and referrals to other agencies. Support services are based on the premise that students' families need support, which will enhance the students' education.

Systemic Change: Change that gets to the core of education structure and concepts. For example, instead of changing the grade scale, authentic assessment is used to determine a student's competency in a given subject area.

T

Tax Capacity: The ratio between per capita personal income and taxes per capita.

Tax Effort: The extent to which a state utilizes its tax base for social services, including highways, law enforcement, health care, and education.

Teach for America: A national nonprofit organization that selects top college graduates in all academic majors to teach for two years in urban and rural hard-to-staff public schools.

Teacher Collaboration: Teachers plan, organize or teach together in an effort to improve each teacher's teaching skills.

Teacher Evaluations: Methods of assessing teachers' success in improving student achievement. Evaluations may include portfolios, observations, data and other evidence of student achievement.

Teacher Licensure: The process by which teachers receive state permission to teach.

Teacher Networks: Professional communities of teachers that focus on specific subject matter.

Tech-Prep Program: A program of study that allows high school students to move on to the next level of objectives at either a vocational/technical institute or college.

Technical Education: Instruction that prepares a student for employment immediately upon the completion of high school.

Thematic Units: Instruction tied together by key concepts. Teachers integrate information from a variety of disciplines into the instructional units.

Title I: A federal program for K-12 students that provides additional funding to help students who are "at-risk" of falling behind academically. Title I is the largest federal aid program for elementary and secondary schools. The program provides money to school systems based on the number of low-income families in each district (i.e., students eligible for free and reduced lunch).

Title II: A federally funded program that provides assistance to state and local educational agencies and institutions of higher education with teacher education programs. Title II funds programs to improve teaching and learning, reform teacher preparation and certification standards and to develop better performance based assessment and professional development strategies.

Title VI: Part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including schools. Title VI prohibits the denial of equal access to education to students with limited proficiency in English.

Title VII: A federal program designed to improve the English proficiency of bilingual students.

Title IX: Law barring gender discrimination in education facilities that receive federal funds. Most Title IX cases filed against K-12 schools involve sex equity in athletic programs.

Total Quality Management: A concept for managing schools that focuses on client satisfaction and encouraging employees to seek continual improvement.

Training of Trainers: A design for training a school in a new instructional method where one or more people are sent to special training and then provide training to the whole school.

Tracking: The practice of dividing students into class size groups, which exist for the major part of the school day or year, based on the student's perceived ability or prior achievement and then designing and delivering instruction to each group.

Transition Plan: Plan separate from the IEP that documents goals for a special education student to aid him or her in making the transition from school to work.

U

Underachiever: A student who is performing at a significant level below his or her ability.

V

Values Education: The process of providing opportunities for all students to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes related to citizenship within a democratic society.

Vertical Equity: Unequal treatment of unequals. Students with greater educational needs may receive additional resources to provide such students with an equivalent educational opportunity.

Voucher: A state allocation of money given to parents to allow their children to attend a school of the parent's choice, either public or private.

W

Whole Child Education: Idea that education should focus on the whole child instead of just academic development. Whole child education places a strong emphasis on social and emotional development and self-esteem. The concept recognizes the essential needs of education, health, mentoring, human services, sports and recreation and arts and culture.

Whole Language: An approach to the teaching of language based on the belief that language is not learned as separate skills and pieces, but as a body of knowledge.

Work-Based Learning: Learning activities that involve work experience. Work-based learning integrates academic and occupational curriculum with worksite experience.

Year-Round Schools: Schools with alternative calendars. Students spend the same number of days in class as those on traditional calendars, but breaks are shorter and more frequent.

Youth Infusion: The principle of intergenerational teamwork and shared decision-making. Youth infusion is gaining popularity in high schools with the hope that seeking student input will make students happier and more willing to follow student policies.

Z

Zero Tolerance: Policies that mandate predetermined consequences or punishments for a specific offense regardless of the circumstances surrounding it.

Sources

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