

2026 Policy Agenda

We believe that *every* student, regardless of circumstance, deserves a pathway to an opportunity-filled future.

Strong K-12 Foundation



K-12 Funding

- **Increase RAISE Act weights and funding** for low-income students, special education students, ELL students, and charter school students.
- **Preserve the ETF for education funding** to continue growing AL's investments in education.



Rigor & High Expectations

- **Defend Alabama's rigorous standards**, designed by Alabama teachers.
- **Defend record growth in Advanced Placement courses.**
- **Strengthen high school pathways** and graduation requirements.



Accountability & Assessments

- **Strengthen Alabama's Education Report Card** to ensure that it meaningfully measures how well schools are performing.
- **Defend against the weakening of current accountability systems.**



Innovation

- Secure **additional flexible funding** for conversion and start-up **public charter schools.**
- Provide another low-cost pathway to **charter facilities financing.**

Impactful Policy Supporting Critical Milestones



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Invest in Alabama's future leaders and workforce from birth.

- Continue to expand access to Alabama's **First Class Pre-K** and invest in the **Quality Stars Program.**



K-8 READING & MATH

Continue to invest in great teachers and effective instruction for students.

- Invest in the **Alabama Literacy Act** and increase funding to support **struggling readers beyond grade 3** so that every child in Alabama learns to read.
- **Remove three-cueing** from literacy instruction, curriculum, and educator preparation, an outdated and ineffective strategy not based on phonics and the science of reading.
- Increase investment in the **Alabama Numeracy Act** to continue Alabama's positive math momentum.
- Continue investment in the **Alabama Principal Leadership and Mentorship Act.**
- Increase investment in **high-quality summer and after-school** programs.
- Implement a **Teacher Pathways, Support, and Advancement Pilot program** to retain and reward our most effective educators through advanced teacher roles.



HIGH SCHOOL & POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS

Strengthen the connection between education and economic opportunity.

- Build on Alabama's record-breaking **Advanced Placement** success. From middle school to high school, our A+ College Ready program grows a pipeline of students ready for rigorous coursework and earning valuable college credit while still in high school.
- Strengthen the **Computer Science Act** with common-sense revisions and continue to fund **Computer Science Education** through the Education Trust Fund.
- Strengthen **high school** and **postsecondary pathways** by conducting an **ROI study** to identify credentials of value and pathways that lead to high-wage, high-demand good jobs.
- Design an **outcomes-based funding system** that incentivizes outcomes and student success as students progress through postsecondary pathways to a good job.
- **Enhance state wage records** with details on job titles, occupation codes, work locations, and employment types so Alabama can clearly understand which education and training pathways lead to high-demand, higher-wage jobs.

Why do these things matter? What progress has Alabama made?

Strong K–12 Foundation



Funding

Students with additional needs require more resources, and decades of research show that targeted investments can be truly transformational for student outcomes. The 2025 RAISE Act brings Alabama's funding system into the modern era by moving beyond simple headcount and ensuring more dollars reach the students who need them most.



Rigor & High Expectations

Rigor matters because students rise to the level of our expectations, and those expectations must reflect the real demands of college, careers, and life. When standards, instruction, and assessments are truly rigorous, students graduate not just with a diploma but with the knowledge and skills necessary for their long-term success.



Accountability & Assessments

Strong assessments and accountability are like keeping score in football—you can't improve if you don't know where you stand or what's working. With clear goals, honest data, and support for schools, Alabama can ensure every child gets a fair shot at success and celebrate real wins for students.



Innovation

Access to high-quality, innovative charter schools gives families more great public school options and empowers educators to design schools that meet students' needs. When strong charter schools personalize learning and focus on high expectations, they boost student success and show what's possible in Alabama schools.

MILESTONE	WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?	WHAT PROGRESS HAVE WE MADE?
Early Childhood	The earliest years of life—from birth to age five—are foundational, delivering the highest return on investment for families, communities, and Alabama's future. As one of the nation's top-rated programs, Alabama's First Class Pre-K prepares children to enter school ready to learn, boosts later literacy and math achievement, and puts more students on a long-term path to success.	• There are First Class Pre-K seats available for 45.9% of Alabama's 4-year-olds • 41% of Alabama's 4-year-olds are enrolled in First Class Pre-K
3rd Grade Reading	Reading on grade level by the end of third grade is a critical milestone, with students who fall behind at this stage far less likely to graduate and those who meet the benchmark overwhelmingly on track for long-term success. Ensuring every child becomes a strong reader sets Alabama students up to succeed in school, graduate ready for college and career, and pursue opportunity-filled futures.	• 65% of AL 3rd-grade students are proficient in ELA • 55% of 3rd-grade students in poverty are proficient in ELA • 50% of Black 3rd-grade students are proficient in ELA
8th Grade Math	Eighth-grade math is a pivotal turning point, as students shift from basic arithmetic to the algebra and problem-solving skills that underpin success in high school, college, and careers. When students master 8th-grade math, they are far more likely to stay on track for graduation, pursue postsecondary opportunities, and be prepared for high-demand, good jobs.	• 25% of AL students are proficient in math • 13% of 8th-grade students in poverty are proficient in math • 9% of Black 8th-grade students in poverty are proficient in math
High School	High school graduation is a pivotal milestone that strengthens opportunities for students and communities, dramatically improving employment prospects and long-term economic stability. To prepare them, students need challenging coursework such as Advanced Placement (AP). A diploma should signal true readiness for what comes next, reflecting that a student is academically and socially prepared for college, training, and a pathway to economic independence.	• 91% graduation rate • 87% earned a College & Career Readiness Indicator • Only 13.1% of high school students are college-ready (2024 ACT) • AL ranks 20th in the nation for AP exams taken, and AL students have saved over an estimated \$453 million in college credit.
Post secondary Pathways	High-quality postsecondary pathways, whether degrees, certificates, or apprenticeships, deliver real value when they lead to credentials aligned with high-wage, high-demand jobs and long-term economic mobility. The strongest pathways blend rigorous academics, hands-on learning, and clear connections to good jobs, helping students see how today's learning leads to tomorrow's opportunities.	• 57% of AL high school graduates are enrolling in 2 & 4-year colleges • 57.7% Workforce participation