



# Alabama Achieves– FY27 ETF Budget

Dr. Eric G. Mackey

February 2, 2026



# ALABAMA ACHIEVES – STRATEGIC PLAN



Academic Growth & Achievement

College, Career, & Workforce Ready

Safe & Supportive Learning Environment

Highly Effective Educators

Engagement



**Every Child.  
Every Chance.  
Every Day.**

## Fundamental Questions

1. Will it help our students become better readers?
2. Will it help our students be better prepared for success in Algebra?
3. Will it help our students become more productive, responsible citizens when they graduate and enter the workforce?



**Strategy.**  
**Focus.**  
**Investment.**



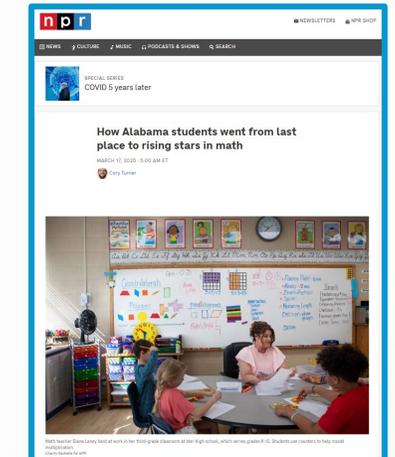
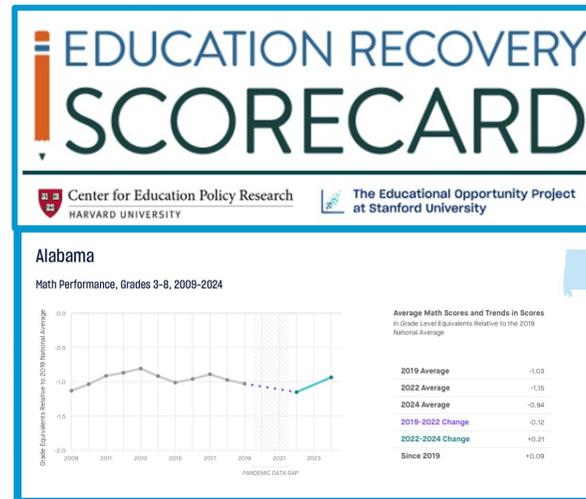
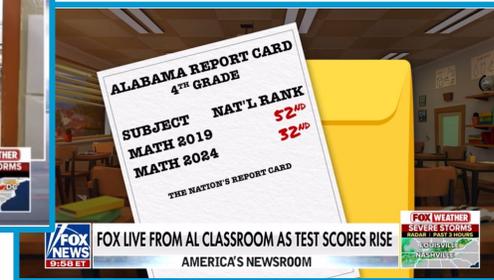
# ACHIEVEMENT on a whole new level

Alabama has the largest increase in 4<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics and is now ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> – the highest ranking ever for Alabama – on the NAEP, the nations report card

Alabama is the only state in the nation to earn a “Strong” rating for improving math instruction on the report published by the National Council on Teacher Quality.

Alabama ranks 1<sup>st</sup> among states in Math Recovery between 2019 and 2024.

Alabama was selected by Harvard University’s Center for Education Policy Research to be a part of their **Inaugural Cohort of States Leading States.**





# ACHIEVEMENT on a whole new level

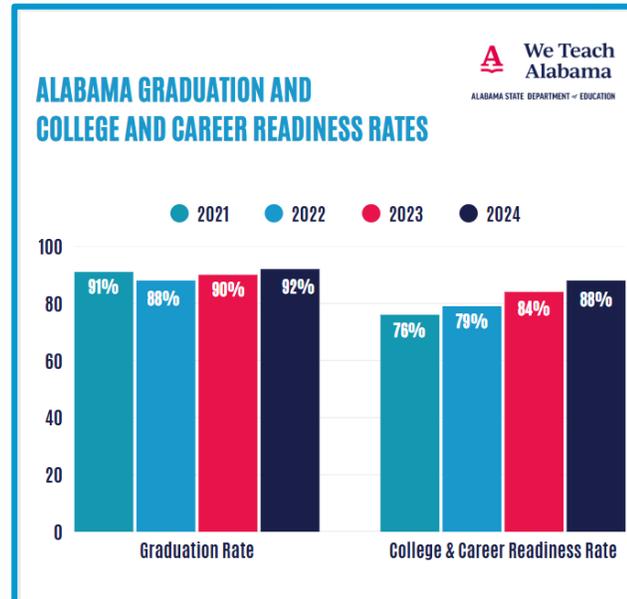
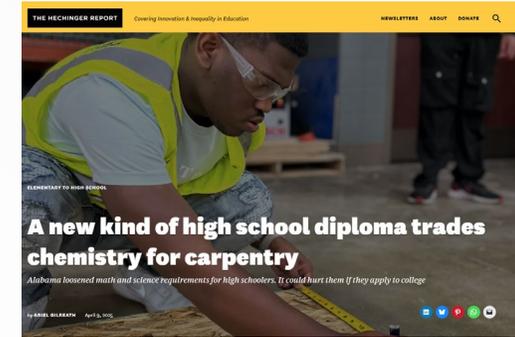
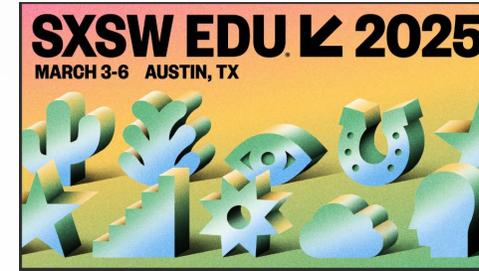
Alabama's high school graduation rate is 92% - one of the highest in the nation – and the College and Career Readiness Rate increased by 3.68 points to 88% - an all-time record for the state.

Alabama has earned an 87 on the State Report Card – our highest score ever.

Alabama Seniors earning college credit has doubled since 2019.

Alabama has the lowest percentage of chronic absenteeism in the nation.

Alabama is ranked top 5 in nation for Computer Science.



Apr 10, 2024

### Revolutionizing Education: Alabama's Data Literacy Leap

The Alabama State Department of Education partnered with QuantHub in order to bring data literacy education to public schools across the state.

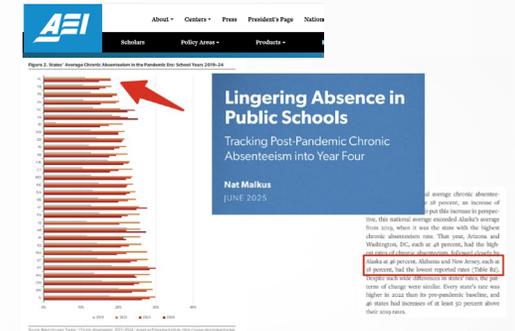
A student using QuantHub in their math class.

By fostering a trailblazing partnership between the Alabama State Department of Education and QuantHub, the state of Alabama is setting a new standard for educational innovation. This collaboration aims to tackle one of the most pressing challenges of 21st-century education: equipping students with the data science skills essential for success in a data-driven world. By proactively equipping K-12 students with essential data skills, Alabama is not only meeting the growing

Huffman High School student Malik Richardson takes measurements on a wooden wall his architecture class is building. Credit: Ariel Gilreath/The Hechinger Report

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — In a corner of Huffman High School, the sounds of popping nail guns and whirring table saws fill the architecture and construction classroom.





# ACHIEVEMENT on a whole new level

## Alabama ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for Reading Recovery between 2019 and 2024.

## Alabama was invited to speak on a panel at the Reagan Institute Summit on Education.

## Alabama was invited to the George W. Bush Institute's Governors Forum on Reading to share with other states what is working well in efforts to improve literacy for America's children.

## Alabama was chosen as the 1<sup>st</sup> state in the nation to host the National Summer Learning Association's Summer Solutions Leadership Forum – outside of the DC Metro Area– for the innovative efforts and investments to close the summer gap and prevent the summer slide through summer reading and math camps.



### The South Surges Academically in Alternative View of National Exam

In a recent essay, literacy advocate Karen Valtes specifically cited Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama as beacons of reading growth for the rest of the country to follow. White agreed the region has gained momentum in recent years, adding that the "golden age" of education reform was largely driven by Southern governors like Bill Clinton in Arkansas, Jim Hunt in North Carolina, and the Bush brothers in Texas and Florida. Along with strong state leadership, he said, particular features like unelected state superintendents and county-level school districts likely explain some of their progress.

#### School Yourself

### The Southern Surge: Understanding the Bright Spots in the Literacy Landscape

Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Alabama offer a playbook for improving reading outcomes.

KAREN VALTES  
Feb 10, 2023

### Alabama, the Ascendant

Alabama is the new kid on the growth block. Truth be told, we're all still getting our heads around its story.

Alabama was one of only two states to show NAEP growth in 4th grade reading since 2019. In 2019, Alabama ranked 49th in for fourth-grade reading, and today it ranks 34th. Alabama was also 49th for low-income fourth-graders in 2019; today, it's tied for 31st. Its state testing shows pronounced gains in reading.

What Alabama did:

Alabama's Reading Initiative, kick-started by 2019 legislation, borrows a lot from the Mississippi Model: LETRS training and regular screening in K-3, literacy coaches in schools, and third grade retention. The retention mandates took effect in 2023-24, and I found it interesting and encouraging that less than 1% of third graders were, in fact, retained.

Alabama stands apart for its innovative summer reading camps. The lowest-performing students automatically receive invitations, and get 60 hours of intervention during the summer. The camps have been fostering growth: Sharon Lurye reported that Alabama "sent over 30,000 struggling readers to summer literacy camps last year. Half of those students tested at grade level by the end of the summer."

Curriculum improvement has been a pillar of Alabama's work. Beginning in 2022-23, all districts were required to have a comprehensive foundational skills program in place. Still, Alabama hasn't yet made moves around core curriculum. I'm told that the state is just beginning to focus on knowledge-building curriculum, something to look for in the years to come.



## How Alabama Improved NAEP Reading Scores With Evidence-Based Literacy

May 9, 2025

### ALABAMA: FOCUSING ON EDUCATOR TRAINING

In 2019, Alabama passed the [Alabama Literacy Act](#) supporting reading instruction for kindergarten through third grade. The bill targeted funding and resources to ensure effective implementation, requiring:

- **Nine hours of science of reading training** for educators in kindergarten through 6th Grade,
- **A Foundations of Reading assessment** for teacher candidates pursuing an Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, and Collaborative Special Education teaching certificates.

To effectively enact the Alabama Literacy Act, the Alabama State Department of Education developed an [Implementation Guide](#) complete with professional learning opportunities, plans for monitoring progress, and next steps.

Many states lack codified requirements for teacher literacy training in educator preparation programs (EPP). In contrast, Alabama has taken a proactive approach through its Path Forward team, which has led statewide teacher literacy training efforts. This initiative was guided by the Barksdale Reading Institute audit in 2020. The audit informed recommendations for improving teacher training in EPPs.

The Path Forward team alongside The Hunt Institute continues to engage Alabama's Institutes of Higher Education Taskforce with representatives from EPPs across the state, the Alabama Reading Initiative, and other stakeholders.

### Alabama Literacy Support Teams

- Alabama State Department of Education
- The Office of Teaching and Leading
- Alabama Reading Initiative

Alabama's investment into educator training may be paying off; Alabama is one of two states who has seen a score difference between 2019 and 2024 4th grade reading NAEP results. While this progress is slow, it is promising as it offers one of the few bright spots in this data.



Three more states — Alabama, Indiana and South Carolina — have adopted all 18 of our fundamental early literacy policies, joining Louisiana, North Carolina and Arkansas at setting a national standard for comprehensive literacy reform.

To put it simply, Alabama, Indiana and South Carolina have built a better foundation for students to learn how to read than most of the country. But this extraordinary feat didn't happen overnight; it took years of carefully planned policy.

Alabama has perhaps one of the strongest literacy coaching programs in the country. Coaches are trained with evidence-based solutions and are assigned to each elementary school in the state. These coaches provide job-embedded training to newer teachers and teachers of K-3 students who are identified as struggling readers. Districts also have a regional literacy specialist to support the literacy coaches in each school and assess how to utilize their support. This approach builds teacher capacity for addressing the needs of struggling readers while also strengthening their practice to focus on students' core instructional needs.





# ACHIEVEMENT on a whole new level



**“TRULY, THE TIDES ARE TURNING WHEN IT COMES TO EDUCATION IN ALABAMA.”**

**GOVERNOR KAY IVEY,  
2026 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS**

 Alabama Achieves

**“Our teachers are certainly key to our success.”**

I am excited to announce that budget includes another two percent **pay increase** for these teachers preparing our next generation.”

 Alabama Achieves

“As a former teacher, I knew there was no greater opportunity than to improve our students’ education. I introduced my first policy as governor, an education initiative, **Strong Start, Strong Finish. And we got to work.**”

“Now, I could not be prouder that my final Education Trust Fund proposal will be **the largest ever** in our state’s history.”

## THE RESULTS:

-  **#1 IN THE NATION FOR MATH RECOVERY**
-  **#3 IN THE NATION FOR READING RECOVERY**
-  **TOP 5 STATE FOR COMPUTER SCIENCE**
-  **OUR HIGHEST EVER COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS RATE**
-  **TIED FOR THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE OF CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**





# ACADEMIC GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### Academic Growth & Achievement

Increase student achievement in all academic areas with a focus on reading and math



Increase reading achievement on state and national assessments



Increase mathematics and science achievement on state and national assessments



Support students with exceptional needs (e.g., special education, gifted, English learners, dyslexic, medically fragile)



Expand computer science offerings to every school



Improve participation and success in Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses



Support a robust curriculum for all students that supports the arts, foreign languages, and other academic areas that create a solid foundation for students

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- ↑ Alabama is ranked **5th** in the nation for Computer Science
- ↑ Participation in Dual Enrollment has increased **87%** since 2018 to 40,348
- ↑ **13.87%** or 160,836 students in Alabama receive support for exceptional needs including special education, gifted, dyslexia, etc

## ACADEMIC GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS



Alabama has led the nation for the past four years\* in COVID Recovery.

- Alabama has exceeded pre-pandemic levels of achievement in mathematics and has the largest increase in 4th grade mathematics in the Nation on the 2024 NAEP, the Nation's Report Card, and is now ranked 32nd in Math - the highest ranking ever for Alabama
- Alabama is now 34th in the Nation in 4th Grade Reading and is one of two states to exceed pre-COVID levels

↑ **88.4%+**

of 3rd Graders are Reading on Grade Level

↑ **25,022+**

Teachers trained in LETRS

↑ **1,048+**

AMSTI Schools

### 3RD GRADE READING\*

\*READING IS A SUBSET OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

● 2024 ● 2025



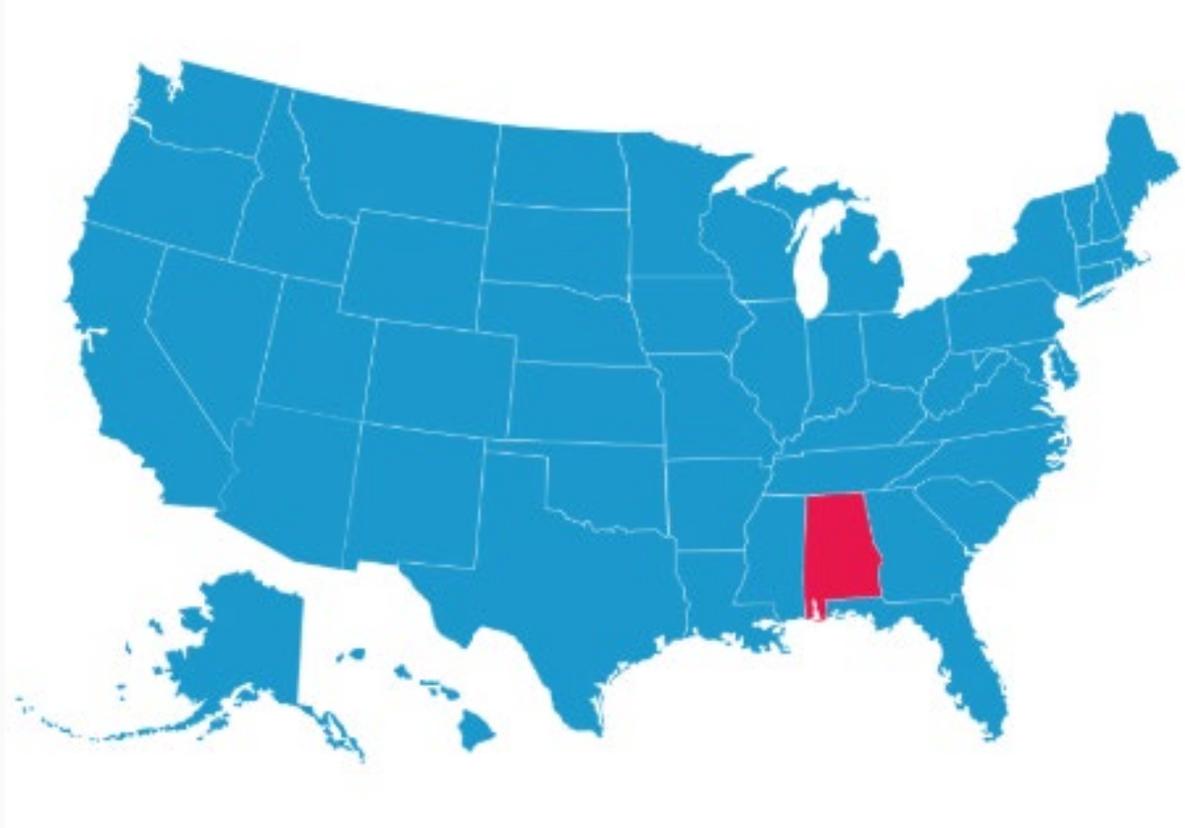
\*\* ADJUSTED TO THE NEW COURSE OF STUDY

\*\*\*BASED ON A CUT SCORE OF 444 FOR 2024 AND 2025

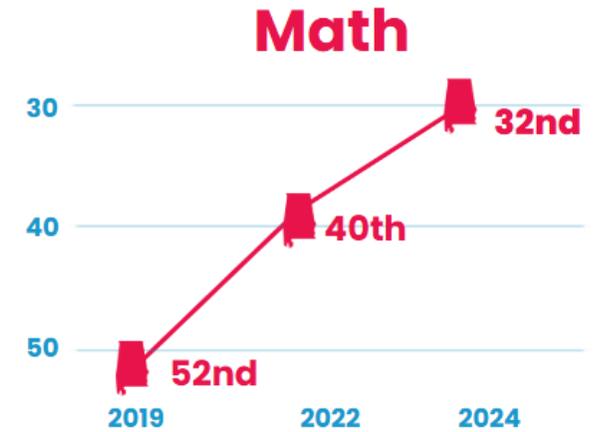


# ACADEMIC GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT

## ACHIEVEMENTS



### Alabama's NAEP State Ranking 4th Grade 2019-2024



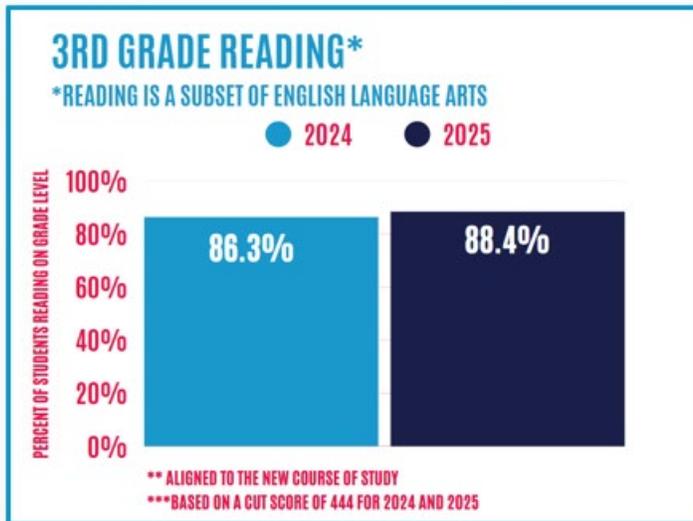


# ACHIEVEMENTS

## ACAP

### Grade 3 Reporting Categories

- 2023 & Beyond: Phonological awareness/phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension



### 100% of 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders are Reading On or Above Grade Level

- Orange Beach City Schools
- Satsuma City Schools
- Princeton School in Birmingham City
- Fleeta School in Covington County
- Kilby Laboratory School in Florence City
- Eura Brown Elementary School in Gadsden City
- Monte Sano Elementary School in Huntsville City
- Eichold-Mertz School of Math and Science in Mobile County
- WH Council Traditional School in Mobile County
- Bear Exploration Center in Montgomery County
- Forest Avenue Elementary School in Montgomery County
- Macmillan International school in Montgomery County
- Chatom Elementary School in Washington County

95% of 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders in 22 other Districts are Reading on or Above Grade Level



# ACADEMIC GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT



	FY27 Board Request (October 2025)	FY27 Governor's Recommended
ACCESS –Distance Learning	\$ 26,014,400	\$26,000,000
Advanced Placement	\$ 14,500,000	\$13,500,000
Alabama Numeracy Act	\$ 114,000,000	\$114,000,000
AMSTI	\$ 38,799,318	\$38,799,318
Alabama Reading Initiative	\$ 112,850,000	\$112,850,000
K-3 Reading Coaches	\$ 36,800,000	\$36,800,000
Struggling Readers Beyond Grade 3	\$ 52,000,000	\$45,000,000 (Supplemental)
English Learners	\$ 4,000,000	\$4,000,000
Gifted Students	\$ 1,675,000	\$1,675,000
Special Education Certified Behavioral Analyst	\$ 13,500,000	\$13,500,000
Special Education Pre-School	\$ 30,000,000	\$30,000,000
Student Assessment	\$ 28,800,686	\$20,405,117



# COLLEGE, CAREER, & WORKFORCE READY ACHIEVEMENTS

## College, Career, & Workforce Ready

Engage, challenge, and support every student in relevant, impactful instruction that equips him or her with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully enter college, career, or workforce



Expand opportunities to give students multiple ways to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and qualities for success after high school



Identify the knowledge, habits, and qualities (i.e. essential skills) necessary for success after high school and support every high school to incorporate these across various curricula



Reduce the gap between College and Career Readiness (CCR) Rate and the Graduation Rate



Provide tools to local school systems for all K-12 students to have opportunities to explore various college and career options

## ACHIEVEMENTS

↑ **92%+**

Graduation Rate

↑ **88%+**

College and Career Readiness Rate

↑ **173,235+**

Students enrolled in CTE

↑ **91.90%+**

Positive Placement Rate for CTE Students

↑ **45,300+**

CTE Credentials Earned

↑ **80.25%+**

of High School Students are enrolled in at least one CTE Class





# COLLEGE, CAREER, & WORKFORCE READY



	FY27 Board Request (October 2025)	FY27 Governor's Recommended
Arts Education	\$ 2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Career Tech Initiative	\$ 53,747,239	\$38,747,239
Computer Science for Alabama (CS4AL)	\$ 7,000,000	\$7,000,000
Jobs for Alabama Graduates	\$ 9,550,742	\$7,050,742



# SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

Provide safe environments that support the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of all students in every school



Working with ADMH to expand access to mental health therapists in schools



Provide support and professional expertise to local school systems as they create, enhance, and/or maintain safe, secure campuses



Provide support and high-quality professional development to school safety personnel



Collaborate with local law enforcement officials to jointly participate in training

### ACHIEVEMENTS

↑ 151+

Mental Health Service Coordinators

↑ 1,659+

School Nurses (RN and LPN)

↑ 706+

School Resource Officers

↑ 90M+

Miles Driven by School Buses

↑ 134M+

Meals Served



Alabama has the Lowest Percentage of Chronic Absenteeism in the U.S.



The Hope Institute



ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION



## SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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### Facility Safety Inspections

- **156 Safety Inspections (26 Districts)**

### School Safety Platform

- **Contract Signed**
- **Regional Safety Trainings during March**

#### Features include:

- **Web-Based Emergency Operations Plan and School Safety Plan Management**
- **School Safety Tracking and Observation Tools**
- **Mobile Maintenance Work Order and Safety Management Tool**

**\*ALEA is now responsible for School Mapping**



# SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



	FY27 Board Request (October 2025)	FY27 Governor's Recommended
Mental Health Service Coordinator Program	\$ 7,650,000	\$7,650,000
School Nurses	\$ 94,556,877	\$96,448,015
Transportation	\$ 615,398,017	\$586,223,644
School Safety, Security, & Climate	\$ 52,916,000	\$16,200,000 Plus \$50,000,000 Supplemental
Alabama Multi-Tiered System of Supports	\$ 2,500,000	\$2,000,000



# HIGHLY EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS ACHIEVEMENTS

## Highly Effective Educators

Ensure highly effective educators are equipped with the content knowledge and teaching skills to address the needs of all learners in every school



Increase the number of high-quality educators entering the profession with an emphasis on shortage and areas of need



Provide high-quality professional development to focus on specific, identifiable needs of teachers and principals



Increase the number of non-traditional teacher candidates recruited as "second career" teachers from military, industry, business, and other fields

## ACHIEVEMENTS

↑ **38,013+**

AMSTI Trained Teachers

↑ **623+**

Building Based Math Coaches

↑ **4,163+**

TEAMS Teachers

↑ **162+**

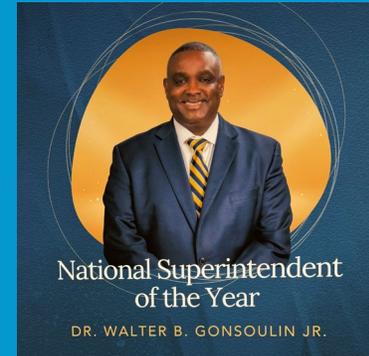
CALTs



Alabama is ranked **5th** in the nation for number of new NBCTs -- and **7th** in the nation for total number of active NBCTs



National Teacher of the Year Finalist  
*Katie Collins*



National Superintendent of the Year  
DR. WALTER B. GONSOULIN JR.





# HIGHLY EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS



	FY27 Board Request (October 2025)	FY27 Governor's Recommended
Math & Science Teacher Salary Matrix (TEAMS)	\$ 87,000,000	\$72,000,000
Special Education Stipend	\$ 8,150,000	\$7,904,000
Principal Leadership Mentoring Act	\$ 33,205,115	\$33,205,115
Speech Pathologist Stipend	\$ 900,000	\$725,000
CALT Stipend	\$ 600,000	\$600,000
Online High-Speed Teacher Certification Portal	\$ 700,000	\$450,000
Alabama Teacher Observation Tool (ATOT)	\$ 1,000,000	\$1,000,000



# ENGAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

## Engagement

Build a collaborative environment at the Alabama State Department of Education that provides fast, reliable customer service for citizens, state leaders, and local education agencies



Develop internal communication strategies and pathways at the ALSDE with a focus of "customer satisfaction"



Enhance external communications strategies and pathways to improve communication between the ALSDE and stakeholders

## ACHIEVEMENTS

↑ 374+

Purple Star Schools

↑ 5,240%+

Increase in Instagram Followers

↑ 40K+

Twitter/X Followers

↑ 93M+

Facebook Impressions



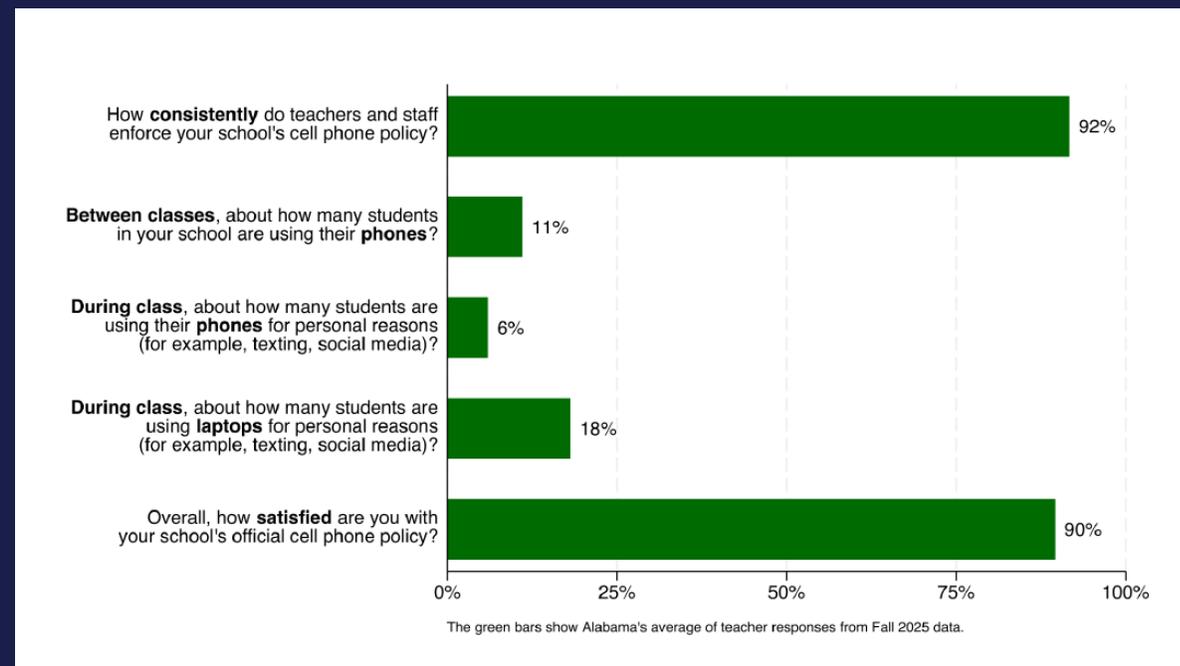
**Sand Rock School**

#ALTeeShirtTuesdays



# Phones in Focus Survey

64.1% of Schools have responded





# FY26 Governor's Recommended

<b>Supplemental</b>	<b>FY26 Governor's Recommended – Supplemental</b>
School Safety Grants	\$50,000,000
CCR Grants	\$20,000,000
Charter School Grants	\$10,000,000
Summer and Afterschool Programs	\$30,000,000
Struggling Readers Beyond Grade 3	\$45,000,000
CTE Equipment	\$15,000,000
Fleet Renewal	\$66,511,023

<b>A&amp;T</b>	<b>FY26 Governor's Recommended</b>
A&T	\$624,900,000



# Alabama Achieves

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION



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