

Take the Lead, Alabama



Our children deserve the best schools possible.

That's not happening today. Alabama is at the bottom of just about every education ranking being published today, and that is hobbling our young people in a time when jobs require more education and skill than ever before.

Ranking after ranking shows that Alabama is failing its school children.

U.S. News & World Report (2019)

- Alabama ranked No. 50 – dead last – in the publication's latest education rankings.
- In Pre-K-12, Alabama ranked No. 49, ahead of only New Mexico.
- Alabama students ranked next to last for math scores.

Education Week's "Quality Counts" analysis (2018)

- Alabama ranked 43rd among the states, with a C-minus grade.
- In the "Chance for Success" index, Alabama ranked No. 41 with a C-plus grade.
- In the "K-12 Achievement" Index, Alabama ranked 43rd, with a D grade.

Alabama students are performing significantly below national averages.

Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA)

- Less than half of Alabama public school students in grades 3-8 scored proficient on grade level tests of reading and math in 2018.
- In all grades, 48 percent of students were proficient in math and 46 percent were proficient in reading.
- The overall proficiency rate for science, which is tested in the fifth and seventh grades, was much lower, at 38 percent.

NAEP National Report Card

- Fourth-grade students in Alabama scoring at or above the Proficient level in math and reading trailed the national average.
- The number of eighth-grade students in Alabama scoring at or above the proficiency benchmark in both math and science trailed the national average by 12 percentage points.

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Too many high school graduates in Alabama are not prepared for college.

- Alabama students ranked No. 45 in College Readiness (U.S. News).
- Only 18 percent of Alabama high school seniors are ready in all four ACT core subjects (PARCA).
- Nearly 30 percent of college freshmen in Alabama need remedial classes (PARCA).

The leadership structure for Alabama schools just isn't getting the job done for our schoolchildren.

- Alabama is one of only six states with an elected school board that appoints a superintendent.
- States such as Florida and Virginia that earn top education rankings in study after study all have Governor-appointed school boards.
- All neighboring states have Governor-appointed boards.

Here's how the 'Take the Lead' initiative will improve educational outcomes for students across the state.

- It will create a new structure called the Alabama Commission on Elementary and Secondary Education, replacing the Alabama State School Board.
- Members of the Commission will be appointed by the Governor to a six-year term, removing them from the whims of the election cycle.
- The Governor's selections will have to be confirmed by the Senate.
- The Commission's membership will reflect the geographical, gender and racial make-up of the public-school system in Alabama.

This is a constitutional amendment and must be approved by voters in an election in March 2020.

It's time to **Take the Lead, Alabama.**
