



Feb. 14, 2025



State Board Receives Overview of CHOOSE Act Implementation

The Alabama State Board of Education reviewed plans for the CHOOSE Act at Thursday's work session, examining the new school choice program that launches in 2025-2026 with \$100 million in funding to provide education savings accounts worth \$7,000 for private school students and \$2,000 for homeschooled students. The program will initially prioritize special needs students and military families while targeting households below 300% of the federal poverty level, before expanding to universal eligibility by 2027-2028.

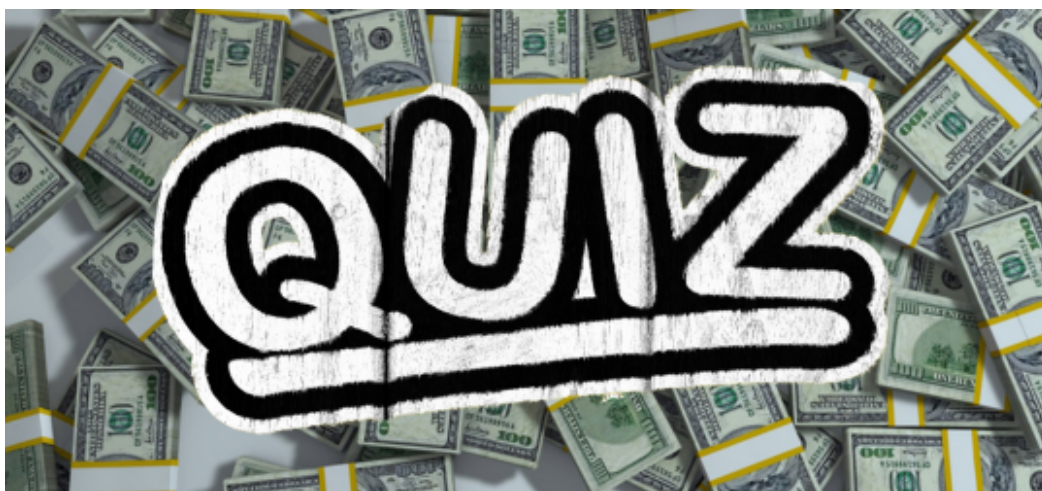
The board also received updates on state interventions in Sumter County and Bessemer City schools and reviewed significant changes to educator preparation requirements in the Alabama Administrative Code.

Additionally, State Superintendent of Education Eric Mackey outlined a new "hybrid" education funding approach that maintains core Foundation Program features while adding \$110 million in weighted funding for specific student groups, including special education, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learners.

Other key highlights and discussion topics included:

- Recognition for the top 25 high-performing schools and 25 most improved schools honored as part of the Legislative School Performance Recognition program;
- Questions about proposed cuts and changes at the U.S. Department of Education; and
- Consideration of educator preparation programs.

[**Read Full Story**](#)



What's Your School Finance IQ?

Test your school finance knowledge by taking our fun and interactive School Finance Quiz to discover if you're a budgeting novice or a financial mastermind!

CHEAT CODE: No matter which end of the spectrum you're on, rest assured you can boost your knowledge at AASB's upcoming Spring Academy Core Conference: [Leadership for Financial Accountability](#), Feb. 28 - March 1, 2025, at the Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa in Florence, Ala.

Take Our Quiz!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Summer Conference Registration Opens Soon!

Registration and the hotel room block for AASB's annual Summer Conference open **Wednesday, March 12**. This year's conference is June 20 - 22 at the Lodge at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, Ala.

Summer Conference is always an exciting event full of learning and networking as well as motivating sessions that will help you "Rock Your Leadership" as a school board member.

You won't want to miss this year's dynamic keynote speakers: **Hamish Brewer**, known as "the relentless principal" who transformed some of the nation's toughest schools, and **Dr. Jim Johnson**, a renowned UNC demographer whose groundbreaking research on population shifts and economic trends helps education leaders prepare for tomorrow's challenges.



Free Poverty Simulation Training for School System Staff

**** Limited Spots Available, First Come-First Served ****

A quarter of Alabama students live in poverty. We're excited to announce a FREE opportunity for school system staff to experience AASB's interactive **Poverty Simulation**, an eye-opening session designed to transform how schools work for and with families in poverty.

Send up to five members of your team to gain vital insights into poverty's impact on education and learn strategies to help students succeed.

When: Friday, Feb. 28 from 9 - 11:30 a.m.

Where: Marriott Shoals | 10 Hightower Pl | Florence, AL 35630

Who: Administrators, counselors, teachers, social workers, etc.

Although there is not cost, we do need each participant to **complete this form no later than noon Wednesday, Feb. 19** to secure your spot. (The form includes basic participant information and can be completed by a central organizer -or- by each individual participant). Completion certificates will be provided to attendees for Continuing Education Units.



Put Your System's Data to Work this Legislative Session

Alabama's Legislature is back in session, and now is the perfect time to put your school system's data to work! AASB's [2025 School System Snapshots](#) provide a detailed view of your school system's state and local resources, offering clear insights into funding and spending. This ready-to-use tool provides an evidence-based foundation for conversations with elected officials about your system's unique funding needs and priorities.

Join School Board Peers from Across the Nation at COSSBA's Upcoming Events



COSSBA National Conference March 21-23

You still have time to register for the Consortium of State School Boards Associations' (COSSBA) National Conference, which will be held **March 21-23, 2025**, in Atlanta.

Attendees will have the opportunity to explore the latest trends and best practices in conference tracks on topics such as finance, governance, school safety, mental health, stakeholder engagement, student achievement, and artificial intelligence's transformative potential.

General Registration after January 10, 2025:

- Unified Boards Alliance Pre-Conference + Main Conference - \$995.00
- Main COSSBA Conference Only - \$775.00

(Non COSSBA Members Conference Only - \$825.00)

[Register Now](#)



National School Safety Symposium

COSSBA's National School Safety Symposium, slated for June 25-27, 2025, in St. Louis, Missouri, is the premier gathering for school system safety teams including superintendents, school resource officers, school board members, communication directors and safety officers.

This symposium brings together top experts in school safety and security to share the latest strategies, best practices and innovative solutions to address today's evolving safety challenges. Space is limited, so register early!

- **Registration:** \$625 per person
- **Registrations for three or more:** \$535 per person (must register at the same time)

[Register Now](#)



Spotlight: Mobile Career Tech Workshop Hits the Road, First Stop AASB

A semi tractor trailer truck in AASB's parking lot Thursday had passersby doing a double-take - and it was worth a second look!

Just in time for Career & Technical Education Month, the ALSDE unveiled its new high-tech mobile career lab at AASB Thursday, hosting both the ribbon-cutting ceremony and the program's first stop. State board members and other visitors toured the interactive learning space that will soon travel to schools statewide.

Part of the "Be Pro, Be Proud" initiative, the truck features virtual reality simulations where students can experience welding, construction, and other technical trades firsthand. The mobile format will bring cutting-edge career tech opportunities to rural schools that may not otherwise have access to such technology.

"This new initiative will meet students where they are," says State Superintendent of Education Eric Mackey, "bridging the gap by connecting high school students with jobs and allowing younger students to explore potential career pathways."

Video: Tour the Truck

Watch highlights from the ribbon-cutting ceremony and hands-on tours. You just might spot some familiar AASB faces in the video - our staff couldn't resist taking a field trip to check out the truck in our parking lot!

[Watch Video](#)



Last Call for Committee Volunteers

Today (Feb. 14) is the deadline to sign up to grow your involvement in AASB. We're seeking volunteers to serve on AASB committees, state task forces and other groups. Incoming committee members will be appointed for one-year terms. AASB Committees include: Advocacy, Board Training Advisory, Bylaws, Resolutions, Equity and Nominating Committees.

In addition, if you're interested in delivering an invocation or serving as a presenter for an AASB event, we'd love to hear from you!

[Sign Up Now!](#)



#PublicSchoolProud: Celebrate National Public Schools Week Feb. 24 - 28

The countdown is on to Public Schools Week 2025, happening Feb. 24 - Feb. 28. This annual celebration invites the education community, parents, lawmakers and others to join in spotlighting our nation's public schools and the dedicated individuals behind them. Help spread the word on social media about the outstanding work happening in

public schools and by educators and education advocates. [This year's toolkit](#) features social media graphics, sample posts and other materials to help celebrate your local public schools!



Alabama Association of School Boards
43 South Jackson Street
Montgomery, AL 36104
800-562-0601

