

# MYTH VS. FACT

## The truth about the Alabama Accountability Act

**AEA Claim:** “Our public schools are under attack.”

**FACT:** The only things “under attack” are failing schools.

From HB84:

“This bill would provide for a refundable income tax credit to reimburse Alabama taxpayers who are the parents of students enrolled in or assigned to attend a failing public K-12 school in the state to offset the cost of transferring the student to a non-failing public school or nonpublic school of the parent’s choice.”

This legislation is a strong motivator for failing schools to improve. Coupled with legislation we’ve passed to authorize the state to take over and improve failing schools for poor academic standards, this package will greatly improve public education in Alabama for all children.

**AEA Claim:** “Newspapers, state school superintendent, school boards, teachers and coaches condemn this ambush of public education.”

**FACT:** Montgomery lobbyists and special interest groups have opposed this legislation because unlike when Democrats controlled state government, they weren’t allowed to have total control over writing the bill. Republicans put parents and students first and passed legislation that will shake up the status quo.

**AEA Claim:** “HB84 could cost public schools \$367 million a year.”

**FACT:** Initial estimates show that the cost of this legislation will be roughly 1 percent of the state’s education budget. Truth is, for parents and children trapped in failing schools, we can’t afford to keep doing nothing.

**AEA Claim:** “Hundreds of millions will flow from public schools to private schools and for profit charter schools”

**FACT:** HB84 specifically prohibits charter schools. From the bill: “No provision of this act shall be construed or shall be used to authorize the formation of a charter school.”

If parents choose to enroll their child in a non-failing school, however, they will receive a tax credit of roughly \$3,500, which is equal to 80 percent of the per pupil expenditure. The other 20 percent continues to fund public schools.

**AEA Claim:** “Your tax dollars could be used to pay tuition for children already in private schools.”

**FACT:** Your tax dollars will be used to provide children with an education in a non-failing school.

**AEA Claim:** “If every child in your county eligible for this program uses it, it’ll mean a direct loss of millions of dollars in funding.”

**FACT:** If every child in your county eligible for this program uses it, it’ll mean that the state funding that has been used to keep failing schools afloat will now follow the child to a non-failing school where they can receive a quality education.

**AEA Claim:** “Every school in your county will pay the price as money is drained from the state’s education trust fund.”

**FACT:** Children at failing schools in your county will finally have more options to receive a quality education. Since the school choice tax credit only applies to failing schools and the estimated cost is roughly 1% of the education budget, it will not affect other schools in your county.

**AEA Claim:** “Many schools could be forced to close.”

**FACT:** The school choice tax credit only applies to failing schools. Therefore the only schools that could potentially be in danger of closing are perpetually failing schools that never improve.

**AEA Claim:** “Who did this to you? Your legislators and Governor Bentley supported this attack on your schools.”

**FACT:** For decades Alabama has ranked among the bottom of the nation in education rankings. Governor Bentley and your legislators passed this bill to target failing schools, encourage them to improve, and give Alabama children and parents trapped in failing schools more options to pursue a quality education.

**AEA Claim:** “It’s time to fight for public education.”

**FACT:** It is time to fight for public education, and it’s past time to fight to improve failing schools. The opportunity to get a quality education shouldn’t be based on your ZIP code or how much money you make. For those children and parents trapped in failing schools, it’s time to give them options.

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For more information on the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013, visit [alprotem.com/accountability](http://alprotem.com/accountability) or [alhousegop.com/accountability](http://alhousegop.com/accountability).