Priority School and School Choice Information: Guided by the Alabama Accountability Act

Alabama Department of Education
Accountability Section
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The Alabama Accountability Act

The Alabama Accountability Act provides the framework for identifying Priority Schools and establishing School Choice information. The act operates in conjunction with the following state laws:

- Alabama Act 2013-64
- Alabama Act 2013-265
- Alabama Act 2015-434
- Alabama Act 2023-418

Priority Schools as Defined by the Alabama Act 2023-418

Priority Schools are public K-12 schools that are either of the following:

a) is designated as a priority school by the State Superintendent of Education

b) does not exclusively serve a special population of students and has received a D or an F on the most recent state report card.

Business Rules for Identifying Priority Schools

The following business rules are used to identify Priority schools aligned with the requirements of Alabama Act 2023-418 to determine priority schools:

1. Determine current/open schools and remove any school that exclusively serves a special population.
2. Determine the schools for school year 2024-2025 that have a D or an F on the Fall 2025 State Report Card.
3. This list will be revised annually in accordance with the law.

Priority School List

The State Department of Education's list includes the System Code, System Name, School Code, School Name, Letter Grade, and Open/Closed status.

School Choice Information

Notification of Choice:

Notification to parents of children enrolled in an Alabama public school designated as a Priority School, or scheduled to enroll in a Priority School as defined above, will be provided no later than **January 16, 2026**, that will outline the options parents may pursue related to School Choice as follows:

a) **Option 1 –** The student may remain or enroll in the assigned school.

b) **Option 2** – The student may transfer to a comparable school that is not included on the annual list of Priority Schools within the same local school system that has available space and is willing to accept the student.

c) **Option 3** – If the local system has not made Option 2 available, the student may transfer to a comparable school that is not included on the annual list of Priority Schools within another Alabama local school system that has available space and is willing to accept the student.

d) **Option 4** – The student may transfer to a qualifying non-public Alabama school that is willing to accept the student.

Transfer Process

a) Parents choosing any of the four applicable options for transfer must complete the required **Notice of Transfer** and submit it to the local superintendent by **March 2, 2026**, for the 2026-2027 school year.

b) The **Notice of Transfer** must include verification from the school administrator of the school where the student is transferring.

c) Eligibility for tax credit remains for a student who transferred under a previously designated school until the highest grade in which a student would have otherwise remained at that school.

Transportation

a) Transportation services for students who transfer from a Priority School to another non-Priority School within the same system remain the responsibility of the Local Education Agency (LEA).

b) Transportation costs for students who transfer from a Priority School to a non-Priority School in another LEA, or a non-public school become the responsibility of the parent.

Student Assessment

Students who transfer from a Priority School to a non-Priority public or qualifying non-public school and participate in the tax credit and/or scholarship program must participate in the approved statewide student assessment program or a nationally norm-referenced test that measures comparable content standards in math and English language arts (ELA) for accountability reporting.

Students with Disabilities

a) Students with disabilities who transfer to a non-Priority School within the same district remain eligible for services as outlined in the current Individualized Education Program (IEP).

b) Students with disabilities who transfer to a non-Priority School within another public school system remain eligible for services as outlined in the current IEP. The receiving LEA may convene an IEP team meeting to make any revisions to the IEP based on the needs of the students within the new environment.

c) Students with disabilities who transfer to a non-public school will be eligible for the equitable services provided to non-public school students contained in the LEA Non-Public School Special Education Services Plan.

Qualifying Non-Public School

a) A qualifying non-public school does not include schools that provide educational services through homeschools or on-line courses.

b) A qualifying non-public school must meet the requirements to participate in the scholarship program authorized by the Alabama Accountability Act.

c) A qualifying non-public school must be accredited by one of the six regional accrediting agencies recognized by the Alabama State Board of Education or meet all the conditions for a qualifying school provided by the Alabama Accountability Act.

Parental School Choice Information

Districts will be informed if they have at least one school designated as a Priority School due to receiving a **D** or an **F** on the Fall 2025 state report card.

Schools that appear on this list should notify parents by **January 16, 2026**, of this status.

Parents will have until **March 2, 2026**, to return a student transfer form to the local school system for the 2026-2027 school year. This will give districts and schools the opportunity to properly evaluate the potential impact of the student transfers on the educational services for that school year.

Questions concerning tax credit eligibility and scholarship opportunities should be directed to the Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR) at 334-242-1170.

Various tax guidance forms and references are available at
Alabama Department of Revenue | Alabama Accountability Act