

WE DARE DEFEND OUR RIGHT TO REFORM EDUCATION

The Local Control School Flexibility Act House Bill 84, sponsored by Rep. Chad Fincher (R-Mobile)

The rules and regulations passed down by the State Department of Education often come in a one-size-fits-all, cookie cutter format. Yet, since school officials in the urban centers, suburbs, and the Black Belt region of Alabama face different issues, schools should have the freedom to address them in a manner that makes sense for their unique situation. With this bill, House Republicans will provide local school systems the ability to request more flexibility from certain state statutes, policies and regulations in order to make innovative and creative decisions that improve education within their districts.

Summary

- The state's 134 public school systems are already able to seek a waiver from any regulations or policies promulgated by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. **The Local Control School Flexibility Act** expands the scope of this program by allowing school systems to also seek a waiver from any state statute.
- A system or school that has been granted a waiver is labeled by **The Local Control School Flexibility Act** as an "innovative" system or school. Reaching this status, requires the State Board of Education and local boards of education as well as the State Superintendent and local superintendents to jointly create a "flexibility contract" that outlines not only the state statute, regulation or policy from which the local system is seeking relief, but also the additional accountability measures the local system will use in order to justify the waiver.
- The possibilities of how **The Local Control School Flexibility Act** can and will be used are nearly limitless. Examples include:
 - Providing systems with more freedom to: hire and assign personnel
 - Partnering with business and industry professionals
 - Promoting healthy students
 - Bringing more retired educators back to the classroom.
- **The Local Control School Flexibility Act** will be used to foster innovation, not create avenues that allow schools to circumvent laws for no reason. Schools are specifically excluded from seeking a waiver for: requirements imposed by federal law; requirements related to student and employee health, safety, or civil rights; requirements imposed by open record, open meeting, financial reporting or transparency, or academic reporting or transparency laws; or requirements related to participation in a state health insurance or retirement system. Additionally, schools will be unable to use the act to decrease salaries or force employees to relinquish their tenured status.
- Finally, **The Local Control School Flexibility Act** ensures that all school systems have an equal opportunity to seek and obtain a requested waiver. The act forbids the State Board of Education or the State Department of Education from favoring one system over another based upon its size, location, student population, or any other possible discriminatory measure.

