

# The Truth about Local Control School Flexibility Act!

The state already provides an Innovation Schools Program that allows local schools to flex certain restrictive rules and regulations in exchange for higher accountability. The vision, aligned with the state Board of Education's strategic Plan 2020, is for local school systems to innovate and implement commonsense solutions to fixable local challenges. The flexibility is only granted if there is a link to a specific student performance area.

The Local School Flexibility Act simply expands this existing flexibility to state statutes. Local school systems have long sought freedom to design student instruction and services to best serve students and community goals. They are frustrated by one-size-fits-all state mandates. Many political leaders, education organizations and industry representatives have thrown their weight behind this proposed legislation, while the most vocal opponent has resorted to familiar scare tactics to put the wants of adults ahead of the needs of children. Below are some of the statements they've made and the truth about those statements.



**Scare tactic:** *The bill would allow exemption from almost all Alabama laws – education and non-education, present and future.*



**Scare tactic:** *If you have tenure at the time the system receives flexibility, it's in name only.*



**Truth:** Each proposal must specifically identify each rule, regulation or statute it seeks to waive and correlate it with specific increased accountability and student performance goals. The flexibility contract would be subject to revocation with annual reviews and five-year target goals. [Section 4 (2)]



**Truth:** Tenure is an employment right that cannot be taken away, and the bill explicitly safeguards tenure and its protections.



**Scare tactic:** *The bill will phase out the teacher salary schedule.*



**Scare tactic:** *If you don't have tenure, you never will.*



**Truth:** Wrong. The bill uses the state's Minimum Salary Schedule set by the education budget as a floor for teacher pay, which is actually designed to protect teachers from being paid less than the salary schedule under an approved plan.



**Truth:** Teachers are never forced to give up tenure. Should there be any flexibility plan that would offer a non-tenured employment structure with attractive incentives, it would be a teacher's option to apply.



**Scare tactic:** *This bill will allow charter schools and privatization of jobs.*



**Truth:** Charter schools have separate governing boards. Under the act, the local school remains in charge. As much as opponents want to muddy the waters, this is not a charter school bill, virtual or otherwise. In addition, local schools already have the authority to contract services, so this is another red herring.



**Scare tactic:** *The bill allows uncertified instructors.*



**Truth:** Yes, it could. Alternative certification is an important part of the state's strategic Plan 2020 to bring experts from the field into the classroom. We have experienced professionals in local communities ready and willing but unable to contribute in the classroom. Any instructor would still be subject to background checks and other safety protocol.



**Scare tactic:** *This bill could end all academic programs currently mandated by state law.*



**Truth:** The act requires proposals to be consistent with Alabama's state standards, assessments, and academic rigor. [Section 5 (a)(3)]



**Scare tactic:** The act would cause the loss of planning time, classroom supplies, access to personnel files, job vacancy posting requirements and employee leave (including sick, on the job injury, personal and catastrophic).



**Truth:** This is just ridiculous fear mongering. The act requires every plan to specifically justify how waiving a law correlates to increased student performance. It isn't even rational to think that a local superintendent and board could concoct a plan and sell it to its community to eliminate any of these.



**Scare tactic:** *The lives of public education employees depend on killing this act. The education of the children of Alabama depends on killing this bill.*



**Truth:** Such extreme hyperbole is not only disappointing but makes Chicken Little look rational. The very ones who would be the source of some of the most innovative ideas are being told the sky will fall if this legislation is enacted. The whole focus of this bill is what can be done to better serve students. The conversation is not about adults and benefits. Stop the hysteria and allow school systems the flexibility to do what is in the best interests of students.

# The Truth about Local Control School Flexibility Act!