

# HELPING FAMILIES INITIATIVE

*Making Alabama's Education Laws Benefit Everyone*

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## A Report to the Alabama Legislature And the Governor September 30, 2025

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House Ways and Means Education Committee  
Legislative Fiscal Officer  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Helping Families Initiative (HFI) is a district attorney-school-community partnership designed to intervene without arrest in the lives of at-risk children, their families, and their neighborhoods. Student absenteeism remains one of Alabama's most pressing education challenges. In the 2023–2024 school year, nearly **15% of the state's 718,716 students** were chronically absent, with the rate climbing to **nearly 20% among low-income families**.<sup>1</sup> The Helping Families Initiative (HFI) within the District Attorney's Office directly addresses this crisis without arrests. Rather, HFI focuses on direct and early contact with the family. HFI helps to resolve the root causes of unexcused absences and disruptive student behavior through family- and community-centered interventions if necessary.

During the 2024–2025 school year, HFI directly served **95,674 at-risk students**, engaging **73,188 families** and **162,714 parents** in collaboration with **19 District Attorneys, 44 school systems, and hundreds of community agencies** across Alabama.<sup>2</sup> These partnerships produced significant improvements in school attendance and reductions in chronic absenteeism. As a result, HFI has yielded measurable improvements in student attendance for **all students**.<sup>3</sup>

The Mobile County Public School System (MCPSS) provides a clear demonstration of HFI's impact. With the program's reinstatement, MCPSS achieved a **3.15% improvement in overall attendance in 2023–2024** and a further **4% overall improvement in attendance in 2024–2025**, resulting in a **50% reduction in truancy** and a **58% reduction in chronic absenteeism**. School Superintendent Chresal Threadgill and District Attorney Keith Blackwood attribute these gains directly to HFI's intervention.<sup>4</sup>

The financial implications are equally stunning. When students miss school, education tax dollars are wasted. MCPSS recovered **\$30.7 million in 2023–2024**<sup>5</sup> and **\$33.7 million in 2024–2025**<sup>6</sup>, for a total of **\$64.4 million that was not wasted by student absenteeism**. Against a combined two-year program cost of just **\$1.32 million**, this represents a **return of \$48.67 for every dollar invested**.<sup>7</sup>

The Helping Families Initiative demonstrates the power of the partnership between district attorneys, school, and community. Early family and community engagement, intervention, collaboration, and accountability are keys to success. By keeping students in school, HFI improves academic outcomes and delivers substantial financial benefits to Alabama's education system.

<sup>1</sup> <https://staterportcard.alsde.edu/OverallScorePage.aspx?ReportYear=2024&SystemCode=000&SchoolCode=0000>

<sup>2</sup> Includes HFI School Systems and students who transferred to or from an HFI School System.

<sup>3</sup> See Table 4 *Added Value for Increased Attendance Days for Academic Years 2023 and 2024*.

<sup>4</sup> See Exhibit A. <https://www.al.com/educationlab/2025/06/this-alabama-county-cut-school-truancy-in-half-after-reinstating-one-program.html>

<sup>5</sup> [https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/5395/Mcps/b370e5fc-2d98-4216-8f85-e3d5b384447a/FY\\_2024\\_Amended\\_Budget.pdf.pdf?disposition=inline](https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/5395/Mcps/b370e5fc-2d98-4216-8f85-e3d5b384447a/FY_2024_Amended_Budget.pdf.pdf?disposition=inline) (3.15% x Total Expenditures)

<sup>6</sup> [https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/5395/Mcps/267293db-9a29-4836-b0c1-9574df9d5c91/FY\\_2025\\_AMENDED\\_BUDGET.pdf.pdf?disposition=inline](https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/5395/Mcps/267293db-9a29-4836-b0c1-9574df9d5c91/FY_2025_AMENDED_BUDGET.pdf.pdf?disposition=inline) (4% x Total Expenditures)

<sup>7</sup> See Exhibit D. This data is based on the total expenditures of the school system for the 2024 and 2025 school years. That amount includes all expenditures by those school years.

# INTRODUCTION

The Helping Families Initiative (HFI) is a district attorney-school-community partnership designed to intervene without arrest in the lives of at-risk children, their families, and their neighborhoods. HFI connects students and their families to existing resources to improve student attendance and behavior, and to support academic engagement before students and families become ensnared in the adult or juvenile justice systems.

According to research from the University of Michigan, education is one of the best crime prevention strategies available.<sup>8</sup> The United States Department of Justice research also proves that when children demonstrate serious misbehaviors in school, including truancy, they are likely to go down a dangerous path that includes crime and other poor outcomes.<sup>9</sup> *HFI interrupts this frightening and costly trajectory.* HFI currently operates in 20 Alabama District Attorneys' Offices, and our results show that HFI works: *Violations of codes of student conduct – especially truancy – are down.* By addressing the root causes of unexcused absences and serious student misconduct through direct early interventions **without arrest**, HFI has significantly reduced violations of school codes of conduct. Because of HFI, *schools are safer* and delivering more value to our communities.

## AUTHORIZATION

In Alabama, the **Mandatory School Attendance Act** is promulgated by the *Alabama Code 1975 § 16-28-1 et seq.*

Alabama's Mandatory School Attendance Act addresses compulsory school attendance and the responsibilities of parents or guardians regarding their child's education. Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child's enrollment, attendance, and behavior. Failure to do so may result in penalties, including fines, costs, or 90 days hard labor.

This Act also places the responsibility of enforcing compulsory school attendance on a multi-faceted system involving school officials, attendance officers, and the legal system.

1. Reporting to the District Attorney: The superintendent of education and the school principals are **required to report these suspected violations to the district attorney within 10 days**. Willful failure to do so could result in a Class C misdemeanor for the school official.
2. Vigorous Enforcement: District attorneys are mandated to **"vigorously enforce"** the Act.

## State Funding

State funding for the Helping Families Initiative (HFI) is authorized by the Alabama Legislature in Act #2024-351.

*To make appropriations for the support, maintenance and development of public education in Alabama, for debt service, and for capital outlay for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025.*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://record.umich.edu/articles/public-school-investment-reduces-adult-crime-study-shows/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles/truncy.pdf>

The total State HFI appropriation for FY 2025 and FY 2026 is \$3,300,000. The Act also authorized the reporting requirements for HFI.

*Not more than 15% of the appropriation shall be used for indirect, overhead, administration, training, or support expenses. The Helping Families Initiative shall file a report no later than September 30, 2025, with the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Finance and Taxation-Education, the House Ways and Means-Education Committee, the Legislative Fiscal Officer, and the Finance Director regarding the number of students served by each LEA. The report shall include measures and be in a format as prescribed by the Legislative Services.*

## Local Funding

Local funds also support this work. Local funds have always matched or exceeded State funds. Local funds are provided by school systems, county and city governments, and philanthropic organizations.

Local funds also pay for the staffing of the district attorney's interagency teams.

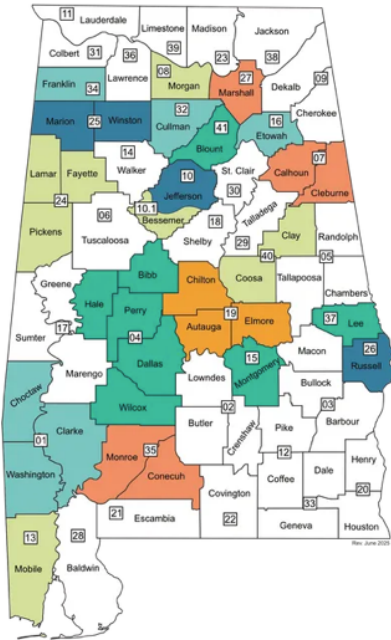
HFI leverages local resources with recommendations for service providers made by the Individualized Intervention Plans. For example, a local faith-based organization may provide school uniforms for families in need. In the early days of the HFI program, the Mobile District Attorney accessed 188 community agencies that provided more than 300 services.

## History

The Helping Families Initiative (HFI) in Alabama began as a pioneering effort to prevent youth involvement in the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems through early intervention supported by district attorneys, schools, and community agencies.

- Origins (2003)
  - The HFI started in 2003 as a district attorney-school-community program within the District Attorney's Office of the 13th Judicial Circuit (Mobile County). Its goal was to identify at-risk students—those with significant behavioral issues—and connect their families with intervention services before problems escalated to juvenile or adult court involvement. This effort was spearheaded by then-District Attorney John Tyson, who recognized that school troubles often signaled deeper family, community, and social challenges. HFI operated with local funds.
- Expansion (2007–2016)
  - Inspired by its early success, the program was replicated in other judicial circuits in Alabama. In 2007, similar initiatives began in Montgomery County (Helping Montgomery Families Initiative, 15th Judicial Circuit) and in Elmore, Chilton, and Autauga Counties (19th Judicial Circuit).
  - In 2014, HFI became a program at the University of Alabama where its processes were refined and additional circuits and school systems adopted the model.
- Structural Growth and Funding (2016–present)
  - In fiscal year 2017 HFI began operating as a program at Volunteers of America Southeast, a nonprofit organization with a wide reach in community services.
  - That year the program started receiving direct appropriations from the Alabama Legislature. As of 2025, state funding has grown significantly, rising from \$425,000 in FY 2017 to \$3,300,000 in FY 2025 and FY 2026, supporting operations across 20 Alabama judicial circuits.

- **Current Operations**



- The program is now implemented by district attorneys in 20 Alabama judicial circuits, partnering closely with school districts and community resource providers. Each district attorney employs trained case officers to identify, assess, and support families with children who have too many unexcused absences or are involved in persistent school discipline problems. The goal is to connect these families to tailored social, mental health, and material resources to address root causes before legal action becomes necessary.
- The approach begins with outreach—often a letter to parents from the DA’s office—escalating, if needed, to a family assessment and coordinated intervention plan. The focus is on prevention: keeping students in school, supporting families, and ultimately improving community safety and student outcomes. No one is required to participate in HFI.

- **Oversight and Evaluation**

- HFI is coordinated by a State Support Team that provides program support and technical assistance. During the past 18 months HFI has developed a case management system using an electronic multi-user database. The implementation of this case management system promises to ensure fidelity to the original model, consistent measurement of outcomes, and operational standardization among jurisdictions. HFI has improved significantly its interventions, tracking, accountability, and funding oversight to ensure effectiveness as the initiative continues to expand. As a result, the volume of work and the services to students and their families have increased significantly.

- **Key People and Organizations**

- Governor
- Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court
- Chairs of Legislative Appropriations Committees
- State Superintendent of Education
- District Attorneys of Participating Jurisdictions
- Participating School System Superintendents
- Directors of Public and Private Service Agencies
- Founding District Attorney and current director of HFI
- HFI State Support Team

## **Purpose and Impact**

HFI's central mission is to head off future involvement in crime and improve the social, academic, and emotional outcomes of at-risk students by proactively marshaling the support of district attorneys, schools, and a wide range of community partnerships.

The most significant benefit of the Helping Families Initiative is that it addresses the underlying issues associated with a student’s lack of school success, and not just outward symptoms — poor school attendance and/or other serious violations of a school system’s code of student conduct.

Addressing a family's deeper needs can change the family's circumstances and break the cycle of repetitive poor school performance for the child.

## Systematic Process

The Helping Families Initiative (HFI) uses a systematic, multi-step process to work with families, specifically targeting student truancy and problematic behavior. Below is a detailed breakdown of the intended HFI process, as well as how it operates in Alabama districts:

### 1. Triggering Event

- **Definition:** A triggering event is usually a certain number of unexcused absences (truancy) or a significant behavioral violation at school.
- **Application:** The specific number of absences or behavioral incidents that trigger HFI intervention varies according to local school system policies. Instead, each school system sets its own threshold—triggers can range from two to seven unexcused absences, or a set number of behavioral incidents.
- **Eligibility:** Students who are already under arrest or who are arrested during their participation with HFI are no longer eligible to participate.

### 2. Engagement

- **Initial Contact:** Once a triggering event occurs, engagement usually starts with the District Attorney's office—directly communicating with the family. This communication notifies parents or guardians of the student's absenteeism or behavioral issues and offers an opportunity to engage with HFI before legal consequences arise.
- **Follow-Up:** In many cases, early issues are resolved after this communication and conversations with families.

### 3. Assign Case Officer & Conduct Family Assessment

- **Case Assignment:** If problems persist, a case officer is assigned to the student. The role of the Case Officer treats the family with dignity and respect to establish the key relationship with the family.
- **Family Assessment:** The officer uses tools like the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale to assess the family's needs.
- **Assessment Domains:** Areas typically explored include parental capabilities, family interactions, home environment, child well-being, economic self-sufficiency, family health/mental health, and trauma.

### 4. Interagency Team: Individualized Intervention Plan

- **Team Formation:** Ideally, an interagency team—including school officials, case officers, law enforcement, public and private community partners—reviews and recommends a tailored intervention plan that addresses the students', families' and neighborhoods' specific challenges.
- **Plan Components:** Plans may include referrals to counseling, physicians, law enforcement, mentoring, food or utility assistance, parenting classes, or other local support services. Plans are reviewed with and approved by the families.

### 5. Referrals

- **Resource Linkage:** Based on the assessment and individualized intervention plan, families are referred to community resources and service providers—this could cover academic, behavioral, health, and basic needs.
- **Scope:** HFI collaborates with a broad network of local agencies, nonprofits, and service providers.

### 6. Follow-Up Family Assessment

- **Monitoring:** The case officer performs follow-up assessments to track improvements in attendance, behavior, and family well-being.

Table 1 summarizes the HFI Process.

*Table 1 Process Diagram (Summarized)*

Step	Main Purpose	Details
Triggering Event	Initiate intervention	Unexcused absences or serious behavior issues, threshold varies by LEA
Engagement	Early outreach to family	DA letter, phone call, text messages or meeting to notify and offer help
Assign Case Officer & Conduct Assessment	Gather family information	Uses assessment tools
Interagency Team & Individualized Plan	Target root causes with supports	Team recommends services tailored to needs
Referrals	Connect family to services	Academic, health, counseling, social, economic, parenting, etc.
Follow-Up Family Assessment	Monitor and measure progress	HFI's new case management systems helps the consistent implementation of this step.

#### Key Points

- **Consistency:** The process is designed to be systematic but operates within the construction of local school district policies.
- **Goal:** The overarching aim is to prevent court involvement by intervening early and addressing the underlying issues behind unexcused absences and bad behavior, if necessary.
- **Prevention-Focused:** HFI's work is preventive, working with families before problems require formal juvenile or adult justice action.

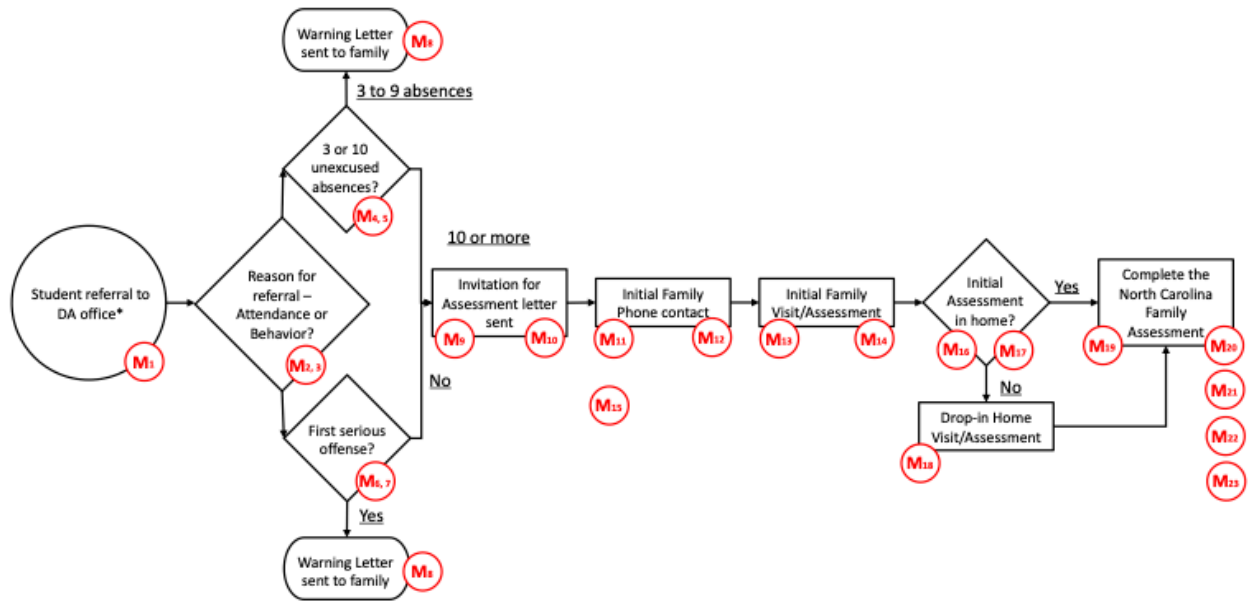
This comprehensive, family-centered approach is grounded in prevention and collaboration and has benefitted from greater standardization and accountability across districts to maximize impact for at-risk students and their families.

A Flow Diagram of the HFI Process is displayed in Figure 1 and Figure 2. These diagrams are designed to display the decision points and resulting action paths. The metrics symbols (e.g., M<sub>1</sub>) referenced in the diagrams are not included in this report.<sup>10</sup>

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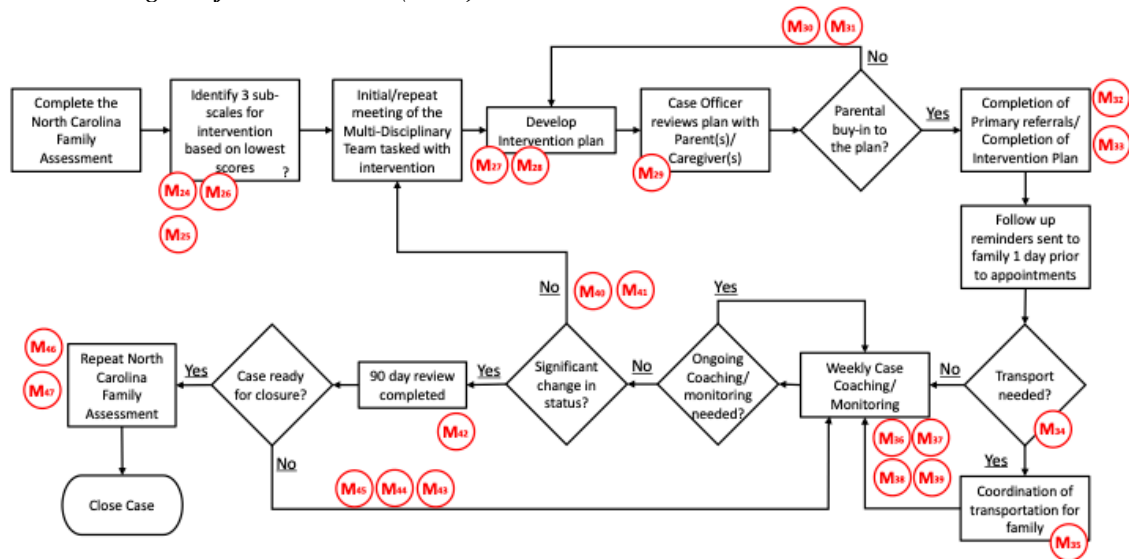
<sup>10</sup> Some of these processes have been amended since the original creation of this diagram.

Figure 1 Flow Diagram of the HFI Process (Part 1)<sup>11</sup>



Improvement Science Consulting

Figure 2 Flow Diagram of the HFI Process (Part 2)





# HFI Database

In 2023 HFI contracted with Moss Rock Solutions, an Alabama database company to develop the HFI Case Management Database to support the day-to-day work of HFI and to provide reports for participating agencies e.g., district attorneys, school system administrators, and the HFI State Support Team. The utilization of the HFI Case Management Database helps to ensure that all circuits follow a structured protocol aligned with the HFI process. Although allowing for individual differences of local school board policies, the HFI Case Management Database promotes normalization of data so that all participating circuits gather the same data and provide, as is possible, similar processes when delivering services to families.

The implementation of the HFI database removed much of the clerical work that was previously done by Case Officers. For example, in the Fall Semester of 2024 the HFI Case Management Database was able to download attendance and behavior data directly from the Alabama Department of Education — saving hundreds of hours that were redirected toward providing services to families.

## Quantitative Results

For the FY2025 school year, the State of Alabama had a student enrollment of 727,822.<sup>12</sup> The Helping Families Initiative was active in 19 judicial circuits and 44 school systems. The enrollment for these school systems totaled 265,653 or about 36.50% of the statewide total student population.

### 1. Number of students directly served.

During the 2024-2025 school year the Helping Families Initiative directly served 95,674 students, approximately 37.9% of the total enrollment in the HFI school systems.

HFI defines *the number of students directly served* as all students who have had an interaction with the Helping Families program. The first step in the HFI process of working directly with students and families is Engagement — a triggering event has occurred because of unexcused absences or serious behavior issues. (See Figure 1) This interaction may include a letter to the family from the district attorney, a phone call to a parent or guardian, a text, or other means of contacting the family.

Each week the Helping Families Initiative receives an electronic report from the Alabama Department of Education updating student attendance and behavior. HFI is concerned with Behaviors (serious violations of the code of student conduct) and Unexcused Absences. Depending on local school district policy, the District Attorney, through HFI, sends a notification to the parents or guardians calling their attention to the Mandatory School Attendance Law<sup>13</sup> and the consequences of noncompliance.

These notifications involved 618 schools, and 1,028 Zip codes across Alabama.

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<sup>12</sup> Memorandum from State Superintendent of Education, July 31, 2024, Re: Gifted Funding Allocation.

<sup>13</sup> Alabama's mandatory school attendance law is primarily found in the **Code of Alabama, Section 16-28-3**.

*Table 2 Number of Students, Families, and Parents Directly Served in Each Circuit (includes behavior)*

<b>Circuit</b>	<b># of Students Served</b>	<b># of Families Served</b>	<b># of Parents Served</b>
1	1,388	1,080	1,874
4	4,291	3,098	6,443
7	7,749	5,654	15,401
8	3,480	2,839	5,770
10	9,938	7,898	14,731
10.1	837	742	1,819
13	13,265	10,507	21,308
15	16,885	12,364	23,450
16	2,272	1,893	7,110
19	14,040	10,454	27,390
24	1,235	1,053	1,787
25	1,841	1,464	2,568
26	1,802	1,373	3,147
32	6,766	4,894	12,602
34	2,700	2,038	4,146
35	5	5	11
37	4,401	3,550	7,450
40	590	504	1,531
41	2,189	1,778	4,176
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95,674</b>	<b>73,188</b>	<b>162,714</b>

Table 3 displays the number of students served in each school system for the 2024-2025 school year. The number of students served is based on all students who have had an attendance interaction with the Helping Families program. Does not include behavior issues.

*Table 3 Number of Students Served in Each LEA FY 2025<sup>14</sup>*

System Name	Enrollment	# of Students Served	System Name	Enrollment	# of Students Served
Clarke County	2,072	1,126	Chilton County	7,573	3,807
Thomasville City	965	262	Elmore County	11,279	5,516
Dallas County	4,471	1,520	Tallassee City	1,441	523
Perry County	820	641	Fayette County	2,115	166
Selma City	2,462	1,335	Lamar County	2,107	569
Wilcox County	1,102	787	Pickens County	2,196	500
Anniston City	1,758	1,045	Haleyville City	1,509	68
Calhoun County	7,683	3,515	Marion County	3,243	1,686
Cleburne County	2,418	818	Winfield City	1,182	325
Oxford City	3,893	2,369	Winston County	2,195	86
Decatur City Schools	8,259	2,330	Phenix City	6,957	150
Hartselle City Schools	3,469	378	Russell County	3,636	1,649
Morgan County Schools	7,328	768	Cullman City	3,153	1,663
Birmingham City	19,640	8,555	Cullman County	9,569	5,091
Tarrant City	1,275	542	Franklin County	3,448	1,691
Bessemer City	2,958	613	Russellville City	2,515	1,000
Midfield City	986	213	Conecuh County	TBD	-
MAEF Public Charter Schools	825	122	Monroe County	TBD	-
Mobile County	48,523	13,024	Auburn City	9,422	20
Chickasaw City	3,442	42	Lee County	8,793	2,484
Satsuma City	1,458	49	Opelika City	5,043	1,898
Montgomery County	25,351	16,887	Clay County	1,763	334
Etowah County	8,376	2,269	Coosa County	772	255
Autauga County	8,757	4,192	Blount County	7,451	1,986
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>265,653</b>	<b>94,869</b>

<sup>14</sup> Enrollment is based on Alabama Department of Education FY2025 Unit Breakdown. [https://www.alabamaachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/RD\\_FR\\_20240610\\_FY-2025-LEA-Units-By-School\\_V1.0.pdf](https://www.alabamaachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/RD_FR_20240610_FY-2025-LEA-Units-By-School_V1.0.pdf)

## 2. Students' absenteeism rates before and after HFI by school system.

Table 4 displays baseline student absence data for the academic years 2023 and 2024 for each participating school system. These data points will be used to determine progress for HFI in each of the respective school systems and judicial circuits. Data for the 2025 school year is not yet available from the Alabama Department of Education. Based on the 2024 budget of \$3,463,192,320 the improved attendance-yields a value of \$47,321,663. That recovered value of taxpayer dollars would otherwise have been wasted.

*Table 4 Value Added for Increased Attendance Days for Academic Years 2023 and 2024<sup>15,16</sup>*

System Name	Percentage		Difference	2024 TOTAL BUDGET	Recovered Value
	Absent 2023	Absent 2024			
Autauga Co.	8.35%	6.35%	1.99%	\$103,990,860	\$ 2,074,529
Blount Co.	5.23%	4.62%	0.62%	\$81,658,385	\$ 503,067
Calhoun Co.	6.97%	6.07%	0.90%	\$105,459,797	\$ 954,103
Chilton Co.	6.99%	5.85%	1.14%	\$91,372,561	\$ 1,041,720
Clarke Co.	6.38%	6.45%	-0.07%	\$34,602,716	-
Clay Co.	7.19%	6.35%	0.84%	\$22,514,796	\$ 188,637
Cleburne Co.	7.43%	6.94%	0.49%	\$32,123,210	\$ 157,404
Coosa Co.	6.63%	6.85%	-0.21%	\$13,010,914	-
Cullman Co.	6.18%	5.47%	0.71%	\$130,737,585	\$ 929,628
Dallas Co.	10.49%	9.33%	1.16%	\$40,262,154	\$ 465,627
Elmore Co.	6.85%	7.63%	-0.77%	\$128,964,440	-
Etowah Co.	8.36%	7.32%	1.04%	\$105,398,287	\$ 1,095,196
Franklin Co.	6.63%	6.28%	0.36%	\$49,915,111	\$ 178,976
Lee Co.	8.13%	7.30%	0.83%	\$120,878,333	\$ 1,004,234
Marion Co.	7.66%	6.91%	0.75%	\$40,600,062	\$ 304,717
Mobile Co.	11.18%	8.02%	3.15%	\$701,084,597	\$ 22,106,658
Montgomery Co.	9.62%	10.37%	-0.75%	\$349,451,703	-
Morgan Co.	6.91%	5.63%	1.28%	\$100,584,423	\$ 1,288,074
Perry Co.	11.50%	11.33%	0.16%	\$18,736,521	\$ 30,377
Pickens Co.	5.29%	6.63%	-1.34%	\$32,645,753	-
Russell Co.	7.49%	6.38%	1.12%	\$47,203,818	\$ 527,014
Anniston City	6.75%	7.36%	-0.61%	\$28,922,070	-
Auburn City	5.14%	5.17%	-0.03%	\$137,695,454	-
Bessemer City	11.23%	9.26%	1.97%	\$47,807,623	\$ 942,536
Birmingham City	9.32%	6.84%	2.48%	\$329,173,943	\$ 8,159,927
Chickasaw City	3.19%	3.47%	-0.28%	\$28,183,920	\$ (79,150)
Cullman City	5.90%	5.46%	0.44%	\$44,946,045	\$ 198,633
Decatur City	6.57%	5.36%	1.21%	\$130,480,559	\$ 1,576,826
Hartselle City	6.30%	5.84%	0.47%	\$46,834,171	\$ 217,805
Midfield City	7.87%	5.10%	2.77%	\$12,258,152	\$ 339,004
Opelika City	8.02%	7.03%	0.98%	\$69,321,745	\$ 681,607
Oxford City	7.77%	7.59%	0.17%	\$69,321,745	\$ 120,219
Russellville City	5.55%	4.98%	0.57%	\$37,125,098	\$ 210,846
Selma City	10.66%	7.94%	2.73%	\$38,779,457	\$ 1,057,877
Talladega City	9.28%	5.84%	3.44%	\$20,857,042	\$ 717,391
Satsuma City	6.10%	5.27%	0.83%	\$18,939,032	\$ 157,971
Tarrant City	9.93%	9.02%	0.91%	\$18,510,322	\$ 168,582
Thomasville City	5.95%	6.90%	-0.95%	\$15,899,734	-
Winfield City	4.71%	4.70%	0.01%	\$16,940,182	\$ 1,629
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>			<b>TOTAL VALUE</b>	<b>\$3,463,192,320</b>	<b>\$ 47,321,663</b>

<sup>15</sup> This Absentee data set is from the Alabama Department of Education web site. 2024-2025 data is not yet available from the Alabama Department of Education. (<https://student.alsde.edu/Collections/StudentAbsenteeism.aspx>)

<sup>16</sup> This Budget data is from the Alabama Association of School Boards web site. <https://alabamaschoolboards.org/snapshot-archive-2024> [https://www.alabamaachievers.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/RD\\_2023616\\_FY-2024-Supplemental-District\\_V1.0.pdf](https://www.alabamaachievers.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/RD_2023616_FY-2024-Supplemental-District_V1.0.pdf)

HFI, in collaboration with other school and community initiatives, has recovered significant value to participating school systems. According to the Alabama Association of School Boards,<sup>17</sup> the total budgets for participating systems is \$3,463,192,320. The reduced number of student absences and the resulting increase in the number of attendance days — systemwide — yields a recovered value benefit of \$47,321,663. This increase in attendance **includes all students, not just those students served directly by HFI**. That is the value of the number of instructional days that would have been wasted had the students not been in school. **The value benefit is more than 14.34 times the total investment of the State of Alabama in the Helping Families Initiative (\$3,300,000). This recovered value includes state, local, and federal dollars spent during the 2024-2025 school year.**

### 3. Number of family assessments completed.

HFI reported 513 Initial Family Assessments using the North Carolina Family Assessment. This number is low because HFI was building the case management system during this time. As a result, most assessments were not documented in the new system.

Family assessments are conducted if student attendance or student behavior remains problematic. If students' attendance continues to falter or if student behavior remains unacceptable, then HFI case officers initiate direct contact with parents or guardians. A home visit is scheduled wherein the case officer assesses the family home life. The assessment provides the baseline data on which Individualized Intervention Plans (IIP) are formed.

The North Carolina Family Assessment Instrument is a comprehensive tool designed to assess overall family functioning across multiple domains. The most widely referenced version is the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale for General Services (NCFAS-G), as well as the extended NCFAS-G+R. These tools assist practitioners in evaluating both strengths and challenges in family systems, helping inform intervention and service planning.

#### Domains of the North Carolina Family Assessment Instrument

Each domain consists of several subscales, and families are rated on a continuum from clear strengths to serious challenges. Here is a brief description of each domain:

- **Environment:** Examines housing stability, neighborhood safety, and environmental risks impacting the family's well-being, such as the presence or absence of violence or drug activity in the community.
- **Parental Capabilities:** Assesses caregivers' supervision, disciplinary practices, and the ability to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities and care.
- **Family Interactions:** Explores bonding, communication, and expectations among family members, as well as the quality and appropriateness of these relationships.
- **Family Safety:** Focuses on the presence or absence of domestic violence, family conflict, and physical or emotional abuse, ensuring environments are physically and emotionally secure.
- **Child Well-Being (Ages 0–12):** Looks at children's behavior, school performance, and relationships with caregivers, identifying any behavioral or relational concerns.
- **Youth Well-Being (Ages 13–21):** Centers on adolescent behavioral issues, school/employment performance, peer relationships, and cooperation within the family.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://alabamaschoolboards.org/snapshot-archive-2024>

- **Social/Community Life:** Measures the family's involvement with the community, relationships with schools, childcare, extracurricular activities, and cultural or ethnic connections.
- **Self-Sufficiency:** Reviews aspects such as employment, income stability, and financial management, focusing on the family's ability to meet needs independently.
- **Family Health:** Evaluates the physical and mental health of caregivers and household members, as well as the impact of disabilities on the family system.

Assessment results guide service planning, ensuring families receive targeted support in identified areas of challenge. This instrument is widely used in child welfare, family preservation, and reunification contexts.

#### 4. Number of students referred to services.

HFI initiated 695 IIPs during the 2024-2025 school year. This number is low because HFI was building the case management system during this time. As a result, most referrals were not documented in the new system.

As previously discussed, the North Carolina Family Assessment (NCFAS-G) provides the baseline data on which Individualized Intervention Plans (IIP) are developed. During the home visit, case officers exercise their professional judgement to assess the family's strengths and areas of need.

Goals are set, referrals are made, and a review of the services provided by the Referral Agency is discussed. Case officers follow up to determine if the services are in fact utilized.

As of May 2025, the Helping Families Initiative identified 916 Referral Agencies that could provide support for families who have completed a family assessment and have an Individualized Intervention Plan. The identification of these agencies is an ongoing process.

#### 5. Number of students receiving referral services.

397 students received referral services to receive 1,564 services. Interagency Teams address the recommendations (referrals) based on the family assessment and the IIP. During the 2024-2025 school year, 301 families were the subject of Interagency Team meetings.

It is important to note that the case management system was in development during this time and, consequently, most of the data was not documented in the system.

#### 6. Number of follow-up assessments completed

Follow-up assessments include both reassessments (32) and closure assessments (239). Again, it is important to note that the case management system was in development during this time and, therefore, most of the data was not documented in the system.

## 7. HFI Activities for 2025-2026

The HFI Case Management System has significantly matured since its initial implementation. As a more robust tool and with increased familiarity by HFI staff in its use, more up to date and complete data is now available.

Here is the HFI Service data for the 2025-2026 School Year through September 22, 2025

<b>HFI Service</b>	<b>Number</b>
# Warning Letters Sent	4,468
# Assessment Letters Sent	988
# Students Referred to Services	56
# of Students Served	12,174
# of Families Served	10,580
# of Parents Served	15,497
# of School Codes Involved	616
# of Zip Codes	1,695
# of IIP Initiated	56
# of Initial Assessments	76
# of Reassessments	4
# of Closed Assessments	15
# of IAT Meetings/Zoom/Emails/Texts	12
# of IAT Cases Addressed during meetings	29
# of Referral Agencies	1,081
# of Students Referred to Services	69
# of Services Provided to Students Total	163
# of Students Utilizing Services	38
# of Referral Agencies Shared with the students	149

## Exhibit A

### This Alabama county cut school truancy in half after reinstating one program<sup>18</sup>

• /Published: Jun. 30, 2025, 3:12 p.m.



MCPSS Superintendent Chresal Threadgill and Mobile County DA Keith Blackwood holding a press conference on truancy declining. Patrick Darrington

Truancy by Mobile County Public School students fell by 50% over the last year, according to the Mobile County District Attorney's Office. Local officials said the reinstatement of [a longtime support program](#) originally created in Mobile, the **Helping Families Initiative**, helped address chronic absenteeism and truancy.

"As educators, we recognize that attendance is one of the most important factors in a student's success," Superintendent Chresal Threadgill said in a rare public appearance. "We do all that we can to encourage students to be present, however, we must also rely upon our parents and the community to make sure children are in class every day."

Along with truancy falling by 50%, the amount of chronically absent students also saw a 58% decline, according to the announcement. Those numbers equated to a total 9,284 truant students and 7,433 chronically absent students.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.al.com/educationlab/2025/06/this-alabama-county-cut-school-truancy-in-half-after-reinstating-one-program.html>



Prior to the Helping Family Initiative being implemented there were 18,722 truant students and 17,767 chronically absent students during the 2022-23 school year. In the 2023-24 school year, the most recent year of data publicly available, Mobile schools reported a chronic absenteeism rate of 18%.

[The Helping Families Initiative](#) partners with school systems and community organizations to intervene and assist families before students are sent to the juvenile justice system. “Attendance isn’t just a school issue, it’s a community responsibility,” Mobile County District Attorney Keith Blackwood said. “These numbers prove that when schools, parents, and students lock arms, we can rewrite the story for thousands of kids across Mobile County. Fewer absences mean fewer suspensions, fewer dropouts, and fewer court cases down the line. That’s the kind of win that changes everything.”

Examples of support vary, but [in the past](#), Helping Families has provided students and parents with washing machines and stoves, clean clothes, mental health appointments and grocery coupons.

The statewide program, which operates in 21 school districts, got [increased funding](#) from the legislature last year.



Truancy and absenteeism remain problems at schools around the country, AL.com and other news organizations [found last year](#).

Six Mobile schools were identified as having the highest truancy decline in the 2024-25 school year.

# Exhibit B Memorandum from State Superintendent of Education

Memorandum from State Superintendent of Education, July 31, 2024, Re: Gifted Funding Allocation displays the total enrollment for all Alabama public school systems.

*Figure 3 Memorandum from State Superintendent of Education, July 31, 2024, Re: Gifted Funding Allocation*

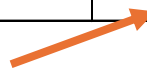
	STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	
<p>Alabama State Board of Education</p> <p>Governor Kay Ivey President</p> <p>Jackie Zeigler District I</p> <p>Tracie West District II</p> <p>Stephanie Bell District III</p> <p>Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D. District IV</p> <p>Tonya S. Chestnut, Ed.D. District V Vice President</p> <p>Marie Manning District VI President Pro Tem</p> <p>Belinda McRae District VII</p> <p>Wayne Reynolds District VIII</p> <p>Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D. Secretary and Executive Officer</p>		
<p><u>MEMORANDUM</u></p> <p>TO:</p> <p>FROM: <i>ESM</i></p> <p>RE:</p>		
<p>F Y 2240 5 1</p>		

*Figure 4 Memorandum from State Superintendent of Education, July 31, 2024, Re: Gifted Funding Allocation (Cont.)*

The last page of this memorandum displays the total enrollment for Alabama K12 school systems — 727,822 students.

**State of Alabama**  
**Department of Education**  
**FY 2025 Gifted Allocation**

Syscode	SystemName	K12 Enrollment	Gifted	Average	Allocation
195	Tallassee City	1,451	184	818	\$ 22,774.00
196	Satsuma City	1,462	164	813	\$ 22,635.00
197	Tarrant City	1,289	45	667	\$ 18,570.00
198	Thomasville City	972	87	530	\$ 14,756.00
199	Troy City	1,725	151	938	\$ 26,115.00
200	Tuscaloosa City	10,609	1,150	5,880	\$ 163,706.00
201	Tuscumbia City	1,564	140	852	\$ 23,721.00
202	Vestavia Hills City	6,868	1,184	4,026	\$ 112,089.00
204	Winfield City	1,190	22	606	\$ 16,872.00
205	Trussville City	4,979	614	2,797	\$ 77,872.00
800	MAEF Public Charter Schools	712	3	358	\$ 9,967.00
801	University Charter School	651	52	352	\$ 9,800.00
802	LEAD Academy	740	11	376	\$ 10,468.00
803	Legacy Prep	438	5	222	\$ 6,181.00
805	i3 Academy	718	49	384	\$ 10,691.00
807	LIFE Academy	528	0	264	\$ 7,350.00
808	Breakthrough Charter School	314	3	159	\$ 4,427.00
809	Ivy Classical Academy	642	0	321	\$ 8,937.00
810	Magic City Acceptance Academy	343	28	186	\$ 5,178.00
811	Empower Community School	302	0	151	\$ 4,204.00
812	Alabama Aerospace and Aviation	168	2	85	\$ 2,367.00
813	Covenant Academy of Mobile	262	1	132	\$ 3,675.00
815	Freedom Prep Academy	200	0	100	\$ 2,784.00
816	Floretta P Carson Visual and Performing Arts	245	0	123	\$ 3,424.00
		<b>727,822</b>	<b>56,905</b>	<b>392,404</b>	<b>\$ 10,925,000.00</b>



# Exhibit C Mobile County Public School Budgets for 2024 and 2025

## Mobile County Public Schools Amended Budget 2024

MOBILE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION COMBINED BUDGET OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES GOVERNMENTAL AND EXPENDABLE TRUST FUNDS FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024						
EXHIBIT B-I-A 6.18.2024 FUND TYPES DESCRIPTION	GENERAL	SPECIAL REVENUE	DEBT SERVICE	CAPITAL PROJECTS	FIDUCIARY EXPENDABLE TRUST	TOTAL (Memo Only)
REVENUES						
STATE REVENUES	404,196,002.88	75,000.00	0.00	47,177,742.33	0.00	451,448,745.21
FEDERAL REVENUES	14,060.00	263,666,077.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	263,680,137.57
LOCAL REVENUES	132,428,531.94	9,317,129.59	1,846,931.69	40,052,643.34	2,604,628.52	186,249,865.08
OTHER REVENUES	536,572.52	2,942,345.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,478,917.82
TOTAL REVENUES	537,175,167.34	276,000,552.46	1,846,931.69	87,230,385.67	2,604,628.52	904,857,665.68
EXPENDITURES:						
INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES	286,251,381.07	79,870,002.44	0.00	0.00	663,367.43	366,784,750.94
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES	96,251,044.19	63,124,498.57	0.00	83,750.00	1,145,783.08	160,605,075.84
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	62,982,844.85	9,895,526.57	0.00	28,964,031.61	4,784.05	101,847,187.08
AUXILIARY SERVICES	34,029,658.82	44,913,771.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	78,943,430.81
GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	31,856,068.14	39,058,252.73	0.00	7,395,777.66	0.00	78,310,098.53
CAPITAL OUTLAY	50,775,745.24	13,762,471.63	0.00	58,374,341.28	4,213.25	122,916,771.40
DEBT SERVICES	301,551.50	0.00	31,945,559.84	4,641,490.34	0.00	36,888,601.68
OTHER EXPENDITURES	7,129,346.96	21,550,131.10	0.00	0.00	334,123.87	29,013,601.93
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	569,577,640.77	272,174,655.03	31,945,559.84	99,459,390.89	2,152,271.68	975,309,518.21
OTHER FUND SOURCES (USES):						
OTHER FUND SOURCES	38,891,866.95	3,202,948.49	27,478,878.46	0.00	160,620.65	69,734,314.55
OTHER FUND USES	24,272,003.01	3,464,809.13	0.00	26,289,096.44	193,573.06	54,219,481.64
TOTAL OTHER FUND SOURCES (USES)	14,619,863.94	(261,860.64)	27,478,878.46	(26,289,096.44)	(32,952.41)	15,514,832.91
EXCESS REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES OVER (UNDER) EXPENDITURES & OTHER FUND USES	(17,782,609.49)	3,564,036.79	(2,619,749.69)	(38,518,101.66)	419,404.43	(54,937,019.62)
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE - OCT 1	132,685,200.85	27,726,013.48	51,319,603.12	167,349,172.78	2,827,022.23	381,907,012.46
ENDING FUND BALANCE - JUN 30	114,902,591.36	31,290,050.27	48,699,853.43	128,831,071.12	3,246,426.66	326,969,992.84

## Mobile County Public Schools Amended Budget 2025

MOBILE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION COMBINED BUDGET OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES GOVERNMENTAL AND EXPENDABLE TRUST FUNDS FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2025						
EXHIBIT B-I-A FY25 Amend I 6.17.25	GOVERNMENTAL				FIDUCIARY	TOTAL
FUND TYPES DESCRIPTION	GENERAL	SPECIAL REVENUE	DEBT SERVICE	CAPITAL PROJECTS	EXPENDABLE TRUST	(Memo Only)
REVENUES						
STATE REVENUES	370,794,970.07	225,000.00	0.00	46,837,278.33	0.00	417,857,248.40
FEDERAL REVENUES	9,900.00	124,300,837.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	124,310,737.11
LOCAL REVENUES	135,272,578.65	15,675,754.87	1,960,079.31	47,102,297.23	4,327,440.35	204,338,150.41
OTHER REVENUES	1,090,628.00	2,821,422.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,912,050.91
TOTAL REVENUES	507,168,076.72	143,023,014.89	1,960,079.31	93,939,575.56	4,327,440.35	750,418,186.83
EXPENDITURES:						
INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES	299,838,697.58	36,493,392.02	0.00	0.00	1,242,339.68	337,574,429.28
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES	105,048,826.86	29,343,853.16	0.00	63,750.00	2,186,886.34	136,643,316.36
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	62,796,379.60	638,368.95	0.00	30,854,117.37	38,357.18	94,327,223.10
AUXILIARY SERVICES	45,330,507.35	52,276,567.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	97,607,074.73
GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	34,197,090.06	2,879,974.72	0.00	8,650,187.80	0.00	45,727,252.58
CAPITAL OUTLAY	7,042,656.29	114,022.40	0.00	63,875,177.84	0.00	71,031,856.53
DEBT SERVICES	64,469.10	0.00	31,662,676.84	4,641,547.32	0.00	36,368,693.26
OTHER EXPENDITURES	9,521,223.19	13,823,058.96	0.00	0.00	412,524.98	23,756,807.13
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	563,839,850.03	135,569,237.59	31,662,676.84	108,084,780.33	3,880,108.18	843,036,652.97
OTHER FUND SOURCES (USES):						
OTHER FUND SOURCES	32,255,693.03	8,688,183.16	27,195,995.46	0.00	293,012.25	68,432,883.90
OTHER FUND USES	23,965,423.68	9,516,894.31	0.00	26,006,213.44	504,030.40	59,992,561.83
TOTAL OTHER FUND SOURCES (USES)	8,290,269.35	(828,711.15)	27,195,995.46	(26,006,213.44)	(211,018.15)	8,440,322.07
EXCESS REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES OVER (UNDER) EXPENDITURES & OTHER FUND USES	(48,381,503.96)	6,625,066.15	(2,506,602.07)	(40,151,418.21)	236,314.02	(84,178,144.07)
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE - OCT 1	181,053,264.86	29,556,884.18	48,763,268.44	155,316,589.62	189,337.70	414,879,344.80
ENDING FUND BALANCE - SEP 30	132,671,760.90	36,181,950.33	46,256,666.37	115,165,171.41	425,651.72	330,701,200.73