

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

THE NEW NORMAL

# The House of Representatives

- 105 Members
- 72 Republicans
- 33 Democrats
- 15 Women
- 11 Former Educators

# The Alabama Senate

- 35 Members
- 26 Republicans
- 8 Democrats and 1 Independent
- 4 Women
- 6 Former Educators

# Major AEA Legislative Issues

- Educator and Retiree Raises
- Charter Schools
- Alabama Accountability Act
- Rolling Reserve Act
- Diversion
- Budget Needs

# Charter Schools Legislation

- Number one priority for Legislative Leadership in both houses
- One of the first bills to pass
- Teams of pro-charter lobbyists
- Hundreds of thousands of dollars spent to pass charters

# Positive Changes Made by AEA

- Conversion Charters must pay at least the matrix
- Conversion Charters must provide TRS and PEEHIP
- Charter schools are subject to the same annual audit conditions as city systems.
- All new Charters must be “start-up” charters. No existing private school can convert to a charter school.

# Low Lights in the Charter School Law

- 10 “start up” charters per year for 5 years
- Unlimited “Conversion Charters”
- Charters may hire “teachers” that are not certified
- If a local board refuses to authorize a charter, a state charter board that is politically appointed may override the local board.
- Non-profit charters can contract with for-profit education management companies.

# Alabama Accountability Act Expansion

## Senate Bill 71 by Sen. Marsh

- Raises the cap on scholarships from \$25 to \$35 million
- Opens up more scholarships to children in non-failing schools
- Expands tax credits for individuals and corporations
- Allows administrative expenses to roll over from year-to-year



# Positive Changes AEA is Seeking

- Block the cap increase from \$25 to \$35 million
- Require audits of scholarship granting organizations
- Limit scholarships to ONLY children in “failing schools”
- Limit definition of “failing schools”
- Limit recipients to actual low income children by linking eligibility to federal free and reduced lunch standards.
- Require significant reporting to the Revenue Department and penalties for eligibility violations.

# Remaining Issues This Session

- Rolling Reserve Act modifications to allow education to receive more funding
- Protecting the ETF from raids from the General Fund
- Full funding of PEEHIP and TRS
- Educator and retiree raises including making post-secondary employees whole