The Road Forward
The Vision

In the knowledge-based economy of the future, a dynamic, healthy and prosperous Alabama will increasingly rely on the education of its population. The first step to realizing that vision is a high-performing system of public schools that challenges all children with world-class expectations for understanding English and its rich literature, mathematics, history and the requirements of a democracy, the sciences and the arts. Such a system demands educators with a deep understanding of the subject being taught, a personal allegiance to continuous self-improvement and a commitment to helping all children find their success in school, careers and their lives thereafter.

It is through promoting and supporting such a vision for each child’s education that Alabama can create a system of public education that is equitable, accountable, and just.
Standards based Reform

• 1989 - National Education Summit
• 1994 - Improving America’s Schools Act
• By the end of the 1990s most states had established standards. Wide variation in rigor and expectations.
• Ted Sizer (*Horace’s Compromise*) used to say to me “Whose Standards?”
• My view: standards should be comparable to the most educationally-advanced countries, states and provinces. They should be established by highly-trained academics conversant with international standards and leading the discussion with excellent K-12 teachers.
• They should be good enough that I would want my children taught to those levels.
NAEP Aggregated Scaled Scores Growth 2003-15

Aggregated NAEP scaled scores of math and reading for 4th and 8th grades
Performance & Growth on NAEP 2003-09

- Lower Performance, Higher Growth
- Lower Performance, Lower Growth
- Higher Performance, Higher Growth
- Higher Performance, Lower Growth

Sample data points:
- AL
Performance & Growth on NAEP 2009-15

- Lower Performance, Higher Growth
- Higher Performance, Higher Growth
- Higher Performance, Lower Growth
- Lower Performance, Lower Growth
Growth on NAEP Scaled Scores: Alabama

Growth 03-09

Growth 09-15
For the first time since 1990, the mathematical skills of American students have dropped, according to results of a nationwide test released by the Education Department on Wednesday.

The decline appeared in both Grades 4 and 8 in an exam administered every two years as the National Assessment of Educational Progress and sometimes called “the nation’s report card.”

The dip in scores comes as the country’s employers demand workers with ever-stronger skills in mathematics to compete in a global economy. It also comes as states grapple with the new Common Core academic standards and a rebellion against them.
EIGHTH GRADE MATH: A SHIFT IN COURSE TAKING

The first decade of the 21st century witnessed a dramatic change in the math courses taken by eighth graders. An "algebra for all in eighth grade" movement was bolstered by the rising belief that middle school students should take more rigorous math classes. Enrollment in advanced courses—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment in eighth grade math courses (percentage of students)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Table 1-2" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General 8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difference</strong></td>
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<td>-11</td>
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</table>

Source: NAEP Data Explorer.

Note: “Advanced” includes: Algebra I, geometry, and either the first or second year of a two-year algebra sequence. “General 8” consist of either eighth grade or basic math.

precocious middle school students by compacting three years into two are discussed in an appendix to CCSS, but the standards themselves lay out a single eighth grade math course that all eighth graders are expected to take. As noted in the study of tracking and Advanced Placement in this report, opponents of tracking have lauded, as a step towards equity, placing all eighth graders in the same math course.
the expected score for 2015 would have been 287 (rounded). Thus the 2015 results are roughly five NAEP scale points lower than would have reasonably been expected. A five point decline in NAEP would mean that eighth graders in 2015 were roughly six months of school behind eighth graders in 2013. The same calculations using the more conservative actual decline of three points leads to an estimated loss of roughly four months of school.[1] This is serious.
Is Common Core math a high standard?

Jason Zimba, lead writer of Common Core math, answers a State Board member
Were Common Core math standards internationally benchmarked?

• In 2010, it was stated on the Common Core website that they were internationally benchmarked.

• When the claim was disputed, the Common Core offered the standards were “informed” by international standards.

• The current FAQ website says that international standards were “consulted” in the development.

• The answer is “no”.
PISA was first administered in 2000. Reading literacy was the major subject assessed that year, followed by mathematics literacy in 2003 and science literacy in 2006. Table 1-1

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</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** PISA 2015, Table I.4.4a (Reading); Table I.2.4a (Science); Table I.5.4a (Math).
The Impact on Reading

![Graph showing the emphasis on particular types of reading in eighth grade](image)
Which way forward?