

# Alabama Schools Project

This is a documentation for the Alabama schools project.

## TODO List

### Johnson

1. Gather the xlsx spread sheet to Mojica ✓ *linkLocation*
2. Merge in data such as graduation rates, race/ethnicity shares *Waiting for Finnegan's data work*

### Mojica

#### Spreadsheet updates

1. Add rows to the xlsx spreadsheet to include schools that never were failing and schools that entered later (This is only for public schools).
2. Add rows/update rows for schools on their closing year with a '2' in the *Status* field.
3. Add columns to the xlsx spreadsheet to include school type (magnet, k-12 10-12, magnet type, etc.)

#### Data search (See if can locate information on )

These do not need to be added to the spreadsheet yet but would be really useful to try and track down. If unable to find exact data, please record website/Department that may have this info for further searching.

1. Disciplinary Data (Expulsions/Suspensions)
2. College Attendance rates
3. Pregnancy, etc. rate.
4. Homeschooling (not sure if reported by county or school district...)
5. AP classes by school.
6. Data on what happens to students after their schools close...
7. How many 'transfer' students in each school (with as much info as possible about students)

### Written Work

1. A page or so about own experience (schools/years/outcomes/general observations, number of students in ap)
2. Overview of the (self-organized learning environment) report that is now missing. Basic ideas/insights etc.
3. More discussion of what happens to students after their schools close. What are the available options? Is it identical to being part of a failing school?

### Questions

1. Can we get Assessment data (aggregate/micro) from Aspire or Alabama Alternate Assessment?
2. What are the differences between Aspire Assessment and Alabama Alternate?
3. Role of Superintendent (How bound by scores, other factors to consider... Political motivations?)
4. What is a *non-failing, nonpublic Alabama School that is willing to accept them?*

5. Who is accepted from failing/failed schools? Data on acceptance?
6. What happens to students at schools that under forced closure?

## Background

The background is based on 'Failing School Story' by Elizabeth Mojica (emojica@crimson.ua.edu).

### Definition of a failing school:

1. Is in the bottom 6% of public Alabama School for year based on the state's standardized assessment in math and reading.
  - a. Students are tested in reading and math in grades 3-8 with the Aspire Assessment
  - b. Students are tested in reading and math in the 10th grade with the Aspire Assessment and the Alabama Alternate Assessment.
2. Is designated as failing by the State Superintendent of Education

### Options for students in a failing school:

1. Students may remain and continue enrolled in the failing school
2. Students can request to transfer to a non-failing school in their same district
  - a. If available, the student may receive transportation assistance
3. Students can request to transfer to a non-failing school outside their district with permission from outside district
  - a. The students' family is solely responsible for all transportation needs
4. Students can request to transfer to any non-failing, nonpublic Alabama School that is willing to accept them.

### Barriers to entry for students from failing schools into alternative schools:

1. Desegregation Laws
  - a. There is current debate on whether these laws should continue to be taken into consideration.
2. Zoned schools based on living arrangements
  - a. After all, the students leaving these schools do not typically contribute financially to these schools.
3. Crowded Schools
  - a. A good number of non-failing schools in Alabama are already filled to capacity and therefore can no longer accept transfers whether from a failing school or not.
4. Number of Nearby Schools
  - a. The higher the number of schools available for the student to attend the more options a students' family may have in deciding where to educate the child.

### Do students exercise options?

These numbers are reported biennially.

1. In 2016 only 2.2% of students were able to successfully transfer from a failing school.
2. The number of applicants denied goes unreported.

These circumstances that discourage transfers matter because they result in many of the students in failing schools to remain in those schools. This results in lower quality of education for them. They are then condemned to that lower quality of education until something or someone greater than them acts on the issue.

## Data Work Description

Gather the raw school file to be in long rather than wide format. Here is a subset of how the long format will look.

SchoolName	SchoolDistrict	Year	Status
Autaugaville School	Autaugaville County	2007	0
Barbour County High School	Barbour County	2007	0
Barbour County Junior High School	Barbour County	2007	0
West Blocton High School	Bibb County	2007	0
Bullock County High School	Bullock County	2007	0
Lafayette High School	Chambers County	2007	0

As of right now there are 545, 241 of status 0, 1. Where Status=0 is not failing, Status=1 is failing.

## Meeting Notes

**11/30/2017 Razzolini, Ross, Johnson**

*Johnson Notes for 11/30/2017*