

Education officials: Pass a realistic budget

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There's a group traveling the state making a very public but simple request of the Alabama Legislature: Pass a realistic budget.

The small group of representatives from the School Superintendents of Alabama, Alabama Association of School Boards and the Alabama Association of School Business Officials spoke earlier this week to the TimesDaily Editorial Board about the financial dilemma schools could face if proration is declared on an uncertain state education budget.

School Superintendents of Alabama Director Susan Lockwood said the most important factor for schools across the state is getting a budget that doesn't go into proration because of the state's poor planning.

"A conservative budget is what we're asking for," Lockwood said. "Systems have used up their reserves and many are in year two of borrowing money just to get through the year. We've got to have a real budget, not this pie in the sky, wishful thinking kind of budget. We just want honesty about what it will be so we can plan accordingly."

Sally Howell, director of the Alabama Association of School Boards, said as bad as proration has hurt the state's education system - to the tune of 40 percent revenue loss in two years - working with less money is doable "if we just know what it will be."