

# advocate for SCHOOLS



TO SEE A LIST OF BILLS TRACKED BY AASB  
DURING THE 2025 REGULAR SESSION,  
CLICK ON BILL TRACKER BELOW:



## AASB Advocacy Committee Days

This year, all AASB Advocacy Days will be held on legislative committee days, offering an insider's glimpse of this key phase of the legislative process.

Begin your day at the AASB office at 8 a.m. with light refreshments before heading to the State House. There, you'll observe lawmakers discussing education-related bills, witness critical policy debates unfold, and gain valuable perspective on how education priorities are debated and shaped before reaching the chamber floor. Lunch will be provided. This is an all-day event.

Advocacy Committee Days are not district specific. The dates listed are open to board members, superintendents and CSFOs. Register early — space is extremely limited and registration will close once capacity is reached.

**Wednesday, April 9**  
**Wednesday, April 16**  
**Wednesday, April 30**

[\*\*REGISTER HERE\*\*](#)

**2025 Regular  
Legislative Session**

**20 Days Remain**

## Lawmakers Dial Up Cell Phone Ban in K-12 Schools

**Cited as a top priority by Gov. Kay Ivey this session, the House and Senate Education Policy Committees approved legislation Wednesday that would ban student cell phone usage in public K-12 schools beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.** Companion bills [H.166](#), sponsored by **Rep. Leigh Hulseley**, and [S.92](#), sponsored by **Sen. Donnie Chesteen**, would prohibit students from using, operating or possessing a wireless communications device during the instructional day. Local boards also would be required to adopt an internet safety policy addressing student internet access on school system devices. The policy would limit student access to only age-appropriate materials and prohibit student access to certain websites and all social media platforms.

The bill does not establish discipline consequences for students, leaving this up to local board policy. However, the bill does establish consequences for school noncompliance. According to the bill sponsors, these provisions are aimed at ensuring uniform compliance with the ban. The State Department of Education (SDE) would be responsible for developing an anonymous survey for school personnel, assessing their school's compliance with the ban. The principal would submit survey results annually to the local superintendent, local board and the State Board of Education (SBOE) for publication on the SDE website.

The bill allows exemptions for:

- Educational purposes under the supervision of a local board employee;
- Emergency situations threatening the life or safety of a student or another person, and for students with:
- Section 504 Plan; Individualized Education Program (IEP); Individualized Accommodation Plan, or Individualized Health Plan

**OF NOTE:** Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, a school failing to meet the ban's minimum compliance standards would lose 30% of their common purchase allocation for classroom instructional support. AASB successfully advocated for these funds to be restored to the FY25 Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget after being zeroed out for several years.

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### More Time for Maternity

Paid parental leave for state and education employees is also on Ivey's list of priorities for lawmakers to address this session. The Alabama K-12 Public School and State Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2025, [S.199](#), unanimously cleared the **Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee** this week. Sponsored by **Sen. Vivian Figures**, this bill would provide eight weeks of paid leave for women and two weeks of paid leave for men in connection with the birth, stillbirth or miscarriage of her/his child. Adoptive parents of children aged three or younger also would be eligible for eight weeks of paid leave. The state currently only covers the cost of **five** substitute teacher days for local boards. The bill would increase the number of allowable leave days to **40**. The cost to implement a paid maternity leave policy is not yet funded in the proposed FY26 ETF Budget. **Figures** said they are working to ensure minimal costs to school boards.

**AASB advocates that any new benefits program must be fully funded by the legislature.**

### Super Charged Dual Enrollment

[S.196](#), sponsored by **Sen. Arthur Orr**, was introduced Tuesday and approved the next day by the **Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee**. The "Move On When Ready" bill would create a separate, alternative dual enrollment program for eligible 11th and 12th grade high school students to **co-enroll** in a local community college to complete their high school course requirements. These students would not take any courses at their high school but instead at the local community college. Coursework

would need to satisfy high school graduation requirements and upon successful completion, the local board would be required to award the students high school diploma. The bill also would create a new fund to pay community colleges to enroll these high school students. AASB is concerned that school boards would have responsibility for students over which they have no oversight, including meeting legal requirements and possible 504 needs.

**Requiring Religious Release Time, Credit**

**H.342** sponsored by Rep. Susan DuBose would amend Alabama’s 2019 law allowing students to be excused from school during elective course time to attend religious instruction off-campus. Currently, the law is permissive - allowing local boards to decide whether to have the program and whether to grant course credit for these electives, thanks to language AAASB successfully advocated for in the original legislation. This bill would **require** local boards adopt a policy allowing students to participate in religious instruction AND **require** schools award elective course credit for religious instruction. **LifeWise**, a \$35 million nonprofit for religious education programming, is the main proponent of this model legislation, pushing to mandate religious education classes be offered during the public school day in Alabama and other states. **AASB has called a Public Hearing before the House Education Policy committee next Wednesday**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION**

**House Education Policy**

▶ **National Signing Day**

**H.96 (Robertson) - High School Signing Day** - would require high schools to excuse students from class who participate in organized National Signing Day activities related to the acceptance of athletic scholarships, post-secondary school educational commitments, apprenticeship programs and military enlistments. The bill would require high schools to provide reasonable accommodations for those activities. **Favorable Report**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ACTION**

**Senate Education Policy**

▶ **Three-Cueing**

**H.9 (Hulsey) - Three-Cueing Literacy Instruction** - would prohibit the use of the three-cueing instruction model that teaches students to read based on visual cues. **Favorable Report**

**Senate Children & Youth Health**

▶ **Internet-enabled Device Filters**

**S.186 (Chambliss) - Internet Filters** - would require Internet-enabled devices, including smartphones and tablets, manufactured on or by January 1, 2027, to contain a filter enabled during device activation if the user is a minor and only allow a user with a password to deactivate or reactivate the filter. This would be applicable to district-owned devices. **Favorable Report**

**HOUSE FLOOR ACTION**

These bills received passage in the House:

**H.57 (Hulsey) - City BOE Land Purchase** - would prohibit a city board from purchasing land outside the municipality without an agreement from the governing body where the land is located.

**S.59 (Chesteen) - Military Records for Proof of Immunization** - would allow active duty military personnel to substitute military medical records of dependents as evidence of age-appropriate immunizations instead of the “Blue Card” at a public or private school.

**H.266 (Woods) - REACH Act** - would codify an existing program between the SDE and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) to offer a nontraditional high school diploma as an additional pathway for students 18 years or older who withdraw/drop out. **AMENDMENT:** A student who withdraws from high school and within one year after withdrawing enrolls in a nontraditional high school diploma option program, may not be counted as a dropout for purposes of the graduation rate calculations of his or her high school on the State Report Card.

**SENATE FLOOR ACTION**

This bill received passage in the Senate:

**S.83 (Orr) - Adult Changing Tables** - would require the installation of height-adjustable, powered adult changing tables in public restrooms in all public building renovation and new construction projects over \$500,000. The bill would create a yet-unfunded grant program to cover the costs of purchase and installation. **AMENDMENT:** K-12 schools exempt, except for those areas frequented by the public such as auditoriums, stadiums, and gymnasiums.

**Select Bill Introductions**

**S.205 (Smitherman) - Funding for Priority Schools** - supplemental appropriation from the ETF of \$78 million that would allocate \$500,000 for each school identified as a priority school on the Fall 2024 State Report Card.

**H.332 (Faulkner) - Computer Science Requirements** - would expand the current law by adding more course offerings available to earn the existing high school graduation requirement of an approved computer science course as a high school graduation requirement.

**H.344 (Collins) - State Intervention of Local Boards** - would authorize the state superintendent to summon witnesses and subpoena records during an educational intervention and return a local board to intervention within five years after a provisional release if determined that the local board has not satisfied the conditions of its release or is unable to properly oversee operations of the local school system.

**H.356 (Woods) – Terrorist Threats** – would require a public school principal to notify law enforcement if the conduct of a student warrants being charged with the crime of making a terrorist threat in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> degree and requires the immediate one-year suspension of any student charged with this crime, expulsion of any student convicted and restitution paid to the local board for any costs incurred. **This bill replaces H.85 (Woods).**

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