

advocate for SCHOOLS



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



School System Snapshots

AASB has released the 2025 edition (FY23 data) of School System Snapshots, which provides an individualized look at each Alabama school system's state and local resources - funding and spending.

[Click here for Snapshots](#)

AASB's Tracking Tool

Don't forget to look at AASB's tracking page where you can check the status of all bills being monitored by AASB during the session. Click on the red bill tracker icon on the top right of the Advocate header.

Fast-Moving Session

The Legislature is off and running. Typically, lawmakers are in session two days a week with one committee day. However, the Legislature plans to meet three legislative days per week for the first two weeks which will allow them to tackle bills at a quicker pace.

2025 Regular Legislative Session

27 Days Remain

Session Begins: Ivey Calls for Cell Phone Ban in Schools

A bill to prohibit the use of smart phones and other wireless devices in Alabama public schools is at the top of Gov. Kay Ivey's priority list for education this legislative session.

During her annual [state of the state address](#) Tuesday, Ivey announced her support for legislation that would implement a statewide ban on the use of cell phones during classroom instructional time. She said proposed legislation also would require local boards to adopt an internet safety policy governing student access to the internet on school-owned devices. Companion bills ([S.92](#) by **Senator Donnie Chesteen** and [H.166](#) by **Rep. Leigh Hulsey**) addressing Ivey's proposed cell phone ban already have been filed and are expected to see committee action as early as next week.

Ivey's address also highlighted successes of Alabama's Literacy and Numeracy Acts as reflected by recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores showing Alabama as one of only two states demonstrating historic gains in reading and math proficiency – from 49th to 34th in reading, and from 52nd to 32nd in math.

Although a pay raise for teachers and state employees is not Ivey's agenda this year, she voiced support for paid maternity leave for both education employees and state workers and cited bi-partisan sponsorship of a bill soon to be introduced by **Sen. Vivian Figures** and **Rep. Ginny Shavers**.

Budgetary Word of Caution

State Finance Director Bill Poole and **Legislative Services Agency Deputy Director Kirk Fulford** cautioned legislators about the state's flattening revenue sources, leveling economic growth and rising costs in presentations to the joint legislative budget committees Wednesday. "The sugar high is over," **Poole** said. Education Trust Fund (ETF) re-

ceipts for FY26 are only estimated to grow approximately 1.82%.

[State Finance Budget Presentation](#)
[LSA Budget Presentation](#)

Governor's ETF Budget

The governor's recommended FY26 ETF budget of \$9.9 billion ([S.112 Orr](#)), ETF supplemental and Educational Advancement and Technology (EAT) Fund appropriation bills will begin in the Senate this session.

The proposed ETF budget includes \$6.7 billion for K-12 education which is a 6% increase over FY25 and the maximum growth allowed by the spending cap.

For FY26, the budget includes fully funding increases to cover rising costs for the Public Education Employees Health Insurance Program (PEEHIP) and the Teacher's Retirement System (TRS), totaling \$140 million.

Additional increases include:

- CHOOSE Act - \$101 million
- Other Current Expense (OCE) - \$72 million
- Math Coaches - \$27 million
- Summer and After School Programs - \$14.4 million
- English Language Learners (ELL) - \$10 million
- Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) - \$7.3 million
- Behavior Analysts (autism support) - \$5 million
- Distance Learning (ACCESS) - \$2.3 million
- Jobs for Alabama Graduates (JAG) - \$2 million
- Principal's Act - \$1.7 million

ETF Supplemental

This year's proposed ETF supplemental ([S.113 Orr](#)) of \$524 million appropriates one-time funds with excess revenue from the previous budget year. The supplemental allocates \$294 million for K-12, including:

- Transportation Fleet Renewal - \$100 million

- School Safety (training, services, materials) - \$50 million
- Summer and After-school Programs - \$30 million
- Textbooks - \$28 million
- College and Career Readiness (CCR) Grants - \$20 million
- Principals and Assistant Principals (to fulfill current school year obligations) - \$14 million
- Charter School Capital Grants - \$10.3 million
- Struggling Readers Beyond 3rd Grade - \$10 million
- North Alabama STEM Center - \$7.5 million
- Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in schools - \$5 million
- TEAMS - \$5 million
- Ed Farm Coding Workforce Training - \$5 million
- Heman Drummond Center for Innovation - \$5 million
- American Village "America 250" Programs - \$3.5 million

The supplemental also includes:

- CHOOSE Act (to the Alabama Department of Revenue for Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs) - \$50 million*

*NOTE: This CHOOSE Act supplemental allocation combined with last year's (\$50 million) totals \$100 million for private school vouchers beginning 2025-26 school year.

Education Advancement & Technology Fund (S.114 Orr), a supplemental appropriation from the Education Advancement and Technology Fund (EAT) would provide \$907.8 million to K-12 public schools to spend in FY25. It also would reallocate \$35 million to seven school systems from last year's appropriation that went unexpended and reverted back to the fund.

Educational Opportunities Reserve Fund

For the first time since the fund's creation in 2023, the governor has recommended a \$133 million appropriation from the Educational Opportunities Reserve Fund (S.111 Orr) which has a current balance of \$1.12 billion.

The recommended appropriation would distribute \$100 million to school systems based on their student populations as part of a hybrid approach to student-weighted funding. Of this amount:

- **\$40 million** for high-poverty schools, based on the number of students who qualify for free and/or reduced lunch;
- **\$40 million** for students with disabilities, based on special education student population as identified in the annual Child Count; and
- **\$20 million** for sparsity/rural schools, to county school boards in counties with a total population of less than 50 residents per square mile.

BIT OF BACKGROUND: A Legislative Study Commission on School Funding was created last legislative session and has met five times since May 2024 to discuss ways to modernize the state's funding formula for K-12 public education. The commission will meet next Thursday, Feb. 13, to adopt its final report with policy recommendations. The commission met last month to discuss a hybrid funding formula approach, rather than a complete-

ly new student-weighted funding formula the commission had previously considered.

Under this hybrid approach, it would keep the state's current Foundation Program as a variable "base" and add new funding for specific student groups as "weights" on top of this base.

Select Bill Introductions

The first week of the regular session saw a total of 374 bills introduced in the House and Senate. Below are a few of the education-related bills AASB is tracking.

H.9 (Hulsey) - Three cueing - would prohibit the use of three-cueing instruction in public K-12 curriculum

H.32 (Tillman) - Semi-monthly pay - would allow for a semi-monthly pay plan for employees of local boards of education

H.61 (DuBose) - CTE/homeschoolers - would allow homeschoolers to enroll in a public school career technical education (CTE) program as non-traditional students and would enable schools to receive average daily membership (ADM) for these students

H.102 (Ross) - Dual enrollment - would mandate dual enrollment courses, offered by community colleges and approved for dual credit by the State Department of Education (SDE), be accessible to all eligible high school students through every local education agency

H.178 (Gidley) - Ten Commandments - would require each local board to display the Ten Commandments in a common area of every public K-12 school under its jurisdiction

H.197 (Faulkner) - Special Ed Dispute Resolution - would require notification of an allegation to the SDE that a local board has potentially violated the Individual With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) before requesting an impartial due process hearing and would establish procedures for resolution

H.231 (Ingram) - School prayer [C/A] - proposes a statewide constitutional amendment which if approved by voters, would require local boards to adopt policies to require each public K-12 school to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer consistent with Judeo-Christian values at the beginning of each school day

S.1 (Givhan) - Education employees' worker's compensation - would create a new benefit program, fund and administrative board for on-the-job injury claims from education employees

S.8 (Allen) - American History and Civics Excellence Initiative - would provide an online American History course of study for high school teachers for endorsement upon completion and one-time stipend

S.13 (Allen) - Star Spangled Banner [C/A] - proposes a statewide constitutional amendment which if approved by voters, would require K-12 schools to broadcast/perform the Star Spangled Banner at least once during the school week and also at school-sanctioned sporting events

S.34 (Smitherman) - Conflict resolution instruction - would mandate all public high school students receive instruction in violence prevention, conflict resolution and mediation before graduation

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