

# advocate for SCHOOLS



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



## Spring Break

Lawmakers will take their official spring break March 24-28. The session will reconvene April 1.

## One Date Left...

### 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.

This is an all-day event from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and lunch will be provided.

Advocacy Committee Days are not district specific and are open to board members, superintendents and CSFOs. If you want to attend but have not registered, there is still one date remaining. Register today — space is **extremely limited** and registration will close once capacity is reached.

**Wednesday, April 30**

**[REGISTER HERE](#)**

**2025 Regular Legislative Session**

**14 Days Remain**

## Session Crosses Halfway Mark, Paid Leave Passes

**The Legislature has completed 16 of its 30 legislative days, officially putting the regular session a little over the halfway point.** Meanwhile, as local boards are nearing the last few weeks of this school year, the education community awaits discussion on the \$9.9 billion Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget and its related appropriations bills expected to go before the **Senate Finance and Taxation Education (SFTE) Committee** when lawmakers return from spring break.

Part of the budget discussion will include changes to how schools are currently funded under the Foundation Program. A bill is expected to be introduced that would propose a hybrid approach to school funding, keeping the current Foundation Program in place and adding new funds for specific student populations such as special education, English Language Learners (ELL), poverty and gifted students.

### Lawmakers Deliver Paid Parental Leave for Educators

The House gave final passage Thursday to the Alabama Public Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2025 (**S.199**), sponsored by **Sen. Vivian Figures** and co-sponsored in the House by **Rep. Ginny Shaver**. The bill establishes paid parental leave for both education and state employees beginning July 1.

Approximately 80% of the state's education workforce is female, and the bill's sponsors and supporters cited the economic benefits of paid leave for recruitment and retention.

Under this new benefits program, female employees will be eligible for up to eight weeks and male employees up to two weeks of paid leave for their child's birth, stillbirth or miscarriage. Both male and female employees will be eligible for up to eight weeks of paid leave for the adoption of a child under three years old. If both parents who jointly adopt a child are state and/or education employees, one parent is entitled to eight weeks of leave and two weeks for the other parent.

**AASB advocates the state fully fund this new benefits program and not pass along the implementation costs to local boards of education.** There will be costs associated with substitute teachers for education employees. The state currently funds a total of five paid sick leave days per teacher, per year. The bill now goes to the Governor for signature.

### Religious Release Time Mandate... Still Problematic

The **House Education Policy Committee** adopted **two amendments** to **H.342** by **Rep. Susan DuBose**, a bill that would mandate religious leave for students. The first committee amendment would allow local school boards to determine if elective credit is earned by a student who participates in religious instruction offsite during the school day. **NOTE: This permissive language for elective course credit already is in current state law.**

The other committee amendment added language that would authorize local boards to "tailor" policy to meet their specific needs, provided the policy still meets the requirements of the bill. **School boards already have the authority to adopt a local policy under current law**, but the policy must be consistent with the restrictive state law and rigid constitutional requirements, leaving little room for flexibility.

Local school boards, responsible for student performance and safety, should, with their communities, make decisions based on local needs, not the wants of a \$35 million Ohio-based nonprofit and its hired lobbyists.

The **House Education Policy Committee** will vote on the amended bill after the legislative spring break.

**AASB urges lawmakers to keep current state law in place which already allows for religious release time policies in Alabama schools.**

### Pressing Pause on Workers' Comp

The **House Ways and Means Education (HWME) Committee** discussed **S.1** by **Sen. Sam Givhan** that would create another benefit program, new fund and new administrative board for on-the-job injury claims from education employees. Speaking to the committee, **Givhan** said the anticipated cost of the program has increased from its original estimate of \$16 million to \$19 million, which is not in the governor's recommended ETF budget. Some committee members raised concerns about creating a new benefits program for education employees that would be separate from the existing program for state employees and questioned the cost effectiveness of maintaining two similar programs. With lingering questions unanswered and time still remaining in the legislative session, **HWME Chairman Rep. Danny Garrett** postponed the committee's vote to after spring break.

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION

#### House Education Policy

##### ► High School Athletics, Computer Science and School Intervention

**H.298 (Colvin)** - High School Athletics and ELL - would restrict certain ELL students from being included in the average daily membership (ADM) of public K-12 schools for purposes of classifying a school for athletic competition. **AMENDMENT: Applies to high schools with 15% or more ELL students enrolled in grades nine-11. Favorable Report as amended**

**H.332 (Faulkner)** - Computer Science Requirements - would expand current law by adding more course offerings to earn the existing high school graduation requirement of an approved computer science course. **AMENDMENT: Makes technical changes to align with current high school course and diploma requirements. Favorable Report as amended**

**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 local school system operations. **Favorable Report**

#### House Ways & Means General Fund

##### ► Adult Changing Tables

**S.83 (Orr)** - Adult Changing Tables - would require installation of height-adjustable, powered adult changing tables in public restrooms in all public building renovation and new construction projects over \$500,000. K-12 schools are exempt, except for those areas frequented by the public such as auditoriums, stadiums and gymnasiums. **Favorable Report**

### HOUSE FLOOR ACTION

#### The House passed a package of tax credit bills:

**H.152 (Rafferty)** - Sales Tax Exemption - would provide a new statewide sales and use tax exemption for purchases of certain baby supplies, formula, maternity and

feminine hygiene products, and would allow local governments to adopt these exemptions. **Would reduce annual ETF revenue by an estimated \$10.5 million and local revenue up to \$14.4 million.**

**\*H.386 (Garrett)** - State Grocery Tax Reduction - would reduce the statewide grocery sales tax from 3% to 2%, **with an estimated \$122 million annual hit to the ETF.**

**\*H.387 (Garrett)** - Local Grocery Tax Reduction - would allow counties and municipalities to reduce grocery sales taxes at the local level.

**\*H.388 (Garrett)** - Retiree Income Tax Exemption - would increase tax exempt retirement income for those 65 and older from \$6,000 to \$12,000, **with an estimated \$45 million annual hit to the ETF.**

**\*H.389 (Garrett)** - Income Tax Deduction - would increase tax exempt income for those making under \$60,000 a year, **with an estimated \$25 million annual hit to the ETF.**

**\*Garrett's tax credit package is expected to be offset by revenues recaptured by the expiration in June 2025 of the current overtime income tax exemption.**

#### This bill also received House passage:

**H.234 (Baker)** - Emergency Panic Buttons - would require each local board and public charter school to provide teachers and other school staff with wearable mobile emergency response technology. Local boards would have until October 1, 2030, to implement provisions of this bill. **AMENDMENT: Bill requirements would be subject to the availability of annual dedicated school safety funds.**

### SELECT BILL INTRODUCTIONS

**H.438 (Drummond)** - Education Transparency Board - would create a temporary board within the State Department of Education and require an impact study be completed and final report published should the United States Department of Education (USDOE) budget be reduced by 20%.

**H.467 (Daniels)** - Overtime Tax Exemption - would remove the sunset date for the overtime tax exemption enacted in 2023 which is set to expire in June 2025, making this exemption permanent. **The exemption is costing the state more than \$300 million annually.**

**S.267 (Orr)** - Charter School Finance Authority - would establish the Alabama Charter School Finance Authority to issue bonds to make financing loans for charter school capital projects.

### FEDERAL UPDATE: USDOE to be Dismantled

President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday instructing Education Secretary Linda McMahon to begin dismantling the USDOE. The White House said the federal government still will be responsible for administering Title I funding, Pell grants, student loans, special education funding and enforcing civil rights laws and other critical functions. Any changes to federal laws or closure of the department would require congressional approval. Click [here](#) for the executive order.

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