

# advocate for SCHOOLS



TO SEE A LIST OF BILLS TRACKED BY AASB  
DURING THE 2024 REGULAR SESSION,  
CLICK ON BILL TRACKER BELOW:



## Stay Tuned: Advocate Special Edition

Be on the lookout for AASB's special edition containing enactments and bills that did not pass. This edition will provide Act numbers and a summary of all education-related general bills, local bills and resolutions.

## Legislative Session Recap Webinar

Join AASB's governmental relations team Friday, June 14 from noon to 1:00 p.m. for a free webinar re-capping session highs and lows.

Executive Director Sally Smith, Governmental Relations Director Ada Katherine van Wyhe and Governmental Relations Coordinator Tracey Meyer will discuss the education bills that did and did not pass, share the inside scoop on action from the final days of the session and answer your questions about bills that will impact your systems. [REGISTER HERE](#)

## 2024 Regular Legislative Session

### Adjourned Sine Die



## ETF Budget Gets Final Okay; Lawmakers Sine Die

After a brief conference committee meeting earlier in the week and a two-day filibuster in the upper chamber, the House and Senate finally concurred the last day of the session on a **\$9.3 billion FY25 Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget (H.145) for FY25, providing an additional \$550 million over current fiscal year.** There were no substantial changes for K-12 line item allocations from the House-passed to Senate-passed versions of the budget. However, conferees made a minor change to move \$1.5 million from the State Department of Education (SDE) to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) for school safety. Now headed to the governor, the FY25 ETF Budget includes a 2% across-the-board pay raise (H.146) for educators and support personnel, instructional support unit adjustments for elementary and middle school assistant principals and the return of funding for common purchases.

### FY25 ETF Budget

#### Increases over FY24:

- Alabama Reading Initiative - **\$48.6 million**
- Principal Leadership Mentoring - **\$30 million**
- Alabama Numeracy Act - **\$28 million**
- Unmet Needs Grant Program - **\$5 million**
- Special Ed Teacher Stipend - **\$3.2 million (\$1,200/per teacher)**
- LEA At-Risk - **\$2.6 million**
- Career Coaches Program - **\$2.5 million**
- English Language Learners - **\$2.3 million**
- Advanced Placement - **\$2 million**
- Gifted Students Program - **\$2 million**
- Cybersecurity Improvements - **\$1.4 million**
- AL Teacher Mentor Program - **\$1 million**
- High Hopes for AL Students - **\$1 million**

- Job's for AL Graduates - **\$1 million**
- Special Ed Preschool - **\$1 million**

#### Budget also includes:

- **Assistant Principals** - Instructional Support Units (FTE) as follows:  
Elementary (.50) - 300 to 499.99 students  
Middle (1.0) - 300 to 499.99 students
- **Common Purchases** - \$100/unit

#### New Line Items:

- Automated External Defibrillators - **\$5 million**
- Public School Grants Program - **\$5 million**
- Math Nation - **\$2.9 million**
- Data Literacy - **\$2.6 million**
- School Safety Grants - **\$1.5 million**
- First Grade Readiness Pilot - **\$900,000**

### Supplemental Appropriations

House and Senate conferees made slight changes to two supplemental appropriations:

#### ETF Supplemental (H.144)

##### > Removed:

\$5 million included in the Senate to help fund a future retiree cost-of living increase

##### > Added:

\$750,000 for Principal Mentorship Program

#### Education Advancement & Technology (EAT) Supplemental (H.147)

##### > Restored:

\$2 million for teacher professional development

### Let's Talk

In the final week of the 2024 legislative session, the House held onto the conference committee-approved ETF budget package to

### Governor's Options

All bills passed by the Legislature on the final day are transmitted to the governor. The risk for every bill passed on the last day is that lawmakers have no recourse to override a gubernatorial veto. The governor now will decide whether to sign the bill into law or let the bill die by her inaction which is called a "pocket veto." She has 10 calendar days to act (May 19).

encourage the Senate to take up more House bills and as leverage for the last-minute possibility of a Senate vote on a gambling package already passed by the House. House members spoke at length on the floor during the ETF budget discussion about the proposed gambling package and the estimated \$1.2 billion in revenue it would generate, which some members said could fund cost-of-living increases for education retirees. The House recessed for several hours Thursday to give the Senate time to pass House bills, yet the Senate never formally adopted a floor calendar due to several controversial bills on the proposed calendar. The Senate instead spent the final day of session filibustering and debating local bills, while also buying time for gambling conversations to continue. They ultimately did not take up this final part of the gambling package, adjourning Sine Die after approving final passage of the ETF budget.

### Bills that Didn't Make It

The following bills were in position for final passage but did not make it across the finish line this week:

**(S.278 Givhan) - Education Employees' Worker's Compensation** - would have created a new benefit program, fund and administrative board for on-the-job-injury claims from education employees. If enacted, there was a corresponding \$14.9 million line item in the FY25 ETF budget; however, this will now be reallocated to the SDE.

**(H.130 Butler) - Don't Say Gay** - would have expanded the state's existing law prohibiting any classroom discussion or instruction of sexual orientation or gender identity from grades K-5 to grades K-8 and would have prevented K-12 employees from displaying a flag or other insignia relating to sexual orientation or gender identity.

**(H.173 Hulsey) - Three-Cueing Literacy Instruction** - would have prohibited the use of the three-cueing teaching model that teaches students to read based on visual cues. This teaching model is not aligned with the science of reading requirements in the Alabama Literacy Act. The SBOE Thursday approved new Administrative Code rule changes prohibiting this model.

**(H.195 DuBose) - Sex Education** - would have prohibited any form of sex education curriculum in K-12 public schools that is not solely abstinence-based.

**(H.278 DuBose) - CTE for Homeschoolers** - would have allowed homeschoolers to enroll in a public school career technical education (CTE) program as a non-traditional student and would have enabled schools to receive average daily membership (ADM) for these students.

### GONE TO GOVERNOR

The following bills have been transmitted to the governor and await her action:

**(S.33 Elliott) - Assistant Principal Contracts** - allows assistant principals, assistant superintendents, and assistant chief school financial officers to be employed by local school boards on a contractual basis, pending a board vote on this action, for those hired after July 1, 2024.

**(S.98 Orr) - School Security Act** - creates a school security inspection and grant program for all K-12 public schools to be inspected at least once every five years to

assess compliance with school security criteria that will be established by the SBOE. Following an inspection, the school security inspector shall provide each school with a security rubric rating and a copy of the rating and recommendations for improvement to the local school board. ALEA will collaborate with local school boards to provide school mapping for each school, available to each local board and law enforcement.

**(S.157 Orr) - Teachers' Bill of Rights** - creates a process for teachers to exclude/remove students from the classroom for disruptive behavior beginning in the 2024-2025 school year. The Act lists five infractions that can be considered disruptive behavior: disorderly conduct; behavior that obstructs the teaching or learning process of others in the classroom; threatening, abusing, intimidating or attempting to intimidate an education employee or another student; willfully disobeying an education employee; and using abusive or profane language directed at an education employee. It requires a school to document each time students are referred out of the classroom. It also requires each local school board to adopt an appeals process for teachers who disagree with their principal's decision related to student disciplinary action and provides legal immunity for education employees related to performance of their duties.

**(H.73 Pettus) - Property Tax Assessment Cap** - caps the percent growth on local revenue from property tax assessment at 7% year over year. This cap was increased from 3% in its original version, which will limit its negative fiscal impact on local communities and schools.

**(H.113 Warren) - First Grade Readiness** - allows students who have not completed kindergarten to enroll in the first grade upon completion of a developmentally appropriate readiness assessment. For the first year of implementation in 2025-2026, a student may not be prevented from enrolling in first grade based on their performance on the assessment. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, a student who does not demonstrate readiness on the assessment will be placed in kindergarten. It also requires the SDE to develop an informational campaign to raise awareness about and promote kindergarten participation.

**(H.290 Oliver) - K-12 Cardiac Emergency Response Plan** - requires each K-12 public and nonpublic school to develop and implement a cardiac emergency response plan beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. This will include staff training and placement on school property for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs).

**(H.308 Collins) - Alternative Teacher Certification** - adds another accrediting organization to the list of those that may be accepted for approval of alternative teacher certification programs.

**(H.331 Woods) - Private School Transfer Students Excluded from State Report Card** - excludes nonpublic school transfer students from a school's academic achievement grade on the state report card for the first three years of enrollment in a public school.

**(H.439 Baker) - Information Technology Directors** - renames technology coordinators as directors and establishes minimum job qualifications and training requirements.

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