

advocate for SCHOOLS



TO SEE A LIST OF BILLS BEING TRACKED BY AASB DURING THE 2019 REGULAR SESSION, CLICK BELOW.



Appt Superintendents

The final step for passage is a vote by the full House to approve [S.222 \(Butler\)](#). Elected superintendents need to focus on leading schools without the pressure to fundraise and campaign. The bill allows superintendents to lead and make decisions based on what is best for students rather than impact on reelection. The best governance for schools is to appoint school superintendents.

Urge Final Passage
[S.222 \(Butler\)](#)

Tier 3 Needed

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act to provide a Tier 3 retirement benefit for educators has now been assigned to the Senate Finance & Taxation Education Committee. It's time to convince senators to support the effort to help keep teachers in Alabama. Ask your senator to vote YES to [H.77 \(Baker\)](#)

2019 Regular Legislative Session

15

days remaining

The Session has reached
its halfway mark.

Senate Approves ETF Budget; Returns \$35M CHIP program to GF

The Senate approved a \$7.1 billion education budget for FY20 Thursday that restores \$90M funding to current education programs, rejecting a \$35M diversion for CHIPS and a \$55M "bonus" payment into the Budget Stabilization Account.

Thanks to senators that supported K-12 school leaders and recognized that Alabamians strongly believe the ETF dollars be directed to public education.

ETF Budget for K-12

The Senate approved [S.199 \(Orr\)](#), the Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget Thursday and [S.192 \(Orr\)](#), the 4 percent education employee pay raise. The budget would add \$184M to the K-12 Foundation program which includes funds for the pay raise. The budget also would increase funding for:

Divisors: Funding for 240 teacher units by lowering divisors for grades 4-6

Operations/Maintenance (OCE): \$25M increase; this reflects a true increase above the 4 percent raise for all support employees. (Non-certified staff are funded in this line item.)

Fleet renewal: \$7,109/bus to \$8,326/bus

Transportation: \$15M increase

Current units: \$3M increase

Substitutes: \$70/day to \$80/day

English Language Learners: \$4M increase with a weighting formula for systems with ELL student populations above 10 percent.

Advanced Placement: \$750K increase

Pre-K: \$25M increase

For the first time since 2008, the budget

reaches or surpasses the funding levels for all critical classroom supports including the following:

	FY19	FY20
Classroom material:	\$536/unit	\$600/unit
Technology:	\$300/unit	\$350/unit
Library:	\$96/unit	\$200/unit
Prof. Development:	\$90/unit	\$100/unit
Textbooks:	\$70/ADM	\$75/ADM

The budget provides increases for a variety of programs, however local school leaders are concerned about a new funding line item. New Schools for Alabama, established to recruit and support new charter schools in the state, would receive a \$500K earmarked appropriation.

The budget next moves to the [House Ways and Means Education Committee](#) which is expected to replace this version with its own substitute to reflect House priorities. Such changes may impact K-12 line items. Once the House approves the budget, it would go to a conference committee to work out Senate and House differences before travelling to the governor for signature.

\$128M Supplemental for FY19

The Senate Thursday approved the \$128M K-12 supplemental appropriation from the Advancement & Technology Fund for local school systems to use in FY19. Each school system's allocation is listed within the legislation, [S.196 \(Orr\)](#), and reflects a significant increase from the total of \$42M available last fiscal year. Local school boards have flexibility in how to use



the one-time funding and are authorized to expend funds in six categories by the Rolling Reserve Act:

1. Repairs or deferred maintenance;
2. Classroom instructional supplies;
3. Insurance for facilities;
4. Transportation;
5. Acquisition or purchase of education technology; or
6. School safety.

The SDE must verify that the funds will be spent on one of the allowable purposes for the funding to be released.

House approves School Day Release-Time for Religion Elective Off Campus

The House Thursday approved [H.291 \(Garrett\)](#) to require the SDE adopt parameters for school board policies regarding religious instruction off-campus. The bill would allow the option for school boards to release students during the school day to receive religious instruction off campus. No school board would be required to adopt a policy providing that option. An AASB amendment was added to ensure a school board would not be required to grant course credit for such electives. **The bill now goes to the Senate.**

Help on the Way for Schools Emergency Teaching Certificates Revised

H.506 (Estes) is scheduled to be on the House floor Tuesday moving to help local school systems struggling to find teachers. Current law provides an option to hire an individual on an emergency certificate. The individual must have a bachelor's degree, be subject to a background check, and can be hired ONLY when a certified teacher is unavailable. However, it limits the emergency certificate to only one year and may not be renewed.

A Teacher Shortage Commission met and one of its first recommendations from superintendents, administrators and school boards was to extend the timeframe for an emergency certificate. As amended in committee, H.506 (Estes) would provide a two-year emergency certificate that could be renewed once for a maximum of four years. Bill sponsor Rep. Tracy Estes, a former Winfield City school board member, said that rural systems particularly need this help right now. He said limiting the total timeframe to four years also addressed concerns that a longer timeframe would be a disincentive for individuals to seek certification.

Computer Science Courses for K-12

House members unanimously approved [H.216 \(Faulkner\)](#) to require a phase-in for all K-12 public schools to offer computer science courses. The bill would require all schools to offer the courses by the 2022-23 school year, starting with high schools in 2020-21. The Governor would establish a computer science task

force to develop a strategic plan. The plan would include a secondary computer science certification pathway for preservice teachers and an endorsement for current certified teachers.

As an incentive to attract prospective teachers, the House added an amendment to allow computer science teachers to participate in the Alabama Math and Science Education Loan Repayment Program (AMSTEP). The bill next moves to the Senate.

Stadium Relief for Schools

A bill amending the number of required restroom fixtures at public high school sports stadiums passed the House on Thursday. [H.159 \(Lee\)](#) would address situations when a school system wants to renovate or build a new sports stadium. Current law sets unreasonable standards to comply with the building code for K-12 schools. The bill is needed to allow school systems to be cost-effective. **The bill now goes to the Senate.**

Bills of Interest

[H.349 \(Collins\)](#) - **Age gap remedies** - addresses statutory inconsistencies of being classified as a minor or adult. Specifies a school may not deny admission to a child under the age of 19 who is on track to graduate.

Approved by House, goes to Senate Committee.

[H.462 \(Easterbrook\)](#) – **High School Career Tech Programs** – this bill would authorize local boards of education to use any available facilities board determines better suited than existing facilities, notwithstanding State Building Code or other building codes. **Approved by House committee, goes to full House.**

[H. 566 \(Kitchens\)](#) – **School Nutrition** – this bill would provide that a K-12 public-school system may allow its schools to donate surplus non-expired food to a charitable organization for the purpose of redistributing the food to needy students participating in the federal school nutrition programs for consumption at the school or off school grounds. **Assigned to House Education Policy**

[S.140 \(Whatley\)](#) - **Sex Education** - would revise content, course materials and instruction provided for any sex education or human reproductive system program. **Pending final passage in House.**

[S.258 \(Livingston\)](#) - **Pledge of Allegiance** - would require the Pledge of Allegiance be conducted at the beginning of each school day in K-12 public schools. **Pending final passage in House.**

[S.311 \(Marsh\)](#) – **Charter School Funding Revised** - This bill removes the limit of 10 mills for public charter school startups (the amount required to participate in the Foundation program) and treats all public school students residing in a school system the same for remaining local funding. **Approved by Senate Committee, goes to full Senate.**