

advocate for SCHOOLS



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



Sine Die

Translated “Sine Die” means adjourn without setting a day or time to reconvene, or to adjourn indefinitely. Lawmakers Adjourned Sine Die on Friday, May 31.

Special Session Expected on Prisons

Lawmakers did not address the ongoing state prison overcrowding and insufficient correctional officer dilemma. Those proposals are likely to be handled this fall in a special session called by the governor for that purpose.

Your Voices

To the end, you kept momentum going strong on appointed superintendents and Tier 3. You did your part and hopefully lawmakers will return to do theirs in 2020.

Advocacy Days

More than 100 AASB members attended one or more of our four Advocacy Days this session. The program continues to grow. If you participated, we would appreciate you taking this [brief survey](#).

2019 Regular Legislative Session has ended.

Strong ETF Budget, Pay Raise and Focus on Early Learning, but...

The 2019 Legislative Session ended Friday with a \$7.1 billion FY20 budget, a hefty FY19 supplemental, a 4 percent education pay raise and more. The last day also ended with disappointment when the House didn't have the resolve to work through a priority bill for the Speaker to appoint local school superintendents and allowed the teacher retirement package fix or Tier 3 proposal to die in the House.

School Leader Priorities Fail

Appointed Superintendents: House Folds

On Friday, the House began discussion of [S.222 \(Butler\)/\(McMillan\)](#) to transition elected superintendents to appointed positions and opponents began a filibuster. The Senate actually went into recess to allow the House time to muscle through the opposition because your hard work had secured the votes for final passage. Nevertheless, the House lacked the will to keep working and carried it over, effectively killing the bill, before ending the session by 6 p.m. Thanks to sponsors **Sen. Tom Butler** and **Rep. Steve McMillan** and the many House members who rallied to support the effort.

Amendment Kills Tier 3 Proposal

The Senate amended [H.77 \(Baker\)](#), the bill that would have improved the TRS retirement benefit, **limiting it ONLY to teachers**. That amendment would have prohibited any support personnel or other certified employees from participating in the new program. It moved the Retirement System's of Alabama (RSA) position from neutral to oppose. RSA sent its contract lobbyists to stop the House

from accepting the change and it died. Behind the scenes, senators also threatened to kill other bills should H.77 move forward. Despite a united education community's tireless support, the Legislature failed to provide this help needed to recruit and retain teachers in Alabama.

K-12 Funding Bills

A joint conference committee hammered out differences and sent the \$7.1 billion education budget [S.199 \(Orr\)](#) to the governor Friday. [Budget spreadsheet](#)

The ETF budget does not fund any of the \$35 million CHIPS program. However, [H.540 \(Poole\)](#) moved the life insurance premium tax receipts, some \$30 million in revenue, from the ETF to the General Fund (GF). Some argued that revenue source belonged in the GF anyway and in the exchange, the ETF was spared the growing costs of the Medicaid program.

The budget includes these increases:

| | FY19 | FY20 |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Classroom material | \$536/unit | \$600/unit |
| Technology | \$300/unit | \$350/unit |
| Library | \$96/unit | \$157.72/unit |
| Prof. Development | \$90/unit | \$100/unit |
| Textbooks | \$70/ADM | \$75/ADM |
| Divisors: | Funds 240 teacher units in grades 4-6 by lowering divisors. | |
| Operations/Maintenance (OCE): | \$25M increase above the 4 percent raise | |
| Fleet renewal | \$7,109/bus to \$8,326/bus | |
| Transportation | \$15M increase | |
| Current units | \$2M increase | |
| Substitutes | \$70/day to \$80/day | |
| English Language Learners | \$4M increase with a weighting formula. | |



Pre-K: \$26.8M increase

Alabama Reading Initiative \$6.5M increase

AMSTI \$1.2M increase

ACCESS Distance Learning \$2M increase

Advanced Placement \$800,000 increase

The final budget also provides a one-time \$6 million for library enhancement. It also restored \$400,000 to the state Charter School Commission.

S.192 (Orr) - Education Pay Raise -provides a 4 percent pay raise for education employees.

S.196 (Orr) - FY19 Supplemental - provides a \$128.7 million supplemental appropriation to K-12 from the Education Advancement & Technology Fund to be used in the current fiscal year.

Enacted

ACT 2019-241 - Pledge of Allegiance - requires the Pledge of Allegiance be recited at the beginning of each school day in K-12 public schools. **H.339 (Ledbetter)**

ACT 2019-281 - Religious Release Time - authorizes local school boards to adopt policy to offer release time for students to receive religious instruction off campus. School boards are not required to adopt the policy nor award credit. **H.291 (Garrett)**

ACT 2019-316 - PLOP - allows education retirees to choose a two-year payment up front followed by a proportionately reduced benefit thereafter. **H.21 (Baker)**

ACT 2019-326 - Rural Broadband Access - authorizes electric providers to use existing infrastructure to expand high-speed internet connectivity. **H.400 (Shedd)**

ACT 2019-345 - Appointed State Board of Education - a constitutional amendment that, if approved by voters in the March primary, would replace the currently elected State Board of Education (SBE) with an appointed Alabama Commission on Elementary and Secondary Education. No governor signature is required. **S.397 (Marsh)**

Pending Governor's Signature

H.32 (Boyd) - Kyle Graddy Act - renames the law and specifies it is a single dose of auto-injectable epinephrine that may be self-administered by a student.

H.159 (Lee) - Stadium Bathrooms - reduces stringent code requirements and prohibitive costs for the number of bathroom fixtures in K-12 athletic facilities.

H.209 (Pettus) - School Security Personnel - allows local boards to hire retired law enforcement officers as school security personnel/school resource officers if they have specified training.

H.216 (Faulkner) - Computer Science Courses - requires all schools to offer the courses by the 2022-23 school year, starting with high schools in 2020-21.

H.349 (Collins) - Age Gap Remedies - addresses whether an individual is classified as a minor/adult; prohibits public schools from denying admission (based on age alone) to students on track to graduate under age 19.

H.385 (Robertson) - School Safety Law - revises to School Emergency Plans to include four distinct security levels as a protocol for school lock-downs.

H.388 (Collins) - Alabama Literacy Act - requires intensive resources/focus on K-3 literacy with intent that stu-

dents read at or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade.

H.462 (Easterbrook) - CTE Facilities - authorizes local school boards to use better-suited facilities, notwithstanding building codes, for Career Tech Education.

H.506 (Estes) - Emergency Teacher Certificates - extends the emergency teacher certificate duration to two years; allows one-time renewal.

H. 566 (Kitchens) - School Nutrition Surplus - allows K-12 school systems to donate surplus, non-expired food to non-profits for redistribution to eligible students to take off campus.

S.14 (Melson) - Bible Elective - allows Bible/religion history elective courses to be offered in grades 6-12.

S.398 (Marsh) - Minority Caucus Consultation - should voters approve the constitutional amendment, would require the governor to consult with legislative minority caucuses to appoint minority members to the Commission on Elementary and Secondary Education.

Education Bills that Died

H.19 (South) - High School Athletics - would have required the State Board of Education to review/approve rules for student eligibility by the high school athletic organization.

H.150 (Garrett) - State Board of Education Term Limits - would have limited state board of education members to two terms.

H.423 (Warren) - Mandatory Kindergarten - would have required every child who is age 5 on or before Sept. 1 to enroll in kindergarten.

H.449 (Gray) - Yoga in Schools - would have authorized yoga instruction in K-12 schools; expressly prohibited use of chants, mantras and more.

H.469 (Rogers) - Character Education - would have extended a comprehensive K-12 character ed program.

H.592 (Stadthagen) - Immunization - would have removed the religious exemption from K-12 student vaccination requirements.

H.625 (Hanes) - Alabama College and Career Ready Standards Prohibited - would have proposed a constitutional amendment to prohibit ACCRS in public schools.

S.8 (Coleman-Madison) - City School Systems - would have increased the population needed to form city system from 5,000 to **15,000** and show financial viability.

S.119 (Marsh) - Common Core/ACCRS repeal - would have terminated ACCRS standards in Alabama public K-12 schools.

S.140 (Whatley) - Revise Sex Education - would have revised sex education content for schools.

S.153 (Melson) - SSUT/Schools - would have made a technical fix to the simplified sellers use tax and provided 25 percent of a county's revenue flows to its schools and prohibited future local acts to change that distribution.

S.311 (Marsh) - Charter School Funding - would have revised funding for public charter school startups.

S.411 (Reed) - Advertising on School Buses - would have authorized local boards to sell advertising on school buses.