

advocate for SCHOOLS



TO SEE A LIST OF BILLS TRACKED BY AASB
DURING THE 2022 REGULAR SESSION,
CLICK ON BILL TRACKER BELOW:



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds

Alabama has \$580 million in federal relief funds available for allocation, making it a priority issue as the Legislature convenes its regular session.

Gov. Ivey is expected to call a special session next week (temporarily postponing the Regular session) so lawmakers can focus their attention on the ARPA funds and how they should be disbursed.

School System Snapshots

AASB has released the 2022 edition of the School System Snapshots, which provides an individualized look at each Alabama school system's state and local resources - funding and spending.

Information is compiled from annual data provided by each system to the Alabama State Department of Education summarized in a user-friendly format.

[Click here for this year's edition.](#)

**2022 Regular
Legislative Session**

28 days remain

Legislative 2022 Session Starts - Budget Forecast Strong

Lawmakers convened Tuesday for the 2022 regular legislative session with another year of encouraging budget proposals: an 8.17% education budget increase and a 4% pay raise for education employees. The budget ([H.135 Garrett](#)) and the pay raise ([H.136 Garrett](#)) will begin in the House this year.

Governor's ETF budget

The governor unveiled her FY23 Education Trust Fund [budget proposal](#) with a **\$627 million increase over last year.**

Increases include:

- 4% pay raise for education employees estimated to cost \$180 million;
- School Nurses - \$9 million (incl. \$1.6 million to cover pay raise)
- Information Tech Coordinators - \$3.6 million
- Alabama Reading Initiative - \$5 million
- AMSTI - \$3 million
- Advanced Placement - \$2 million
- Pre-K (Special Education) - \$10 million
- Computer Science - \$1 million
- Gifted students - \$4.9 million
- English as Second Language - \$2 million
- School-based mental health - \$1.5 million
- Career Tech (expand career coaches) - \$5 million
- Technology in Motion (K-12 computer science teacher training) - \$1.5 million
- National Board Certified Teachers - \$750,000

New Budget Items

The governor's budget featured three new line items to support her educational priorities including the Governor's Mathematics Education Coaches, Underperforming Schools and the Special Education Certified Behavior Analyst Program.

Math Coaches - The Mathematics Education Coaching Corps is expected to receive \$5 million to recruit highly skilled and experienced elementary mathematics teachers to work as math coaches. These coaches would mentor classroom mathematics teachers with an emphasis to improve student achievement in math grades K through five.

Underperforming Schools Grant - In a challenge to schools, communities, Gov. Ivey said, "We will no longer accept the existence of a failing school." She is requesting **\$10 million** for elementary schools identified as underperforming pursuant to the A-F Report Card. Elementary schools identified as underperforming will be eligible to receive grants to resolve deficiencies. The State Department of Education will assess each school and issue individualized recommendations to address concerns.

Special Education Certified Behavior Analyst Program - The Governor's ETF proposal also included an **\$8.5 million** line item for Behavioral Analysts. Behavioral Analysts work with students with a variety of behavioral disorders, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, developmental disability or learning disabilities.

Math Task Force

Ivey announced in her [2022 State of the State Address](#) support for legislation that to create a Math Task Force as one of her educational priorities.

The task force will provide recommendations for recruiting and retaining math teachers, increasing support for struggling students and a review of state math standards and assessments.

Joint Budget Hearings

Budget presentations were held before the start of the legislative session on Tuesday. Kirk Fulford, deputy director for the fiscal division of the Legislative Services Agency and State Finance Director Bill Poole told lawmakers in a joint budget hearing that federal dollars for coronavirus aid are responsible for the high revenues being reported for this year.

The Education Trust Fund (ETF) grew by 16.42% in FY21, which has been described as historic and unprecedented. Fulford told lawmakers, “This is not normal.” He cautioned lawmakers to be fiscally conservative when working their budgets. Poole estimates 3.61% growth in FY23, which is a significant decrease from last year.

Poole urged lawmakers and school officials not to make permanent decisions based on temporary circumstances. The federal dollars which have been infused into Alabama’s economy “will go away,” and the state needs to be in a position to address it when it happens, he said. Poole also addressed the governor’s priorities, including investments in Pre-K, after-school and summer school programs, professional development, expanding mental health services, and investment opportunities for math and science students and teachers.

LSA Budget Presentation

State Finance Budget Presentation

State Superintendent of Education Dr. Eric Mackey presented the SDE’s budget request which highlighted achievements and delineated a plan for moving education forward in Alabama.

SDE Budget Presentation

Education Advancement & Technology Fund

A supplemental appropriation from the Advancement & Technology Fund (ATF) would provide \$205.7 million to K-12 public schools to spend this fiscal year. **H.139 (Garrett)** appropriates monies accrued as a function of the Rolling Reserve Act. State revenues collected beyond the fiscal year appropriations are first deposited in a Budget Stabilization Account based on the prior year’s budget. Any additional revenue flows to the ATF, and the legislature may provide a supplemental appropriation in the current fiscal year. The amount proposed for this fiscal year is slightly less than the FY 21 appropriation.

The ATF supplemental appropriations for K-12:

- 2018: \$41.2 million
- 2019: \$128.7 million
- 2020: \$178.9 million

- 2021: \$206 million
- 2022: \$205.7 million (proposed)

ATF funding may be used for repairs and maintenance; classroom instructional support; insurance for facilities; transportation; acquisition/purchase of education technology and school security.

AASB is working with lawmakers this session to include capital outlay, in particular new construction, in the list of approved uses for ATF funding.

Guns and Schools

A key item in the Alabama House GOP agenda “**Standing Tall For Alabama**” is legislation to allow for the carry of firearms without obtaining a permit. **H.66 (Stringer)/S.12 (Melson)** would only allow school boards to prohibit guns from school-sponsored athletic events held off campus if all attendees are screened for prohibited items before entering an event.

“School athletic events are no place for weapons. For the protection of students and spectators, only qualified law enforcement should carry weapons,” said AASB Executive Director Sally Smith.

AASB is closely monitoring this bill (and other legislation dealing with this issue).

Critical Race Theory

Several bills introduced in the House of Representatives take aim at banning Critical Race Theory (CRT) from classrooms and/or training.

Last August, the State Board of Education **adopted a resolution** prohibiting each local board of education from offering K-12 instruction intended to “indoctrinate students in social or political ideologies that promote one race or sex above another.” Despite the resolution, some lawmakers feel legislation is necessary in case the state board ever reverses its position. The following introduced House bills all deal with Critical Race Theory: **H.8 (Pringle)** - would prohibit public K-12 schools and colleges from teaching certain concepts regarding race or sex, such as critical race theory. **H.9 (Oliver)/S.7 (Barfoot)** - would prohibit the state and any of its political subdivisions or agencies from teaching certain concepts regarding race or sex in training. **H.11 (Crawford)** - would prohibit public K-12 schools and colleges from teaching certain concepts regarding race or sex, such as critical race theory and further prohibit employees from distinguishing or classifying students based on race or color.

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