

# advocate for SCHOOLS



TO SEE A LIST OF BILLS TRACKED BY AASB  
DURING THE 2026 REGULAR SESSION,  
CLICK ON BILL TRACKER BELOW:



### AASB Advocacy Days

Alabama's 2026 legislative session is underway. Join us in Montgomery for AASB Advocacy Days where you'll hear from key lawmakers and AASB's governmental relations team plus visit the State House while the legislature is in session. The dates listed are open to board members, superintendents and CSFOs. If you are unable to make your district's Advocacy Day, feel free to sign up for a date that works for you.

**Tuesday, Feb. 3**  
Districts 6, 7, 8, 9  
[REGISTER NOW](#)

**Tuesday, Feb. 24**  
Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
[REGISTER NOW](#)

**Wednesday, Mar. 18**  
Committee Day  
All Districts  
[REGISTER NOW](#)

### AASB Bill Tracking

Don't forget to visit AASB's tracking page where you can check the status of all legislation being monitored and download copies of the bills. Just click on the red bill tracker icon on the top right of the Advocate header.

**2026 Regular  
Legislative Session**

**27 Days Remain**



## Session Underway - Ivey Calls For Educator Pay Raise

**Lawmakers convened this week for the last legislative session in this quadrennium, also marking the end of Gov. Ivey's second full term in office.**

In her final [state of the state address](#) Tuesday, she touted her FY27 Education Trust Fund (ETF) proposal of **\$10.48 billion** as the largest in Alabama's history. She called for a two-percent pay raise for educators (marking the seventh pay raise for teachers during her tenure), an additional \$50 million dedicated for K-12 school safety efforts and an increase in funding from **\$180 million to \$250 million** for the CHOOSE Act, Alabama's private school voucher program. She also voiced support for legislation to be introduced - The Let the Kids Play Act - that will ensure students benefitting from the CHOOSE Act will not have to sit out a year to participate in athletics. This legislation stems from legal action initiated by the governor against the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) for enforcing established rules for CHOOSE Act transfers.

### Speaking of the CHOOSE Act

A significant **\$250 million** proposal for the CHOOSE Act in the governor's recommendation will be funded off-budget. So where is this money coming from?

The ETF already allocates \$100 million for the CHOOSE Act, using funds from the previous year's supplemental appropriation. This will be combined with \$150 million directed to the CHOOSE Act fund annually from gross income tax receipts, funding which would otherwise go to the ETF. This new off-budget funding mechanism was quietly approved by the legislature in the final days of the 2025 session, enabling funds to be automatically transferred each year into the CHOOSE Act fund without requiring a budget appropriation or legislative approval.

It appears lawmakers are shoring up the CHOOSE Act Fund for 2027-2028 school

year, when the CHOOSE Act will be universal, giving up to \$7,000 to any private school student—as long as there are sufficient funds.

### Governor's ETF Budget

The governor's budget package including her recommended FY27 ETF Budget, [\(H.238 Garrett\)](#), a two-percent educator pay raise [\(H.239 Collins\)](#), ETF Supplemental and Education Advancement and Technology (EAT) Fund appropriation bills will begin in the House this session.

The proposed ETF budget includes **\$7.1 billion** for K-12 education which is a **5.75%** increase over FY26 (**\$6.7 billion**) and the maximum growth allowed by the statutory spending cap.

For FY27, the budget includes a partial funding increase to address rising costs for the Public Education Employees Health Insurance Program (PEEHIP) totaling **\$210 million**, which represents a little more than half of the \$380 million PEEHIP requested. This reflects an increase from the current monthly employer rate of \$904 to \$1,073 per member.

### Additional increases include:

- Other Current Expense (OCE) - **\$154 million** (Pay Raise \$20 million, PEEHIP \$48 million, New \$85 million)
- Transportation Operations - **\$107 million** (Pay Raise \$5.4 million, PEEHIP \$19 million, New \$83 million)
- Alabama Numeracy Act - **\$19 million**
- Distance Learning (ACCESS) - **\$3.5 million**
- Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) - **\$3 million**
- Mental Health Coordinators - **\$2.96 million**
- English Language Learners (ELL) - **\$2 million** (for the online platform)
- Computer Science Program - **\$1 million**
- Principal's Act - **\$603,000**
- Technology In Motion - **\$237,000**

ETF Supplemental

This year’s proposed **\$419 million** ETF supplemental, [\(H.235 Garrett\)](#), appropriates one-time funds with excess revenue from the previous budget year. The supplemental allocates **\$274 million** for K-12, including:

- Transportation Fleet Renewal - **\$66.5 million**
- School Safety (training, services, materials) - **\$50 million**
- Struggling Readers Beyond 3rd Grade - **\$45 million**
- Summer and After-school Programs - **\$30 million**
- College and Career Readiness (CCR) Grants - **\$20 million**
- Tech Equipment - **\$15 million**
- Ed Farm Technology Workforce Training - **\$15 million**
- Charter School Grants - **\$10 million**
- Social Studies Curriculum Project - **\$7 million**
- McWane Center - **\$5 million**
- North Alabama STEM Center - **\$2 million**
- Specialty Schools - **\$1.5 million each**
  - School of Cyber Technology and Engineering
  - School of Fine Arts
  - School of Math and Science
  - School of Healthcare Sciences
- Junior Achievement of Alabama - **\$1.25 million**
- The Links (family education program) - **\$1 million**

The supplemental also includes:

- CHOOSE Act for the 2026-27 school year (under the Alabama Department of Revenue for Educational Savings Accounts) - **\$100 million**

This year’s proposed supplemental more closely aligns with the ETF percentage split, allocating 65% of these one-time funds to K-12. Last year’s supplemental allocated less than one-third of supplemental funds to K-12.

Education Advancement & Technology Fund

A **\$1 billion** supplemental appropriation, [\(H.236 Garrett\)](#), from the Education Advancement and Technology (EAT) Fund would provide **\$624.9 million** to K-12 public schools to spend in FY26. An additional **\$100 million** would be allocated to the State Department of Education to provide matching grants to local boards for expenses related to developing regional CTE centers throughout the state, including capital outlay and equipment, building on last year’s appropriation of the same amount.

☞ **Talk to your lawmakers about preventing earmarks in the EAT to ensure school boards can use these funds as allocated.**

Educational Opportunities Reserve Fund

The governor recommended a **\$500 million** appropriation from the **\$1.12 billion** Educational Opportunities Reserve Fund (EORF). [\(H.237 Garrett\)](#), transfers **\$137.6 million** to a new higher education outcomes-based funding model the budget chairmen will be proposing. The remaining **\$362.4 million** would be allocated to the Renewing Alabama’s Investment in Student Excellence (RAISE) Act fund. This is in addition to the **\$375 million** that was

transferred last session from the EORF to the RAISE Act Fund, phased in over three years:

- **\$100 million** in year one (2025)
- **\$125 million** in year two (2026)
- **\$150 million** in year three (2027)

The budget chairs have indicated this EORF off-budget allocation will be used in future years to help fund the RAISE Act, CHOOSE Act and a higher education outcomes-based funding model.

Fiscal Storm Clouds Gathering

State Finance Director Bill Poole and Legislative Services Agency Deputy Director Kirk Fulford cautioned legislators about the state’s flattening revenue sources, leveling economic growth and rising costs in presentations to the joint legislative budget committees Wednesday.

Senate Finance and Taxation Education Chair Sen. Arthur Orr warned of “clouds on the horizon” for Alabama’s fiscal outlook, emphasizing the need to budget conservatively for FY27 in anticipation of a revenue plateau in FY28. The state’s General Fund budget faces funding cuts for the first time in several years, which is generally bad news for the ETF. General Fund costs may be shifted to the ETF, such as the Child Health Care Insurance Plan (CHIP). The governor proposed funding CHIP through the ETF supplemental instead of the General Fund. “We are coming down from the sugar high,” said Fulford as he presented revenue growth trends showing ETF revenue has now returned to moderate 2.5% annual growth.

State Finance Budget Presentation  
LSA Financial Condition Presentation

Sprinting Toward Elections

Lawmakers are in session two days a week with one committee day. Because this is an election year, the legislature plans to meet three legislative days per week throughout January, which will allow them to tackle bills at a quicker pace. Legislative leadership intends to return lawmakers to their districts at least a month before the primary election May 19. The legislature will break for one week March 23-27 and return in April to finish business. The Senate intends to pass local bills as first priority due to gridlock in the final few days of last year’s session that kept several local bills from final passage.

Select Bill Introductions

- [S.4 \(Shelnutt\)](#) - Religious Release Time Mandate - would mandate each local board of education to adopt a policy allowing students to participate in religious release time, changing the current 2019 current state law from permissive to mandatory.
- [H.178 \(Garrett\)](#) - City BOE School Consolidation - would provide a process for two or more city boards of education to form a consolidated school.
- [S.73 \(Chesteen\)](#) - High School Athletic Association - would prohibit any public K-12 school from being a member of an athletic association unless the association’s governing body is at least 50% political appointees.

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