

advocate for SCHOOLS



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



Who Is Your Local Lawmaker?

You may already know the answer to that question, but if not, you can find out who your elected officials are by clicking [HERE](#).

Start by entering your zip code and then enter your full street address to narrow the search to identify your state legislators - House and Senate.

Join Us In Montgomery

AASB Advocacy Days are coming! Meet one-on-one with lawmakers, learn more about the legislative process and how to successfully advocate for public education as a local school board member.

Feb. 8 | Districts 7, 8, 9
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Feb. 22 | Districts 1, 2, 3
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Mar. 8 | Districts 4, 5, 6
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**You may sign up for any of the dates if unable to attend on designated district day.*

2022 Regular Legislative Session

27 days remain

First Special Session Complete: Here's a Brief Recap

Alabama lawmakers approved plans and final passage of [H.1 \(Clouse\)](#) on Thursday outlining how to expend \$772 million in federal pandemic relief funds received under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) with a big boost to broadband expansion. Legislators, with bipartisan support, are making a significant investment in Alabama with plans to spend \$276 million for broadband expansion. Other priorities include replacing aging water and sewer systems, providing funding for health care providers - including hospitals and nursing homes - and shoring up the state's unemployment fund. The bill has gone to the governor for her signature.

The pandemic highlighted vulnerable areas in the state when schools transitioned to remote learning. Some school systems did not have devices for every student, many students lacked internet services at home, some areas experienced slow speeds (as illustrated in the [Alabama Broadband Map](#)) and other areas had severely limited broadband access.

State leaders and school officials have since made substantial progress in these areas by investing pandemic relief funds into computer devices, school bus and campus Wi-Fi access, and programs created to provide free internet to families in need.

Still, plans for taking on statewide broadband expansion are complex when considering state coordination with counties and municipalities and the cost to carry out the project. Rural Alabamians - especially students - will benefit greatly from broadband expansion with increased internet speed and access.

Note: There is another \$1 billion in federal funds expected to arrive this summer which will likely mean another special session.

Bump in the Road for Return

The legislature is to resume the regular session February 1. However, the expectation for lawmakers to reconvene and pick up where they left off may have hit a speed bump.

A panel of federal court judges Monday invalidated the Alabama Legislature's 2022 redistricting plan for congressional races and ordered lawmakers to redraw new congressional districts, including a second district which must represent a considerable number of minority voters. This ruling also pushed candidate qualifying to February 11 for congressional candidates, with the qualifying deadline for state and county-level races ending January 28.

There is some talk the governor may call a second special session for legislators to focus on getting new congressional districts drawn within the short time frame ordered by the judicial panel. Others believe lawmakers can complete the task without the need for another special session. In the meantime, the state is appealing the panel's ruling.

Legislative timing for acting on matters is always important, but even more so during an election year when state lawmakers want to quickly take care of business, possibly wrap up a regular session early and get back home to campaign.

The fact the qualifying deadline for all legislative seats will be over when they return for the regular session will likely impact dynamics for the remainder of the session. Lawmakers will know if they have opposition or not. Expect to see an onslaught of bills which may be influenced by local politics.

Don't Forget...

Be sure to check out [AASB's bill tracker](#) in each week's Advocate to follow select bills dealing with public education introduced this legislative session.