

# advocate for SCHOOLS



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



## School System Snapshots

AASB has released the 2026 edition (FY24 data) of School System Snapshots, which provides an individualized look at each Alabama school system's state and local resources - funding and spending. These Snapshots are a great tool to use in discussions with lawmakers, local stakeholders and your community.

[VIEW SNAPSHOTS](#)

## AASB Advocacy Days

Join us in Montgomery for AASB Advocacy Days. 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. 24**  
Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
[REGISTER NOW](#)

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

**2026 Regular  
Legislative Session**

**22 Days Remain**

## Bill to Limit Screen Time Clears House, Heads to Senate

**Gov. Kay Ivey's priority bill to limit screen time for children passed the House Tuesday with a nearly unanimous vote (101 to 1).** [H.78 \(Ross\)](#) would require the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education to develop guidelines for limited screen time for children from birth to age five in licensed child care, First Class Pre-K and public school kindergarten classrooms, with annual training requirements for teachers. Each local board would be required to adopt a policy on screen time limitations in kindergarten classrooms. The State Board of Education (SBOE) would coordinate with the Department of Early Childhood Education and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to develop these standards and guidelines.

AASB worked with the bill sponsor and the Governor's Office on changes to ensure school boards retain the authority to adopt local policy and provide guidance for screen time in kindergarten classrooms, following the SBOE standards. This includes bill language clarifying that local board policy must be adopted by the 2027-28 school year and not by the bill's effective date of Jan. 1, 2027. In addition, AASB secured language providing exceptions for diagnostic tests and assessments, virtual programs approved by the school board and special education.

### General Fund Troubles for ETF

In a Joint Budget Committee hearing Thursday, **General Fund Budget Chairman Sen. Greg Albritton** cautioned lawmakers and state agencies about level funding, raising concerns about the negative impact of tax credits and exemptions against General Fund budget streams, as well as to the Education Trust Fund (ETF). The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) requires additional funding to cover an estimated shortfall for the current and next fiscal years. As the General Fund is unable to absorb the

cost of CHIP growth, **\$19.2 million has been shifted to the ETF supplemental** in the governor's budget to cover the state's obligation.

To accommodate these troubling budget trends, [S.152, Albritton](#), would amend the state's current funding mechanism for CHIP to allow other sources of revenue, such as the ETF. **This marks a concerning return to previous years when General Fund revenue could not support costs that were then shifted to the ETF.** Demand for future funding of this program is unknown, as the federal government is pushing states to take more responsibility for CHIP and other benefit programs.

### Tax Credit Concerns

Both **Senate Finance and Taxation Education Chair Sen. Arthur Orr** and **House Ways and Means Education Chair Rep. Danny Garrett** called for a more careful evaluation in their respective committees of the impact of tax credits and exemptions on ETF revenue streams. As an example, the **Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee** approved amendments to [\(S.16 Weaver\)](#) - the only tax exemption bill on the agenda Wednesday. One [amendment](#) adds a sunset date and [another amendment](#) requires a local opt-in to participate in the tax credit.

**It is essential to carefully consider the trade-offs when implementing tax credits to ensure a balanced approach that supports public education while maintaining the integrity of the ETF.**

### Advanced Math Pathways

[H.353 \(Butler\)](#) would require each school system to develop an Advanced Math Pathway to prepare students for Algebra 1 in middle school and college credit-bearing math courses in high school. It would allow stu-

dents to enroll based on math proficiency assessments and require local school systems to provide additional supports for students. Under Alabama’s Numeracy Act, the State Department of Education’s (SDE) Office of Math Improvement provides instructional support to teachers and students through a statewide system of regional math coaches who assist with teaching strategies and interventions. The SBOE requested and the governor’s budget proposes a **\$19 million increase** for math supports in grades K-5 and a **\$3 million increase** for targeted supports in grades 6-8.

House Committee Action

The **House Education Policy Committee** approved the following:

- **Military Veterans Temporary Teaching Certificate**  
**S.149 (Woods)** would create a temporary five-year teaching certificate pathway for eligible military veterans. This bill, modeled after a similar program in Florida, is a top priority of Gov. Ivey. Veterans would meet academic criteria, including minimum college credit hours and passage of the subject-area Praxis test and would be paired with mentor teachers as they earn full certification over the five-year timeframe. This bill and its House companion, **H. 306 (Rehm)**, have been re-referred to the House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.
- **Three Cueing Prohibition**  
**S.168 (Chesteen)** would prohibit the use of “three cueing” in reading instruction, which is not aligned with the Science of Reading standards established through the Alabama Literacy Act. Three-cueing relies on visuals, instead of phonics, to teach reading. While three-cueing could still be used for background knowledge and context clues, it could not be the primary method to teach word reading. The bill also states that if the State Board of Education (SBOE) finds a local board not in compliance, the local board, the legislature and the general public will be notified of the violation. This bill would codify an **existing SBOE rule adopted in 2024** that already prohibits the three-cueing method of instruction in both public schools and in the state’s educator preparation programs.
- **CTE Programs for Homeschool Students**  
**H.183 (DuBose)** would authorize homeschool students to attend public CTE programs beginning in the 2027-28 school year. A homeschool student would only be considered for enrollment after current public school students are enrolled.

House Floor Action

The House approved the following bills:

- **TEAMS Contracts**  
**H.122 (Collins)** would allow experienced math and science teachers in the Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) program to receive a contract of up to three years, rather than the current five-year contract requirement. If enacted, beginning Oct. 1, 2026, the maximum length of any new TEAMS contract would be three years.
- **Education Job Postings**  
**H.225 (Smith)** would reduce the number of days required for posting of personnel vacancies when school is in ses-

sion from the current 14-day posting period to 7 days, for jobs that are supervisory, managerial or otherwise newly created positions.

- **Marijuana and Mandatory Reporters**  
**H.72 (Sellers)** would require mandatory reporters, including education personnel, to report when a child smells like marijuana smoke. It also requires DHR to handle these reports in the same manner as suspected child abuse or neglect and would make smoking marijuana in a car with a child present a Class A misdemeanor.

Bills to Watch

- **Sex Education**  
**S.209 (Shelnutt)** would require all public K-12 sex education curricula to teach sexual risk avoidance and promote abstinence from all sexual activity, prohibit instruction on abortion or contraception and bar sex education for students in kindergarten through fourth grade. It would mandate parental notice and opt-out and restrict schools from educators or organizations that don’t support sexual risk avoidance.  
☞ **NOTE:** The state already requires parental opt-in for sex education.
- **Sick Leave and Direct Donations**  
**S.211 (Allen)** would expand the definition of “educational authority” for sick leave banks, which already includes school boards, to include two- and four-year public colleges and other public schools. It would require the SBOE to adopt a model policy governing sick leave banks, catastrophic leave and direct donations of leave. It would remove limits on catastrophic sick-leave donations and allow employees to donate sick leave directly, even across different authorities.
- **ELL Athletics**  
**H.333 (Colvin)** would require athletic associations to adjust a public high school’s athletic classification to account for the number of enrolled English Language Learner (ELL) students who do not participate in interscholastic athletic events, beginning in the 2028-2029 school year.
- **TRS Retiree Cost of Living Increase**  
**H.339 (Hassel)** would provide a 4% cost-of-living benefit increase to certain eligible retirees and beneficiaries of the Teachers’ Retirement System (TRS) who retired before Oc. 1, 2025, have at least 25 years of service, and receive an annual benefit of \$25,000 or less.
- **Federal Tax Credit for SGOs**  
**H.342 (DuBose)** would provide for Alabama’s participation in the federal scholarship tax credit for individuals who make qualified contributions to scholarship granting organizations (SGOs), as created by the One Big Beautiful Bill of 2025.  
☞ **NOTE:** Gov. Ivey signed **Executive Order 742** earlier this month confirming Alabama’s participation in the federal scholarship tax credit program and authorizing the Alabama Department of Revenue to administer the program, as the agency already administers the state’s scholarship program created by the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013.

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