

advocate for SCHOOLS



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



Fast Pace for Legislative Session

Regular sessions are comprised of 30 legislative days within 105-calendar days. In-session days are Tuesdays and Thursdays, with committee days on Wednesdays. However, since this is an election year, lawmakers are speeding up the process to get all 30 legislative days completed prior to April 25 (105th calendar day) so they can hit the campaign trail earlier.

The plan is for the Legislature to continue to meet in-session three days a week instead of two. The anticipated last day of the Regular session is April 15.

AASB Advocacy Days

Have you registered yet?

Feb. 22 | Districts 1, 2, 3
[REGISTER NOW](#)

Mar. 8 | Districts 4, 5, 6
[REGISTER NOW](#)

**You may sign up for any of the dates if unable to attend on your designated district day.*

2022 Regular Legislative Session

18 days remain

Supplemental Dollars for School Improvements

A bill to include capital outlay as a permitted use of supplemental dollars from the Education Advancement and Technology (EAT) Fund unanimously passed the full Senate 26 to 0 Thursday. [S.175](#), sponsored by Sen. Arthur Orr, provides additional flexibility for school facility needs. Dollars allocated to the EAT Fund may currently be used for repairs and maintenance; classroom instructional support; insurance for facilities; transportation; acquisition and purchase of education technology, and school security measures.

[S.175](#) would permit capital outlay - or new construction - as an additional qualified expenditure, giving school systems more control and flexibility, especially to assist with rising renovation and construction costs. School board members continue to identify new construction and improved facilities as a high priority for funding. The bill now moves to the House.

What is the Education Advancement and Technology (EAT) Fund? The EAT Fund is a by-product of Alabama's Rolling Reserve Act. The act was put in place to prevent proration of education dollars and to set parameters for the amount of revenue that could be budgeted by lawmakers in any given fiscal year. As a function of the Rolling Reserve Act, state revenues collected beyond fiscal year appropriations are first deposited in a Budget Stabilization Account based on the prior year's budget. Any additional revenues flow to the EAT Fund, and the legislature may provide a supplemental appropriation in the current fiscal year for monies accrued.

Kindergarten Before First Grade

Several pieces of legislation focused on ensuring Alabama's schoolchildren are ready to learn and succeed have been introduced this

session. The focus continues with [H.331](#), a bill sponsored by Rep. Peblin Warren, to require kindergarten completion before first grade. The bill specifies a child who turns age six between September 1 and December 31 shall be entitled to **enroll in first grade** if he/she has successfully completed kindergarten or is deemed first grade-ready on an assessment to be developed by the State Department of Education (SDE) and approved by the State Board of Education. Children would be eligible to **enroll in kindergarten** if they turn age five by September 1 or by local exception if they turn age 5 by Dec. 31. If enacted, the bill would be applicable for the 2022-23 school year.

Over the years, Warren has carried several different versions of this bill which was duly noted by Rep. Terri Collins, Chair of the House Education Policy Committee, who commended the bill's sponsor for her tenacity. Committee members approved the bill Wednesday. It now moves to the full House.

Teacher Shortage Solutions

[H.307](#) sponsored by Rep. Alan Baker and approved by the House Education Policy Committee would provide schools with some much-needed relief to help with the teacher shortage prevalent in most Alabama systems. This bill would authorize the SDE to issue a professional teaching certificate to educators with one or more alternative certificates who have been employed with a local board for one full year. The bill moves to full House.

In the Senate, Sen. Greg Albritton is proposing an innovative way to get more teachers into classrooms and provide staffing help for schools. [S.236](#) would grant a senior educator certificate to any individual age 65 or older holding a four-year degree. According to the bill, a senior educator certificate would allow an individual to provide classroom in-

struction, coach athletic teams and perform other reasonable duties deemed necessary by a school principal. These certificates would not be valid for more than two years; however, they could be renewed one time for a maximum of four years. The bill has been assigned to the Senate Education Policy Committee.

Due Process: Expulsions and Suspensions

Sen. Rodger Smitherman passed a bill in the Senate this week that would provide a uniform statewide system of procedural due process protections relating to the suspension and expulsion of public school students for violating the student code of conduct or state law.

The State Board of Education requires each local board to develop a written policy on student discipline which allows for local control on how discipline is administered, subject to state and federal laws. **S.79** would remove specific control from school boards by creating a uniform system of procedures when suspending or expelling students from school, prohibit the suspension of students who are tardy or truant and remove suspension as a disciplinary action for all students in grades K-5, unless the behavior endangers a student or staff member. While schools provide due process for students and practices may differ, this bill would require each school system to follow the same guidelines and procedures to ensure due process is being followed consistently. The bill has been assigned to the House Education Policy Committee.

Transgender Bathrooms

A bill requiring public K-12 school students only use the bathroom of their birth-assigned sex was given **House Education Policy Committee** approval Wednesday. According to the bill’s sponsor, **Rep. Scott Stadhagen**, **H.322** is not about transgender students but rather a way

to address what he sees as safety issues in our schools. However, the bill sponsor was not able to cite any instances in Alabama schools where sexual misconduct had occurred specifically due to a student entering a facility based upon the sex he/she was identifying with as opposed to their birth-assigned sex. The bill moves to the full House.

NOTE: Any state law on this issue may ultimately be superseded by federal law. Cases are currently pending in our federal courts which will decide whether a student has a right to use the bathroom consistent with their gender identity.

Floor Action

H.241 (Collins) - AL Credential Quality and Transparency Act - would provide essential data about educational and occupational credentials and competencies. PASSED House. Assigned to Senate committee.

S.116 (Whatley) - Advanced K-12 enrollment - would allow children of military families to pre-enroll in public K-12 school pending military orders. PASSED Senate. Assigned to House committee.

Select Committee Action

H.46 (Collins) - State Seal of Biliteracy - would recognize graduates with proficiency of English and at least one other language (including American Sign Language) with a seal on their diploma. Approved by House committee. Bill moves to full House.

S.200 (Smitherman) - AL Literacy Act retention delay - would postpone implementation of the 3rd grade retention requirement until the 2024-25 school year. The bill was approved as **AMENDED** to postpone implementation to the 2023-24 school year. Bill moves to full Senate.

Does your Representative or Senator serve on a key education committee?

<u>House</u> <u>Ways & Means Education</u>	<u>House</u> <u>Education Policy</u>	<u>Senate</u> <u>Finance & Taxation Ed</u>	<u>Senate</u> <u>Education Policy</u>
<p>Danny Garrett, Chair Joe Lovvorn, Vice Chair Rod Scott* Alan Baker Prince Chestnut Terri Collins Barbara Drummond Corley Ellis David Faulkner Dexter Grimsley Jamie Kiel Nathaniel Ledbetter Steve McMillan Rodney Sullivan Debbie Wood</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">* Ranking Minority Member</p>	<p>Terri Collins, Chair Alan Baker, Vice Chair Rod Scott* Anthony Daniels Will Dismukes Barbara Drummond Brett Easterbrook Corley Ellis Tracy Estes Bob Fincher Charlotte Meadows Tashina Morris Kerry Rich Proncey Robertson Shane Stringer</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">* Ranking Minority Member</p>	<p>Arthur Orr, Chair Tim Melson, Vice Chair Rodger Smitherman* Greg Albritton Gerald Allen Donnie Chesteen Vivian Davis Figures Garlan Gudger Jim McClendon Malika Sanders-Fortier Clay Scofield David Sessions Bobby Singleton Jabo Waggoner Tom Whatley</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">* Ranking Minority Member</p>	<p>Tim Melson, Chair Donnie Chesteen, Vice Chair Rodger Smitherman* Tom Butler Chris Elliott Vivian Davis Figures Kirk Hatcher Jim McClendon Randy Price Shay Shelnett</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">* Ranking Minority Member</p>

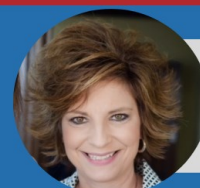
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