

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

It's not too late to join us in Montgomery for one or both of the two remaining AASB Advocacy Days. The dates listed are open to board members, superintendents and CSFOs. If you are unable to make Tuesday's Advocacy Day, feel free to sign up for our final one in March.

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

Wednesday, March 18
Committee Day
All Districts
[REGISTER NOW](#)

Budgets Still On Pause

Lawmakers will be more than half-way through the legislative session by the end of next week but neither the Education Trust Fund Budget, nor the General Fund Budget have been taken up in their respective committees. With the legislative spring break planned for the end of March, we are all on stand-by waiting for the budgets to start moving.

2026 Regular Legislative Session

16 Days Remain

Making the Grade: State Report Card Revamp

Some major changes to Alabama's A-F report card were unveiled before the House Education Policy Committee Wednesday. Committee Chair Rep. Terri Collins explained her bill, [\(H.396\)](#), as a way to "raise the bar for student achievement," noting a substitute bill is expected to be in committee next week to address concerns raised by some in the education community. While current law, adopted in 2012, directs the state superintendent to design the grading system, Collins' proposal would spell out in statute the specific types of assessments, performance indicators and weights to be used to calculate annual scores. The bill also includes a trigger to automatically raise the grading if 60% of schools earn an A or B, a threshold already surpassed on the 2025 state report card. [View proposed report card changes](#)

County School Board Consolidation

The House Education Policy Committee approved a bill that would proposing a Constitutional Amendment, which if approved by voters, would provide a voluntary process for two or more contiguous county boards of education to merge into a consolidated county school system. [H.380](#) by Chair Rep. Terri Collins would require the State Board of Education (SBOE) to conduct an impact study on the potential effects of consolidation after the county boards adopt a formal resolution agreeing to merge. The formal resolution would detail and provide for the payment of their respective debt, specify how consolidation would take place and identify how the remaining controlling multi-county board of education would operate, the roles and duties of the multi-county board members and the time frame for consolidation. The bill sponsor introduced this bill as a complement to [H.178 \(Garrett\)](#) which would provide a similar process for city school board consolidation.

Private Plane Tax Credit Fails to Land

The House Ways and Means General Fund Committee voted down a bill, [H.185 \(Colvin\)](#), that would exempt certain corporate aircraft from ad valorem taxes, a proposal that would have reduced state and local revenues by more than \$11 million, including \$2.2 million in local revenue for public schools. This session, lawmakers have filed 53 bills, several still lacking official fiscal notes, creating new tax exemptions, credits and abatements that would strip hundreds of millions from state and local tax bases. These proposals come as revenue growth is declining and budget chairmen warn of "darkening skies" ahead. **If enacted, these bills would drain millions from public education at a time when the state's education budget is facing a challenging outlook.**



K-12 Capital Improvement Projects

Currently, construction projects at K-12 schools and colleges that cost less than \$750,000 do not have to be approved by the state's Division of Construction Management (DCM). However, the division still has to inspect these smaller projects for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance or fire and safety issues. [S.88 \(Stutts\)](#), passed in the Senate Tuesday, would remove the requirement for the DCM to inspect or make recommendations on any school or college construction project under \$750,000, but projects would still have to be ADA compliant and meet fire and safety standards.

General Contractor Exemptions

S.279 (Chambliss), a bill that would make it easier for public K-12 schools to contract for regular, ongoing maintenance and repairs, was approved by the **Senate County and Municipal Government Committee**. This bill would exempt several types of services from general contractor requirements, including:

- Painting;
- Cleaning, waste disposal, and janitorial services;
- Stripping and waxing floor services;
- Pressure washing;
- Maintenance of existing security and access control systems;
- Lighting and filter replacement;
- Maintenance of existing plumbing, air conditioning and electrical systems.

Sick Leave Donations

S.211 (Allen), was given a favorable report by the **Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee** to revise the sick leave bank and donation process for local school boards and create a new process for donating leave directly from one employee to another across school systems. The bill would require the SBOE to adopt a model sick leave policy providing for sick leave banks, catastrophic leave and direct donation of sick leave between employees. It would remove the current cap limiting how much catastrophic sick leave an employee may donate to another. The bill also would require the sick leave policy to allow for direct donation of leave to another employee, even if the employees work for other systems. No individual employee would be able to receive more than 30 sick leave days per school year. Any policies developed by the local sick leave bank committee would need to be approved by the school board. The bill was amended in committee to remove two- and four-year colleges and universities.

Serious Threats, Serious Consequences

The **Senate Judiciary Committee** approved **(H.7 Woods)**, a bill that would increase criminal penalties for the crimes of making a terrorist threat in the first and second degree and strengthen related school discipline requirements. The sponsor brought the bill in response to increases in threats against schools. The bill would require school officials immediately notify law enforcement if the conduct of a student warrants being charged with the crime of making a terrorist threat in the first or second degree. The principal must schedule a hearing within 30 days or within the timeline of the 2024 Student Discipline Due Process Law, whichever is sooner. The suspension the student receives would depend upon the outcome of the local board's discipline hearing. An **amendment to the bill** was approved in committee that reiterates disciplinary actions required under this bill must comply with federal disability protections.

House Committee Action

The **House Ways and Means Education Committee** approved **H.361 (Daniels)**, a bill that would require state and local governments to provide paid leave to employ-

ees who donate an organ or bone marrow. A substitute was adopted limiting its application to state employees.

The Committee also approved **S.62 (Orr)**, a bill to establish the **Alabama Charter School Finance Authority** to issue bonds for financing loans for charter school capital projects.

Senate Committee Action

The **Senate Education Policy Committee** approved:

- **S.305 (Smitherman)**, which would authorize local school boards to vote on allowing chaplains as volunteers. This is the companion bill to **H.8 (Gidley)**.
- **S.300 (Figures)**, which would put into law the exact design to be used for Alabama's Helping Schools motor vehicles tags.

Senate Floor Passage

➢ **S.272 (Orr) - Protecting Public Records** - would require the redaction of certain sensitive information from public records requests and would prohibit the use of public records provided by a local school board for solicitation. **This is an AASB priority bill.**

➢ **S.209 (Shelnutt) - Sex Education** - would require public K-12 schools teaching sex education to teach sexual risk avoidance instead of comprehensive sex education. It would prohibit sex education curricula from including discussion of how to obtain abortions or contraceptives or demonstration of contraceptive use. **NOTE: Sex education is not required and parents must give written permission for their child to participate.**

➢ **S.248 (Shelnutt) - Religious Release Time** - would require any public school to allow a child to participate in off-site religious instruction during the school day, at their parent's request, if sponsored by a local church or community-based religious organization. **NOTE: State law already authorizes school boards to adopt local policy for religious release time instruction.**

Bills Introduced This Week

➢ **H.470 (Robbins) - Retiree Return to Work** - would allow a retiree from the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) or Employees' Retirement System (ERS) to return to work without having retirement benefits suspended.

The current annual earnings limit would not apply; however, the individual wouldn't be allowed to earn any additional retirement benefits and must commit to three consecutive years of employment with the same employer.

➢ **H.480 (England) - SSUT Revenue to Local School Boards** - would require each county and city to distribute a minimum of 40% of simplified sellers use tax (SSUT) revenue to each local board in their respective jurisdiction. This would not apply to any county or city that adopted a local revenue-sharing agreement prior to Oct. 1, 2027.

➢ **S.311 (Smitherman) - Priority Schools** - would provide a **\$121 million** one-time supplemental appropriation for schools on the AAA priority school list. Each identified school would receive **\$1 million**.

➢ **S.315 (Figures) - Retiree COLA (2%)** - would provide TRS and ERS retirees a two-percent cost-of-living increase (COLA) effective Oct. 1, 2026.

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