

advocate for SCHOOLS



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



AASB Advocacy Committee Day

Don't miss out! AASB's final Advocacy Day for the year is on a legislative committee day, offering an insider's glimpse of this key phase of the legislative process.

Begin your day at the AASB office at 8 a.m. with light refreshments before heading to the State House. There, you'll observe lawmakers discussing education-related bills, witness critical policy debates unfold and gain valuable perspective on how education priorities are debated and shaped before reaching the chamber floor. Lunch will be provided. This is an all-day event.

Advocacy Committee Day is not district specific. It is open to all board members, superintendents and CSFOs. If you have already attended one of the first two Advocacy Days this year, you may still register for the Committee Day although no additional credit will be awarded.

Wednesday, March 18

Committee Day
All Districts

[REGISTER NOW](#)

**2026 Regular
Legislative Session**

13 Days Remain

Halfway Through Session: ETF Budget Still Awaits Action

The Legislature has completed 17 of its 30 legislative days, officially moving the regular session just past the halfway point. As lawmakers enter the final stretch of the session, local school boards are watching closely for action on the **\$10.47 billion FY27 Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget** and its related appropriations bills. The budget package is expected to come before the **House Ways and Means Education Committee** ahead of the Legislature's spring break scheduled the week of March 23. Stay tuned...

State Report Card: Work in Progress

The **House Education Policy Committee** held a public hearing Wednesday on **H.396**, a bill sponsored by **Committee Chair Rep. Terri Collins** that would make sweeping changes to Alabama's state report card by changing the formula used to calculate annual A-F letter grades for schools and systems. Notably, the measures for academic achievement and College and Career Readiness Indicators (CCRI) would increase and graduation rates and chronic absenteeism would decrease.

Education leaders from across the state spoke in opposition, urging lawmakers to slow down amid concerns the grading changes could drop some schools by a full letter grade. Proponents argued it's time to "raise the bar" on the state report card, noting that although the law passed in 2012, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) didn't implement it until 2018 and the measures haven't been updated since.

A **substitute bill** distributed ahead of next week's committee meeting would add chronic absenteeism back into the report card and authorize a newly-created Accountability Council, not the ALSDE, or State Board of Education (SBOE), to raise the grading scale for all letter grades when 60% of all public schools and systems earn either an A or B.

To address concerns about proposed changes to the state report card, **Committee Chair Rep. Terri Collins** has requested a meeting next Tuesday with members of the education community to discuss issues and potential improvements before the committee takes a vote on the bill.

Pledge, Prayer and Punishment

House Education Policy Committee members engaged in a lively debate Wednesday over a bill requiring local school boards to vote on whether to permit voluntary prayer in schools. **H.43**, sponsored by **Rep. Reed Ingram**, proposes a constitutional amendment that, if approved by voters, would mandate all public K-12 schools begin each day with the Pledge of Allegiance. **NOTE: State law already requires the daily Pledge of Allegiance in Alabama's schools and the U.S. Department of Education recently issued updated guidance on constitutionally protected prayer and religious expression, making it clear public schools have always allowed students and educators to act and speak according to their faith.**

The bill also would require each local board, within 90 days of the amendment's ratification, to vote on adopting a policy allowing employees and students to voluntarily participate in daily prayer and read religious texts. If a board fails to hold the required vote, the matter could be reported to the state superintendent, and the school system could face financial penalties including the withholding of up to 25% of its state funding.

A committee amendment was adopted removing references to the Bible and eliminating a requirement for schools to collect permission slips or monitor student participation, but the bill ultimately was carried over due to confusion about the outcome of a voice vote and uncertainty about whether enough members supported giving it a favorable report.

Committee Chair Rep. Terri Collins instructed the sponsor to work with stakeholders before the bill returns to the committee. **Instead, Rep. Ingram reintroduced the bill in its original form, now filed as H.511**, which retains the specific Bible reference and the requirement of parental permission slips. The newly filed bill has been assigned to a different committee, **House State Government**, which is scheduled to consider it next Wednesday. **AASB has called a public hearing.**

Career Tech Package Introduced

House Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter has introduced a coordinated package of Career and Technical Education (CTE) initiatives anchored by a House Joint Resolution (HJR) seeking **\$150 million** to expand CTE programs statewide:

- **HJR189 (Holk Jones) - \$150M Investment in CTE** - this resolution supports \$150 million in additional funding from the Education Advancement and Technology (EAT) Fund for CTE regional centers. This would build on last year's **\$100 million** EAT appropriation for grants to local school systems to develop regional centers, including capital outlay and equipment.
- **H.517 (Lomax) - TRAIN Act** - would create the Talent Readiness and Industry Needs (TRAIN) Act allowing schools to partner directly with businesses for CTE instruction. It would also create a workforce teaching certificate for skilled professionals to provide classroom instruction, and businesses could temporarily loan qualified employees to teach designated CTE courses. **The bill also would create a new tax credit, reducing ETF revenues by up to \$10 million to incentivize business participation.**
- **H.520 (Paramore) - CTE Teacher Certification** - would require the SBOE to establish an expedited certification pathway for CTE teachers relocating to Alabama.

Return of the Overtime Income Tax Deduction

While the state finance director and budget chairmen have cautioned lawmakers about the damaging cost of tax credits and exemptions piling up, a bill to eliminate up to \$1,000 in state income tax on qualified overtime pay was filed Thursday by **Rep. James Lomax**. **H.527** would mirror the federal income tax deduction for overtime pay established in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025.

During the 2025 legislative session, lawmakers failed to move forward with a proposal to make the 2023 overtime tax elimination permanent citing concerns the tax cut had already reduced ETF revenues by more than \$230 million.

House Committee Action

House Ways and Means Education

- **H.75 (Robertson) - High School Signing Day** - would require high schools to excuse students from class who participate in organized National Signing Day activities.

Senate Committee Action

Senate Finance & Taxation Education

- **H.178 (Garrett) - City System Consolidation** - would provide a process for the consolidation of two or more

contiguous city boards of education. An **AASB amendment** was approved to allow for the merger of school boards, not just consolidation and abolishment of one board.

Senate Education Policy

- **H.329 (Faulkner) - Computer Science Courses** - would require all public school students complete an approved high school or college-level computer science course, beginning with the graduating class of 2032.
- **S.5 (Allen) - Star-Spangled Banner** - would amend Alabama's Constitution, if approved by voters, to require local boards to adopt policies ensuring every public K-12 school broadcasts or formally presents the first stanza of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at least once each week during school hours.

House Floor Passage

- **H.2 (Standridge) - Gulf of America** - would rename the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America and require all state and local entities to implement the name change unless compliance would impose an operational or financial burden on the entity or employees.
- **H.8 (Gidley) - Campus Chaplains** - would authorize local boards to vote on allowing volunteer chaplains in schools. The companion bill, **S.305 (Smitherman)**, was approved by the full Senate.
- **H.306 (Rehm) - Veterans Teaching Certificate** - would authorize the SBOE to grant temporary teaching certificates to eligible military veterans.
- **H.360 (Sells) - 2A Sales Tax Holiday** - would establish an annual weekend-long sales tax holiday for ammunition, firearms and hunting supplies. If enacted, this would decrease annual sales tax receipts to the ETF by an estimated \$386,000 and locally up to \$506,000.

Senate Floor Passage

- **S.201 (Givhan) - JROTC for Homeschool** - would require public school Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) programs be available to home school and private school students who are the dependents of active duty military parents residing within the local school system's attendance zone.

Gone to the Governor

- **H.78 (Ross) - Screen Time Limits** - 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.
- **S.168 (Chesteen/Hulsey) - Three Cueing** - 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. Under the bill, if the SBOE finds a local board not in compliance, the local board, the Legislature and the general public will be notified of the violation.

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