

advocate for SCHOOLS



TO SEE A LIST OF BILLS TRACKED BY AASB
DURING THE 2023 REGULAR SESSION,
CLICK ON BILL TRACKER BELOW:



AASB's New Tracking Tool

We have a new tracking page where you can check the status of bills being monitored by AASB during the session. Features of the tracking page include AASB's position and a record of action by the Alabama Legislature.

Click on the red bill tracker icon on the top right of the Advocate visit the new tracking page.

School System Snapshots

AASB has released the 2023 edition (FY21 data) of the School System Snapshots, which provides an individualized look at each Alabama school system's state and local resources - funding and spending.

[Click here for this year's edition.](#)

2023 Special Session

11 Days Remain

A special session can last no longer than 12 legislative days. The regular session is expected to resume March 21.

2023 Regular Legislative Session

29 Days Remain

Ivey Calls Special Session; Prioritizes Funds & Education

Gov. Kay Ivey wasted no time issuing a [proclamation](#) calling legislators into a special session just as the 2023 regular session kicked off. Ivey announced Tuesday lawmakers would be meeting in special session the next day to address how to best appropriate and oversee the second round of federal pandemic relief dollars (\$1 billion) available as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund. Also in the call for special session - a \$60 million supplemental appropriation to pay off the state's remaining obligation to the Alabama Trust Fund.

Education: Number One Issue

The governor has set a goal for Alabama to rank among the top 30 states in reading and math by the end of her current term.

"Improving our children's educational outcomes is my top priority and will continue to be over the next four years," Ivey said.

The governor highlighted key education priorities in her [State of the State address](#):

- Kindergarten completion/first grade readiness
- Providing resources to disadvantaged school systems
- Full implementation of the Alabama Numeracy and Literacy Acts
- Increased funding for:
 - Reading and math coaches
 - After-school programs
- Teacher pay raise (2%)
- Improving school choice options already in place - Charter schools and Alabama Accountability Act
- Creation of Alabama School of Health Care Sciences High School in Demopolis
- Establishing a partnership with the Saban family and the city of Tuscaloosa for immersive STEM education for students,

including sports sciences

- Continued investment in school safety, security and mental health issues

Education Trust Fund Surplus

The Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget is currently sitting on a \$2.9 billion surplus. While several lawmakers have discussed the idea of taxpayer rebates, Gov. Ivey is proposing one-time rebates of \$400 per taxpayer (\$800/family) with an estimated cost of \$1 billion going back to Alabamians.

ETF Budget Outlook

Budget presentations were held prior to the start of the legislative session Tuesday. Kirk Fulford, deputy director for the fiscal division of the Legislative Services Agency and State Finance Director Bill Poole addressed lawmakers in a joint budget hearing.

Fulford stressed the importance of being prepared as economic growth is expected to continue slowing down in FY23, although the exact timing and impact are unclear. This prudence has led government leaders to take a cautious approach to budgeting, resulting in a record surplus of \$2.9 billion in FY22.

Meanwhile, the state finance director noted there are initial signs of an economic slowdown or moderate growth. The governor's FY24 ETF budget, which has not yet been released, is expected to increase by 6.50% to \$8.79 billion, according to Poole. The FY24 cap for legislators is set at \$10.9 billion. Both Poole and Fulford cautioned against appropriating to the cap and stated while there are opportunities ahead, there are also many challenges.

[LSA Budget Presentation](#)

[State Finance Budget Presentation](#)

K-12 Budget Request

State Superintendent of Education **Dr. Eric Mackey** presented the SDE’s budget request to the Legislature’s joint budget committees in preparation for the start of the regular session. The SDE is requesting an increase of \$984 million. **Mackey** told lawmakers there are two main things driving the costs: inflation and wanting to invest in people. The main focus is to concentrate on early reading and math, he added. Some requested increases in funding are for:

- Teacher materials and supplies
- School safety
- Hiring additional teachers, counselors and administrators
- College and career readiness

SDE FY24 Budget Request

Cybersecurity Funding

The House Ways and Means Education Committee heard from Alabama Leaders in Educational Technology (ALET) Wednesday. ALET’s Executive Director **Susan Poling** asked the committee to maintain funding school cybersecurity at its current amount of \$68,000 per system. She also asked to maintain funding for cybersecurity grant support (\$50,000) and continued employee cybersecurity training (\$500,000).

Poling told lawmakers Alabama school systems recently surveyed about cybersecurity revealed that all of them had experienced at least one phishing attempt or received deceptive emails attempting to obtain passwords or sensitive information.

ALET Cybersecurity Presentation

Select Bill Introductions

The first day of the regular session saw a total of 175 bills introduced in the House and Senate. Below are a few of the education-related bills AASB is tracking.

H.6 (Paschal) - Parental Rights - would establish legislative findings relating to the fundamental rights of parents to direct the education, upbringing, care, custody and control of their children.

H.7 (Oliver) - Divisive Concepts - would prohibit local boards from promoting, endorsing or requiring affirmation of certain divisive concepts relating to race, sex or religion.

H.35 (Estes) - Student-Led Prayer - would require local boards to allow school resources (such as a microphone or public address system) to students to facilitate student-led prayer.

H.42 (Warren) - School Safety Awareness - would require lockdown drills to include SROs and law enforcement participation.

H.43 (Warren) - First Grade Readiness - would require a child to successfully complete kindergarten or demonstrate first grade readiness before being enrolled in first grade.

H.45 (Gray) - Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act - would require local boards to adhere to guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education if a student athlete exhibits symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest.

H.65 (Collins) / S.36 (Elliott) - Competitive Bid Increase - would increase the minimum amount from \$15,000 to \$25,000 for contracts subject to competitive bid for city and county boards of education.


H.73 (Garrett) - Open Enrollment - would require each local board and charter school to adopt and implement an intra-district enrollment policy and an inter-district enrollment policy providing for open enrollment throughout the state.

H.90 (Rogers) - Special Ed Services Expanded - would provide that certain students with an intellectual disability are entitled to receive educational services up to 26 years old.


S.46 (Orr) - Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact - would authorize state licensing authorities in compact states to help identify and facilitate the mobility of P-12 teachers across state lines.

S.52 (Orr) - Alabama Safe at Schools Act - would amend the current act to apply to students with adrenal insufficiency. To provide training for school personnel to administer injectable medication to those students.

S.56 (Orr) - Special Ed Classroom Cameras - would require local boards to provide for the use and maintenance of video cameras in public K-12 classrooms in which at least half of the regularly attending students receive special education services.



• **ADVOCACY DAYS** •



ALABAMA
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL BOARDS

APRIL 4
Districts 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

APRIL 18
Districts 6, 7, 8 & 9

MAY 2
New Board
Members

MONTGOMERY, AL

Alabama’s legislative session is underway!

You are invited to join us in Montgomery for AASB Advocacy Days.*

This year we have expanded participation to include CSFOs and are having an Advocacy Day specifically tailored for new board members and those who have never attended before.

April 4 - **REGISTER NOW**
Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & CSFOs

April 18 - **REGISTER NOW**
Districts 6, 7, 8, 9 & CSFOs

May 2 - **REGISTER NOW**
New Board Members & First-time Attendees

**You may sign up to participate for any of the dates if unable to attend on your designated district day. However, please do not double register. For more information or any questions, please contact Tracey Meyer at tmeyer@alabamaschoolboards.org*

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