

advocate for SCHOOLS



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



Final Advocacy Day CANCELLED

Due to low registration and the fast pace of the current legislative session, the Advocacy Committee Day scheduled for March 18 has been cancelled.

We do want to thank the nearly 80 school board members, CSFOs and superintendents who participated in the first two Advocacy Days held this session. We truly appreciate your commitment to advocating on behalf of school boards and learning strategies to engage your local leaders and state lawmakers. We look forward to providing this opportunity again next year.

Budget Timeline

The ETF Budget Package will be taken up in the Senate after legislative spring break (March 23-27).

The last day lawmakers can meet for this session is April 27; however, lawmakers are aiming for an early April end date to return to their districts and campaign ahead of the May 19 primary election.

Legislative Session

8 days remain

SPRING BREAK
March 23-27

ETF Budget Package Clears House, Heads to Senate

Moving at lightning speed, the House Ways and Means Education (HWME) Committee approved the FY27 Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget package Wednesday, and the full House passed it Thursday. The FY27 ETF Budget allocates **\$7.1 billion** for K-12 schools.

On the House floor, **HWME Chair Rep. Danny Garrett** highlighted several major investments, adjustments and funding shifts, telling members this ETF budget would fund a reading coach in every school and ensure each system has a school nurse, mental health coordinator and technology coordinator. In addition, another **\$399 million** would be transferred from the **Educational Opportunities Reserve Fund** to continue student-weighted funding through the RAISE Act.

The House-passed budget also includes a **\$180 million** increase for the Public Education Employees Health Insurance Program (PEEHIP) to help offset rising costs. This amount is **\$30 million less** than what the governor proposed after PEEHIP requested **\$380 million**, reflecting an increase in the monthly employer rate from **\$904 to \$1,073**.

Budget Package

➤ **FY27 ETF Budget (H.238 Garrett)** - The **\$10.48 billion** budget is a **5.75%** increase over FY26, an addition of **\$570 million**, and includes a 2% across-the-board pay raise for educators **(H.239 Collins)**.

➤ **ETF increases include:**

\$137 million - Other Current Expense (OCE) - (Pay Raise \$20 million, Benefits \$43 million, New \$74 million)

\$104 million - Transportation Operations - (Pay Raise \$6 million, Benefits \$15 million, New \$83 million)

\$22.9 million - Numeracy Act (33 additional math specialists)

\$4.5 million - STEM Major Teacher Recruitment Program

\$3.5 million - ACCESS Distance Learning

\$2.9 million - Mental Health Coordinators (to employ eight regional administrators)

\$2 million - English Language Learners (coaches)

\$1 million - Computer Science

\$237,000 - Technology in Motion

\$100,000 - Cameras in the Classroom

➤ **New ETF line-items** include:

\$8 million - Advanced Innovation Grant Program

\$500,000 - Microschool Grant Program

\$250,000 - CPR Kits for Classrooms

Middle School Divisors (grades 7-8), were lowered from 19.70 to 19.34, yielding a 103.10 increase in teacher units statewide, with **\$12 million** in new funding.

HOUSE-PASSED ETF SPREADSHEET

Supplemental Appropriations

Part of the budget package passed in the House includes two supplemental appropriations providing one-time funding for the current fiscal year ending Sept. 30 (FY26):

➤ **EAT Supplemental (H.236 Garrett)** - this **\$1 billion** supplemental appropriation from the Education Advancement and Technology (EAT) Fund would provide **\$570 million** to K-12 schools, a decrease of **\$54.9 million** from the governor's proposal. Another **\$150 million** would be allocated to the State Department of Education (SDE) for matching grants to local school boards for regional career and technical education (CTE) centers throughout the state, building on last year's \$100 million EAT allocation for these grants.

ALL school board EAT allocations were **reduced 8.8%** from the governor's proposal in order to allocate an additional **\$50 million** to CTE grants and **\$4.9 million** to new line items for 20 select school systems.



[VIEW EAT SPREADSHEET](#)

➤ **ETF Supplemental (H.235 Garrett)** - would appropriate a **\$419.7 million** supplemental appropriation, of which **\$168.2 million** is allocated for K-12, or 40% of the one-time funds available. This is a **decrease of almost \$100 million** from the governor’s proposed supplemental, as nearly **\$50 million** was shifted to fund the new State House.

➤ **Of the K-12 amount:**

- \$30 million** - Summer/Afterschool Program
- \$25 million** - Fleet Renewal
- \$25 million** - School Safety
- \$20 million** - College and Career Readiness Grants
- \$10 million** - Charter School Grants
- \$10 million** - Struggling Readers Beyond 3rd Grade
- \$10 million** - Career Tech Equipment
- \$7.3 million** - School Breakfast Program

☞ **NOTE:** The ETF supplemental allocates **\$100 million** to the Alabama Department of Revenue for **CHOOSE Act** education savings accounts for private and homeschool vouchers. Combined with **\$150 million** in income tax receipts directed to the CHOOSE Act outside of the budget, this equals **\$250 million** reserved for non-public school vouchers.

➤ **Educational Opportunities Reserve Fund (EORF) (H.237 Garrett)** - would transfer an additional **\$399.2 million** in one-time funding for the **Renewing Alabama’s Investment in Student Excellence (RAISE) Act Fund** and **\$100.8 million** to the new College and Higher Education Excellence and Reserve (CHEER) Fund for outcomes-based funding for two- and four-year institutions.

Another Raise for the RAISE Act

The House-passed revisions to the EORF increase the RAISE Act Fund’s total balance to **\$666 million**, shoring up the fund in anticipation of declining revenues. Last year, **\$375 million** was transferred from the EORF to support the first three years of the new student-weighted funding model. Of that amount, **\$108 million** was allocated for the current **2025–26** school year, leaving **\$267 million** remaining in the RAISE Act Fund. For FY27, the ETF budget appropriates **\$133 million** from the RAISE Act Fund, along with **\$58 million** from previously consolidated and redistributed ETF line items, for a total of **\$191 million** in student-weighted funding for the **2026-27** school year. This funding is in addition to the annual ETF Foundation Program allocation.

Reset Button for A-F Report Card

Responding to extensive feedback from educators and stakeholders on **(H.396)** - a bill which would have made sweeping changes to Alabama’s school accountability system and performance measures used in the state’s A-F report card - **House Education Policy Chair Terri Collins** introduced a more measured approach in a new bill, **H.604**. **Collins** said the goal is “to ensure the state’s accountability system and state report card supports improved outcomes and long-term success for all Alabama students.” Under **H.604**, an **Accountability Council** would be established to annually review the state’s ac-

countability framework and recommend updates to the governor, legislature, State Board of Education and SDE. The bill also would task the **Alabama Workforce Board** with developing a system to collect, analyze and report student outcomes related to completion of college and career readiness indicators. Unlike **H.396**, the new bill **does not define indicators** or set specific performance measures or scoring weights in state law. Instead, **H.604** shifts the focus to an ongoing review structure rather than locking detailed measures into statute. The **House Education Policy Committee** gave the bill a favorable report.

Playing to the Base

As lawmakers look ahead to the May 19 primary election, a slate of bills designed to appeal to the political base of certain lawmakers and bolster their campaign efforts was taken up on the House floor and in committee. After lengthy debate and multiple amendments, the House passed **H.511 (Ingram)**, a proposed constitutional amendment. If approved by voters, it would require each local school board to adopt policy mandating the daily, voluntary recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance and permitting voluntary student-led prayer. An **amendment** was approved to remove a provision in the bill that would have authorized the state superintendent of education to withhold up to 25% of state funding for any non-compliant board. The amendment also clarified any voluntary prayer must be student-led and student-initiated.

The **House Education Policy Committee** advanced a new version of a religious release time bill, **S.248 (Shelnutt)**, after a similar proposal failed in two committees last session. **S.248** would require public schools to allow students to participate in off-site religious instruction during the school day. As with last year, the bill is backed by **LifeWise Academy**, a multi-million dollar, non-profit out-of-state company which lobbies for religious release time programs nationwide.

☞ **NOTE:** Current law authorizes school boards to have a religious release time policy. **S.248** would require local boards to allow student participation in off-site religious programs upon parental request.

Senate Floor Passage

➤ **S.280 (Waggoner)** - **TRS/ERS Service Credit** - would allow teachers and state employees to purchase credit in the Teachers’ Retirement System (TRS) or Employees’ Retirement System (ERS) for public service performed for the federal government.

➤ **S.211 (Allen)** - **Sick Leave Donations** - would revise the sick leave bank and donation process for local school boards and create a new process for donating leave directly across school systems.

Gone to the Governor

➤ **H.122 (Collins)** - **TEAMS Contracts** - beginning Oct. 1, 2026, teachers in the Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) program would receive a contract of up to three years, not five.

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