

advocate for SCHOOLS



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



Legislative Spring Break

Lawmakers will take their official spring break March 23-27. The session will reconvene March 31.

ETF Budget Package Quick Look

View the House-Passed ETF Budget bills:

[H.235 - ETF Supplemental](#)

[H.236 - EAT Supplemental](#)

[H.237 - EORF](#)

[H.238 - FY27 ETF Budget](#)

[ETF FY27 Spreadsheet](#)

[H.239 - Pay Raise \(2%\)](#)

YOUR OPINION MATTERS TO AASB!

We would love your feedback to this question:

Is it responsible for lawmakers to approve \$75 million in tax cuts when ETF revenues are declining?



Spring Break Forecast: Tax Cuts Bloom, ETF Revenues Wilt

With legislative days dwindling, local school boards are eagerly awaiting final budget numbers as they prepare for next year. The next step is for the **Senate Finance and Taxation Education (SFTE) Committee** to take up the FY27 Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget and education-related appropriations bills. **SFTE Chair Sen. Arthur Orr** told committee members he plans to have the budget package in the **SFTE Committee** when lawmakers return from spring break. Any Senate changes to the House-passed budget would require concurrence to avoid going to conference committee to hash out any differences. Stay tuned...

Not So 'Responsibly' Cutting ETF Revenues

Despite legislative lip service publicly acknowledging the need to tighten the budget amid declining revenues, the **HWME Committee** Wednesday approved more than **\$75 million in proposed tax cuts and exemptions**—measures that would further reduce funding available for public education. One of the largest proposals, **H.527 (Lomax)**, was presented to the committee as a “responsible bill” that would “not take away a large amount from the education budget.” In reality, it would **reduce ETF revenues by nearly \$40 million** by creating a new individual income tax deduction for overtime pay. Modeled after the federal provision in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, **Lomax’s** bill would allow taxpayers to deduct up to \$1,000 in qualified overtime from their state income taxes each year. The bill was cited as more cost-effective than a similar 2025 proposal that would have permanently extended the 2023 overtime exemption—an exemption which cost the state more than \$400 million. The committee adopted an amendment which added a 2028 sunset date for the deduction.

The committee also approved several addi-

tional tax breaks:

- **(H.15 Shirey)** - removes the state sales tax on eyeglasses and contacts, at an estimated cost of \$14.5 million to the ETF.
- **(H.579 Shaver)** - exempts an exotic animal preserve from sales tax.
- **(H.390 Daniels)** - expands the existing employer child care tax credit to also cover adult daycare, capped at \$20 million.

HWME Chair Rep. Danny Garrett told committee members that not all of these tax credits and exemptions will “cross the finish line” in the Senate. “We’ve been judicious in our tax credits...not all of these [bills] are impactful,” said **Garrett**.

House Committee Meetings

Making the most of the final days of the legislative session, the **House Education Policy Committee** met twice this week to move bills along. The committee approved three Senate bills that are now in position for final passage and two House bills that are now ready for a vote by the full House.

- **S.5 (Allen)** - **Star Spangled Banner C/A** - which, if approved by voters, would amend Alabama’s Constitution 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.
- **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; parents must give written permission for their child to participate.**
- **S.211 (Allen)** - **Sick Leave and Direct Donation** - would require the State Board of Education (SBOE) to adopt a model policy

governing sick leave banks, catastrophic leave and direct donations of leave. It removes existing limits on catastrophic sick leave donations and allows employees to donate sick leave directly to one another, even across different agencies. In committee, the bill was amended to remove the cap that restricts employees to receiving no more than 30 days per school year (6 work weeks) of donated leave per school year. Removal of the cap expands both bill's reach and its potential cost beyond what the Senate passed. The amended bill also would apply to all Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) employees, which includes all two-and four-year colleges and universities and certain education-related state agencies. **AASB is working with the bill sponsor to ensure the cap on direct donation is restored to the bill.**

➤ **H.567 (Gray) - Student-Athlete Tracking** - would require all public high schools track student-athletes' NCAA eligibility beginning in the ninth grade and develop individualized postsecondary transition plans for all students.

☞ **NOTE:** This vendor-backed bill was presented to the committee by **Hi.Ed**, a software system company that monitors student-athletic academic progress.

➤ **H.603 (DuBose) - Educator Prep Program Report Cards** - would require the State Department of Education (SDE), SBOE and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to revise and annually update a teacher preparation report card evaluating the performance of each Educator Preparation Program (EPP) and Alabama Teacher Preparation Organizations. The bill would require the SBOE to annually review the report cards to determine if interventions or supports are necessary. ☞ **NOTE:** This bill would codify and expand the work the SDE has already begun which was presented to the SBOE in December. [View the online EPP Report Card and Data Dashboard here.](#)

The **House State Government Committee** carried over a controversial bill, **S.88 (Stutts)**, about **Division of Construction Management (DCM)** oversight, that would remove the DCM inspection requirement for K-12 capital improvement projects under \$750,000, but not the underlying compliance requirements with building code and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The committee chair did not indicate if the bill would be brought back up, citing concerns from general contractors and State Finance regarding liability. The committee approved **S.337 (Stutts)**, a bill that would require the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to sell certain school indemnity lands at the local board's request and specify how the proceeds would be distributed.

House Judiciary

➤ **H.148 (Paschal) - Parents' Fundamental Rights [C/A]** - if approved by voters, would amend Alabama's Constitution to affirm that parents have a fundamental right to direct the education, upbringing, care, custody and control of their children, and the government may not infringe on that right.

➤ **H.216 (Gidley) - Ten Commandments** - would require local boards to display a poster or framed document, no

smaller than 11 x 14, of the Ten Commandments and a historical context statement in every fifth through 12th grade history classroom, and in a common area of a school with grades five and above, subject to private funding. The SDE would be required to identify appropriate resources for school boards to comply free of charge. ☞ **NOTE: A similar Arkansas law requiring the Ten Commandments to be displayed in classrooms was declared unconstitutional this week by a U.S. District Court.**

House Ways & Means Education

➤ **H.563 (Garrett) - CHOOSE Act Athletic Eligibility** - would create enforcement mechanisms for the CHOOSE Act's athletic eligibility nondiscrimination rules and would allow participating students to seek damages or injunctive relief if an athletic association acts against them solely because of their CHOOSE Act status. The Senate companion bill **S.342 (Chambliss)** was also approved in **SFTE Committee**.

House Ways & Means General Fund

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

Senate Committee Meetings

Senate Education Policy

➤ **S.364 (Smitherman) - Conflict Resolution** - would require all public school students in grades 6-12 to receive instruction in violence prevention, conflict resolution, and mediation before graduation. It also directs the SDE to develop related instructional standards.

➤ **H.511 (Ingram) - Pledge and Prayer [C/A]** - if approved by voters, would amend Alabama's Constitution to require each local school board to adopt policy mandating the daily, voluntary recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance and permitting voluntary student-led, student-initiated prayer.

Senate Judiciary

➤ **H.420 (Butler) - Discharging Firearm/School Bus** - would increase the penalty for discharging a firearm into an occupied school bus or school building to a Class A felony.

House Floor Passage

➤ **H.533 (Wilcox) - Epinephrine in Schools** - would allow any FDA-approved, single-dose premeasured form of epinephrine (a nasal spray) to be carried and used by students and schools to treat life-threatening allergic reactions. **NOTE: Current law only allows students and schools to carry and use single-dose epi pens.**

Signed into Law

✓ **Act No: 2026-254 - Competitive Bid/Playground Equipment** - exempts public K-12 school contracts from the public works law for the purchase and installation of playground equipment.

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