

advocate for SCHOOLS



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



Legislative Webinar

AASB will host House Ways and Means Education Committee Chair Rep. Danny Garrett for a webinar May 1 explaining how Alabama's tax structure compares to other states. Stay tuned for registration details.

Advocacy Days

You're invited to join us in Montgomery for *AASB Advocacy Days. All attendees will receive 2 hrs. of training credit for participating in this free event.

Apr. 4 - REGISTER NOW

Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & CSFOs (only a few spots left)

Apr. 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. For more information or any questions, please contact AASB.*

2023 Regular Legislative Session

26 Days Remain

Back-to-Work

Legislature returns April 4

\$1.4 Billion ETF Dollars Diverted for Non-Education

The supplemental appropriation ([S.87 Orr](#)) submitted to the Legislature last week by Gov. Kay Ivey allocates excess receipts of \$2.8 billion in the Education Trust Fund (ETF), with a staggering half of those funds earmarked for non-education expenses. AASB has serious reservations about the governor's proposal, as it raises the question: Are we truly using these funds to support public schools in the most effective way?

While we commend the governor for boosting Other Current Expenses (OCE) funding by \$108 million and an across-the-board 2% pay raise for educators, we urge legislators to carefully reevaluate the supplemental appropriation and FY24 ETF budget ([S.88 Orr](#)). AASB believes education dollars should be dedicated to programs and initiatives that directly benefit students.

Ivey's supplemental appropriation proposal includes a tax rebate and funding for various non-education projects such as infrastructure, workforce training and economic development initiatives.

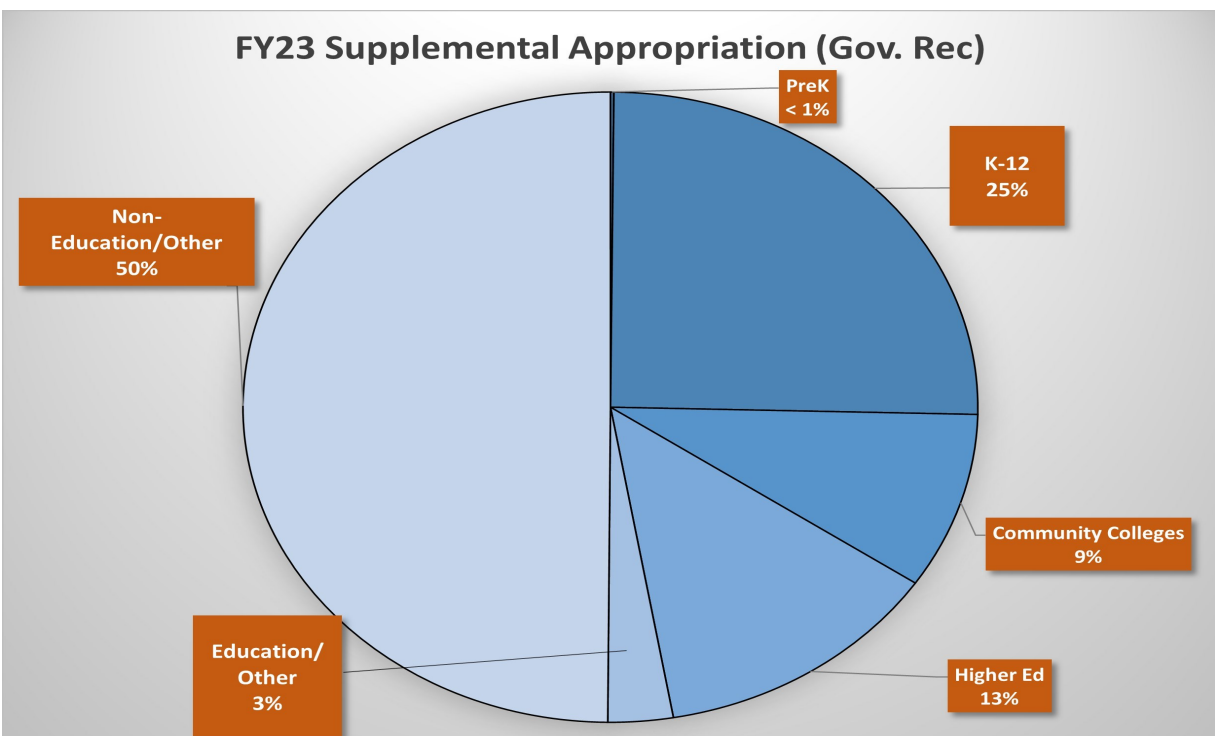
There also is a questionable \$100 million appropriation for prison education. State Finance Director Bill Poole [told AL.com](#) the funds are for construction of vocational facilities where education will take place.

Other non-education appropriations include:

- \$967 million Tax Rebate
- \$200 million to Rural Downtown Revitalization Projects
- \$31 million to Mobile Airport Authority
- \$30 million to AIDT Electric Vehicle Workforce Training
- \$25 million to Port of Alabama
- \$25 million to Montgomery County Commission
- \$5 million to World Games

[Supplemental Appropriation Spreadsheet](#)

AASB believes the supplemental appropriation should prioritize areas that directly benefit K-12 student learning.



Revamping Education Budget

Given current economic conditions ripe for another **\$1 billion** plus surplus at the end of FY23, the time is now for the Legislature to provide strong support for education by amending the FY23 Supplemental Appropriation and FY24 ETF Budget.

- AASB is calling** on lawmakers to appropriate education dollars by investing in three critical areas including:
- **\$264.7 million** to lower divisors to decrease the student-teacher ratio
 - **\$140 million** more to support school systems challenged to complete capital improvement projects due to inflationary costs and market conditions
 - **\$49.6 million** to adjust assistant principal-earned units to one full unit for every 250 students. Currently, one assistant principal is earned for every 750 elementary students, every 500 middle school students and every 500 high school students.

Lower Funding Divisors

The Legislature can tackle academic achievement and student behavior challenges by lowering funding divisors that will decrease the student-teacher ratio. Committing funds specifically for this purpose creates smaller class sizes that enhance learning environments for students.

By lowering divisors, schools will benefit from the following:

- **Improved academic performance:** Research consistently shows smaller class sizes lead to improved student achievement. This is largely attributed to increased individual attention and tailored instruction.
- **Increased student engagement:** With fewer students in a class, teachers can better foster an engaging learning environment, encouraging more active participation, deeper discussions and greater collaboration among students.
- **Enhanced teacher effectiveness:** Lower student-teacher ratios enable teachers to better manage their classrooms, provide more meaningful feedback on assignments and devote more time to lesson planning and preparation.
- **Reduced behavioral issues:** Smaller class sizes often lead to fewer classroom disruptions and behavioral problems, as teachers can more easily identify and address issues as they arise.
- **Better student-teacher relationships:** A lower student-teacher ratio facilitates the development of stronger relationships between students and teachers, which can positively impact students' motivation, self-esteem and overall school experience.

Adjust Earned Units for Assistant Principals

AASB asks the state to prioritize the allocation of resources to fully fund an assistant principal for every 250 students. School principals need help, and now is the optimal time to revamp earned units for assistant principals.

As schools grapple with increasing demands, assistant principal play a crucial role in managing and supporting not only the diverse needs of hundreds of students, but also their parents and staff.

The state can signal support for ensuring each school has the administrative capacity to effectively manage academics, student discipline and school safety by addressing instructional support units for assistant principals in the proposed FY24 ETF Budget.

Increase Funding for Capital Projects

AASB also believes we can provide more funding in capital improvement. Although we applaud the governor for appropriating **\$510 million** for K-12 capital improvement needs, now is the time to aim higher with at least **\$650 million** – an increase of **\$140 million**– to the supplemental appropriation.

These funds can help school systems move forward with essential capital improvement needs that have been delayed and adversely affected by historic inflation. Dedicating these funds to capital improvement, will address increased cost concerns and critical infrastructure issues while improving physical learning environments.

What Can You Do?

AASB urges board members to talk their legislators and advocate amending the FY23 Supplemental Appropriation and FY24 ETF budget. By prioritizing education and redirecting funds to K-12 education programs and initiatives, we can significantly improve academic achievement, behavioral concerns and the school environment. When you make the call to your legislators with information gathered from teachers, principals and the superintendent in your schools, we urge you to ask for these three things:

- **Lower divisors** to decrease student-teacher ratio
- **Increase capital project appropriations** to support school systems capital improvement projects as a result of exorbitant costs and market conditions
- **Adjust assistant principal earned units** to one full unit per every 250 students

Coming Up...

The **House Education Policy Committee** will be taking up the following K-12 bills next Wednesday:

H.164 (Whitt) - Financial Literacy - would require students to complete a personal financial literacy and money management course and exam before graduation.

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. It would also allow for a child turning five on or after September 1 to enter kindergarten provided if local board allows.

H.218 (McC Campbell) - Failing Schools Designation - for purposes of school grading under the Alabama Accountability Act, would change the term "failing school" to "fully supported school".

AASB LEGISLATIVE TEAM



Sally Smith, J.D.
Executive Director

ssmith@AlabamaSchoolBoards.org



Bart Reeves, Ed.D.
Assistant Executive Director
for Governmental Relations

breeves@AlabamaSchoolBoards.org



Tracey Meyer
Governmental Relations
Coordinator

tmeyer@AlabamaSchoolBoards.org