



TO SEE A LIST OF BILLS TRACKED BY AASB  
DURING THE 2026 REGULAR SESSION,  
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## Advocate for Schools Podcast



A quick need-to-know breakdown, straight from the pages of Advocate for Schools newsletter presented by AASB's New AI host, "ALLIE". The Podcast is available to subscribe & stream on:

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### LET US KNOW!

Do you support the legislature creating an Accountability Council to make recommendations for the state report card?



### Sine Die in Sight

To adjourn Sine Die translates to adjourning indefinitely or "without a day" for future action or meeting. Lawmakers are planning to meet three days next week and wrap up the session April 9.

Legislative Session  
3 days remain

## Clock Winding Down as Senate Passes ETF Budget

The Senate passed the \$10.4 billion FY27 Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget and accompanying funding bills Thursday. Minor changes were made in the Senate to all but one bill in the budget package. The bills with Senate changes now head to the House for concurrence. Let's take a look...

### ➤ ETF Supplemental - [H.235 \(Garrett\)](#)

Local school boards and the State Department of Education (SDE) total appropriations remain unchanged, although a \$25 million one-time allocation for school safety now includes a \$3 million earmark for school mapping to be completed by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) pursuant to the School Security Act of 2024.

### ➤ Education Advancement and Technology Fund Supplemental - [H.236 \(Garrett\)](#)

Adds an earmark to one school board appropriation for athletic facility enhancements and makes small changes to the legislative special projects for select school systems.

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

Increases the RAISE Act weights over FY26 for students in poverty from 2.25% to 2.75%; special education Tier 1 from 2.0% to 2.5%; and gifted from 4.5% to 4.75%.

### ➤ Educator Pay Raise - [H.239 \(Collins\)](#)

In addition to an across-the-board 2% pay increase for educators, language was added to provide a one-time longevity bonus for retirees under the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS).

Just the Educational Opportunities Reserve Fund (EORF) appropriation, [H.237 \(Garrett\)](#), remained unchanged from the House-approved version. It was transmitted to the governor upon final passage Thursday.

### Budget Isolation Resolution

Until both budgets go to the governor, the Budget Isolation Resolution (BIR) is a procedural requirement needing a supermajority vote before a bill may be considered on the

floor. BIR votes can prevent controversial bills from reaching debate, but once that procedural hurdle is cleared, passage of the legislation becomes significantly easier. Timing is everything during the last days of a legislative session.

### House Committee

#### State Government

➤ [S.88 \(Stutts\)](#) **K-12 Capital Improvement Projects** - would remove the requirement for the state's Division of Construction Management (DCM) to inspect or make recommendations on any school or college construction project under \$300,000. Projects still would have to be ADA compliant and meet fire and safety standards. As amended in committee, the bill also would not allow any project that affects areas where students and staff regularly congregate to be exempt from DCM inspection. The amended bill was narrowly approved on a 6-5 vote, indicating an uncertain path forward to final passage.

### Senate Committees

#### Education Policy

➤ [H.8 \(Gidley\)](#) **Campus Chaplains** - would authorize local school boards to vote on allowing volunteer chaplains in schools.  
➤ [H.380 \(Collins\)](#) **County BOE Consolidation [C/A]** - would propose a constitutional amendment, which, if approved by voters, would allow two or more contiguous county boards of education to consolidate.

#### Finance & Taxation Education

➤ [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 also would create a workforce teaching certificate for skilled professionals to provide classroom instruction, and businesses could temporarily loan qualified employees to teach CTE courses. The bill also would create a new tax credit, **reducing ETF reve-**

nues by up to \$10 million to incentivize business participation. The bill was **amended** in committee to add community development foundations as an entity eligible to participate alongside businesses for up to \$4 million of the \$10 million cap.

### House Floor Passage

➤ **H.353 (Butler) Advanced Math Pathways** - would require the SDE to develop an Advanced Math Pathway to prepare students for Algebra 1 in middle school and college credit-bearing high school math courses. The bill also would require school boards to automatically enroll students in the program and provide additional support to participants. The SDE would be required to report annually on student performance and enrollment in advanced math courses. **AASB and CLAS worked on an adopted amendment to clarify the role of the SDE and school boards, create an opt-out process and make technical changes aligned with the state's course of study and assessment program.**

➤ **H.584 (Ross) Screen Time Limits** - would build upon the newly-enacted Healthy Early Development and Screen Time Act of 2026 (**Act 2026-169**) and require the State Board of Education (SBOE) to adopt standards for the use of screen-based instruction in kindergarten through grade 12. It also would establish the Elementary Instructional Technology Task Force within the SDE to provide recommendations to the SBOE relating to screen-based instruction which must be included in its standards. **An AASB amendment was adopted to clarify definitions, ensure alignment with laws and policies and exempt required assessments, teacher's use of technology and online coursework.**

➤ **H.527 (Lomax) Overtime Income Tax Deduction** - would establish an individual income tax deduction of up to \$1,000 on qualified overtime pay per year, mirroring a federal tax deduction established in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The House approved an **amendment** adding a 60-day grocery sales tax holiday to the bill, which would annually run May 1 to June 30. **As amended, this tax exemption bill's estimated annual cost to the ETF increases from \$40 million to \$83.4 million each year.**

➤ **H.604 (Collins) Accountability Council** - would establish an Accountability Council to review the state's accountability system, suggest improvements and require the Alabama Workforce Board, with help from the SDE and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, to develop a system for tracking student performance related to college and career readiness.

### Senate Floor Passage

➤ **S.99 (Kelley) Ten Commandments** - would require school 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.

➤ **S.342 (Chambliss) 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.

➤ **S.380 (Orr) TRS Longevity Bonus** - would provide a one-time, lump-sum longevity bonus for TRS retirees with a retirement date before May 1, 2026, of one dollar per month for each year of service. **Example: 30 years x 12 months = \$360 bonus. The Senate included the longevity bonus language in the educator pay raise bill (H.239) to ensure passage.**

### Gone to the Governor

➤ **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.225 (Smith) Education Job Postings** - would reduce the mandatory job posting window for certain school board personnel from 14 to seven days.

➤ **S.248 (Shelnutt/Dubose) Religious Release Time** - would require any public school to allow a child to participate in off-site religious instruction during the school day, at their parent's request, if sponsored by a local church or community-based religious organization.

➤ **S.279 (Chambliss) General Contractor Exemption** - would exempt several types of services from general contractor requirements, making it easier for local school boards to contract for regular, routine maintenance and repairs on certain existing projects. These include: security and access control systems; lighting and filters; plumbing, air conditioning and electrical; painting; and cleaning and janitorial services, including floor waxing.

## Defending the Trust.

Alabama's Education Trust Fund is the foundation of public education for nearly 750,000 students across all 67 counties. This session, it's under pressure — bill by bill, exemption by exemption.

The ETF is under attack and lawmakers want to whittle away public school dollars. We want to ensure you have the tools to understand what's at stake and share that information with your communities. Since this session began, 57 bills have been filed that would reduce revenues flowing into the ETF. Of those, 39 have fiscal notes totaling more than **\$458 million** in estimated annual costs. Every exemption has a cost, and you know all too well: Alabama's students can't afford to pay it. Visit our **Defending the Trust page** and try the "What Does It Buy?" calculator for yourself. You can select any bill from this session and instantly see what that money could mean for Alabama's public schools — in concrete terms like school buses, teachers, reading coaches and per-pupil funding.

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