


ALABAMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION


The Capital


PULSE


Your Weekly Legislative Update


The Rundown


 The Alabama Legislature convened Tuesday, March 7th, beginning the 2023 Legislative Session. The day started early with committee budget presentations, followed by both chambers gaveling in at noon, and concluded Tuesday evening with Governor Ivey's annual State of the State address at the Alabama State Capitol.


 Budget committee members received reports from the Legislative Services Agency and the State Finance Department outlining Alabama's unprecedented \$2.8 billion surplus. Alabama State Finance Director Bill Poole urged lawmakers to remain disciplined while budgeting but saved specific details and priorities of the Governor's budget for her to unveil that evening.


 The first legislative day was largely ceremonious as the leaders from both chambers welcomed newly elected and veteran lawmakers and their families to the chamber floors. Once legislators were welcomed, both chambers adjourned until Tuesday, March 21st, due to a special session being called by the Governor.

 The main takeaways from Governor Ivey's State of the State Address were the Special Legislative Session regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and the \$2.8 billion education budget surplus. She announced a two percent raise for all public education employees – pre-k through 14 – and declared her goal for Alabama educators to have the highest starting salary in the Southeast by the end of her term in 2026.

 Next week will be dedicated strictly to the special legislative session, where legislators will decide how to allocate ARPA dollars the state has received from the federal government. The Governor is asking the legislature to invest in major endeavors such as expanding broadband access, improving water and sewer infrastructure, and investing in the state's health care system.

 Despite the frequent conversations surrounding school choice, no bills relating to this topic have been filed at this time. No legislation regarding education can be filed or advanced until the legislature reconvenes for the 2023 regular legislative session on Tuesday, March 21st.

 Although we are in the early stages of the session, 174 bills have been filed between both chambers. The AEA lobby team has read every bill, and we are closely monitoring 67 bills at this time.

 April looks to be a very big month when action will be fast and furious in Montgomery. As always, the AEA Lobby Team will update you through the *Capital Pulse* each Friday.

While you're busy serving our state's students, we've got your back in the Alabama Legislature.