



The Consortium of State School Boards Associations Weekly Education Report

JUNE 23, 2025

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The COSSBA Education Report, a weekly publication, provides an executive summary of public policy issues affecting American K-12 education and employment. **Please use the bookmarks below to navigate to your area of interest:**

1. **News, Publications, & Updates on COSSBA Policy Priorities**
 - **Child Nutrition**
 - **Senate Parliamentarian Strikes Key SNAP Spending Cuts from GOP Megabill:** The Senate parliamentarian on Friday ruled against several more Republican provisions in President Trump's megabill, including language to bar immigrants who are not citizens or lawful permanent residents from receiving food assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
 - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
 - **Federalist Society Examines Efforts to Dismantle USED:** On Monday, the Federalist Society held an event that featured a panel of education policy experts and legal scholars examining President Donald Trump's efforts to dismantle the Department of Education (ED), focusing on the legal and policy implications of these actions.
 - **AAAS Hosts Webinar on Evolving STEMM Workforce Needs:** On Tuesday, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) hosted a webinar featuring AAAS Interim Executive Director Tatiana Nin.
 - **AEI Hosts Book Event on Youth Mental Health Crisis:** On Wednesday, American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Senior Fellows Timothy Carney, Naomi

Schaefer Riley, and Sally Satel examined the worsening youth mental health crisis **in a discussion** on their **recently published book**, *Mind the Children: How to Think About the Youth Mental Health Collapse*.

- **Hunt Institute Showcases Model on Leveraging Student Success:** On Wednesday, the Hunt Institute **hosted a panel discussion** titled, “The BARR Model: Leveraging Existing Resources to Promote Student Success,” showcasing how the BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) model helps schools improve student outcomes by focusing on relationships and utilizing data schools already collect.
- **Court Blocks Education Department Office of Civil Rights Staff Cuts:** On Wednesday, a federal judge in Boston **blocked** the Department of Education’s (ED) effort to reduce staff within its Office for Civil Rights (OCR), ordering the agency to restore operations and submit weekly status reports until the office returns to its prior state.

4. **New Publications**

- **State of the States: Five Policy Levers to Improve Math Instruction**
National Council on Teacher Quality (June 2025)
The report found that math achievement drives success in academics and life. Yet, even as students’ math outcomes stagnate—or decline—most states haven’t adopted bold, comprehensive strategies to turn the tide. When states prioritize policies that support teacher effectiveness, they build the foundation for lasting gains in student math achievement.

5. **In the News**

- **Restoring Trade Skills to Liberal Education**
US Department of Education | Homeroom (June 12, 2025)
- **Debate Intensifies Over National School Choice Proposal**
K-12 Dive (June 13, 2025)
- **Teachers Union President Randi Weingarten Resigns From DNC**
Politico (June 15, 2025)
- **Education Department Reinstates Some Research and Data Activities**
The Hechinger Report (June 16, 2025)

6. **Weekly Calendar - What’s coming up this week?**

- **House Appropriations Continued Mark-Up of the FY26 Agriculture Appropriations Bill:** The House Appropriations Committee will resume consideration of the FY2026 Agriculture Appropriations bill.
Monday at 7:30pm
- **The Fiscal Year 2026 Department of Health and Human Services Budget:** The House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health will receive testimony from Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Tuesday at 10am ET
- **Childcare and the American Workforce: Removing Barriers to Economic Growth:** The Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education will hold a hearing on childcare and the U.S. workforce.

Tuesday at 10:15am ET

- **What Parents Want: Innovative Ways to Improve Communication and Build Trust in Schools**: New America will host a peer learning exchange in partnership with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

Tuesday at 1:30pm ET

- **AI Basics: From Definitions to Deployment**: The Campaign for Grade Level Reading will hold a webinar on essential concepts of AI and its critical considerations for educators.

Tuesday at 3pm ET

- **Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee**: The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee will hold a markup of S. 836, the "Children and Teens Online Privacy Protection Act," other bills, and vote on the nomination of Bryan Bedford to be administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

Wednesday at 10am ET

- **Toward a Bilingual Future for English Learners**: New America will hold a webinar on benefits of bilingual education to the 5.3 million students that are English language learners.

Wednesday at 1:30pm ET

- **Executive Session on Nominations**: The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will markup to consider the nominations of Penny Schwinn, of Tennessee, to be Deputy Secretary, and Kimberly Richey, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, both of the Department of Education.

Thursday at 9:30am ET

7. **Future Hearings & Events**

- **Smart Start: Leveraging Technology to Detect and Support Learning Differences Early**: The Campaign for Grade Level Reading will hold a webinar on how technology can support different styles of learning.

July 1 at 3pm ET

8. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**

- **Senate floor**: Consideration of nominations
- **House floor**
 - **H.R. 3944** – Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (Sponsored by Rep. Carter (TX) / Appropriations Committee)
 - **H.R. 875** – Jeremy and Angel Seay and Sergeant Brandon Mendoza Protect Our Communities from DUIs Act of 2025 (Sponsored by Rep. Moore (AL) / Judiciary Committee)
 - **H.R. 275** – Special Interest Alien Reporting Act of 2025 (Sponsored by Rep. Greene (GA) / Homeland Security Committee)
 - **H. Res. 516** – Condemning the violent June 2025 riots in Los Angeles, California. (Sponsored by Rep. Kim / Judiciary Committee)
 - **H. Res. 519** – Condemning the attacks on Minnesota lawmakers in Brooklyn Park and Champlin, Minnesota, and calling for unity and the

rejection of political violence in Minnesota and across the United States, as amended (Sponsored by Rep. Morrison / Oversight and Government Reform Committee)

9. [Important U.S. House and Senate Links](#)

10. [About BPAG](#)

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

CHILD NUTRITION

SENATE PARLIAMENTARIAN STRIKES KEY SNAP CUTS FROM RECONCILIATION

The Senate parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough, [struck down several key provisions](#) of President Trump's budget reconciliation bill, ruling they violate the Senate's Byrd Rule and are therefore ineligible for passage with a simple majority. Among the rejected measures was a Republican proposal to bar non-citizen immigrants from accessing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, as well as a controversial cost-shifting mechanism that would have required states to contribute to SNAP costs based on their benefit error rates. This latter provision faced opposition from moderate GOP Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Susan Collins (R-ME), and its removal may ease efforts to secure their support. The bill would have forced most states—nearly all of which have error rates above 6%—to pay between 5% and 15% of SNAP costs by 2028. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) praised the rulings, asserting that Democrats will continue enforcing Senate rules to block what he called Republicans' "conservative families lose and billionaires win agenda." Without changes to comply with the Byrd Rule, these provisions would require 60 votes to survive procedural objections, significantly complicating GOP efforts to pass the bill under reconciliation.

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

The House was in recess last week and the Senate had a short week due to the Juneteenth federal holiday, so there was not much progress to report on the FY 2026 budget and appropriations process. Education advocates continue to eye late July for House Appropriations Committee action on the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education measure. The Senate continues to navigate its prerogative to change—or not—the House-passed ["One Big Beautiful Bill Act."](#)

The House Appropriations Committee will [continue marking up spending bills this week](#). There will be much activity on both sides of the Capitol as lawmakers look to make progress on both the reconciliation bill and annual spending before the Fourth of July break.

In other news, Democratic [lawmakers are demanding](#) that Education Secretary Linda McMahon halt plans to transfer Career and Technical Education (CTE) and other programs to the Labor Department, arguing her administration has no legal authority to move programs to another agency. The top Democratic members of the House and Senate appropriations and education committees wrote to the Secretary, "We have a simple demand — to follow our nation's education and appropriations laws as Congress wrote them." In response, the Department told the press that they have paused any implementation of the plans to transfer programs and funds. Education Department spokesperson Madi Biedermann said in a statement, "We have paused implementing

this IAA while we appeal a preliminary injunction in place. ED is reviewing the letter and will respond, as we always do, to members of Congress.” No specificity on the timing of the promised response.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Bill Cassidy (R-LA) won approval for his panel’s contribution to the Senate Reconciliation package while other panels do their work. In addition, this week, the Senate parliamentarian started reviewing provisions of the House-passed measure to determine whether they would survive any “Byrd Rule” challenges in the Senate. Senate Parliamentarian Elizabeth MacDonough has issued rulings that several key pieces of the House-passed bill would not prevail any such challenges because they have only a negligible impact on the budget — or none at all. Rulings made public last week relate to provisions from Senate committees on Banking, Environment and Public Works and Armed Services. More rulings are ahead, and an update related to SNAP benefits from parliamentarian meetings over the weekend is highlighted in the Child Nutrition section above.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

FEDERALIST SOCIETY EXAMINES EFFORTS TO DISMANTLE USED

On Monday, the Federalist Society held an event that featured a panel of education policy experts and legal scholars examining President Donald Trump’s efforts to dismantle the Department of Education (ED), focusing on the legal and policy implications of these actions. The discussion included Jonathan Butcher, Will Skillman Senior Research Fellow in Education Policy at the Heritage Foundation; Michael Petrilli, President of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute; David Randall, Director of Research at the National Association of Scholars; Kent Talbert, Investigative Counsel for the House Committee on Education and Workforce and former ED General Counsel; and Robert Eitel, President and Co-Founder of the Defense for Freedom Institute and former Senior Counselor to the Secretary of Education. The panel examined recent administration actions, including a 50% workforce reduction at ED and Executive Order (EO) 14242, which directs the Secretary of Education to initiate ED’s closure and return education control to the states. The EO also calls for rescinding federal civil rights regulations tied to ED funding and eliminating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and gender ideology initiatives. Additionally, the administration has proposed transferring the federal student loan portfolio to the Small Business Administration. Panelists noted that these actions have sparked litigation, with states and school districts suing the department over concerns about the separation of powers. The case is currently pending before the US Supreme Court. Several panelists argued that ED has overstepped its original 1979 mandate to support—not direct—state education efforts. While acknowledging that full dissolution of the ED would require congressional action and amendments to the Department of Education Organization Act, the panel explored the feasibility of reallocating functions like civil rights enforcement and Pell Grant administration to other federal entities. Ultimately, the panel agreed that lasting improvements in student outcomes would stem from state-level reforms rather than federal intervention. A recording of the event is [here](#).

AAAS HOSTS WEBINAR ON EVOLVING STEMM WORKFORCE NEEDS

On Tuesday, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) hosted a webinar featuring AAAS Interim Executive Director Tatiana Nin. During the event, Nin discussed the

evolving U.S. Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM) workforce and spotlighted the findings of *Science at Work: The People and Industries Powering America's Prosperity*, [a new report](#) redefining what it means to be a STEMM professional and emphasizing the sector's expansive economic footprint. According to the report, over 73 million Americans—34% of the national workforce—hold STEMM-related jobs, collectively contributing more than \$10.87 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product annually. The discussion focused on how this data can inform efforts to close the nation's persistent skills gap, where employer demand for STEMM expertise outpaces the available talent. The webinar highlighted the growing importance of recognizing diverse educational pathways into STEMM careers, especially for workers without bachelor's or advanced degrees, as a means of fostering equity and inclusion in the workforce. The conversation also called for a cultural shift in how STEMM jobs are defined, acknowledging the increasing number of roles requiring knowledge of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence. Panelists stressed the need for localized workforce development strategies and stronger collaboration between education systems, industry, and policymakers. The webinar concluded by underscoring the importance of aligning training opportunities with real-world labor demands and broadening public understanding of who can succeed in the STEMM economy.

AEI HOSTS BOOK EVENT ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

On Wednesday, American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Senior Fellows Timothy Carney, Naomi Schaefer Riley, and Sally Satel examined the worsening youth mental health crisis [in a discussion](#) on their [recently published book](#), *Mind the Children: How to Think About the Youth Mental Health Collapse*. The authors explored contributing factors behind rising rates of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress among children and teens. Key themes included the impact of smartphones and social media, the decline of religious affiliation and stable family structures, and broader cultural and educational shifts. Panelists expressed concern over changing patterns in teen drug use—particularly increased marijuana use alone—and cited evidence linking legalization to higher rates of psychosis and addiction. The role of technology was also scrutinized, with experts pointing to sleep disruption, digital dependency, and warped social comparisons as major drivers of mental health issues. The conversation also emphasized the need for a "life script"—a clear sense of purpose, values, and direction—that can help young people build resilience and avoid the mental health pitfalls associated with today's digital and social landscapes. Finally, the panel addressed how policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals can work together to reshape school and community environments to better support youth well-being.

HUNT INSTITUTE SHOWCASES MODEL ON LEVERAGING STUDENT SUCCESS

On Wednesday, the Hunt Institute [hosted a panel discussion](#) titled, "The BARR Model: Leveraging Existing Resources to Promote Student Success," showcasing how the BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) model helps schools improve student outcomes by focusing on relationships and utilizing data schools already collect. Angela Jerabek, Founder and Director of the BARR Center, created the model after seeing half of her students fail during their first year of high school. She believed the issue was not with the students or teachers, but with how schools were structured. BARR encourages collaboration among educators and emphasizes student strengths—not just problems. The model has demonstrated significant impacts on academic performance, school climate, and student well-being. North Dakota Superintendent Kirsten Baesler, who has been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary

Education at the US Department of Education, described BARR as the most effective framework she has encountered. It can be integrated into existing school operations rather than adding new burdens. She emphasized that student-teacher relationships are foundational to learning, and BARR provides educators with a structure to build those connections. Dr. Shannon Mortrud, Assistant Principal at Fargo South High School, shared that her school's ninth-grade failure rate dropped from 50% to 11% after adopting the model. The structured time, called ITIME, helps staff understand students more personally, creating space for meaningful engagement. BARR rests on two core components: data and relationships. Teachers use what they observe in and out of the classroom to identify risks and respond early. The model does not require hiring new staff—only rethinking how schools use their time and teams. Jerabek concluded that when teachers know their students better, both achievement and morale improve. More on the BARR model is [here](#).

COURT BLOCKS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS STAFF CUTS

On Wednesday, a federal judge in Boston **blocked** the Department of Education's (ED) effort to reduce staff within its Office for Civil Rights (OCR), ordering the agency to restore operations and submit weekly status reports until the office returns to its prior state. The ruling, issued by U.S. District Judge Myong Joun, comes in response to ED's March layoffs, which eliminated half of OCR's workforce and shuttered seven of its 12 regional offices. Former staff warned the cuts would severely hinder the office's ability to investigate civil rights complaints in a timely manner. Judge Joun emphasized OCR's essential role in enforcing federal civil rights laws in education, noting that many students facing discrimination lack the resources to file lawsuits and depend on OCR's investigations. He wrote that a "functional OCR is crucial" to protecting against unlawful discrimination. The ruling follows a [lawsuit filed in March](#) by the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, which accused the department of effectively halting investigations into complaints of race and sex discrimination. The group alleged that OCR "cherry-picked" which cases to investigate and showed "contempt for the civil rights of marginalized students." That case is currently paused pending related litigation. Despite these developments, the ED has continued some civil rights work. It launched an ["End DEI" portal](#) for discrimination reporting and [opened investigations](#) into allegations of antisemitism at 60 universities and a civil rights dispute over a Native American mascot in New York, which was referred to the Department of Justice.

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4. New Publications

State of the States: Five Policy Levers to Improve Math Instruction

National Council on Teacher Quality (June 2025)

The report found that math achievement drives success in academics and life. Yet, even as students' math outcomes stagnate—or decline—most states haven't adopted bold, comprehensive strategies to turn the tide. When states prioritize policies that support teacher effectiveness, they build the foundation for lasting gains in student math achievement.

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5. In the News

Restoring Trade Skills to Liberal Education

US Department of Education / Homeroom (June 12, 2025)

Debate Intensifies Over National School Choice Proposal

K-12 Dive (June 13, 2025)

Teachers Union President Randi Weingarten Resigns From DNC

Politico (June 15, 2025)

Education Department Reinstates Some Research and Data Activities

The Hechinger Report (June 16, 2025)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Monday, June 23, 2025

Mark-up: House Appropriations Continued Mark-up of the FY26 Agriculture Appropriations bill

Subject: The House Appropriations Committee will resume consideration of the FY2026 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Contact: Live stream available [here.](#)

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

Hearing: The Fiscal Year 2026 Department of Health and Human Services Budget

Subject: The House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health will receive testimony from Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Contact: Livestream available [here.](#)

Hearing: Child Care and the American Workforce: Removing Barriers to Economic Growth

Subject: The Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education will hold a hearing on childcare and the U.S. workforce.

Time: 10:15 a.m.

Contact: Livestream available [here.](#)

Webinar: What Parents Want: Innovative Ways to Improve Communication and Build Trust in Schools

Subject: New America will host a peer learning exchange in partnership with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

Time: 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here.](#)

Webinar: AI Basics: From Definitions to Deployment

Subject: The Campaign for Grade Level Reading will hold a webinar on essential concepts of AI and its critical considerations for educators.

Panelists: Nathan Kriha, policy analyst, EdTrust; Nneka McGee, founder, Muon Global; Erin Mote, CEO and Founder, EDSAFE AI Alliance; Fran Newberg, deputy chief, Office on Education Technology, The School District of Philadelphia; and Tara Carrozza, director of digital learning and innovation, New York Public Schools.

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Markup: Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee

Subject: The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee will hold a markup of S. 836, the "Children and Teens Online Privacy Protection Act," other bills, and vote on the nomination of Bryan Bedford to be administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Contact: Livestream available [here](#).

Webinar: Toward a Bilingual Future for English Learners

Subject: New America will hold a webinar on benefits of bilingual education to the 5.3 million students that are English language learners.

Time: 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Thursday, June 26, 2025

Mark-up: Executive Session on Nominations

Subject: The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will markup to consider the nominations of Penny Schwinn, of Tennessee, to be Deputy Secretary, and Kimberly Richey, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, both of the Department of Education

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Contact: Live stream available [here](#).

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

Webinar: Smart Start: Leveraging Technology to Detect and Support Learning Differences Early

Subject: The Campaign for Grade Level Reading will hold a webinar on how technology can support different styles of learning.

Panelists: Nadine Gaab, Ph.D., Harvard Graduate School of Education; Loui Lord Nelson, Ph.D., The UDL Approach; Ola Ozernov-Palchik, Ph.D., Boston University; Glenna Wright-Gallo, Everway; and Tina Zampitella, M.Ed., AIM Academy; Carla E. Small (moderator), Sprout Labs.

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

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8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor:

Consideration of nominations

House Floor:

H.R. 3944 – Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (*Sponsored by Rep. Carter (TX) / Appropriations Committee*)

H.R. 875 – Jeremy and Angel Seay and Sergeant Brandon Mendoza Protect Our Communities from DUIs Act of 2025 (*Sponsored by Rep. Moore (AL) / Judiciary Committee*)

H.R. 275 – Special Interest Alien Reporting Act of 2025 (*Sponsored by Rep. Greene (GA) / Homeland Security Committee*)

H. Res. 516 – Condemning the violent June 2025 riots in Los Angeles, California. (*Sponsored by Rep. Kim / Judiciary Committee*)

H. Res. 519 – Condemning the attacks on Minnesota lawmakers in Brooklyn Park and Champlin, Minnesota, and calling for unity and the rejection of political violence in Minnesota and across the United States, as amended (*Sponsored by Rep. Morrison / Oversight and Government Reform Committee*)

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9. Links for Up-to-Date Information on Hearings, Legislation, and Events

[U.S. House and Senate 2025 Schedule](#)

[U.S. Department of Education](#)

[U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions](#)

[U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor](#)

[U.S. Senate Budget Committee](#)

[U.S. House Budget Committee](#)

[Congressional Budget Office](#)

[Federal legislative information](#)

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10. About BPAG

Bose Public Affairs Group is a full-service government affairs and public relations consulting firm that has built a reputation for producing results. We partner with clients committed to excellence in education and other social services to achieve policy and advocacy success by:

- leveraging our expertise and passion;
- strategizing intelligent solutions; and,
- Creating meaningful impact.

Our team includes long-term insiders in education policy from Pre-K through higher education, innovative thinkers and savvy strategists that provide a comprehensive array of customized client services. We have the knowledge, skills, and relationships that are necessary for successful advocacy at all levels. From grassroots to grass tops and everything in between, our broad-based legislative practice approaches every project with the same degree of determination and professionalism. BPAG provides expertise in a variety of services:

- Government Relations
- Research and Analysis
- Advocacy Training
- Association Management

- Strategic Communications
- Policy Events

For more information, please visit our [website](#).

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