



The Consortium of State School Boards Associations
Weekly Education Report
LAST WEEK IN WASHINGTON

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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](#)**

• **[IDEA](#)**

- **[Hunt Institute, ED Discuss Policies to Support Students with Disabilities](#)**: On Thursday, the Hunt Institute held an event titled, “Empowering Possibilities: Building Inclusive Pathways to Careers for Individuals with Disabilities” as part of their Postsecondary Pathways webinar series.

2. **[Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up](#)**

• **[Impact on State School Board Associations](#)**

3. **[In Brief – Last Week in Washington](#)**

- **[Cardona Appoints New National Assessment Governing Board Members](#)**: On Friday, October 6, Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona announced the appointment of 11 education leaders – seven new members and four reappointed members – to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which oversees the Nation's Report Card.
- **[ED Announces TA Centers to Support Learning, Student Wellbeing](#)**: On October 6, The Department of Education announced the creation of technical assistance centers to support state and local efforts to enhance student wellbeing, academic success, and school safety.

- **Public Charter School Leaders on Retaining Teachers of Color:** On Wednesday, The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) hosted an event titled, "Public Charter Schools and Teachers of Color."

4. **New Publications**

- **Eleventh Annual High School Benchmarks Report Tracking Trends in College Progress**

National Student Clearinghouse (September, 2023)

This eleventh annual report provides the most current data on high school graduates' postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes.

5. **In the News**

- **Workplaces Do It, So Can Schools: Real-World Relevance Keeps Girls in STEM**

Forbes (October 13, 2023)

- **Education Can Unite Us: That's Needed Now More Than Ever**

The Hill (October 10, 2023)

- **Most E-Rate Participants Call for More Cybersecurity Support with FCC Funds**

K-12 Dive (October 10, 2023)

- **Schools' Pandemic Spending Boosted Tech Companies. Did It Help U.S. Students?**

Washington Times (October 9, 2023)

- **Bring Education Back to the States**

The Hill (October 9, 2023)

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

- **Principals' Perspectives on Federal Education Funding:** The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) will hold an event to examine school leader perspectives on federal education funding.

Wednesday at 10:30am ET

- **House Education and Workforce Subcommittee Hearing on Explicit Content in Libraries:** The House Education and the Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee will hold a hearing on

"Protecting Kids: Combating Graphic, Explicit Content in School Libraries."

Thursday at 10:15am ET

7. **Future Hearings & Events**

- **Taking the Science of Reading to Scale:** FutureEd at Georgetown University will hold a webinar on how states and localities are responding to state legislative

efforts to enact science of reading laws and scale these programs for the long-term benefits of students.

October 24 at 2pm ET

8. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**
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1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

HUNT INSTITUTE, ED DISCUSS POLICIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

On Thursday, the Hunt Institute held an event titled, “Empowering Possibilities: Building Inclusive Pathways to Careers for Individuals with Disabilities” as part of their Postsecondary Pathways webinar series. Moderator Erica McCray spoke with John Samuel, co-founder and CEO of Ablr; Katherine Neas, deputy assistant secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) at the Department of Education; and Shajira Brown, director of equity and inclusion at the National Disability Institute (NDI). Discussion focused on the successful partnerships, policies, and grant programs needed to ensure people with disabilities have a smooth transition from their postsecondary education to the workforce. Samuel explained how he founded Ablr to remove barriers for all people with disabilities by eliminating the digital divide, shifting the mindsets of people and organizations, and creating pathways to employment. The motivation to establish Ablr generated from his personal experience of being diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa in college and fearing poor job prospects. After opening up about his disability, Samuel discovered a community of people with similar work barriers and founded Ablr to address the large amounts of inaccessible digital content. Neas highlighted how OSERS works to improve results and outcomes for people with disabilities of all ages by providing leadership and targeted funding. Brown with NDI stressed the importance of community partnerships to collaborate and communicate effectively. NDI strives to raise awareness that people with disabilities are ubiquitous in schools, in the workplace, and in the community. Brown asserted that individuals with disabilities should have the same opportunities and potential for advancement as everyone else. Instead of looking at disabilities in the workplace solely from a compliance standpoint, there needs to be a shift to focus on the disability community by equipping educators, policy makers, and companies with the tools they need to make long-term positive steps in the right direction.

2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

The US House of Representatives has been without a Speaker since October 3rd, when former Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) was ousted from the position by eight of his Republican

colleagues and all of his Democratic peers. Since then, there have been hours of meetings behind closed doors as the Republican conference decides what to do next. As of Monday, it appears that Representative Jim Jordan (R-OH) is inching closer to the 217 votes needed for the gavel after receiving the nomination from his caucus late Friday afternoon. In the closed-door session, he received 152 votes and has been trying to consolidate his support ever since.

On Thursday evening, Representative Steve Scalise (R-LA), who had been nominated for the job, withdrew from the race. He acknowledged that he wouldn't be able to get 217 Republican votes on the House floor and Rep. Jordan (R-OH) seized on the news and let his colleagues know he is still in the running. On Friday afternoon, Representative Austin Scott (R-GA) became a contender. Late Friday, Rep. Jordan got the nomination in the Republic Caucus and has been steadily working to try and win over some of his more skeptical colleagues. A tentative floor vote has been scheduled for Tuesday afternoon so stay tuned!

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

With the House in chaos, there has been no progress on resolving Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 spending. The temporary spending measure keeping the federal government open expires November 17th. Some lawmakers have raised questions about whether the House has to stick to the deal former Speaker McCarthy made with fiscal conservatives regarding spending levels. House Rules Committee Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK), the former Republican leader of the House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) Appropriations Subcommittee, told Politico that the deal then-Speaker McCarthy made with conservatives to cut FY 2024 discretionary levels far below the levels set by the bipartisan Fiscal Responsibility Act – the agreement to raise the debt ceiling – no longer exists. He went on to make the case that the “murky” deal to cut funding below the levels approved in the House Appropriations Committee bills probably wouldn't have the support of a majority of the House. Even before making those additional spending cuts, the House LHHS bill cut Education Department funding by \$22 billion (28%), in sharp contrast to the bill approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee, which essentially level funds the agency. It seems that Rep. Cole, and perhaps others, might revisit those proposed levels. Eventually.

While no legislative business can be done on the House floor until a Speaker is elected, Committees are back to holding hearings next week. The House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education is hosting an October 19th hearing titled, “Protecting Kids: Combating Graphic, Explicit Content in School Libraries.” It will surely be a partisan affair. In the meantime, stakeholders of every kind are eager to see a path to continuous federal funding for the fiscal year that began October 1.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

CARDONA APPOINTS NEW NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

On Friday, October 6, Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona announced the appointment of 11 education leaders – seven new members and four reappointed members – to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which oversees the Nation's Report Card. The Nation's Report Card, also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), is the only nationally representative assessment of student achievement. Over the past year, NAEP provided critical insights into student learning gaps across subjects and

grades worsened by the pandemic. In addition, accompanying survey data revealed important trends related to chronic absenteeism, literacy, and teacher confidence in getting reducing learning loss. The nonpartisan 26-member governing board was established by Congress to set policy for the Nation's Report Card. The board decides what grades and subjects to assess, content to include, and achievement levels. It works with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which administers NAEP, to release and disseminate results. "I'm confident the appointees announced today will draw on their diverse experiences - including as school leaders, educators, and parents - to guide decision-making around how we assess student achievement in our country. At this critical moment in our students' continued recovery from the disruption of the pandemic, I'm especially grateful for these leaders and their willingness to serve on the National Assessment Governing Board," said Secretary Cardona. The list of appointees can be found [here](#). New and reappointed members will be sworn in at the governing board's quarterly meeting in November.

ED ANNOUNCES TA CENTERS TO SUPPORT LEARNING, STUDENT WELLBEING

On October 6, The Department of Education (ED) **announced** the creation of technical assistance centers to support state and local efforts to enhance student wellbeing, academic success, and school safety. These centers complement the ED's commitment to accelerate learning, meet students' mental health needs, and expand academic opportunity and success inside and outside of the regular school day. Funds awarded for these technical assistance centers include \$760,619 for the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Center; \$18.3 million for National Technical Assistance Center for 21st Century Community Learning Centers; and \$5.6 million for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (Title IV, Part A) and Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) Stronger Connections Technical Assistance Center. These centers "will support the Department's Raise the Bar: Lead the World initiative and build on announcements the Department made earlier in the year to accelerate learning and improve student achievement," the announcement states.

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL LEADERS ON RETAINING TEACHERS OF COLOR

On Wednesday, The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) hosted an event titled, "Public Charter Schools and Teachers of Color." The event featured Norma Garcés, executive director of Academia Cesar Chavez School; Taylor Howard, director of professional development at The Center for Black Educator Development; Paula Cole, executive director of Educators for Excellence; Debbie Veney, senior vice president of communications for NAPCS; Roberto J. Rodriguez, assistant secretary for planning, evaluation, and policy development at the U.S. Department of Education; and Fiona Sheridan-McIver, senior manager in government relations at NAPCS. The discussion focused on the importance of teachers of color in academic environments, particularly pertaining to K-12 education. An emphasis was placed on charter schools, as nearly 70 percent of the student population in charter schools is comprised of students of color, compared to 53 percent of public school districts, and the educator workforces in charter schools tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse than public school districts. Questions were raised about how schools could better support and retain teachers of color, who often take on the 'invisible labor' of educating peers and students on cultural differences and social issues. Panelists vocalized the difference between tokenism and valuing diversity, noting that schools should strive for the latter. Panelists examined how they could elevate the voices and perspectives of teachers of color, and many agreed that increased and targeted funding would be

the best way to make improvements. There was mention of using government seed money to establish more schools, as well as suggestions for teacher base salaries. One panelist noted that many passionate teachers were being driven out of the profession due to long hours and low wages; another stated that teaching is the only profession that touches all other professions first and is invaluable to society. A full recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).

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4. New Publications

Eleventh Annual High School Benchmarks Report Tracking Trends in College Progress
National Student Clearinghouse (September, 2023)

This eleventh annual report provides the most current data on high school graduates' postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes. These data are the most relevant benchmarks for monitoring and evaluating progress in assisting students to make the high school to college transition and earn a credential in a timely manner.

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5. In the News

Workplaces Do It, So Can Schools: Read-World Relevance Keeps Girls in STEM
Forbes (October 11, 2023)

Education Can United Us; That's Needed Now More Than Ever
The Hill (October 10, 2023)

Most E-Rate Participants Call for More Cybersecurity Support with FCC Funds
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Washington Times (October 9, 2023)

Bring Education Back to the States
The Hill (October 9, 2023)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Event: Principals' Perspectives on Federal Education Funding

Subject: The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) will hold an event to examine school leader perspectives on federal education funding.

Time and Location: 10:30 a.m.; SVC 203-02, US Capitol Building.

Registration: TBD.

Thursday, October 19, 2023

Hearing: House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Explicit Content in Libraries

Subject: The House Education and the Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Protecting Kids: Combating Graphic, Explicit Content in School Libraries."

Time and Location: 10:15 a.m.; 2175 Rayburn HOB.

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

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

Webinar: Taking the Science of Reading to Scale

Subject: FutureEd at Georgetown University will hold a webinar on how states and localities are responding to state legislative efforts to enact science of reading laws and scale these programs for the long-term benefits of students.

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

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8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor:

Consideration of nominees

House Floor:

Potential vote to elect a Speaker of the House

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

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

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

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10. About BPAG

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- 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

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