



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

**OCTOBER 23, 2023**

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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**

• **Broadband Connectivity and E-Rate**

- **FCC Adopts Rule Allowing Funds for Wi-Fi on School Buses:** On Thursday, in a partisan 3-2 vote, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) commissioners adopted a declaratory ruling allowing districts to use money from the E-Rate program, which assists schools and libraries with buying affordable broadband, toward Wi-Fi and supported devices on buses.

• **Funding**

- **ED Awards Support Student Parents, Diverse Schools & More:** In the past two weeks, the Department of Education announced a number of awards. The agency awarded \$24 million to support family engagement and improved access to childcare for student parents and another \$25 million to support diverse schools and tribal teachers.
- **Principals Share Perspectives on Federal Education Funding:** On Wednesday, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) hosted an event titled, "Principals' Perspectives on Federal Education Funding." The event featured a panel of expert speakers experienced in K-12 program administration, and the discussion centered

on the GOP's proposed education spending cuts and their prospective negative impacts on schools.

2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**

- **Impact on State School Board Associations**

3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**

- **Learning Policy Institute Looks at Restorative Practices in Schools:** Last week, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) hosted an event titled, “Safe Schools, Thriving Students: Fostering Restorative Practices and Safe and Supportive Communities.” Panel conversation focused on the implementation of restorative practices in K-12 schools, as opposed to traditional methods of discipline such as punishments, detention, suspension, or expulsion.
- **House Ed Panel Hears Testimony on Explicit Content in Libraries:** On Thursday, the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing on “Protecting Kids: Combating Graphic, Explicit Content in School Libraries.”

4. **New Publications**

- **Surveys of Teachers and Parents on Educational Technology**  
*American Federation of Teachers (October, 2023)*  
This memo presents the key findings from surveys of teachers and public school parents that were conducted on behalf of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), focusing on the topic of educational technology. The organization interviewed a representative, national cross-section of members for the teacher survey; and a representative national cross-section of public school parents for the parent survey.

5. **In the News**

- **What's In Biden's \$106 Billion Supplemental Funding Request**  
*Reuters (October 20, 2023)*
- **Education Department Watchdog to Audit Pandemic Aid Dollars Through 2025**  
*K-12 Dive (October 19, 2023)*
- **The Biden Administration Still Hasn't Defined Its K-12 Agenda. Why?**  
*Education Week (October 18, 2023)*
- **Tennessee Might Reject Federal Education Funds. What Would That Look Like?**  
*The Hill (October 15, 2023)*

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

- **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.  
*Tuesday at 2pm ET*

- **House Ways and Means Committee on School Choice and Tax Incentives:**  
The House Ways and Means Committee will hold a hearing on “Educational Freedom and Opportunity for American Families, Students, and Workers.”  
*Wednesday at 10am ET*
7. **Future Hearings & Events**
    - **Effects on Public Pre-K:** The Urban Institute will hold a virtual discussion on “The Effects of Public Pre-kindergarten for 3-Year-Olds on Early Elementary School Enrollment: Evidence from the D.C. Centralized Lottery,” focusing on “low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.”  
*October 30 at 11am ET*
    - **Expanding Education Opportunity through Community-Wide Efforts:** The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) will hold a discussion on expanding educational opportunities through community-wide initiatives like opportunity zones and promise neighborhoods.  
*October 30 at 4pm ET*
  8. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**
    - **Senate floor:** Consideration of nominees
    - **House floor:** Potential vote to elect a Speaker of the House
  9. **Important U.S. House and Senate Links**
  10. **About BPAG**

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## 1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

### BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE

#### FCC ADOPTS RULE ALLOWING FUNDS FOR WI-FI ON SCHOOL BUSES

On Thursday, in a partisan 3-2 vote, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) commissioners adopted a **declaratory ruling** allowing districts to use money from the E-Rate program, which assists schools and libraries with buying affordable broadband, toward Wi-Fi and supported devices on buses. The rule also directs a public notice for comments on the specific services and equipment that should be funded using E-Rate dollars. “We’re going to help close the homework gap and get more kids connected for school,” FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel said at the commission’s meeting. “This is especially vital in rural areas where commutes to school are long and we all know broadband is not always available.” Rosenworcel has been proposing to make Wi-Fi and hotspots eligible for E-Rate funding since last year. Her proposal was included as part of her new **Learn Without Limits initiative**. The expansion would address the June 2024 sun-setting of the Emergency Connectivity Fund, which has helped schools and libraries with remote learning tools like Wi-Fi on school buses. Funding for the E-Rate program, which is under the Universal Service Fund, is typically eligible to certain schools and libraries for educational purposes, with this new rule clarifying that Wi-Fi and similar technology on school buses is an educational purpose. Congressional Democrats and those on the commission have applauded the proposal for supporting students, particularly those in rural

areas, while Republicans have expressed concerns over wasteful government spending and that it might increase students' access to unsupervised internet use.

## **FUNDING**

### **ED AWARDS SUPPORT TRIBAL ED, STUDENT PARENTS, DIVERSE SCHOOLS & MORE**

Last week, the Department of Education (ED) announced a number of awards. The agency awarded \$24 million to support family engagement and improved access to childcare for student parents. On October 11, ED **announced** \$11.4 million in grants to 12 organizations in states and school districts across the country to improve and strengthen family engagement programs. This investment builds on ED's "**Raising the Bar for Parent Partnership in Our Schools**" efforts to engage parents, family members, caregivers, or advocates. On October 12, ED **announced** an additional \$13 million in grants to 34 institutions of higher education to support or establish high quality, campus-based child care programs to meet the needs of student parents with low incomes enrolled on their campuses. For the first time, applicants for the **Child Care Access Means Parents in School** (CCAMPIS) grant program were encouraged to propose ways to improve the quality of the services they provide. Furthermore, ED is distributing another \$25 million to support schools, including an **announced** \$11 million in awards for the new **Native American Language Resource Centers** (NALRC) **program**, the first-ever Native American Teacher Retention Initiative (NATRI) program, and the **State Tribal Education Partnership** (STEP) **program**. The funding will help strengthen the vitality of Native American languages in schools, support Native American teachers, and ensure Tribal Educational Agencies can coordinate grant resources alongside state and local partners. And an **announced** \$14 million in awards to help support local- and state-driven voluntary efforts to foster more diverse school communities through ED's first-ever **Fostering Diverse Schools Demonstration Program**. These grants, are aligned with the Raise the Bar: Lead the World call to action and support district efforts to enrich educational experiences.

### **PRINCIPALS SHARE PERSPECTIVES ON FEDERAL EDUCATION FUNDING**

On Wednesday, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) hosted an event titled, "Principals' Perspectives on Federal Education Funding." The event featured a panel of expert speakers experienced in K-12 program administration. The discussion centered on the GOP's proposed education spending cuts and their prospective negative impacts on schools. The Republican's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-H) funding bill includes a cut of \$22.5 billion—28 percent—below the fiscal year 2023 enacted level for discretionary appropriations for the Department of Education (ED). The Labor-H bill contains many subsections that are relevant to NASSP and elementary and secondary education funding, but the panel focused on three main issues: Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The panel explained how Title I focuses on improving the academic achievement of disadvantaged students and is designed to bridge education gaps between students of different financial classes. For instance, Title I funding can be used to subsidize school lunches or ensure students have access to necessary technology. Title II-A centers around preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers, principals, or other school leaders. Students' educational needs continuously fluctuate, and this statute gives teachers training opportunities that can help them improve their skills as well as advance their own careers. It is the federal government's largest investment in educator professional development, the panel noted. Title III funds language instruction for English learners and immigrant students and helps ensure that nonnative speakers can attain English proficiency and develop high levels

of academic achievement in English. The proposed House Republican FY 2024 funding bill would reduce Title I spending by 80 percent and eliminate Title II-A and Title III programs altogether. Panelists expressed their devastation at these proposed cuts and pressed that they would have sizeable impacts on the quality education that students have access to, particularly at a time where schools are already experiencing overcrowding, teacher shortages, and student apathy. Many schools rely on this funding for their daily operations, and already have budgets that are stretched thin. The panel further noted how teachers are understaffed and overworked, and the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the educator shortages that have strained schools for decades. Participants asserted that the proposed bill would worsen the pressure put on teachers and school administrators to meet the unique needs of their student population. These funding cuts would also disproportionately impact low-income students and students of color. COSSBA has been vocally pushing back against these proposed funding cuts, which are also a top priority of our organization. More information about the Republican proposed fiscal year 2024 ED budget can be found [here](#).

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## **2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up**

As last week came to a close, the US House of Representatives remained without a Speaker and in a state of chaos. As of late Friday, Representative Jim Jordan (R-OH) lost his third vote for the job—by the largest margin to date—and the Republican caucus voted to select another speaker designee for the caucus. It was decided that by Sunday evening, all interested candidates should put their names forward for the position. The caucus will hold a closed-door forum on Monday evening with a possible caucus vote on Tuesday morning. As of Monday morning, 9 members had declared they were running – including the number three member of House leadership Representative Tom Emmer (R-MN) the majority whip. What comes next is anyone’s guess as it seems unlikely with 9 candidates running that any member could gather the 217 GOP votes needed to become speaker. Last week was full of intraparty sniping, reports of death threats, finger pointing, and shouting. Democrats remain unified in their support for their leader, Representative Hakeem Jeffries (R-NY), and are open to giving acting Speaker Patrick McHenry (R-NC) the Speaker’s gavel through the end of the year in order to get back to business. That notion faces strong opposition from some Republicans. The path forward is murky. At best.

In the meantime, the White House [has requested](#) \$105 billion for Ukraine, Israel, addressing the border crisis, and other priorities. The [70-page letter](#), addressed to Speaker Pro Tempore McHenry, also details needs around access to “high speed Internet” and child care. With the House in disarray, it’s unclear what elements of the request might be funded, but some Republicans will be uncomfortable with a bill that connects the needs of Ukraine to those of Israel, as well as the border crisis.

Maybe the House will have a new Speaker this week? Or an empowered temporary Speaker who can bring bills to the floor? Or some other unprecedented scenario? Maybe...

### **How does this impact State School Board Associations?**

As the House remains leaderless, time marches toward November 17<sup>th</sup> and the expiration of the continuing resolution that is funding the federal government. The country is four weeks away from the drama of another shutdown deadline. COSSBA’s federal team in DC and other education advocates continue to remind lawmakers that the spending bills developed by the

House would be detrimental and urge them to support the bipartisan Senate proposals that essentially provide level funding for education and other important domestic programs.

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### **3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington**

#### **LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE LOOKS AT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS**

Last week, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) hosted an event titled, “Safe Schools, Thriving Students: Fostering Restorative Practices and Safe and Supportive Communities.” The event featured Tatiana Chaterji, restorative justice facilitator at Oakland Unified School District; LPI President and CEO Linda Darling-Hammond; Sean Darling-Hammond, assistant professor of community health sciences and biostatistics at the University of California, Los Angeles; Gerry House, former president of the Institute for Student Achievement; Sarah Klevan, senior researcher for Learning Policy Institute; Pedro Noguera, Dean with the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education; and Carlyne Quintana, deputy chancellor of teaching and learning at New York City Public Schools. Panel conversation focused on the implementation of restorative practices in K-12 schools, as opposed to traditional methods of discipline such as punishments, detention, suspension, or expulsion. According to panelists, exclusionary discipline methods can lead to social isolation, indifference, and disillusionment. Harsh punishments can negatively impact students’ self-perception and development. Exclusionary discipline is racially disparate; it is more likely to be found in schools with higher populations of students of color. High suspension rates tend to be found in lower-income schools, which often lack the resources to address the underlying issues that can increase poor behavior. The panel elaborated on how some K-12 educators and faculty have become proponents of restorative alternative practices such as community building, conflict mediation, and intervention. These efforts seek to positively connect troubled students with their peers. Some teachers see restorative practices as a way for students to not only build confidence in their community, but also in themselves. Some panelists note that restorative practices in schools can help reduce the school-to-prison pipeline, as truant students are more likely to become involved in gang activities. Additionally, these practices contribute to a decline in misbehavior, depressive symptoms, sleep deprivation, and illness. Panelists also note that schools with restorative practices see better performance on standardized testing. For restorative practices to be successfully implemented, certain conditions must first be met. There needs to be a positive community environment, hands-on learning, and room for students to express themselves. Panelists also discussed the role of School Resource Officers (SROs) in communities that have problems with violence. Some panelists believed SROs provide a layer of protection for students and teachers and that having a safe environment to learn in is crucial to education quality. However, it is important for schools to not feel militarized with the presence of SROs, and for students to know that SROs are there for their protection. Information about the event can be found [here](#).

#### **HOUSE ED PANEL HEARS TESTIMONY ON EXPLICIT CONTENT IN LIBRARIES**

On Thursday, the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing on “Protecting Kids: Combating Graphic, Explicit Content in School Libraries.” “Parents are rightly concerned about the kind of content their children are consuming at the K-12 level. It’s time that we have a conversation that’s grounded in reality and focused on how to create an environment that is in the best interest of

children’s educational development,” said Subcommittee Chairman Aaron Bean (R-FL) in advance of the hearing. The [witness panel](#) featured Lindsey Smith, chair of the Montgomery County, Maryland, chapter of Moms for Liberty; Dr. Jonathan Friedman, director of free expression and education programs at PEN America; Max Eden, research fellow for the American Enterprise Institute; and Megan Degenfelder, superintendent for the Wyoming Department of Education. Thursday’s House hearing followed a September Senate Judiciary Committee [hearing](#) on book bans. The House education panel’s hearing focused more on the prevalence of explicit content in libraries, and as was expected, it was similarly partisan. Chair Bean opened the hearing with a warning that the proceedings would be covering graphic content and young people should reconsider tuning in if they had. To counter the negative rhetoric around book bans, Bean further expressed in his opening remarks that “School boards, communities, and parents constantly set standards of decency; removing a book from a library shelf is not akin to pouring gasoline on it and setting it ablaze. It’s not criminalizing the ownership of the book. It’s not even making them less accessible.” In closing, he made an appeal to parents that they “keep demanding that your school board reflect the values of your communities, keep involving yourself in your children’s education, and most importantly, keep doing what’s best for your kids.” Subcommittee Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici noted in her remarks that “this is the U.S. Congress, not a school board meeting.” She stated that school library books should be age appropriate and that the federal government should not dictate school curricula or the books that go in libraries and accused her Republican colleagues of abandoning those values. She further criticized republicans for “waging these culture wars, in part to undermine our public education system, and to try to justify defunding public schools and libraries preferring instead to funnel public dollars into low quality private voucher programs.” Opening remarks, witness testimony and a recording of Thursday’s hearing are archived [here](#).

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#### **4. New Publications**

##### **Surveys of Teachers and Parents on Educational Technology**

*American Federation of Teachers* (October, 2023)

This memo presents the key findings from surveys of teachers and public school parents that were conducted on behalf of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), focusing on the topic of educational technology. The organization interviewed a representative, national cross-section of members for the teacher survey; and a representative national cross-section of public school parents for the parent survey.

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#### **5. In the News**

##### **What's In Biden's \$106 Billion Supplemental Funding Request**

*Reuters* (October 20, 2023)

##### **Education Department Watchdog to Audit Pandemic Aid Dollars Through 2025**

*K-12 Dive* (October 19, 2023)

##### **The Biden Administration Still Hasn’t Defined Its K-12 Agenda. Why?**

*Education Week* (October 18, 2023)

## Tennessee Might Reject Federal Education Funds. What Would That Look Like?

*The Hill* (October 15, 2023)

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### THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

#### 6. Weekly Calendar

##### **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](#).

##### **Wednesday, October 25, 2023**

###### **Hearing: House Ways and Means Committee on School Choice and Tax Incentives**

**Subject:** The House Ways and Means Committee will hold a hearing on "Educational Freedom and Opportunity for American Families, Students, and Workers."

**Time and Location:** 10:00 a.m.; 1100 Longworth HOB.

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

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#### 7. Future Hearings and Events

##### **Monday, October 30, 2023**

###### **Webinar: Effects of Public Pre-K**

**Subject:** The Urban Institute will hold a virtual discussion on "The Effects of Public Pre-kindergarten for 3-Year-Olds on Early Elementary School Enrollment: Evidence from the D.C. Centralized Lottery," focusing on "low-income neighborhoods and communities of color."

**Participants:** Erica Greenberg, principal research associate, Urban Institute; Breno Braga, principal research associate, Urban Institute; and Miriam Calderon, chief policy officer, Zero To Three.

**Time:** 11:00 a.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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## 9. Links for Up-to-Date Information on Hearings, Legislation, and Events

[U.S. House and Senate 2023 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

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