



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**

• **Broadband Connectivity and E-Rate**

• **White House Requests Additional \$9.1B for FCC's Broadband Efforts**

MeriTalk (October 27, 2023)

The White House is asking Congress for an additional \$9.1 billion to support the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), including \$6 billion to help fund its Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and \$3.1 billion for the FCC to fund the removal of outdated communications infrastructure operated by providers.

• **Teacher-Principal Training and Recruitment**

• **The Relationship between Teacher Intentions, Turnover Behavior, and School Conditions**

Brookings (October, 2023)

Research using statewide administrative data has shown teacher turnover climbed in 2021 and 2022 in several states, raising concerns that the worst could be yet to come.

• **Funding**

• **Need More Time to Spend ESSER Funds? Contact Your State Now, Ed. Dept. Says**

Education Week (October 23, 2023)

School districts that want more time to spend their third and final round of federal COVID-relief dollars on contract expenses should start contacting

their state departments of education immediately, a U.S. Department of Education official told a gathering of school finance chiefs.

• **Child Nutrition**

• **Food Insecurity Increased As Pandemic-Era Meal Waivers Ended**

K-12 Dive (October 27, 2023)

Food insecurity in U.S. households with children increased to 17.3 percent in 2022, up from 12.5 percent the year before and 14.8 percent in 2020, according to federal research on household food security released last week by the Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service.

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

• **Impact on State School Board Associations**

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

• **State, Local School Leaders Examine “Science of Reading”**: On Tuesday, FutureEd hosted an event titled, “Taking the Science of Reading to Scale.” The science of reading is a term that refers to decades of research in fields including brain science that point to effective strategies for teaching kids to read.

• **House Holds Oversight Hearing on Apprenticeships, Career Pathways**: On Wednesday, the House Oversight and Accountability Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee held a hearing titled, “The Power of Apprenticeships: Faster, Better Paths to Prosperous Jobs and Less Waste in Higher Education.”

• **House Ways and Means Examines School Choice, Education Tax Policy**: On Wednesday, the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on “Educational Freedom and Opportunity for American Families, Students, and Workers,” which highlighted education tax policies and legislative solutions to expand quality education through certain tax programs.

4. **New Publications**

• **5 Ways State Governments Can Support Student Mental Health**

Center for American Progress (October, 2023)

This issue brief outlines how state governments can support schools in best serving their students and addressing the student mental health crisis.

• **What School Boards Need to Know about Title IX**

American Enterprise Institute (October, 2023)

As school board members look ahead, they should be aware of what changes are expected, what legal claims are likely, what could happen if school board policies do not comply with the anticipated final Title IX rules, and what to do if they are in a state that has passed laws in conflict with the new ED rules.

5. **In the News**

• **Afterschool Meal Participation Drops for the First Time**

K-12 Dive (October 26, 2023)

• **Here’s Where Speaker Mike Johnson Stands on the Issues**

Politico (October, 25, 2023)

- **Ranking Member Cassidy, Hickenlooper Introduce 21st Century Dyslexia Act**
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (October, 25, 2023)
 - **Understanding CISA's Cybersecurity Plan**
K-12 Dive (October 23, 2023)
6. **Weekly Calendar - What's coming up this week?**
- **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."
Monday 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.
Monday at 4pm ET
7. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**
- **Senate floor:** Potential consideration of minibus appropriations
 - **House floor:**
 - **H.R. 4364** – Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2024
 - **H.R. 4821** – Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024
 - **H.R. 4820** – Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024
 - **H. Res. 773** – Providing for the expulsion of Representative George Santos from the House of Representatives
 - **H. Res. 807** – Censuring Representative Rashida Tlaib for antisemitic activity, sympathizing with terrorist organizations, and leading an insurrection at the United States Capitol Complex
 - **H. Res. 610** – Censuring Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene
8. **Important U.S. House and Senate Links**
9. **About BPAG**

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE

WHITE HOUSE REQUESTS ADDITIONAL \$9.1B FOR FCC'S BROADBAND EFFORTS

The White House is asking Congress for an additional \$9.1 billion to support the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), including \$6 billion to help fund its Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and \$3.1 billion for the FCC to fund the removal of outdated communications infrastructure operated by providers. The supplemental funding request, which

the White House sent to Capitol Hill last week, looks to expand access to high-speed internet across America through the ACP. [Read the article.](#)

TEACHER PRINCIPAL TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER INTENTIONS, TURNOVER BEHAVIOR, AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS

Brookings (October, 2023)

Research from Brookings using statewide administrative data has shown teacher turnover climbed in 2021 and 2022 in several states, raising concerns that the worst could be yet to come. Teachers who say they plan to leave their schools—either to transfer or leave education—typically do leave their school within three years. Teacher intentions—and, to a lesser extent, eventual turnover—are largely driven by school organizational conditions and organizational commitment. [Read the report.](#)

FUNDING

NEED MORE TIME TO SPEND ESSER FUNDS? CONTACT YOUR STATE NOW, ED. DEPT. SAYS

School districts that want more time to spend their third and final round of federal COVID-relief dollars on contract expenses should start contacting their state departments of education immediately, a U.S. Department of Education official told a gathering of school finance chiefs. [Read the article.](#)

CHILD NUTRITION

FOOD INSECURITY INCREASED AS PANDEMIC-ERA MEAL WAIVERS ENDED

Food insecurity in U.S. households with children increased to 17.3 percent in 2022, up from 12.5 percent the year before and 14.8 percent in 2020, according to federal research on household food security released last week by the Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service. [Read the article.](#)

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Last week, House Republicans finally chose a new House Speaker. After three weeks without one, Republicans unanimously elected Representative Mike Johnson (R-LA). As he campaigned for the post, he [outlined](#) his plans for appropriations and other legislative goals, asserting, “the survival and future of our republic may well be decided over the next twelve months.” Education advocates are watching these plans closely. His letter does not mention the total discretionary funding level he would like to see available in FY 2024, but it does reference a “commitment to rein in wasteful spending.”

While the Senate was debating an FY 2024 “minibus” spending bill that included the Agriculture, Military Construction, and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development packages, the would-be Speaker told his colleagues that the House must pass all 12 government funding bills to strengthen its negotiating position with the Senate and White House.

The new Speaker also says Congress will need to pass another continuing resolution (CR) by November 17th and suggests a measure that extends funding to either January 15 or April 15. It’s worth noting that unless the provisions of the *Fiscal Responsibility Act* are modified, not passing the FY 2024 spending bills by January 1, 2024, would trigger automatic cuts of one percent to

current funding levels. However, those cuts wouldn't be implemented until the end of April, presumably giving Congress time to pass the bills without actually enforcing the cap.

The Speaker's plans extend to the FY 2025 cycle. Like his predecessor, he sets the goal of passing all 12 spending bills by the end of July. He then proposes no August recess "unless all 12 appropriations bills have passed the House." Members will be eager to be on the campaign trail during an election year. It seems unlikely they will stay in Washington, DC, even if they don't reach the ambitious goals of the new Speaker.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

In order to save time on the appropriations process, Speaker Johnson proposed that the House Appropriations Committee "discharge" the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) and Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS) bills. The full Appropriations Committee hasn't marked up either bill and this proposal would skip that step—arguably to avoid forcing some moderate Republicans to vote on a bill that would decimate education programs and other domestic investments. Speaker Johnson proposes floor consideration of the CJS bill the week of November 6; the LHHS bill would be debated the following week, according to his plan.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

STATE, LOCAL SCHOOL LEADERS EXAMINE "SCIENCE OF READING"

On Tuesday, FutureEd hosted an event titled, "Taking the Science of Reading to Scale" where FutureEd Senior Fellow Lynn Olson moderated a discussion with Penny Schwinn, former Tennessee commissioner of education; Kiffany Pride, assistant commissioner of learning services at the Arkansas Department of Education; and Mary Bussman, principal of Roseville Area Schools in Minnesota. The science of reading is a term that refers to decades of research in fields including brain science that point to effective strategies for teaching kids to read. In the past five years, 30 states around the country have passed laws requiring schools to use evidence-based methods for teaching young students how to read. Carrying out new science of reading laws include retraining teachers, revamping curricula, screening students, and embedding these changes for the long-term benefit of students. The main challenge discussed by the panel was translating the new science of reading policies into effective classroom practices and expanding instruction based on the science of reading in the nation's vast, decentralized system of more than 13,000 school districts. Schwinn argued that getting kids to read on grade level is imperative because literacy is linked to higher graduation rates, better health outcomes, and longer overall life expectancies. To have successful and sustainable high literacy rates, states and districts should feel empowered to formulate cohesive approaches that address better curriculum, teacher preparation, and improved parent teacher communication. Schwinn further stated that comprehensive policies, adequate funding, and successful implementation are all critical to taking the science of reading to scale. Pride added that her success to applying this new method of teaching in Arkansas was providing multiple pathways to train teachers on a year-long basis. By providing a combination of in-person training and online module-based training, teachers were able to receive adequate instruction on how to implement the science of reading into their classroom. Bussman stated that communication between districts, states, and the federal government was key to ensuring politics and practice come together to seamlessly implement this into the classroom. She argued that there needs to be a combination of encouragement, incentives, and teacher buy-in for sustained success.

HOUSE HOLDS OVERSIGHT HEARING ON APPRENTICESHIPS, CAREER PATHWAYS

On Wednesday, the House Oversight and Accountability Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee held a hearing titled, “The Power of Apprenticeships: Faster, Better Paths to Prosperous Jobs and Less Waste in Higher Education.” Subcommittee Chairman Pat Fallon (R-TX) emphasized in his opening statement that a four-year college degree is not for everyone. In the past few years, there has been a struggle to find qualified workers for America’s manufacturing industry. In order to have a steady pipeline of skilled manufacturing workers, high schools should integrate vocational education into normal academic tracks, giving everyone the opportunity to find their natural talent. Subcommittee Ranking Member Cori Bush (D-MO) argued that attaining a postsecondary degree has never been more expensive, yet vital for career development. She warned that many republicans are threatening to cut funding, which would be detrimental to apprenticeship programs nationwide that rely on state and federal funding. Tony Ewing, president of Advanced Fixtures, Inc., stated that he has engaged local school districts that have industrial programs to develop a seamless pathway from high school to his manufacturing company. He has found more success hiring local talent as opposed to out-of-state talent. Erin Davis Valdez, policy director of Next Generation Texas, mentioned the College, Career, or Military Readiness Outcomes Bonus that was established in 2019 to provide funding to incentivize and reward innovation and achievement for districts who are demonstrating alignment. Valdez cited limited success of the program, stating that employers often feel that some of the certifications are not aligned with their actual workforce needs. Casey Sacks, president of Bridge Valley Community and Technical College found that working closely with employers in her community allowed them to identify workforce needs and barriers. For example, Sacks found that many manufacturing shifts are not conducive to single moms who might struggle with childcare or transportation barriers. Solutions are currently being formulated to address the workforce barriers for minorities in apprenticeship programs. Apryle Gladney, associate vice chancellor of the Office of Human Resources, touted the importance of public private partnerships to ensure the success of the Medical Apprenticeship Program at Washington University in St. Louis. Students in this program can attend evening undergraduate coursework fully funded by the university or graduate coursework at half the tuition cost. In his closing statement, Chair Fallon stressed the importance of giving high school students more work-based learning experiences and aligning apprenticeship programs with workforce needs. Determining ways to incentivize young people to train for trade and vocational jobs should be a top priority to ensure the strength of American manufacturing. Fallon argued that the stigma around career and technical schools needs to be addressed as these professions provide competitive wages and are essential to a functioning society. A full recording of the hearing and witness testimony can be found [here](#).

HOUSE WAYS & MEANS EXAMINES SCHOOL CHOICE, EDUCATION TAX POLICY

On Wednesday, the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on “Educational Freedom and Opportunity for American Families, Students, and Workers,” which highlighted education tax policies and legislative solutions to expand quality education through certain tax programs. In his opening remarks, Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) suggested that Congress should further expand 529 accounts – tax-advantaged investment vehicles that encourage higher education expense savings – and applauded Republicans for expanding them in 2017 to cover K through 12 education. He specifically suggested that 529 accounts be amended to cover additional education costs such as books, tutoring, educational therapies for students with disabilities, and homeschooling expenses. “These 529 accounts could also help address America's skilled labor

shortage by expanding to cover skilled trade or licensing programs,” he added. Ranking Member Richard Neal (D-MA) followed by immediately addressing the chaos surrounding the vote for Speaker of the House and accused Wednesday’s hearing as being a distraction from the House’s inability to operate. He then touted the Biden Administration for “the first and second largest years of job growth in American history.” He further addressed America’s economy and “sweeping potential for job creation,” which he argued were Democrat successes. Neal concluded his opening remarks without addressing education tax policy and later focused his questioning on skills development spurred by the *Inflation Reduction Act* and the *CHIPS and Science Act*, particularly through trade schools and community colleges. Dr. Corey DeAngelis, a senior fellow for American Federation for Children (AFC) and a visiting fellow for the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, testified that existing evidence finds that private school choice is associated with higher levels of parent satisfaction. He additionally argued that students should be funded directly, which would allow more families to have access to educational opportunities. He compared this to direct funding of Pell Grants, Head Start, food assistance and Medicaid. “We should apply the same logic to K through 12. We should fund students, not systems.” Additional witnesses included AFC’s Hera Varmah, who testified on her personal experience with school choice; Jerome Redmond, president and CEO of American Truck Training; Sharon Sedlar, founder of PA Families for Education Choice; and Girard Melancon, board chair of the National Skills Coalition, who focused on technical education at trade schools and community colleges as quality choices for students over traditional four-year universities. During questioning, Republican responses focused on issues similar to the Chairman’s remarks, while Democrats continued to disparage infighting within the Republican Party. Even so, Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) accused Wednesday’s hearing as an attempt to undermine public schools. He spoke to the underfunded education system in Texas and criticized the potential establishment of a school voucher system in the state. “What we need are Republicans and Democrats working together to strengthen public education, not destroy it through plans like those being considered today,” Doggett concluded. A recording of the hearing and witness testimony can be found [here](#).

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4. New Publications

5 Ways State Governments Can Support Student Mental Health

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This issue brief outlines how state governments can support schools in best serving their students and addressing the student mental health crisis.

What School Boards Need to Know about Title IX

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5. In the News

After-school meal participation drops for the first time

K-12 Dive (October 26, 2023)

[Here's where Speaker Mike Johnson stands on the issues](#)
Politico (October 25, 2023)

[Ranking Member Cassidy, Hickenlooper Introduce 21st Century Dyslexia Act](#)
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (October 25, 2023)

[Understanding CISA's cybersecurity plan](#)
K-12 Dive (October 23, 2023)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

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](#).

Event: Expanding Educational Opportunity through Community-Wide Efforts

Subject: 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.

Participants: Frederick Hess, director of education policy studies, AEI; and Geoffrey Canada, president, Harlem Children's Zone.

Time and Location: 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.; AEI, 1789 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Auditorium

Registration: Register and live stream available [here](#).

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7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor:

Potential consideration of minibus appropriations

House Floor:

[H.R. 4364](#) – Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2024

[H.R. 4821](#) – Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024

[H.R. 4820](#) – Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024

[H. Res. 773](#) – Providing for the expulsion of Representative George Santos from the House of Representatives

[H. Res. 807](#) – Censuring Representative Rashida Tlaib for antisemitic activity, sympathizing with terrorist organizations, and leading an insurrection at the United States Capitol Complex

[H. Res. 610](#) – Censuring Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene

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8. 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](#)

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[Federal legislative information](#)

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9. 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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