



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

**FEBRUARY 5, 2024**

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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**
    - **A New Federal Program Helps Provide Meals to Kids When School is not in Session. These States Opted Out**  
*PBS New House (February 1, 2024)*
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
  - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
  - **House Panel Holds Oversight Hearing on K-12 Public Education:** On Tuesday, the House Oversight and Accountability Health Care and Financial Services Subcommittee held a hearing on the oversight of K-12 public education. Tuesday’s proceeding addressed the challenges affecting the country’s K-12 public education system, including declining academic achievement and rises in chronic absenteeism.
  - **Senate Judiciary Questions Tech Leaders on Child Safety:** On Wednesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee conducted a four-hour hearing on “Big Tech and the Online Child Sexual Exploitation Crisis.” The session showcased bipartisan efforts to fight child sexual exploitation on social media, featuring CEOs Linda Yaccarino (X Corp), Shou Chew (TikTok Inc), Evan Spiegel (Snap Inc), Mark Zuckerberg (Meta), and Jason Citron (Discord) as witnesses.

#### 4. New Publications

- **Learning Curve: Lessons from the Tutoring Revolution in Public Education**  
*FutureEd (January, 2024)*

The report profiles three distinct strategies for scaling tutoring programs and how to sustain them beyond the expiration of schools' federal pandemic-relief funding. Researched and written by FutureEd Policy Director Liz Cohen under a partnership with Stanford University's National Student Support Accelerator, the report tells the tutoring stories of schools in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Odessa, Texas; and New York City, where the additional support of tutors has made a significant impact on students' well-being and academic success.

#### 5. In the News

- **House Subcommittee Seeks Solutions for Lagging Academics, Attendance K-12 Dive**  
*(February 1, 2024)*
- **House Passes Child Tax Credit Expansion – Which Could Benefit Millions of Families, Experts Say**  
*CNBC (February 1, 2024)*
- **The Transformative Influence of Academic Advisors**  
*Homeroom | US Department of Education (January 31, 2024)*
- **DeLauro, Fitzpatrick Introduce Bipartisan Expanding Access to Mental Health Services in Schools Act**  
*US Representative Rosa DeLauro (January 29, 2024)*

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

- **Driving Innovation Through Inclusive STEM Education**: *EducationWeek* and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) will hold a webinar to share insights, experiences, and research findings to shed light on the challenges faced by marginalized groups in STEM education.  
*Tuesday at 12pm ET*
- **Benefits of the District of Columbia's Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund for Workforce Well-Being and Retention**: The Urban Institute will hold a webinar titled, "Benefits of the District of Columbia's Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund for Workforce Well-Being and Retention."  
*Wednesday at 1pm ET*
- **Chronic Absenteeism After the Pandemic**: The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) will host a discussion on "Chronic Absenteeism After the Pandemic," focusing on student attendance.  
*Thursday at 10am ET*

#### 7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

- **Senate floor:**
  - **Consideration of nominations**
  - **Potential consideration of immigration measure and supplemental appropriations**
- **House floor:**

- **House resolution** on Censuring Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota
- **House bill** on making emergency supplemental appropriations to respond to the attacks in Israel for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes

8. **Important U.S. House and Senate Links**

9. **About BPAG**

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## 1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

### CHILD NUTRITION

#### **A NEW FEDERAL PROGRAM HELPS PROVIDE MEALS TO KIDS WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION. THESE STATES OPTED OUT**

*PBS News Hour* (February 1, 2024)

Oklahoma is opting out of a new federal summer food program aimed at reducing childhood hunger that could have benefitted more than 400,000 children in the state this year.

The program provides extra money to cover food costs for children in low-income families during summer months when schools are closed. Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt rejected an estimated \$60 million in federal funds, citing concerns over the federal government's implementation of the program and asserting that sufficient food resources for children already existed in the state. [Read more here.](#)

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## 2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

After weeks of waiting for news from appropriations leaders regarding the amount of money each subcommittee would have for their respective bills, last weekend, the numbers were given to the subcommittee chairs.

Ultimately, it is quite likely that the bills will come to the floor via the suspension calendar—the same method used to [pass a tax bill this week that includes an expansion of the child tax credit.](#) Hardline conservatives on the House Rules Committee will not support the topline funding level. They wanted the severe cuts in the bill developed last year. Use of the suspension calendar will bypass the Rules Committee, but will require support from two-thirds of voting members on the floor. The Senate will likely be able to secure the sixty votes needed to pass the bill in that chamber as well. Lots of work and negotiation will be required to get the bill the floor of either chamber.

Advocates are still watching to see if the final Labor, Health and Human Services and Education bill for FY 2024 will have funds for Member-directed projects—or “earmarks.” The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 bill had \$200 million in earmarks. The FY 2024 House partisan bill from last year had none. The bipartisan Senate bill had \$290 million in education project funding. It has been reported that the final bill will once again have earmarks.

Staff and Members have much work ahead of them in February. [The calendar](#) is challenging. The House is in session the week of February 12, but the Senate is not. Neither is in session the week of February 19. The House comes back into session on February 28, providing just three

days for votes before the first continuing resolution expires at midnight on Friday, March 1. Lawmakers will need the extra day February has during this Leap Year.

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

While the figures aren't public, House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee Chairman Robert Aderholt (R-AL) said the bill's FY 2024 allocation is smaller than the FY 2023 allocation, but, "workable," according to him. Of course, the bill his committee developed last year would have gutted Department of Education investments in economically challenged school districts and educator supports and cut the agency's overall budget by almost 30 percent so it's unclear what the ultimate product will look like. Fortunately, Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) certainly would have opposed large cuts to the bill in the behind-closed-door negotiations. In coming weeks, staff and Members will have to negotiate the large and complicated bill and its many programmatic spending decisions, as well as controversial policy riders. They are reportedly working toward a February 9 deadline for drafting bills and are staring down the March 8 deadline for the current temporary spending bill that is keeping the Department of Education and other associated agencies open.

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

#### **HOUSE PANEL HOLDS OVERSIGHT HEARING ON K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION**

On Tuesday, the House Oversight and Accountability Health Care and Financial Services Subcommittee held a hearing on the oversight of K-12 public education. The [witness panel](#) featured Ginny Gentles, director of the Education Freedom Center at the Independent Women's Forum; Dr. Nat Malkus, a senior fellow and the deputy director of education policy studies for the American Enterprise Institute; and Denise Forte, president and CEO of The Education Trust. Tuesday's proceeding addressed the challenges affecting the country's K-12 public education system, including declining academic achievement and rises in chronic absenteeism. There were partisan disagreements over the causes of certain challenges facing schools: Republicans blamed extended school closures, lack of school discipline, and the pursuit of "woke" agendas, while Democrats pointed to systemic inequities like lack of funding and resources. Both parties agreed that targeted tutoring and increased learning time could be effective learning recovery strategies, but questioned whether COVID relief funds were spent effectively. Republicans heavily criticized the lack of accountability and data around the nearly \$190 billion in federal pandemic relief funding for schools. In addition, there was heated partisan debate on issues such as school choice, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), social emotional learning (SEL) initiatives, book bans, and gun violence. While both parties acknowledged the serious academic challenges facing K-12 education, the hearing exposed familiar and fundamentally different perspectives on their root causes and how to adequately address them. The hearing is archived [here](#), and a full memo prepared by our team is [here](#).

#### **SENATE JUDICIARY QUESTIONS TECH LEADERS ON CHILD SAFETY**

On Wednesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee conducted a four-hour hearing on "[Big Tech and the Online Child Sexual Exploitation Crisis](#)." The session showcased bipartisan efforts to fight child sexual exploitation on social media, featuring CEOs Linda Yaccarino (X Corp), Shou Chew (TikTok Inc), Evan Spiegel (Snap Inc), Mark Zuckerberg (Meta), and Jason Citron (Discord) as

witnesses. Five bipartisan bills intended to reduce the exploitation of kids online through accountability and transparency were discussed including: [The STOP CSAM Act](#), [The Earn IT Act](#), [The Shield Act](#), [The Project Safe Childhood Act](#), and [The REPORT Act](#). This highly **publicized** hearing saw Tech CEOs, representing diverse companies and target demographics, interrogated over the online dangers present on their services. Mental health, bullying, abuse and mistreatment were common topics of discussion. Senators probed witnesses for information on their companies' ongoing efforts to combat these issues. While the CEOs proposed solutions like AI monitoring, safety moderators, and improved parental controls, some senators deemed self-regulatory measures insufficient and pressed for support of proposed online safety bills. During the hearing, Yaccarino committed to supporting the Stop CSAM Act, while Spiegel reiterated Snap Inc.'s previous support for the [Kids Online Safety Act](#). An over 20-year old Telecommunications Act provision providing liability protection ([Section 230](#)) became a bipartisan target, with senators criticizing its failure to hold tech accountable through lawsuits. As tragic anecdotes of children and parents harmed by social media were brought to the hearing's attention, tech CEOs were pressured to act. Zuckerberg notably apologized for their experiences and promised to continue to invest in industrywide efforts to protect children. In addition to child safety concerns, Republican senators raised apprehensions about TikTok's association with the Chinese government, citing privacy and national security concerns. Despite attempts to field questions, witnesses often struggled to give clear answers amid relentless questioning. The hearing concluded with a sense of frustration over perceived inadequacies in industry and legislative action, emphasizing the need for concrete measures. A full recording and witness statement are available [here](#).

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

##### **Learning Curve: Lessons from the Tutoring Revolution in Public Education**

*FutureEd* (January, 2024)

The report profiles three distinct strategies for scaling tutoring programs and how to sustain them beyond the expiration of schools' federal pandemic-relief funding. Researched and written by FutureEd Policy Director Liz Cohen under a partnership with Stanford University's National Student Support Accelerator, the report tells the tutoring stories of schools in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Odessa, Texas; and New York City, where the additional support of tutors has made a significant impact on students' well-being and academic success.

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

##### **House Subcommittee Seeks Solutions for Lagging Academics, Attendance**

*K-12 Dive* (February 1, 2024)

##### **House Passes Child Tax Credit Expansion – Which Could Benefit Millions of Families, Experts Say**

*CNBC* (February 1, 2024)

##### **The Transformative Influence of Academic Advisors**

*Homeroom* | *US Department of Education* (January 31, 2024)

## DeLauro, Fitzpatrick Introduce Bipartisan Expanding Access to Mental Health Services in Schools Act

*US Representative Rosa DeLauro* (January 29, 2024)

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### THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

#### 6. Weekly Calendar

##### **Tuesday, February 6, 2024**

###### **Webinar: Driving Innovation Through Inclusive STEM Education**

**Subject:** EducationWeek and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) will hold a webinar to share insights, experiences, and research findings to shed light on the challenges faced by marginalized groups in STEM education.

**Participants:** Yolanda Payne, research associate, Georgia Institute of Technology; Dr. Sonal Patel, program manager for digital learning and computer science education, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS); and Dr. Glenda Flores, associate professor of chicano/latino studies, University of California, Irvine (UCI).

**Time:** 12:00 p.m.

**Registration:** Register [here.](#)

##### **Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

###### **Webinar: Benefits of the District of Columbia's Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund for Workforce Well-Being and Retention**

**Subject:** The Urban Institute will hold a webinar titled, "Benefits of the District of Columbia's Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund for Workforce Well-Being and Retention."

**Participants:** Justin B. Doromal, senior research associate, Urban Institute; Erica Greenberg, senior fellow and co-principal investigator, District of Columbia Child Care Policy Research Partnership, Urban Institute; Laura Jimenez Parra, research associate, Urban Institute; Sara Mead, deputy superintendent of early learning, District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education; Heather Sandstrom, senior fellow and principal investigator, District of Columbia Child Care Policy Research Partnership, Urban Institute

**Time:** 1:00 p.m.

**Registration:** Register [here.](#)

##### **Thursday, February 8, 2024**

###### **Webinar: Chronic Absenteeism After the Pandemic**

**Subject:** The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) will host a discussion on "Chronic Absenteeism After the Pandemic," focusing on student attendance.

**Participants:** Lisa Coons, superintendent of public instruction, Virginia Department of Education; Nat Malkus, deputy director of education policy studies, AEI; Michael Gottfried, professor, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education; Scott Rocco, superintendent, Hamilton Township School District; and Hedy Chang, executive director, Attendance Works.

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**Registration:** Register [here.](#)

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## 7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

### Senate Floor:

- Consideration of nominations
- Potential consideration of immigration measure and supplemental appropriations

### House Floor:

- [H. Res. \\_\\_\\_](#) – Censuring Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota
- [H.R. \\_\\_\\_](#) – Making emergency supplemental appropriations to respond to the attacks in Israel for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes

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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](#)

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

[Congressional Budget Office](#)

[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

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

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