



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

**MARCH 25, 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. *The Education Report* will be on hiatus for the Easter recess. The next edition will publish on April 15, 2024.

Please use the bookmarks below to navigate to your area of interest:

1. **News, Publications, & Updates on COSSBA Policy Priorities**
  - **Teacher Recruitment and Retention**
    - **Senators Kaine, Booker Offer Insights on Critical Teacher Shortages:**  
On Wednesday, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) held an in-person briefing titled, “Tackling Critical Teacher Shortages.” Delving into the state of the educator workforce, the panelists discussed evidence-based approaches and federal strategies to address the nation’s teacher shortage.
  - **Funding**
    - **OMB Director Highlights Importance of PreK-12 ED in House Hearing:** On Thursday, the House Budget Committee heard from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Shalanda Young on President Joe Biden’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget request. On education, and in response to Member questions, Director Young remarked on how President Biden’s budget request reinforces free preschool; strengthens the childcare and educator workforce pipelines; doubles the Pell Grant; adequately funds Title I; and proposes free community college.

## 2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up

- Impact on State School Board Associations

## 3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

- AEI's Frederick M. Hess Leads Panel on Conservative K-12 Policy: On Tuesday, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) hosted a webinar titled, “Getting K-12 Right.” Drawing on ideas from a new book, *Getting Education Right: A Conservative Vision for Improving Early Childhood, K–12, and College*, the panel sketched an outline of K–12 education reform from a conservative perspective.
- Education Leaders, Government Officials Examine Experiential Learning: On Thursday, the Albert Shanker Institute, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Center for American Progress (CAP) held an in-person conference titled, “Passion Meets Purpose: Promising Pathways Through Experiential Learning.”
- House Education Panel Passes Measure on Charter School Funding: On Thursday, the House Education and the Workforce Committee marked up several bills, including H.R. 6418, the “Empower Charter School Educators to Lead Act.” The bipartisan measure of charter schools authorizes state entities who receive grants through the Charter Schools Program (CSP) to use a portion of their funding to support the application process and development of new charter schools.

## 4. New Publications

- Access to Mathematics Learning and Postsecondary Preparation Opportunities in High School: Findings from the 2023 American Mathematics Educator Study

*RAND Corporation (February 2024)*

The authors of this report provide a national view of high school mathematics course offerings, student assignment to mathematics courses, and postsecondary transition supports, and how access to different supports for learning mathematics and preparation for college and careers varies across school characteristics and across five focal states: California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Washington.

## 5. In the News

- How Are High Schools Supporting Students Through FAFSA Delays?  
*K-12 Dive (March 21, 2024)*
- The \$190 Billion In Emergency Funds Given to Schools During The Pandemic Is Ending  
*NPR (March 20, 2023)*
- Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$180 Million Investment in School energy Infrastructure as Part of Investing in America Agenda  
*US Department of Energy (March 20, 2024)*
- Blackburn, Cortez Masto Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Strengthen After School Programs, Reduce Juvenile Crime in Local Communities  
*US Senator Marsha Blackburn (March 19, 2024)*

- **More High School Students Are Getting a Jump on College Credits Now**  
*EdTech Magazine (March 19, 2024)*
  - **Raising the Bar for Multilingualism and English Learners Through a Re-Imagined National Professional Development Program**  
*US Department of Education | Homeroom (March 18, 2024)*
6. **Weekly Calendar - What's coming up this week?**
- **NSF Math and Physical Sciences Advisory Committee Meeting:** The National Science Foundation will hold a meeting of the Advisory Committee for Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Tuesday and Wednesday.  
*Tuesday at 10am ET*
  - **National Board on Education Sciences Meeting:** The Department of Education will hold a virtual meeting of the National Board for Education Sciences. Agenda includes: Discussion of and voting on reports from NBES subcommittees; Discussion of Health, Education, Labor and Pensions ranking member Bill Cassidy, (R-La.), report to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, with remarks from P. David Pearson, professor at the University of California Berkeley, Leslie Fenwick, professor at Howard University, Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, professor at the University of Southern California, and Robert Jaegers, vice president of research at Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning  
*Friday at 10am ET*
7. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**
- The House and Senate are in recess through April 8, 2024.
8. **Important U.S. House and Senate Links**
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## 1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

### TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

#### SENATORS KAINE, BOOKER OFFER INSIGHTS ON CRITICAL TEACHER SHORTAGES

On Wednesday, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) held an in-person briefing titled, “Tackling Critical Teacher Shortages – Insights on Federal Policies and Programs.” The event was sponsored by the Offices of Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and featured a panel of education experts – Ternesha Burroughs, secondary math teacher and president of Education Minnesota-OSSEO; Michael DiNapoli Jr., deputy director of federal policy at the Learning Policy Institute; Susan Kemper Patrick, senior researcher at the Learning Policy Institute; Jacqueline Rodriguez, chief executive officer at the National Center for Learning Disabilities; Clifton Tanabe, dean of the college of education at the University of Texas-El Paso; and Reggie White, 2022-2023 Alabama Teacher of the Year and district mentor teacher at Birmingham City Schools. Delving into the state of the educator workforce, the panelists discussed evidence-based approaches and federal strategies to address the nation’s teacher shortage. Senator Kaine began the conversation by underscoring the importance of promoting career and technical education, developing a diverse teacher workforce, and

addressing the teacher shortage, particularly in special education, math, and science disciplines. In addition, DiNapoli highlighted how over 93% of all loans are held by the Department of Education with 1.3 million teachers still in repayment. Recommending three policy solutions, DiNapoli outlined how the federal government should expand loan forgiveness and service scholarships, enhance the affordability and availability of high-retention pathways into teaching, and increase support for beginning teachers and teacher leadership. Patrick also shared details from a recent LPI [study](#), revealing that 314,134 teacher positions were either unfilled or filled by a teacher not fully certified for their assignment. Discussing how at least 6 million children are affected by these shortages, Patrick acknowledged that higher need schools are disproportionately impacted. To help address this issue, the panelists of education experts and leaders urged policymakers to prioritize the expansion of teacher loan forgiveness, increased mentorship programs, and competitive compensation to incentivize the recruitment and retainment of qualified teachers.

## FUNDING

### OMB DIRECTOR HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF PREK-12 ED IN HOUSE HEARING

On Thursday, the House Budget Committee heard from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Shalanda Young on President Joe Biden's Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget request. Committee Chair Jodey Arrington (R-TX) kicked off the hearing by expressing sincere fondness for Director Young, and in likeness to President Biden, noted that the federal budget is "more than just numbers on a ledger, they are a statement of values." Even so, Arrington expressly stated his frustration with the President's FY 25 budget request, as there is a "starkness" between the values presented in the request and those of Republicans on the Committee. "I would say [President Biden's request is] disconnected from the American people and their reality, and their needs, and their desire for a different direction," the Chair said. In typical fashion, Committee Ranking Member Brendan Boyle (D-PA) countered those remarks, arguing that the country is better off now than it was four years ago. "You're right - there is a stark and clear difference between the two visions," Boyle responded. "One is a vision that would take us back to the depths of where we were just four years ago. The other is a vision that has literally led the world in economic growth." On education, and in response to Member questions, Director Young remarked on how President Biden's budget request reinforces free preschool; strengthens the childcare and educator workforce pipelines; doubles the Pell Grant; adequately funds Title I; and proposes free community college. A recording of the hearing is [here](#).

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## 2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

In the early morning hours of Thursday, March 21, House leadership released a package of six FY 2024 spending bills. That chamber passed the spending package on Friday with a vote of 286 to 134. Early Saturday morning, the Senate passed the measure with a vote of 74-24, sending it to President Joe Biden's desk, meaning the FY 2024 spending process is finally resolved, almost six months into the fiscal year. The [\\$1.2 trillion package](#) includes the bill education advocates have eagerly awaited—the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) bill, as well as funding for defense, homeland security, financial services and general government, the legislative branch, and state-foreign operations. It will fund these

portions of the federal government until the end of the fiscal year, or September 30, 2024. (A package including the six other annual funding bills was enacted two weeks ago.)

Now that the FY 2024 process is complete, advocates still don't have much time for rest and reflection. The FY 2025 process is underway. President Biden released his FY 2025 wish list earlier this month, and Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young and other cabinet members have already appeared on Capitol Hill to defend the budget request. That will continue in April after the recess. Of course, it is an Election Year, and given the already shortened timeline for developing and debating FY 2025 spending bills, it is largely assumed that Congress will not compete the FY 2025 spending bill until after Election Day. The FY 2025 spending process has already been thrown off schedule and with advocates and citizens increasingly accustomed to an annual process of varying dysfunction, the lame duck session will be expected to be quite productive.

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

A summary of the LHHS portion of the bill, prepared by Democratic staff for the House Appropriations Committee, says, "The bill provides a total of \$79.1 billion in discretionary appropriations for [the Department of Education] ED. After adjusting for Community Project Funding, the total amount is a modest decrease of \$201 million (0.3 percent) compared to fiscal year 2023. The total amount for the Department of Education is \$22 billion above the funding level proposed by the Republican majority earlier this year." The bill invests \$18.4 billion in the program that helps the country's poorest schools, which is a \$20 million increase compared to FY 2023 levels. Republicans had proposed cutting the program by 80% in the bill they developed last year. Modest increases would go to special education investments as well.

In a year when advocates have been saying "level funding is a win" due to the constraints placed on lawmakers as a result of federal spending caps included in last year's Fiscal Responsibility Act, level funding is indeed what is in store for most Department of Education programs. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program will receive the same amount it did in FY 2023--\$1.3 billion. The same is true for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment State Grants, which will get \$1.4 billion, and for the Title II grants that support teacher professional development, which will see an investment of \$2.2 billion. The bill affirms support for ongoing investments in programs that address student social, emotional, and cognitive needs, and the Department's Education, Innovation and Research program will invest \$87 million in grants for STEM and computer science, and \$87 million in grants for social and emotional learning in FY 2024.

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

#### **AEI'S FREDERICK M. HESS LEADS PANEL ON CONSERVATIVE K-12 POLICY**

On Tuesday, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) hosted a webinar titled, "Getting K-12 Right." The event featured an expert panel consisting of AEI's Frederick M. Hess, director of education policy studies, as well as AEI adjunct fellow Michael Q. McShane. The two were joined by Louisiana State Superintendent Cade Brumley; Nicole Neily, president of Parents Defending Education; and 50CAN President Derrell Bradford. Drawing on ideas from Hess and McShane's new book, Getting Education Right: A Conservative Vision for Improving Early Childhood, K-12, and College, the panel sketched an outline of K-12 education reform from a

conservative perspective. Hess summarized the book's overarching theme, describing what he says is diminished trust in the Democratic party, particularly due to covid closures and poor student performance. Hess' book also examined distinct opportunities conservative lawmakers are now presented with, such as parent engagement on fresh policy ideas that will reduce learning loss. Neily articulated the frustration many parents felt during the pandemic toward school administrators who often used complex jargon to reduce parental interactions and further emphasized the importance of strengthening parental rights. McShane cited the writings of Milton Friedman on the benefits of market mechanism, applauding new school choice efforts in Louisiana and Arizona. He underscored that rigor, choice, and flexibility are not just conservative values and that incorporating these into the current K-12 education system could benefit all students. Bradford examined the benefits of school choice, saying that while he is optimistic about the expanded implementation of choice-friendly policies, new regulations are necessary to hold certain schools accountable. Brumley described his work leading the Louisiana school system, pointing to bipartisan opportunities for lawmakers to improve student outcomes. Additionally, Brumley listed the many challenges educators face, such as chronic absenteeism, low discipline, poor math scores, and low reading fluency. Overall, Brumley asserted that teachers need more respect, support, and compensation. A recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).

### **EDUCATION LEADERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS EXAMINE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

On Thursday, the Albert Shanker Institute, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Center for American Progress (CAP) held an in-person conference titled, "Passion Meets Purpose: Promising Pathways Through Experiential Learning." The event featured a panel of education leaders, government officials, and decision-makers, including Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA); Maryland Governor Wes Moore (D); Randi Weingarten, president of AFT and the Albert Shanker Institute; S. Kwesi Rollins, vice president of leadership and engagement at the Institute of Educational Leadership; Raphael Bonhomme, an educator at District of Columbia Public Schools; Azariah McLymore, a graduate from the Newburgh P-TECH Program; and others. Discussing the benefits of immersive educational experiences, the first panel provided insights on how to expand the scope of experiential learning and its importance in equipping students with the necessary skills for success, including teambuilding, networking, and communication. Rollins shared that experiential learning fosters a sense of belonging among students, promoting meaningful learning and problem solving. Further, he argued that experiential learning enhances student engagement, helping to address the problem of chronic absenteeism. Providing strategies for scaling experiential learning initiatives, Bonhomme advocated for increased time and enhanced training for educators to optimize program implementation. In a subsequent panel discussion, Rep. Khanna revealed a disparity of 400:1 investment ratio between universities and CTE and emphasized the importance of creating equitable pathways for alternative education and career opportunities. In addition, Gov. Moore spotlighted Maryland's new Service Year Option for recent high school graduates, underscoring the necessity of redefining success to alleviate the undue pressure exerted on students to pursue traditional four-year universities. Acknowledging the work yet to be done, several speakers highlighted the power of community and private sector partnerships and called for increased funding for experiential learning programs and for better alignment between education and industry needs.

## **HOUSE EDUCATION PANEL PASSES MEASURE ON CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING**

On Thursday, the House Education and the Workforce Committee **marked up** several bills, including H.R. 6418, the Empower Charter School Educators to Lead Act; H.R. 3724, the Accreditation for College Excellence Act; and H.R. 7683, the Respecting the First Amendment on Campus Act. The bipartisan measure of charter schools authorizes state entities who receive grants through the Charter Schools Program (CSP) to use a portion of their funding to support the application process and development of new charter schools. The bill's progression to the full House follows a March 6 subcommittee hearing on the benefits of charter schools, where Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee Chair Aaron Bean (R-FL) urged for expanding charter school access around the country. On for-profit and private charter schools, Subcommittee Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and her Democrat colleagues on the panel had shared their concerns over the lack of guardrails that enable waste, fraud, and abuse of federal funds, and the lack of civil rights protections for students enrolled in these schools. While policy around school choice does present bipartisan views and Republicans on the Committee routinely support charter school expansion, Committee Democrats remain concerned with the issues Ranking Member Bonamici underscored. Full Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-NC) in her opening remarks, countered this stance, saying, "Charter schools are bastions of innovation and choice in a public education ecosystem otherwise dominated by bureaucracy and entrenched special interests." Meanwhile, Full Committee Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA) has previously shared concerns with growing racial isolation in schools, and even offered a failed amendment to the bill that would have included an assessment of segregation the community where a charter school is being established. As for the other bills, the Accreditation for College Excellence Act requires an accrediting agency to confirm that its standards do not require or encourage a higher education institution to support or oppose specific social and political beliefs or support unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on sex, race, or ethnicity. Lastly, the Respecting the First Amendment on Campus Act amends the Higher Education Act to require colleges and universities to adopt and adhere to principles of free speech. The vote record on each of the bills and other amendments offered can be found [here](#), in addition to a recording of the hearing.

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### **4. New Publications**

#### **Access to Mathematics Learning and Postsecondary Preparation Opportunities in High School: Findings from the 2023 American Mathematics Educator Study**

*RAND Corporation (February 2024)*

The authors of this report provide a national view of high school mathematics course offerings, student assignment to mathematics courses, and postsecondary transition supports, and how access to different supports for learning mathematics and preparation for college and careers varies across school characteristics and across five focal states: California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Washington.

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

#### **How Are High Schools Supporting Students Through FAFSA Delays?**

*K-12 Dive (March 21, 2024)*

**The \$190 Billion In Emergency Funds Given to Schools During The Pandemic Is Ending**  
*NPR* (March 20, 2024)

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**Raising the Bar for Multilingualism and English Learners Through a Re-Imagined National Professional Development Program (NPD)**  
*US Department of Education | Homeroom* (March 18, 2024)

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## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

### 6. Weekly Calendar

#### **Tuesday, March 26, 2024**

**Agency Event: NSF Math and Physical Sciences Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Subject:** The National Science Foundation will hold a meeting of the Advisory Committee for Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Tuesday and Wednesday.

**Time and Location:** 10:00 a.m.; NSF, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA.

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

#### **Friday, March 29, 2024**

**Agency Event: National Board on Education Sciences Meeting**

**Subject:** The Department of Education will hold a virtual meeting of the National Board for Education Sciences. Agenda includes: Discussion of and voting on reports from NBES subcommittees; Discussion of Health, Education, Labor and Pensions ranking member Bill Cassidy, (R-La.), report to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, with remarks from P. David Pearson, professor at the University of California Berkeley, Leslie Fenwick, professor at Howard University, Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, professor at the University of Southern California, and Robert Jaegers, vice president of research at Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

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

**Registration:** RSVP to [ellie.pelaez@ed.gov](mailto:ellie.pelaez@ed.gov)

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## 7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

The House and Senate are in recess through April 8, 2024.

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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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