



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

**DECEMBER 4, 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**

• **IDEA**

- **ED Updates Resources for Children with Disabilities, Early Ed Programs:** On Tuesday, the Department of Education (ED) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the release of an updated joint-policy statement on supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs.

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

• **Impact on State School Board Associations**

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

- **ED, States, Local Organizations Bolster Student Mental Health Access:** Last Friday, the Department of Education (ED) released a statement expressing their commitment to addressing the mental health challenges faced by students nationwide.
- **ED Announces Nearly \$74 Million for Full-Service Community Schools:** On Tuesday, the Biden-Harris Administration also announced an investment of nearly \$74 million in new five-year Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) grants.
- **Webinar Explores Augmented, Virtual Reality in Classrooms:** On Thursday, the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation hosted an event titled, "AR/VR in Classrooms: The Roadmap to Widespread Adoption."

#### 4. New Publications

- **Generative AI in Education: Call for Evidence Summary of Responses**

*United Kingdom Department for Education (November, 2023)*

The United Kingdom's Department for Education opened a conversation with the country's education sector with the launch of a Call for Evidence on the use of GenAI in education. The Department asked for views and experiences from practitioners across all stages of education, as well as from the educational sector and artificial intelligence (AI) experts, and issued a report detailing its findings.

- **Kids' Share 2023: Report on Federal Expenditures on Children through 2022 and Future Projections**

*Urban Institute (November, 2023)*

To inform policymakers, children's advocates, and the general public about how public funds are spent on children (birth through age 18), this 17th edition of the annual Kids' Share report provides a new analysis of federal expenditures on children from 1960 to 2022.

#### 5. In the News

- **Biden-Harris Administration Announces Partnership to Distribute Free COVID-19 Tests to schools across the Country**

*U.S. Department of Education (November 29, 2023)*

- **School Board Members Across Tennessee Condemn Voucher Expansion**

*The Tennessean (November 29, 2023)*

- **Cardona Says Standardized Tests Haven't Always met the Mark, Offers New Flexibility**

*EducationWeek (November 28, 2023)*

- **Where Biden Stands on His Education Campaign Promises**

*The Hill (November 28, 2023)*

- **Should the School Year be Extended to Make Up for Learning Loss?**

*The Hill (November 27, 2023)*

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

- **English Learner Family Toolkit:** The U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language will hold a webinar to highlight the release of the English Learner Family Toolkit and the implications and potential uses of the information and resources in each chapter; recommend ways and best practices for sharing these resources with EL families; and demonstrate the features of the EL Family Toolkit mobile app.

*Tuesday at 4pm ET*

- **Children and Teens with Immersive Tech:** The Future of Privacy Forum (FPF) will hold a virtual discussion on "Immersive Tech Panel Series: Kids & Teens."

*Wednesday at 11am ET*

- **Importance of Math to U.S. Industry:** The American Mathematical Society and the Institute for Pure & Applied Mathematics will hold a briefing on "Math Changes Everything: The Importance of Mathematics to U.S. Industry."

*Wednesday at 12pm ET*

- **House Oversight Subcommittee on White House AI Policy**: The House Oversight and Accountability Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "White House Policy on AI."
7. **Future Hearings & Events**
- **Benefits of Active Parenting in K-12 Education**: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research will hold a virtual discussion on the benefits of active parenting in K–12 education. Panelists will discuss the details of successful parent-student relationships, the value of school choice, and broader K–12 issues that would benefit from active parental engagement.  
*December 11 at 4pm ET*
8. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**
- **Senate floor**: Consideration of nominations
  - **House floor**:
    - **H.R. 4468** – Choice in Automobile Retail Sales Act of 2023
    - **H.R. 5933** – DETERRENT Act
    - **H.J. Res. 88** – Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to Improving Income Driven Repayment for the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program and the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program
9. **Important U.S. House and Senate Links**
10. **About BPAG**

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## 1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

### **INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)**

#### **ED UPDATES RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, EARLY ED PROGRAMS**

On Tuesday, the Department of Education (ED) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) **announced** the release of an updated joint-policy statement on supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs. The HHS-ED policy statement builds upon a statement originally released in 2015 and includes a renewed commitment and urgency, as children with disabilities continue to face barriers accessing and fully participating in inclusive early childhood programs. The updated policy statement advances the Departments’ position by continuing to increase public awareness and understanding of the latest science that supports inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs from the earliest ages. “Our nation’s youngest learners—including those with disabilities—deserve access to high quality early childhood programs that nurture their potential and provide a strong foundation for future success,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “The responsibility to ensure that young children with disabilities and their families are included in high-quality early childhood programs is a shared one. Government, at all levels, early childhood systems, and schools must work together to provide necessary support to parents with their kids,” said Secretary of HHS Xavier Becerra. Over 61 million adults in the U.S. have a disability, and

nearly one out of every six children is estimated to have a developmental delay. The Departments' shared vision is to build a culture of inclusion for individuals with disabilities beginning at birth, continuing in early childhood programs and schools, and into communities and workplaces. "Inclusion in high-quality, evidence-based early childhood programs sets the stage for continued inclusion through school years and beyond. Setting high expectations for early inclusion paves the way for children with disabilities to reach their goals and to learn, live, and thrive in school and in their communities," said Assistant Secretary for the U.S. ED's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Glenna Wright-Gallo. The statement reiterates expectations for inclusive early childhood settings and updates recommendations for state and local agencies that implement Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) programs, Head Start, childcare, home visiting, preschool, and public schools to increase inclusive early learning opportunities for all children. To read the full policy statement, click [here](#).

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## 2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday, there was quite a bit of Congressional drama: an on-going race to find a Speaker of the House; several House Appropriations measures that failed to advance because of steep funding cuts and/or policy riders; a lack of agreement on emergency supplemental funding for Ukraine and Israel; and the open question of a potential government shut down. While Congress kept the government open by passing a "laddered" continuing resolution for federal agencies into the New Year, it is still unclear how Congress will address emergency supplemental funding as well as find final agreement on the fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills.

Last week, signals have been sent as Congress returned from their Thanksgiving break. Early in the week, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) indicated that the Senate is working on a \$100 billion supplemental funding bill for Ukraine, the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific, which will be considered in early December. He indicated that he is open to some immigration reforms, but not the hard-right demands proposed by House Republicans in the *Securing our Border Act* (H.R. 2), which the House passed earlier this year. Negotiations on national security supplemental and immigration reform continue, and it is unclear if the supplemental package will also include the Biden-Harris Administration's \$60 billion domestic supplemental request.

On a similar note, signals were sent about "topline" funding for fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills. House Freedom Caucus member Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX) [wants](#) topline spending at \$1.59 trillion, the level established in the *Fiscal Responsibility Act* (FRA). While this amount of funding is higher than the \$1.47 trillion previously proposed by House Republicans, this level of funding would cut non-defense spending by \$14 billion and increase defense spending by \$28 billion. Rep. Roy urged House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) to ignore the \$54 billion "side deal" of additional non-defense discretionary spending that former Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) negotiated with the Biden-Harris Administration. House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) pushed back. She noted that both Republicans and Democrats voted for the *Fiscal Responsibility Act* because the "side deal" of additional spending would keep non-defense programs at last year's levels. She also reminded members that the House Republican majority has had difficulty passing key bills—such as the education funding bill—because of its proposed steep cuts. Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA), chair of the House Freedom Caucus, acknowledged most of the House and Senate voted for the levels in the FRA and that

there could be “three or four more bills” that could pass the House at those proposed FRA funding levels.

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

Complicating matters more are reports from the Congressional Budget Office that appropriations scoring has changed, and under the proposed FRA caps, non-defense spending will be cut by 7-10%. The report is upsetting for education advocates as many have assumed that education funding would be frozen at last year’s levels.

Five appropriations bills have yet to pass the House, including the education funding bill. Will the House Republican conference revise those bills with the high spending levels of the FRA (absent any “side deals”)? What will they do with the proposed steep cuts to education funding in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill?

This week, we’ll keep an eye out for those signals.

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

#### **ED, STATES, LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS BOLSTER STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS**

Last Friday, the Department of Education (ED) released a statement expressing their commitment to addressing the mental health challenges faced by students nationwide. The statement was made jointly with several national and local organizations, including the National Association of State Boards of Education, National Conference of State Legislatures, State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, National Association of Counties, and U.S. Conference of Mayors. The statement highlights the exacerbation of mental health issues due to the pandemic's disruptions and emphasizes the role of schools in providing mental health services. The ED announced a \$2 billion investment to create inclusive learning environments, hire and train 14,000 new mental health professionals, and collaborate with the Department of Health and Human Services to expand Medicaid reimbursement for school-based health and mental health services.

#### **ED ANNOUNCES NEARLY \$74 MILLION FOR FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

On Tuesday, the Biden-Harris Administration also announced an investment of nearly \$74 million in new five-year Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) grants. The funding aims to support an additional 30 local education agencies, nonprofits, and other organizations in expanding community schools across the United States, including Idaho, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Ohio. The grants will contribute to comprehensive approaches, addressing students' needs through services such as nutrition assistance, mental health support, early childhood education, and afterschool programs. The grants include Capacity Building and Development grants, Multi-Local Agency Grants, and State Scaling grants. With these new awards, the Department of Education (ED) has now awarded FSCS grants in 30 states and territories. The announcement includes a list of new grantees and their respective grant types, supporting a total of 102 school districts, 292 schools, and 229,549 students.

#### **WEBINAR EXPLORES AUGMENTED, VIRTUAL REALITY IN CLASSROOMS**

Last Thursday, the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation hosted an event titled, "AR/VR in Classrooms: The Roadmap to Widespread Adoption." The event featured panelists

Kai Frazier, founder and CEO of Kai XR, and Muhsinah Morris, academic program director and assistant professor of chemistry at Morehouse College. The event explored the use of immersive technology in education, with discussions on the benefits and drawbacks of incorporating new technologies such as Augmented Reality or Virtual Reality (AR/VR) into the classroom. AR/VR holds the potential to be applied across a wide variety of subjects, from chemistry to history. Panelists highlighted that universities and schools have begun integrating AR/VR technology into lesson plans, resulting in increased knowledge retention, enhanced student engagement, and improved student outcomes. The panelists also observed that AR/VR has the ability to inspire curiosity and a love for learning in young students. Furthermore, they emphasized the significance of exposing students to technology at a young age to better prepare them for success in an increasingly digital world. However, as adoption continues to scale, concerns have emerged regarding disproportionate accessibility and excessive screen time. The panelists emphasized the importance of incorporating technology into all schools, not solely in private schools and wealthy districts. Additionally, they addressed concerns about students spending too much time on screens due to the inclusion of AR/VR in schools, asserting that technology usage is here to stay and that AR/VR is more beneficial than harmful. A full recording of the event can be found [here](#).

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

##### **Generative AI in Education: Call for Evidence Summary of Responses**

*United Kingdom Department for Education* (November, 2023)

The United Kingdom's Department for Education opened a conversation with the country's education sector with the launch of a Call for Evidence on the use of GenAI in education. The Department asked for views and experiences from practitioners across all stages of education, as well as from the educational sector and artificial intelligence (AI) experts, and issued a report detailing its findings. The evidence is clear that teachers across primary, secondary and tertiary education are already beginning to see real benefits from the use of GenAI.

##### **Kids' Share 2023: Report on Federal Expenditures on Children through 2022 and Future Projections**

*Urban Institute* (November, 2023)

To inform policymakers, children's advocates, and the general public about how public funds are spent on children (birth through age 18), this 17th edition of the annual Kids' Share report provides a new analysis of federal expenditures on children from 1960 to 2022. It also offers an updated view of public expenditures made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Projections of federal expenditures on children through 2033 give a sense of how budget priorities are scheduled to unfold over the longer term under current law.

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

##### **School Board Members across Tennessee Condemn Voucher Expansion**

*The Tennessean* (November 29, 2023)

##### **Biden-Harris Administration Announces Partnership to Distribute Free COVID-19 Tests to Schools across the Country**

*U.S. Department of Education* (November 29, 2023)

**Cardona Says Standardized Tests Haven't Always Met the Mark, Offers New Flexibility**  
*EducationWeek* (November 28, 2023)

**Where Biden Stands on His Education Campaign Promises**  
*The Hill* (November 28, 2023)

**Should the School Year be extended to Make Up for Learning Loss?**  
*The Hill* (November 27, 2023)

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## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

### 6. Weekly Calendar

#### **Tuesday, December 5, 2023**

**Webinar: English Learner Family Toolkit**

**Subject:** The U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language will hold a webinar to highlight the release of the English Learner Family Toolkit and the implications and potential uses of the information and resources in each chapter; recommend ways and best practices for sharing these resources with EL families; and demonstrate the features of the EL Family Toolkit mobile app.

**Participants:** U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition: Montserrat Garibay, assistant deputy secretary & director; Beatriz Ceja, deputy assistant secretary; Melissa Castillo, senior advisor.

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.

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

#### **Wednesday, December 6, 2023**

**Webinar: Children and Teens with Immersive Tech**

**Subject:** The Future of Privacy Forum (FPF) will hold a virtual discussion on "Immersive Tech Panel Series: Kids & Teens."

**Participants:** Bailey Sanchez, senior counsel of youth and education privacy, FPF; and Jameson Spivack, senior policy analyst of immersive technologies, FPF.

**Time:** 11:00 a.m.

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

**Briefing: Importance of Math to U.S. Industry**

**Subject:** The American Mathematical Society and the Institute for Pure & Applied Mathematics will hold a briefing on "Math Changes Everything: The Importance of Mathematics to U.S. Industry."

**Participants:** Alan Lee, chief technology officer, Analog Devices, Inc.

**Time:** 12:00 p.m.; SVC 208-209, U.S. Capitol Building.

**Registration:** For more information, contact [alb@ams.org](mailto:alb@ams.org).

**Hearing: House Oversight Subcommittee on White House AI Policy**

**Subject:** The House Oversight and Accountability Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "White House Policy on AI."

**Time and Location:** 2:00 p.m.; 2154 Rayburn HOB.

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

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## 7. Future Hearings and Events

### Monday, December 11, 2023

**Webinar: Benefits of Active Parenting in K-12 Education**

**Subject:** The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research will hold a virtual discussion on the benefits of active parenting in K–12 education. Panelists will discuss the details of successful parent-student relationships, the value of school choice, and broader K–12 issues that would benefit from active parental engagement.

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.

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

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## 8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

**Senate Floor:**

Consideration of nominations

**House Floor:**

[H.R. 4468](#) – Choice in Automobile Retail Sales Act of 2023

[H.R. 5933](#) – DETERRENT Act

[H.J. Res. 88](#) – Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to Improving Income Driven Repayment for the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program and the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program

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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

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

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