



The Consortium of State School Boards Associations Weekly Education Report

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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**
 - **FCC Universal Service Fund Found Unconstitutional By 5th Circuit:**
On July 24, the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit released a decision in *Consumers' Research et al. v. FCC* holding that the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Universal Service Fund contribution mechanism, a broadband subsidy program, violates the Constitution and returned the issue to the FCC for further proceedings.
 - **FCC Publishes Final Rule to Address Homework Gap Through E-Rate:** On August 20, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) published a final rule taking steps to modernize the E-Rate program to meet the evolving needs of schools and libraries around the country by allowing for the distribution of Wi-Fi hotspots and services to students, school staff, and library patrons for off-premises use.

2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up

- Impact on State School Board Associations

3. August Recess Education Department Announcements

- **ED Officials Embark on Week-Long Back to School Bus Tour:** On September 3, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona launched a week-long 2024 Back to School Bus Tour.
- **States Receive \$179M to Improve Academic Achievement:** On September 4, the Department of Education (ED) announced \$179 million in grants for student academic acceleration, as part of the ED's Back to School Bus Tour. The grants add to the Biden-Harris Administration's goal of improving academic achievement nationwide.
- **\$28M in Grants Awarded by ED to Recruit, Develop Teacher Workforce:** On September 4, the Department of Education (ED) announced more than \$28 million in awards for the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) program. ED also announced new Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) data displaying the breakdown of borrowers approved for the program in each state.
- **As Back to School Bus Tour Concludes, ED Releases Over 50 Fact Sheets:** On September 5, as the Department of Education (ED) wrapped up its week-long Back to School Bus Tour, it released 52 fact sheets, detailing specific actions and investments the Biden-Harris Administration has taken to assist public schools, colleges, and universities, and investments in students.

4. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

- **Biden-Harris Admin Announces Student Academic Success Actions:** On September 4, the White House announced several actions to drive academic success for all students, including new non-regulatory guidance on school improvement.
- **White House Announces IES Director Nomination:** On Monday, the White House announced President Biden's intent to nominate Adam Gamoran as Director of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), the federal agency responsible for education research and data collection.
- **School Superintendents Hold Briefing on ARP Spending:** On Monday, The School Superintendents Association (AASA) held a briefing titled, "School District Spending of ARP: What went right and what could be improved."
- **HELP Chair Cassidy Holds K-12 Innovation Roundtable:** On Tuesday, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Chair Bill Cassidy (R-LA) led a roundtable on K-12 Innovation and Student Achievement. The event welcomed several ed tech innovators and entrepreneurs from around the country, as well as Senators Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) and Katie Britt (R-AL).
- **Committees Approve Bills to Protect Children, Advance School Choice:** On Wednesday, the House Education and the Workforce Committee approved several **bills** that would address hazing on college campuses, gender identity in schools, and sexual abuse awareness; and House Ways and Means Committee Republicans

were responsible for advancing a school choice tax bill supported by former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

- **AEI Holds Discussion on Increasing Opportunity for Students:** On Wednesday, The American Enterprise Institute hosted a book discussion, “Doing Right by Kids: Leveraging Social Capital and Innovation to Increase Opportunity.”
- **ED Issues New Resources Addressing Sex Discrimination in Schools:** On Thursday, the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released two new resources to help schools comply with the 2024 amendments to Title IX Regulations, which went into effect August 1, 2024.

5. **New Publications**

- **Promoting Learning and Development in K-12 Out-of-School Time Settings**
National Academies (2024)

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine convened an ad-hoc committee to examine learning and development in out-of-school time settings across the K-12 age span. The committee's review is focused on students from low-income households across urban, suburban, and rural settings.

6. **In the News**

- **US Consumer Watchdog Finds That School Lunch Fees Are Taking a Toll on Parents**
US News (September 11, 2024)
- **Was ESSER Funding Successful? Superintendents Say It’s Hard to Generalize**
K-12 Dive (September 9, 2024)
- **USDA Prioritizes Food Safety in School Meals as New Academic Year Begins**
Food Safety News (September 4, 2024)
- **Education Department Approves All Requests to Extend ESSER Spending Deadlines**
K-12 Dive (August 21, 2024)
- **Poll: Americans Want Next President to Focus on Workforce Prep, Hiring Teachers**
The 74 (August 21, 2024)
- **Supreme Court Blocks Partial Enforcement of Title IX Rule**
Higher Ed Dive (August 19, 2024)
- **Department Convenes States to Elevate Support for Educators**
Department of Education (August 12, 2024)
- **Education Department: 2025-26 FAFSA to Fully Debut by December 1**
Higher Ed Dive (August 8, 2024)
- **Trump’s Agenda47 on Education: Abolish Teacher Tenure, Universal School Choice**
USA Today (August 12, 2024)
- **A Teacher in the White House: What Harris-Walz Could Mean for Education**
Education Week (August 6, 2024)

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

- **Stakeholder Briefing: Raising the Bar Across America**: The U.S. Department of Education will host a stakeholder briefing to learn more about the Department's newly released Raising the Bar Across America state data.
Tuesday at 3pm ET
- **New Ways to Transform Education**: New America will hold a virtual summit to highlight The Learning Sciences Exchange (LSX) at New America and its work to help problem-solvers see through various lenses by drawing on talent from many sectors and applying the science of learning to help children and adolescents thrive.
Wednesday at 9am-4pm ET
- **Senate Agriculture Committee on the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program**: The Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics, and Research will host a hearing on the national school lunch program and breakfast program.
Wednesday at 2pm ET
- **Family Economic Stability for Child Well-Being**: The National League of Cities (NLC) will host a webinar as a part of the State and Local Government Prenatal-to-Three Collaboration in Action initiative, conducted in partnership with the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties Research Foundation, National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.
Thursday at 2pm ET

8. **Future Hearings & Events**

- **CEF Legislative Conference Advocacy**: The Committee for Education Funding (CEF) will host an annual legislative conference Zoom webinar on "Upcoming Issues: Legislation Impacting Education Funding, and Shortages in the Educator Workforce."
September 24, 2024

9. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**

- **Senate floor**: Consideration of nominations
- **House floor**:
 - **H.R. 5339** – Protecting Americans' Investments from Woke Policies Act (Sponsored by Rep. Allen / Education and the Workforce Committee)
 - **H.R. 5179** – Anti-BDS Labeling Act (Sponsored by Rep. Tenney / Ways and Means Committee)
 - **H.R. 7909** – Violence Against Women by Illegal Aliens Act (Sponsored by Rep. Mace / Judiciary Committee)
 - **H.R. 3724** – End Woke Higher Education Act (Sponsored by Rep. Owens / Education and the Workforce Committee)
 - **H.R. 4790** – Prioritizing Economic Growth Over Woke Policies Act (Sponsored by Rep. Huizenga / Financial Services Committee)
 - **H.J. Res. 136** – Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental

Protection Agency relating to "Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles". (Sponsored by Rep. James / Energy and Commerce Committee)

- **H.R. 5717** – No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act (Sponsored by Rep. LaLota / Judiciary Committee)
- An item related to government funding may be considered.

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

11. **About BPAG**

1. **COSSBA Policy Priorities**

BROADBAND

FCC UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND FOUND UNCONSTITUTIONAL BY 5TH CIRCUIT

On July 24, the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit released a decision in *Consumers' Research et al. v. FCC* holding that the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Universal Service Fund (USF) contribution mechanism, a broadband subsidy program, violates the Constitution and returned the issue to the FCC for further proceedings. The USF is a federal fund paid for by fees on telecommunications providers that helps ensure that all consumers have access to quality telecommunications services at reasonable rates. The USF is notable for not only supporting rural areas and income-eligible consumers, but also schools and libraries via the E-Rate program. The Fifth Circuit decided that the USF fee is a tax and that the FCC subdelegating tax collection to the Universal Service Administrative Company, a private entity, was unconstitutional. The decision created a split with the Sixth and Eleventh circuits, both of which have upheld the legality of the USF. "This decision is misguided and wrong. It upends decades of bipartisan support for FCC programs that help communications reach the most rural and least-connected households in our country, as well as hospitals, schools, and libraries nationwide," FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel **said in a statement**. "The opinion reflects a lack of understanding of the statutory scheme that helped create the world's best and most far-reaching communications network. We will pursue all available avenues for review." In response to the Court's decision, the FCC **released an announcement** on August 8 underscoring the USF's impact on the United States and outlined consequences that might arise if the FCC is forced to end these programs that "help connect schools and libraries." The Fifth Circuit has granted the FCC a stay on taking action from the ruling until September 30, as long as they file an appeal to the Supreme Court, which the FCC has announced they will. COSSBA will be closely monitoring this issue and will look for opportunities to weigh in on this pending litigation.

FCC PUBLISHES FINAL RULE TO ADDRESS HOMEWORK GAP THROUGH E-RATE

On August 20, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) published a **final rule** taking steps to modernize the E-Rate program to meet the evolving needs of schools and libraries around the country by allowing for the distribution of Wi-Fi hotspots and services to students, school staff, and library patrons for off-premises use. The rule, which was approved by the FCC in July, allows schools and libraries to use E-Rate funding to loan out Wi-Fi hotspots and support high-speed internet access for students, school staff, and library patrons in both rural and urban parts of the country. It adopts a budget mechanism that sets a limit on the amount of support that an applicant can request for Wi-Fi hotspots and services over a three-year period and adopts numerous

safeguards to protect the integrity of the E-Rate program, including measures to ensure the supported Wi-Fi hotspots and services are in use, are used for educational purposes, are not funded through other sources, and are properly documented for auditing purposes. Lastly, the rule requires compliance with the *Children's Internet Protection Act*. The rule is currently being challenged in the Fifth Circuit US Court of Appeals. The petition for review argues that the FCC does not have the authority to fund connectivity outside the physical bounds of a library or classroom. Other conservative think tanks have taken a similar position, yet proponents of the rule say that millions of students still do not have adequate access to the internet and modernizing the E-rate program ensures that students can do their schoolwork wherever they are. "Today, we have a choice," Rosenworcel said in July. "We can go back to those days when people sat in parking lots to get a signal to get online and students struggling with the 'homework gap' hung around fast-food places just to get the internet access they needed to do their schoolwork. Or we can go forward and build a digital future that works for everyone."

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

The House and Senate returned to Washington, DC, last week after a lengthy August recess. They are expected to leave again September 27th, leaving just three weeks (now two) to decide how to keep the federal government open while they are on the campaign trail in October and early November. To no one's surprise, House Speaker Mike Johnson's (R-LA) plan to fund the government through March 2025 via a continuing resolution (CR) that would have attached to it the [Safeguard American Voter Eligibility \(SAVE\) Act](#) was unsuccessful. It became clear by mid-week that the package would not pass the House and it was pulled without ever coming up for a vote. The package never had a chance in the Senate and the White House said it would veto a CR with the Save Act attached.

This week, Speaker Johnson and his colleagues will have to produce another plan, but the Senate is not waiting. It has been reported that the Senate hopes to next week release an extension of government funding to December 13th. That is significantly shorter than the House plan. It is worth noting that some Democrats support extending current funding levels through March 2025, since that would circumvent any proposed cuts for half of the fiscal year. That is arguably a better outcome than allowing Republicans to seek significant cuts if the elections go their way in November. In the meantime, there are no floor votes on any Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 spending bills expected in either chamber this month, setting up a final resolution of FY 2025 spending for the lame duck session or the 119th Congress. It will be appropriations season for months to come.

The first week of an intense three-week work period is over. Advocates and staff are bracing for the second.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

The short September session has other committees scheduling action on bills as well. Last week, the House Education and the Workforce [marked up](#) a number of bills. One addressed hazing on college campuses; another deals with child sexual abuse; and a controversial measure related to preferred pronouns, name or sex-based accommodations was among the measures debated. In a [press release](#) on the proceeding, Chair Virginia Foxx (R-NC) said, "The bills before us today touch on some of the most important issues facing our country—from student safety and child protection to health care access and parental rights. I am grateful to all the Members who have

worked diligently to bring these bills to the forefront, and I am confident that by advancing these pieces of legislation, we are making meaningful strides in the well-being of our constituents and accountability from our government.” It is unclear whether any of these bills will be debated on the House floor.

The House Science, Space and Technology Committee advanced a number of bills addressing artificial intelligence (AI) that were debated on Wednesday, including two education measures. The bipartisan LIFT AI Act and the National Science Foundation AI Education Act were approved. The former would invest in the teaching and learning of AI in K-12 schools; the latter would provide funds for professional development in AI for teachers and other educators. Supporters are hopeful the bills will make it to President Joe Biden’s desk by year’s end.

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3. August Recess Education Department Announcements

ED OFFICIALS EMBARK OF WEEK-LONG BACK TO SCHOOL BUS TOUR

On September 3, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona launched a week-long 2024 Back to School Bus Tour. The Department of Education (ED) road trip to multiple states showcased the various ways the Biden-Harris Administration is investing in accelerating student achievement and “raising the bar” for public education. Secretary Cardona was joined on the tour by the Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, White House Domestic Policy Advisor Neera Tanden, ED Deputy Secretary Cindy Marten, and ED Under Secretary James Kvaal. The tour kicked off in Wisconsin, then made appearances in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Cardona expressed his excitement for the tour, stating that he was “looking forward to lifting up what’s working in public education and celebrating the exciting work taking place in our schools and communities to ensure that all students, no matter their race, place, or background, have opportunities to succeed and contribute to our country.” Throughout the tour, ED officials joined national, state, and local education leaders to speak with students, parents, and educators at events that celebrated the back-to-school season and underscored the administration’s efforts to help students and communities recover from the impacts of the pandemic by improving academic achievement from K through career. In Wisconsin, ED partnered with United Way of Greater Milwaukee to promote the critical importance of regular student attendance; and in Michigan, Secretary Cardona spoke with borrowers who benefited from debt relief via the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. Throughout the tour, ED also highlighted efforts to support high-quality teacher recruitment and retention programs and amplified the agency’s role in supporting public schools with the youth mental health crisis. The tour concluded in Pennsylvania, where Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten joined Secretary Cardona to highlight the critical role of full-service community schools, serving the whole child, ensuring food security in communities, offering mental health supports for communities, and improving opportunities and outcomes for students.

STATES RECEIVE \$179M TO IMPORVE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

On September 4, the Department of Education (ED) announced \$179 million in grants for student academic acceleration, as part of the ED’s Back to School Bus Tour. The grants add to the Biden-Harris Administration’s goal of improving academic achievement nationwide. \$149 million is for

Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) awards, the first for the Biden-Harris administration and the largest award since the CLSD program's inception. Meanwhile, nearly \$30 million is being spent on Competitive Grants for State Assessments (CGSA). CLSD grants are designed to advance effective, evidence-based literacy practices, and have been awarded to 23 state education agencies (SEAs). According to ED's press release, "These new grants will support states and educational partners in developing and implementing evidence-based literacy interventions and supports to help students achieve key literacy milestones. They also will help states, school districts, and communities promote equitable access to high-quality literacy instruction and materials for every student." SEA awardees are encouraged to partner with Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to provide early care education programs, schools, and districts with targeted intensive support. The nearly \$30 million in CGSA grants are being awarded to 10 SEAs. This funding is intended to develop and implement high-quality, innovative, and unique assessments that improve teaching and learning, and provide timely and meaningful information to educators, parents, and students about student progress. Lastly, ED is issuing additional guidance and resources on how schools and communities can further provide academic enrichment opportunities and reduce chronic absenteeism. These additional resources include guidance for the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) program and a new resource on Full-Service Community Schools and combatting chronic absenteeism; The states receiving grants for both programs are listed here.

\$28M IN GRANTS AWARDED BY ED TO RECRUIT, DEVELOP TEACHER WORKFORCE

On September 4, the Department of Education (ED) announced more than \$28 million in awards for the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) program. ED also announced new Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) data displaying the breakdown of borrowers approved for the program in each state. The data shows that \$69.2 billion in relief for nearly 947,000 borrowers was delivered. By contrast, at the start of the Biden-Harris administration, only 7,000 had been approved for PSLF. "Nothing matters more in public education than making sure every child has access to great teachers, and that means well-prepared, well-supported, well-compensated, and fully empowered teachers," Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona stated. The TQP program, along with the \$28 million in grant funding, is intended to encourage a diverse range of people to pursue teaching careers. The Biden-Harris Administration has increased annual funding for the TQP program by 34 percent, or nearly \$18 million per year. Similarly, ED has worked with states and the Department of Labor to grow the number of registered apprenticeship programs for teachers across the United States. The Biden-Harris Administration also has taken steps to reduce the burden of student debt and ensure that student loans are not a barrier to opportunity for prospective teachers. For instance, the Administration secured a \$900 increase to the maximum Pell Grant, the largest increase in a decade, and finalized new rules to help protect borrowers from programs that leave graduates with unaffordable debts. ED is continuing its work to issue debt relief regulations under the *Higher Education Act*, despite court challenges, with new regulations expected in the fall.

AS BACK TO SCHOOL BUS TOUR CONCLUDES, ED RELEASES OVER 50 FACT SHEETS

On September 5, as the Department of Education (ED) wrapped up its week-long Back to School Bus Tour, it released 52 fact sheets, detailing specific actions and investments the Biden-Harris Administration has taken to assist public schools, colleges, and universities and invest in students. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona stated, "These 52 fact sheets show tangible ways our investments have raised the bar for students and schools in every part of our country." Secretary

Cardona went on to say that “together, we have swiftly and safely reopened schools after a pandemic, helped students accelerate their academic achievement, supported student mental health, and built new pathways to brighter careers and futures.” The fact sheets specifically underscore the Administration’s investments in PreK-12 and higher education, including securing one of the largest federal education investments through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and helping nearly 100,000 public schools reopen and students recover academically. These added resources go further to include, but are not limited to, tackling the youth mental health crisis; addressing gun violence; improving learning environments; strengthening and expanding teacher educator pipelines; fighting for college affordability, postsecondary success, and career pathways; and delivering student debt relief to student loan borrowers. The state-by-state fact sheets can be found at ED’s [Raise the Bar: Lead the World website](#).

4. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

BIDEN-HARRIS ADMIN ANNOUNCES STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS ACTIONS

On September 4, the White House announced several actions to drive academic success for all students, including new non-regulatory guidance on school improvement. The administrative actions include: 1) [awarding](#) \$149 million to support states in implementing evidence-based reading interventions; 2) [awarding](#) \$30 million to support comprehensive assessment systems that inform teaching and support learning; and, 3) releasing a [new resource](#) for educators on evidence-based strategies for increasing student literacy and math achievement. The new school improvement [guidance](#) focuses on evidence-based practices to support students and educators and accelerate academic achievement. The Education Department is providing a 30-day opportunity for the public to comment on the draft guidance; comments should be emailed to OESE.Feedback@ed.gov by October 4, 2024. Furthermore, the White House is calling on governors and state education leaders to create statewide student data systems that provide actionable chronic absenteeism-related data for schools intended to help target interventions and drive improvement. The Administration is also calling on industry vendors to improve the availability and utility of student attendance data. Included in this broad set of efforts is an Department of Education (ED) issued resource for state leaders on different state approaches to creating and implementing data systems to address chronic absenteeism, as well as a joint ED and Department of Agriculture resource on healthy school meals expected later this month. Lastly, the Administration also announced the founding of the Student Attendance and Engagement Solutions Network; the release of a joint ED and Department of Transportation resource on providing safe and reliable transit options; the launch of the “Attendance Champions Challenge;” and the publication of resources for parents on navigating school attendance.

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES IES DIRECTOR NOMINATION

On Monday, the White House announced President Biden’s intent to nominate Adam Gamoran as Director of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), the federal agency responsible for education research and data collection. Gamoran currently serves as President of the William T. Grant Foundation. He was previously a Professor of Sociology and Educational Policy Studies and director of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Gamoran is an elected member of the National Academy of Education, and he has served on a variety of panels for the National Research Council (NRC), including the Board on Comparative

International Studies of Education and the Board on Science Education. He now chairs the NRC's Committee on the Evaluation Framework for Successful K-12 STEM Education. "I'm incredibly pleased that President Biden has nominated Adam Gamoran to serve as Director of the Institute of Education Sciences. Adam has spent his career conducting and leading critical research that improves the lives of young people – including research on inequality in education," stated Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. Gamoran will need to be confirmed by the Senate to officially assume the role.

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS HOLD BRIEFING ON ARP SPENDING

On Monday, The School Superintendents Association (AASA) held a briefing titled, "School District Spending of ARP: What went right and what could be improved." Briefing participants included Sasha Pudelski, director of advocacy for AASA; Rupak Gandhi, superintendent of Fargo Public Schools in North Dakota; and Heidi Sipe, superintendent of Umatilla School District in Eastern Oregon. Pudelski opened the briefing with an overview of AASA's recent survey report on school district American Rescue Plan (ARP) spending. The latest report is the fifth installment in a survey series AASA conducted on the topic. Based on the survey results, Pudelski asserted that while the full impact of ARP remains to be seen, the significance of the funding is "undeniable." Following Pudelski, Ghandi touched on the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on Fargo Public Schools, noting that many students faced mental health issues and required additional social and emotional supports during the pandemic. ARP funds were prioritized for technology upgrades, investing in human capital, mental health support, and addressing learning loss, Gandhi explained. He voiced that human capital investments were the most impactful, resulting in improved academic performance, better academic rates, and reduced behavioral issues. Sipe explained that the Umatilla School District is small, with only 1,450 student enrollments. She also noted that the district has the second-highest percent of English Language Learners in Oregon and 100 percent of students receive free meals each day. She said that the district's top ARP spending priorities were hiring roaming substitutes full-time, investing in daycare centers for staff and parents, and creating a credit recovery space for people going back to school. Notably, funding for daycares provided more jobs, improved staff retention, increased graduation success, and improved attendance. Following panelist presentations, questions were answered related to mental health and chronic absenteeism ARP investments; the difference between spending annual federal funding versus emergency funding; and the role of federal guidance, particularly around guidance that remains unclear. AASA's ARP survey series can be viewed [here](#).

HELP CHAIR CASSIDY HOLDS K-12 INNOVATION ROUNDTABLE

On Tuesday, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Chair Bill Cassidy (R-LA) led a roundtable on K-12 Innovation and Student Achievement. The event welcomed several ed tech innovators and entrepreneurs from around the country, as well as Senators Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) and Katie Britt (R-AL). The group examined innovative strategies being employed in schools to help children succeed in the classroom and beyond. Senator Cassidy began by expressing the need to incentivize innovative school models throughout K-12 education, citing that in 2023, 72 percent of parents considered moving their child to a new school, a 35 percent increase from the prior year. The roundtable participants followed Senator Cassidy's opening remarks by sharing innovative strategies. Steve Grubbs, CEO and co-founder of VictoryXR acknowledged that artificial intelligence (AI) will be an integral part of society moving forward. Because of this, he stressed that the United States needs to be a global leader in AI by promoting a free knowledge language model. Ruben Morris, founder of the Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School,

highlighted the school's public/private partnerships with organizations and companies such as the Federal Aviation Administration and Delta Airlines. These valuable engagements have created real-world opportunities and hands-on learning experiences for high school students, Morris explained. The school's mission is to establish meaningful STEM career pathways, particularly in computer science and cyber security, which offers students special credentials prior to high school graduation. Amar Kumar, founder and CEO of KaiPod Learning, criticized what he believes are outdated teaching models. He explained that KaiPod Learning's goal is to create one million new schools by inspiring educators to open micro-schools with class sizes of 10-15 students that focus on providing individualized instruction. Meanwhile, Heidi Vasiloff, academic executive director of the Great Hearts Nova school, remarked on the school's ability to disrupt education in a positive way by allowing students the flexibility to learn from wherever they are. Finally, Kelby Woodard, president and CEO of the Cristo Rey Network, explained the corporate work-study structure that the network's schools offer its students. These work-study programs give underprivileged high school students opportunities beyond high school, such as college degree attainment and corporate career placement. Cristo Rey schools have successfully utilized this model for 30 years, Woodard said, improving the lives and career trajectories of over 26,000 students. The roundtable discussion displayed a clear emphasis on embracing innovative schools and learning models to improve student achievement and career success. The discussion can be viewed [here](#).

COMMITTEES APPROVE BILLS TO PROTECT CHILDREN, ADVANCE SCHOOL CHOICE

On Wednesday, the House Education and the Workforce Committee approved several bills that would address hazing on college campuses, gender identity in schools, and sexual abuse awareness. In a party-line vote, the committee advanced legislation requiring elementary and middle schools that receive federal funding to obtain parental consent before students can change their gender identity and pronouns. H.R. 736, the *PROTECT Kids Act*, championed by Congressman Tim Walberg (R-MI), would also require parental consent to allow students to change “sex-based accommodations,” such as locker rooms or bathrooms. The Committee approved two additional bills with overwhelming bipartisan support. *The Stop Campus Hazing Act* (H.R. 5646) strengthens hazing reporting requirements at colleges and universities and would require postsecondary institutions to establish prevention programs to combat hazing on campus. Lastly, the Education Committee unanimously advanced legislation authorizing federal grants to support teacher and staff training for child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs. Sponsored by Congressman Nathan Moran (R-TX), the *Jenna Quinn Law of 2024* (H.R. 7233), is designed to assist teachers, school faculty, students, and communities with how to prevent, recognize, respond to, and report child sexual abuse among primary and secondary school students. Furthermore, House Ways and Means Committee Republicans were responsible for advancing a school choice tax bill supported by former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. H.R. 9462, the *Educational Choice for Children Act*, would support private school scholarships. Each bill now awaits floor consideration in the House before heading to the senate if successfully advanced.

AEI HOLDS DISCUSSION ON INCREASING OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS

On Wednesday, The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) hosted a book discussion, “Doing Right by Kids: Leveraging Social Capital and Innovation to Increase Opportunity,” moderated by Yuval Levin, director of social, cultural, and constitutional studies for AEI. The panel featured Beth Akers, AEI senior fellow; Chester Finn, president emeritus for the Thomas B. Fordham Institute; and Martin West, Henry Less Shattuck professor of education for the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Levin began the event by outlining several benefits and limitations provided

by Education Savings Accounts (ESAs). Following Levin, Finn touched briefly on the previous night's 2024 Presidential Debate between Former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris. He noted that K-12 education policy was not discussed, which he asserts is emblematic of a lack of interest at the federal level for K-12 legislative issues. Moving the discussion to early education, Finn expressed his disdain for the Headstart program and voiced support for early education and childcare programs that adequately prepare children for school and improve upward mobility. Akers then commented on higher education and its correlation to economic mobility. She criticized what she referred to as a disconnect between how policymakers and everyday Americans view postsecondary education and asserted that the average American prioritizes economic mobility as it relates to college degrees. Akers pointed to the chapter she authored in *Doing Right by Kids*, urging policymakers to hold postsecondary institutions accountable for improving economic mobility. She specifically referred to a “do no economic harm” policy proposal in the book that would incentive institutions to deliver on economic mobility for their students. Martin West listed several themes he felt were missing from AEI's new book, specifically conversations around deregulation, which he argues is necessary to allow for innovative micro-schools that serve a small number of students and often provide more flexible settings than traditional schools. He asserted that micro-schools are a promising strategy to address upward social mobility. Pointing to the book's chapter on K-12 education, West notes that homeschooling rates have doubled in recent years, along with the emergence of new school models, such as micro-schools, and hybrid schools like co-ops. Concluding his remarks, West provided recommendations for K-12 policy going forward: 1) An intense focus on results, 2) targeted government resources for individuals with disabilities, and 3) an emphasis on cognitive development, as opposed to holistic. Following individual panelist remarks, the group questioned if there is a growing willingness to talk about accountability. The panel agreed that there is an imbalance with federal spending and accountability that needs to be corrected. A recording of the AEI book event is [here](#).

ED ISSUES NEW RESOURCES ADDRESSING SEX DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOLS

On Thursday, the Department of Education's (ED) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) [released](#) two new resources to help schools comply with the 2024 amendments to Title IX Regulations, which went into effect August 1, 2024. The resources explain how the 2024 Title IX Regulations clarify and update longstanding obligations related to Title IX coordinator duties, as well as prohibitions on sex discrimination based on pregnancy or related conditions and parental, family, or marital status. The first resource – [2024 Title IX Regulations: Impact on Title IX Coordinator Duties](#) – highlights new and updated requirements for Title IX coordinators, who play a critical role in ensuring compliance with their schools' Title IX obligations. The second resource – [2024 Title IX Regulations: Nondiscrimination Based on Pregnancy or Related Conditions & Parental, Family, or Marital Status](#) – clarifies these prohibitions on sex discrimination for students, employees, and applicants for admission or employment. Both resources answer pressing questions and complement previously released technical assistance documents on 2024 Title IX Regulation implementation, including a [summary](#) of major provisions; a [resource](#) for drafting Title IX nondiscrimination policies, notices of nondiscrimination, and grievance procedures; [pointers](#) for implementation; and a small entity compliance [guide](#).

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5. New Publications

Promoting Learning and Development in K-12 Out-of-School Time Settings

National Academies (2024)

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine convened an ad-hoc committee to examine learning and development in out-of-school time settings across the K-12 age span. The committee's review is focused on students from low-income households across urban, suburban, and rural settings.

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6. In the News

US Consumer Watchdog Finds That School Lunch Fees Are Taking a Toll on Parents

US News (September 11, 2024)

Was ESSER Funding Successful? Superintendents Say It's Hard to Generalize

K-12 Dive (September 9, 2024)

USDA Prioritizes Food Safety in School Meals as New Academic Year Begins

Food Safety News (September 4, 2024)

Education Department Approves All Requests to Extend ESSER Spending Deadlines

K-12 Dive (August 21, 2024)

Poll: Americans Want Next President to Focus on Workforce Prep, Hiring Teachers

The 74 (August 21, 2024)

Supreme Court Blocks Partial Enforcement of Final Title IX Rule

Higher Ed Dive (August 19, 2024)

Department Convenes States to Elevate Support for Educators

US Department of Education | Homeroom (August 12, 2024)

Education Department: 2025-26 FAFSA to Fully Debut by December 1

Higher Ed Dive (August 8, 2024)

Trump's Agenda47 on Education: Abolish Teacher Tenure, Universal School Choice, Patriotism

USA Today (August 12, 2024)

A Teacher in the White House: What Harris-Walz Could Mean for Education

Education Week (August 6, 2024)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

7. Weekly Calendar

Tuesday, September 17, 2024

Stakeholder Briefing: Raising the Bar Across America

Subject: The U.S. Department of Education will host a stakeholder briefing to learn more about the Department's newly released [Raising the Bar Across America state data](#).

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Registration: Join via Microsoft Teams [here](#).

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Webinar: New Ways to Transform Education

Subject: New America will hold a virtual summit to highlight The Learning Sciences Exchange (LSX) at New America and its work to help problem-solvers see through various lenses by drawing on talent from many sectors and applying the science of learning to help children and adolescents thrive.

Participants: Paul Butler, president, New America; Yalda Uhls, executive director, Center for Scholars, and Storytellers, UCL; Lisa Guernsey, director and co-founder, LSX, New America; and others.

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

Hearing: Senate Agriculture on the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

Subject: The Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics, and Research will host a hearing on the national school lunch program and breakfast program.

Witnesses: Crystal Fitzsimons, interim president, Food Research and Action Center; Russell Redding, secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture; Nichole Taylor, director of food and nutrition, Chichester School District; Kay Swartz Rentzel, executive director, Southeastern Food Processors Association; and Meg Bruening, professors, Department of Nutritional Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University.

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Registration: Livestream [here](#)

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Webinar: Family Economic Stability for Child Well-being

Subject: The National League of Cities (NLC) will host a webinar as a part of the State and Local Government Prenatal-to-Three Collaboration in Action initiative, conducted in partnership with the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties Research Foundation, National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.

Participants: Nia Coaxum, program manager, City of Philadelphia Department of Public Health; Cynthia Osborne, founder and executive director, National Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center; Jamila H. Winder, county commissioner, Montgomery County, PA

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

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8. Future Hearings and Events

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

Webinar: CEF Legislative Conference Advocacy

Subject: The Committee for Education Funding (CEF) will host an annual legislative conference Zoom webinar on “Upcoming Issues: Legislation Impacting Education Funding, and Shortages in the Educator Workforce.”

Participants: Kimberly Eckert, dean, Oxford Teachers College at Reach University, Oakland, CA; Clifton S. Tanabe, dean, College of Education, University of Texas at El Paso; W. Burke Royster, superintendent, Greenville County Schools, South Carolina; Taylor Maag, director of workforce policy, Jobs for the Future; Bryce McKibben, senior director of policy & advocacy, The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs, Temple University, Pennsylvania; and Tara Thomas, government affairs manager, AASA -The School Superintendents Association.

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

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9. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor:

Consideration of nominations

House Floor:

H.R. 5339 – Protecting Americans’ Investments from Woke Policies Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Allen / Education and the Workforce Committee*)

H.R. 5179 – Anti-BDS Labeling Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Tenney / Ways and Means Committee*)

H.R. 7909 – Violence Against Women by Illegal Aliens Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Mace / Judiciary Committee*)

H.R. 3724 – End Woke Higher Education Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Owens / Education and the Workforce Committee*)

H.R. 4790 – Prioritizing Economic Growth Over Woke Policies Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Huizenga / Financial Services Committee*)

H.J. Res. 136 – Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States

Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles". (Sponsored by Rep. James / Energy and Commerce Committee)

H.R. 5717 – No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act (Sponsored by Rep. LaLota / Judiciary Committee)

An item related to government funding may be considered.

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10. Links for Up-to-Date Information on Hearings, Legislation, and Events

[U.S. House and Senate 2024 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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11. About BPAG

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- leveraging our expertise and passion;
- strategizing intelligent solutions; and,
- Creating meaningful impact.

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