



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**
 - **Teacher Recruitment and Retention**
 - **House Education Panel Considers Innovative Teacher Prep Programs**: On Wednesday, the House Education and The Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing titled, “Innovative Teacher Preparation: Properly Equipping America’s Educators” to address the challenge of teacher shortages and retention across America.
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
 - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
 - **House Oversight Democrats Examine Gun Violence in Schools**: On Monday, Democrats on the House Oversight Committee held a roundtable discussion to examine “Long-Term Consequences and Costs of Gun Violence and Emotional Trauma for Young People and School Communities.”
 - **House Higher Ed Panel Reviews GAO Report on FAFSA Failures**: On Tuesday, the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held a hearing to address the ongoing issues around the implementation of the Department of Education’s new Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

- **House Democrats Reintroduce Childcare Enhancement Bills:** On Wednesday, House Democratic Whip Katherine Clark (D-MA) and Representatives Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), Jennifer McClellan (D-VA), Brittany Pettersen (D-CO), and Jill Tokuda (D-HI) reintroduced a pair of childcare bills that would support childcare facilities and the workforce.
- **STEM Education Coalition Hosts Policy Forum on Capitol Hill:** On Wednesday, the STEM Education Coalition hosted a policy forum on Capitol Hill titled, “Make Science Count: How K-12 Accountability Policies Impact Science Learning.”

4. **New Publications**

- **Artificial Intelligence in Education and Mental Health for a Sustainable Future**
National Academies (September 2024)
The publication highlights how Artificial intelligence (AI) has demonstrated potential to be transformative in addressing challenges in mental health and education and in supporting broader sustainability issues. However, there are well-founded concerns about AI regarding its potential to exacerbate inequity, further marginalizing underserved communities.
- **FAFSA: Education Needs to Improve Communications and Support Around the Free Application for Federal Student Aid**
US Government Accountability Office (September 2024)
The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently completed its review on the simplified FAFSA rollout. This recently released review assesses (1) how Education’s rollout of the new FAFSA affected students, (2) the extent to which Education provided students with information and support, and (3) the extent to which Education provided colleges with timely communications.

5. **In the News**

- **Government Watchdog Blames Education Department Leadership for Chaotic FAFSA Rollout**
USA Today (September 24, 2024)
- **Most K-12 Teachers Unhappy as Staffing Shortages, Learning Losses Persist, Report Shows**
The Washington Times (September 25, 2024)
- **For the Sake of America’s School Children, Congress Must Keep AmeriCorps Going**
The 74 (September 25, 2024)
- **This Texas Private School Teaches Students Through AI**
NBC News (September 25, 2024)
- **NYC Schools Chancellor David Banks Announces Retirement Weeks After Feds Raided His Home**
CBS News (September 25, 2024)
- **ESSER Post-Mortem: How Did Districts Spend \$190B in Federal Funds? Did It Work?**
The 74 (September 26, 2024)

- **Biden-Harris Administration Makes \$965 Million Available to Fund Clean School Buses That Reduce Pollution, Save Money, and Protect Children’s Health**

US EPA (September 26, 2024)

6. **Weekly Calendar - What’s coming up this week?**

- **Outlook for Workforce and Education Policy**: Jobs for the Future will hold a webinar with bipartisan conversations with leading policy experts and political observers about the future of federal workforce and education policy, as we enter the final stretch of the campaign season and look ahead to 2025.

Monday at 3:30pm ET

7. **Future Hearings & Events**

- **National Board for Education Sciences**: The Department of Education will hold a meeting of the National Board for Education Sciences for presentations from Matthew Soldner, the acting director of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), each of the IES Centers, and the IES Office of Science followed by a discussion of IES' ongoing work and theory of change.

October 9 at 12:30pm ET

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

- The House and Senate are in recess.

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

10. **About BPAG**

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

HOUSE EDUCATION PANEL CONSIDERS INNOVATIVE TEACHER PREP PROGRAMS

On Wednesday, the House Education and The Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing titled, “Innovative Teacher Preparation: Properly Equipping America’s Educators” to address the challenge of teacher shortages and retention across America. Although few committee members participated, **the hearing** did allow those in attendance to identify shortcomings in the teacher preparation system and examine potential solutions. Witnesses provided varying perspectives on the issue, as did Members of Congress on distinct efforts to recruit and retrain educators, with a particular focus on team-teaching approaches. In his opening remarks, Subcommittee Chair Aaron Bean (R-FL) stressed the need for affordable and accessible pathways into the classroom, saying that traditional teacher preparation programs are too costly for many prospective teachers. He further suggested the Committee investigate alternative certification programs as avenues to recruiting and retaining talented teachers. Subcommittee Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) advocated for diversifying the educator workforce, saying it would benefit all students. Bonamici further expressed support for Title I and Title II funding, as well as the *Teacher Diversity and retention Act (H.R. 5478)*. She also promoted the expansion of loan forgiveness for those entering the educator workforce. **Dr. Carole Basile**, dean of the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona

State University, highlighted the university’s “Next Education Workforce” initiative that promotes a team-based teaching model, saying that it has broad implications for teacher preparation. [Dr. Melba Spooner](#), dean of the Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University, commented on the school’s redesigned curriculum program that focuses on personalized and individualized learning models while being responsive to market demands. [Mr. Sharif El-Mekki](#), CEO of the Center for Black Educator Development, encouraged a focus on educator diversity and expanding the Black teacher pipeline across the country. Mekki shared that all students benefit from a diverse teacher workforce and urged the committee to take decisive action by supporting programs that promote educator diversity. Lastly, [Dr. Greg Mendez](#), the principal of Skyline High School in Arizona, testified that traditional methods of teacher preparation programs are struggling to meet the evolving needs of students and educators. Like Dr. Basile, Dr. Mendez promoted team-based teaching models in schools. Witness testimony and a recording of the hearing is [here](#). A full summary that includes committee member questions is [here](#).

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Capitol Hill has emptied of elected lawmakers, as Congress started a six-week pre-election recess last Wednesday after passing a continuing resolution (CR) funding bill that will keep the federal government funded through December 20, 2024. The [bipartisan continuing resolution](#) passed the House on Wednesday via a 341-82 vote. Hours later, it passed the Senate by a vote of 78 to 18.

The 118th Congress is on track to being one of the least productive Congresses ever—[it has enacted 82 public laws so far](#). And a fair percentage of those bills have been CRs. Advocates are hopeful that the post-Election Day lame duck session might bump up those numbers. While the results of the November election will profoundly affect the deliberations of Congress when it reconvenes on November 12, 2024, there are three items that lawmakers are certain will at least be considered for action.

First, of course, is Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 spending. With the CR keeping the federal government operating through December 20th, which is the scheduled last day of the lame duck session, lawmakers and staff will once again face the pressure of addressing spending while staring down the holiday break.

Second is the annual defense bill—or [the National Defense Authorization Act](#). As a must-pass bill, advocates for every cause are trying to attach amendments to the measure. Particularly since there have only been 82 chances for enactment of any legislation since the start of 2023.

The third item on the Congressional wish list – [the Farm Bill reauthorization](#) – is the one with perhaps the smallest chances of enactment. It’s a large, complicated bill that would have to navigate House Republican priorities for changes and how they differ from the plans of Senate Democrats. In a post-election climate, bipartisan negotiations could be difficult.

Washington, DC, and Capitol Hill will be quieter than usual for the next six weeks, with lawmakers on the campaign trail and then returning for what will certainly be a frenetic lame duck session. Then, everyone will quickly turn to who will be key players in the 119th Congress and how productive—or not—the next two years might be.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

The ultimate resolution for spending bills will likely be a series of “mini-bus” bills that include two or three of the 12 spending bills. Education advocates are expecting the final education funding levels to be very close to current levels. That means that investments in education will be essentially the same for FYs 2023, 2024 and 2025. Regardless, advocates will continue to make the case for greater investments in education in coming months.

As for [the Farm Bill](#), there aren't many education programs of interest but it does include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps, and other nutrition programs for low-income households. Advocates would like to see those programs updated, particularly with COVID-era food and nutritional supports changing.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

HOUSE OVERSIGHT DEMOCRATS EXAMINE GUN VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

On Monday, Democrats on the House Oversight Committee held a [roundtable discussion](#) to examine “Long-Term Consequences and Costs of Gun Violence and Emotional Trauma for Young People and School Communities.” Oversight Committee Ranking Member Jamie Raskin (D-MD) invited several school leaders and gun safety advocates to participate in Monday’s event, including several founding members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals’ (NASSP) [Principal Recovery Network](#). Monday’s roundtable discussion was the second in-depth briefing to discuss the issue of gun violence in America and came just 19 days after the September 4 school shooting in Winder, Georgia that killed two students and two teachers. In his [opening statement](#), Congressman Raskin referenced several statistics on gun violence in America, specifically underscoring gun violence in schools. Raskin stated that the number one cause of death for children today is gun violence, outpacing cancer, vehicle crashes, poisoning, and others. Following Raskin, the roundtable participants provided personal remarks on their experiences with gun violence in schools, highlighting the deadly 1999 Columbine shooting and the 2018 Marshall County High School shooting, as well as others throughout the years. Members of Congress then asked school leaders around the table to elaborate on potential gun violence policy solutions, such as ‘Red Flag’ or ‘extreme risk’ laws. Melissa Alexander cited a [Vanderbilt poll](#) finding that 75 percent of Tennesseans support Red Flag laws. Congressman Jared Moskowitz (D-FL) highlighted his experience with school safety legislation in Florida, saying, “A completely Republican legislature and a completely Republican Senate and a completely Republican governor ... [were able to enact] gun violence prevention [laws],” referring to [gun safety legislation](#) passed in Florida following the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in 2018. Despite success in Florida and other states, the panel recognized certain challenges in passing a federal gun safety bill, and Members on the panel were unable to provide a clear pathway for passing federal legislation. However, the elected officials and participants agreed that there should be constant and sustained support for movements like March for Our Lives so that future generations are guaranteed safe schools in which to learn and grow.

HOUSE HIGHER ED PANEL REVIEWS GAO REPORT ON FAFSA FAILURES

On Tuesday, the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development [held a hearing](#) to address the ongoing issues around the implementation of the Department of Education’s (ED) new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

In 2020 and 2021, Congress enacted legislation setting a July 2023 deadline to launch a simplified FAFSA application process. ED did not meet that [timeline](#), and system issues have plagued the process since its December 30, 2023 soft launch. Following ED's disrupted FAFSA launch, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked to review the simplified FAFSA rollout. The GAO provided Congress with two testimonial reports ahead of Tuesday's hearing. The [first report](#) found that ED needs to improve communications and support around FAFSA and made seven recommendations to ensure the ED is prepared for the start of the next FAFSA cycle. The [second report](#) highlighted preliminary results showing that strong leadership is needed to address serious student aid system weaknesses. The latter report provided six recommendations, including adhering to agency policy in managing requirements and testing, developing policy for independent acquisition reviews, and hiring a permanent departmental Chief Information Officer (CIO). Notably, the GAO found that the failed FAFSA launch hurt lower-income students the most. The GAO also found ED knew there could be delays as early as August 2022, yet it was not announced until March 2023. Ultimately, delays, glitches, and other issues led to a nine percent decline in submitted FAFSA applications among first-time applicants, and an overall decline of about 432,000 applications. During the hearing, Republicans, Democrats, and the GAO witnesses expressed concern about next school year's FAFSA period, which has already been pushed back to December with ED currently allowing schools and students to participate in a [Beta test period](#) before the December launch. GAO officials warned that the next FAFSA could see even more delays and similar technical issues due to systemic problems in ED and the Office of Federal Student Aid. The hearing and both reports can be found [here](#).

HOUSE DEMOCRATS REINTRODUCE CHILDCARE ENHANCEMENT BILLS

On Wednesday, House Democratic Whip Katherine Clark (D-MA) and Representatives Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), Jennifer McClellan (D-VA), Brittany Pettersen (D-CO), and Jill Tokuda (D-HI) [reintroduced a pair of childcare bills](#) that would support childcare facilities and the workforce. *The Childcare Infrastructure Act* would establish a competitive grant program to support renovations at childcare facilities, which lawmakers hope will allow providers to expand their facilities to serve more children. The bill would also authorize \$10 billion over five years to support infrastructure. *The Childcare Workforce Development Act* would authorize a student loan repayment program for early childhood educators. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would oversee a repayment program of up to \$6,000 annually for early educators who are working for providers that receive Childcare and Development Block Grant funding. The bill would also establish a program that would provide up to \$4,000 to certain people pursuing an associate degree or certificate in early childhood education. "Childcare is critical for early learning and for social and emotional development and it really does set kids up for success," Congresswoman Bonamici said during the [press conference](#). "For high-quality early childhood education and childcare, we need strong early childhood educators, safe teacher-child ratios curriculum and importantly — we need the physical environment." Representative Bonnamici serves as the top Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education. Whip Clark added that the "pair of bills will build out childcare facilities across the country while recruiting talented Americans to pursue careers in early education. This investment would mark a critical step forward in House Democrats' fight to lower costs for parents, create opportunities for our children, and build an economy that works for working families."

STEM EDUCATION COALITION HOSTS POLICY FORUM ON CAPITOL HILL

On Wednesday, the STEM Education Coalition hosted a policy forum on Capitol Hill titled, “Make Science Count: How K-12 Accountability Policies Impact Science Learning.” The briefing welcomed a panel of experts, including Dr. Christine Cunningham, senior vice president of STEM Learning; Peter McLaren, executive director of Next Gen Education, LLC; Connie Haymon, a master teacher for Laurel Woods Elementary School in Maryland; and David Todisco, senior manager of government and public affairs for The LEGO Group. STEM Education Coalition Executive Director James Brown moderated the panel discussion. Dr. Cunningham provided an overview of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) science assessment results. Dr. Cunningham praised the [NAEP science assessment](#) for its targeted design to measure students’ knowledge and abilities in the areas of Earth and space science, physical science, and life science. Peter McLaren elaborated on Next Gen Education’s expertise and guidance that it provides to states, districts, and schools in the areas of science education and the implementation of three-dimensional science education standards. McLaren recommended that every state include science assessments in its accountability system and said that building a system of science assessments will provide schools, districts, and states with key indicators of science learning outcomes. Connie Haymon, an elementary school science and math teacher, shared her experience in the classroom and with her students. Haymon advocated for hands-on science instruction yet criticized certain budget constraints that create barriers to implementing hands-on learning approaches in classrooms. Haymon also called attention to teacher burnout, saying most teachers are stretched too thin when it comes to educating children. She attributed these experiences to inefficient student-teacher ratios and onerous school budget cuts. Haymon went on to say that appropriate funding for public schools across the country is a good first step toward improving teacher burnout, but a whole-of-government approach would further enhance science education. David Todisco shared several LEGO Group-inspired solutions to solving the “crisis of confidence in STEM.” He stated that confidence is built through hands-on learning, which is why the LEGO Group provides certain schools with [LEGO education sets](#). Todisco also shared several statistics, saying 77 percent of US educators believe that “learning through play supports the development of future-ready skills.” The panel agreed that a whole-of-government approach is necessary for improving STEM education, and it is evident that hands-on learning is advancing STEM engagement across the United States.

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4. New Publications

Artificial Intelligence in Education and Mental Health for a Sustainable Future

National Academies (September 2024)

The publication highlights how Artificial intelligence (AI) has demonstrated potential to be transformative in addressing challenges in mental health and education and in supporting broader sustainability issues. However, there are well-founded concerns about AI regarding its potential to exacerbate inequity, further marginalizing underserved communities.

FAFSA: Education Needs to Improve Communications and Support Around the Free Application for Federal Student Aid

US Government Accountability Office (September 2024)

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FAFSA affected students, (2) the extent to which Education provided students with information and support, and (3) the extent to which Education provided colleges with timely communications.

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5. In the News

Government Watchdog Blames Education Department Leadership for Chaotic FAFSA Rollout

USA Today (September 24, 2024, 2024)

Inclusive Higher Education STEM Pathways

Homeroom | US Department of Education (September 24, 2024)

Most K-12 Teachers Unhappy as Staffing Shortages, Learning Losses Persist, Report Shows

The Washington Times (September 25, 2024)

For The Sake of America's School Children, Congress Must Keep AmeriCorps Going

The 74 (September 25, 2024)

This Texas Private School Teaches Students Through AI

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ESSER Post-Mortem: How Did Districts Spend \$190B in Federal Funds? Did It Work?

The 74 (September 26, 2024)

Biden-Harris Administration Makes \$965 Million Available to Fund Clean School Buses That Reduce Pollution, Save Money, and Protect Children's Health

US Environmental Protection Agency (September 26, 2024)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Monday, September 30, 2024

Webinar: Outlook for Workforce and Education Policy

Subject: Jobs for the Future will hold a webinar with bipartisan conversations with leading policy experts and political observers about the future of federal workforce and education policy, as we enter the final stretch of the campaign season and look ahead to 2025.

Participants: Michael Brickman, former Senior Adviser to the Under Secretary of Education for President Trump; Maria Flynn, president and CEO, Jobs for the Future, and former Labor

Department official for Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush; Denise Forte, former Acting Assistant Secretary of Education for President Obama; Seth Harris, former Deputy Director of the Biden White House's National Economic Council, Acting Labor Secretary for President Obama; and John Pallasch, former Labor Assistant Secretary for President Trump.

Time: 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Agency Meeting: National Board for Education Sciences

Subject: The Department of Education will hold a meeting of the National Board for Education Sciences for presentations from Matthew Soldner, the acting director of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), each of the IES Centers, and the IES Office of Science followed by a discussion of IES' ongoing work and theory of change.

Time: 12:30 p.m.

Registration: RSVP to ellie.pelaez@ed.gov by October 4.

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8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

The House and Senate are in recess.

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9. 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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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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