



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. **This report will not be published next week because of the Thanksgiving Holiday. Please use the bookmarks below to navigate to your area of interest:**

1. **News, Publications, & Updates on COSSBA Policy Priorities**
 - **Broadband Connectivity and E-Rate**
 - **Supreme Court to Review Constitutionality of Universal Service Fund**: The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday announced it will review the legal battle over the constitutionality of the Universal Service Fund, which could dictate the future of broadband expansion.
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
 - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
 - **New America Explores Fundamentals of Youth Apprenticeships**: Last Monday, New America hosted a webinar on the “Fundamentals of Youth Apprenticeship,” featuring a panel of experts that spoke about the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship, a national initiative launched in 2018 aimed at expanding access to equitable, high-quality apprenticeship opportunities for youth ages 16-24.
 - **National Academies Discusses K-12 Entrepreneurship Education**: On Tuesday, the National Academies Government-University-Industry-Philanthropy Research Roundtable hosted a webinar focused on the transformative role of early entrepreneurship education.
 - **Trump Taps Former WWE Exec Linda McMahon as ED Secretary**: On Tuesday, it was announced that President-elect Donald Trump nominated Linda

McMahon, former Small Business Administration head and professional wrestling executive, to lead the Department of Education, signaling a strong focus on school choice, parental rights, and strengthening the workforce.

- **Philanthropists Examine How to Scale High-Impact Tutoring:** Last Tuesday, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (CGLR) hosted a webinar on high-impact tutoring to explore the effects it has in public schools across the United States. The panel featured representatives from several national philanthropies, each offering insights on how to stimulate local funding for community-based programs to enhance high-impact tutoring.
- **ED Announces Official Release of 2025-26 FAFSA Form:** On Thursday, the Department of Education released the 2025–26 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) ten days ahead of their chosen December 1 deadline.

4. **New Publications**

- **Larger Pay Increases and Better Benefits Could Support Teacher Retention**
RAND Corporation (November 2024)
In this report, researchers use the 2024 State of the American Teacher survey to explore a set of factors that could relate to teachers’ persistently negative perceptions of their pay between the 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 school years.

5. **In the News**

- **House Passes FAFSA Deadline Act**
Inside Higher Ed (November 18, 2024)
- **The K-12 World Reacts to Linda McMahon, Trump’s Choice for Education Secretary**
Education Week (November 20, 2024)
- **Bringing Schools Up to Speed Against Emerging Cyber Threats**
EdTech Digest (November 21, 2024)
- **With McMahon, Trump Shrugs Off Lack of School Experience for Education Nod**
The Hill (November 21, 2024)
- **How Linda McMahon Might Approach the Dept. of Education**
The New York Times (November 21, 2024)
- **Optimism, Concern Follow Trump’s Decision to Tap Former WWE Exec as Education Secretary**
Inside Higher Ed (November 21, 2024)
- **Massachusetts Student’s Punishment for AI Use Can Stand, US Judge Rules**
US News (November 21, 2024)
- **Rounds Introduces Legislation to Eliminate US Department of Education**
US Senator Mike Rounds (November 21, 2024)

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

- **Examining the 2024 Election:** The National Association of State Boards of Education will hold a webinar to review the results and key takeaways from the November elections, explore what they mean for education policymaking in 2025, and forecast what’s likely to top state board agendas.
Tuesday at 3pm ET

7. **Future Hearings & Events**

- **Parents Rights in Education**: The Heritage Foundation will hold a webinar to examine parental rights on issues involving school curriculum, school administration, gender affirming medicine to privacy, and opt-out rights to school surveys.
December 3 at 11am ET
- **State Policies to Build and Retain the Teacher Workforce**: The Learning Policy Institute will hold a webinar as part of the state legislative prep series on “Building and Retaining the Teacher Workforce.”
December 3 at 3pm ET
- **State Policies to Address Teacher Shortages**: The Learning Policy Institute will hold a webinar as part of the state legislative prep series on “Long-Term Solutions to Teacher Shortages.”
December 5 at 1pm ET
- **AI in Classrooms, Funding, and the Future of Education**: The Hunt Institute will hold a webinar on artificial intelligence in classrooms, the past year’s educational investments, and funding opportunities education leaders can look forward to in 2025.
December 5 at 2pm ET
- **State Policies to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**: The Learning Policy Institute will hold a webinar as part of the state legislative prep series on “Eliminating Chronic Absence.”
December 10 at 1pm ET
- **Promoting Equity through Data – Resources and Insights for Education Leaders**: The U.S. Department of Education will hold a webinar on “Promoting Equity through Data: Resources and Insights for Education Leaders.”
December 12 at 3pm 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**

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE

SUPREME COURT TO REVIEW CONSTITUTIONALITY OF UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND

The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) has **agreed to review** the constitutionality of the Universal Service Fund (USF), a key program managed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that funds broadband expansion and internet subsidies. The review follows a 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals ruling deeming the fund's setup unconstitutional, conflicting with rulings from two federal circuit courts. SCOTUS will also assess whether the case is moot due to procedural issues raised by challengers. The USF supports the E-Rate program, critical for internet access and broadband connectivity for public schools. Education advocates have warned that

ending these subsidies could have severe nationwide consequences. The challenge, led by the conservative group Consumers' Research, argues the fund imposes an improper tax and criticizes the FCC for outsourcing fund management to a nonprofit organization created by the FCC. Congress is simultaneously considering reforms to the system. FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel's statement on the SCOTUS announcement is [here](#).

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

The House and Senate are in recess until after Thanksgiving. When they return, they will have less than three weeks before government funding runs out on December 20th. Given that timeline, it seems they will have to approve another continuing resolution (CR) before resolving Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 spending. "I would still love an approps deal. That's probably not possible," House Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) said last week.

While Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) has said he would like to pass a CR that keeps the government funded through March 2025, giving President-elect Donald Trump and the Republican-led 119th Congress a few months to set their agenda and begin their work. His Senate colleagues—and Chairman Cole—seem more inclined to wrap up FY 2025 spending to avoid unfinished business next year. The indecisiveness could force their hand. Negotiating spending bills before December 20th would require House-Senate bipartisan talks, decisions about topline spending levels, and significant staff work. None of that is happening right now.

Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Susan Collins (R-ME) acknowledged the challenging timeline last week, saying to reporters, "I still want us to get [FY 2025 spending bills] finished before December 20. But we may have to do a short CR...I don't know. I was told that if we did not produce the bill this week, there simply wasn't enough time." Her partner in this work, Appropriations Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) still has hope, saying, "We're going to keep doing our job. I'm not going to preclude anything by guessing."

In the meantime, appropriators are working on an emergency supplemental spending bill to address the many natural disasters that have affected the country. Chairman Cole expects a "robust" package to be debated in December.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

The headline-making education news last week was the selection of Linda McMahon to head the Department of Education. She co-chairs President-elect Trump's transition team and was rumored to want to be Secretary of Commerce. The assignment could be a consolation prize. She ran the Small Business Administration for the first two years of the first Trump administration, so has already been vetted and approved by the Senate once, making it less likely there would be any big problems this time, although Democrats on the Senate Health, Education and Labor Pensions could have difficult questions for her at her nomination hearing next year.

And in what could be considered surprising news, there were reports last week that Democrats and Republicans on the House and Senate education panels reached agreement on a revision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Those rumors are believed true, as over the weekend, a bipartisan, bicameral [WIOA bill summary](#) was released. The news means that maybe there will be a win for education policymakers before the end of the 118th Congress.

3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

NEW AMERICA EXPLORES FUNDAMENTALS OF YOUTH APPRENTICESHIPS

Last Monday, New America hosted a webinar on the “Fundamentals of Youth Apprenticeship,” featuring a panel of experts: Taylor White, Director of Postsecondary Pathways for Youth at the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA); Lancy Downs, Senior Policy Analyst at the Center on Education and Labor; and Ivy Sullivan, Manager at PAYA. White explained that [PAYA](#) is a national initiative launched in 2018 aimed at expanding access to equitable, high-quality apprenticeship opportunities for youth ages 16-24. Through this multi-partner initiative, New America and its PAYA National Partners collaborate to support place-based partnerships, foster learning and innovation, and strengthen evidence-based youth apprenticeships across the country. At the core of PAYA’s youth apprenticeship model is a combination of paid, structured on-the-job training, and related classroom learning. This high-quality program is built on strong partnerships involving employers, high schools, and postsecondary education providers, most often community colleges. White and Sullivan outlined the typical trajectory for a PAYA youth apprenticeship, which begins with students in 11th or 12th grade. They complete paid, on-the-job learning while earning transferable college credits. After high school graduation, the apprenticeship continues into a third year, during which students enroll in college courses and complete their apprenticeship. Upon completion of the program, students graduate with five key assets: 1) Transferable college credit, 2) industry-recognized credentials, 3) a high school diploma, 4) a professional network and mentors, and 5) paid work experience. Each asset empowers students to pursue full-time employment, further education, or a combination of both. In sum, the panel voiced that youth apprenticeships bring together K-12 school systems, employers, and postsecondary institutions in a collaborative effort to ensure student success, and together, these partners help ensure positive, long-term outcomes for youth apprentices as they navigate this multi-year program. A full list of PAYA’s learning hubs and grantees can be found [here](#).

NATIONAL ACADEMIES DISCUSSES K-12 ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Last Tuesday, the National Academies Government-University-Industry-Philanthropy Research Roundtable (GUIPRR) hosted a webinar focused on the transformative role of early entrepreneurship education. Sierra Jackson led the discussion, joined by panelists Nick Briere, executive director of the Connecticut Invention Convention; Doron Feller, associate director of community partnerships at the Connecticut Invention Convention; and Jorge Valdes, program advisor on STEM education and intellectual property at the US Patent and Trademark Office. Briere spoke about the pathways for innovation and entrepreneurship education in K-12 schools, highlighting how to enhance accessibility while creating efficient ecosystems that support diversity across various learning platforms. He also discussed the [Connecticut Invention Convention model](#), which, since its inception, has engaged over 330,000 students in identifying real-world problems, creating inventions to solve them, and pitching their ideas through a high-level business plan. Feller shared insights into the Connecticut Invention Convention's hands-on approach, which blends elements of a "Shark Tank" experience with a science fair. This model allows students to tackle real-world problems they've identified, while developing tools and skills they will carry with them throughout their lives. Feller emphasized that the goal of the program is to ensure accessibility for all students, regardless of background or socioeconomic status. Lastly, Valdes discussed entrepreneurship from the perspectives of invention, education, and intellectual

property. He outlined several initiatives by the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to rethink how students are educated and prepared as future inventors. For instance, USPTO offers a free, online K-12 invention [education resource](#) that provides information on invention and intellectual property for students, educators, and parents. Additionally, the USPTO runs the [National Summer Teacher Institute](#), which gathers K-12 educators from across the country to focus on invention, entrepreneurship, innovation, and STEM. The USPTO also offers the [Master Teacher of Invention and Intellectual Property Education Program](#), which trains educators and provides them with resources and support.

TRUMP TAPS FORMER WWE EXEC LINDA MCMAHON AS ED SECRETARY

On Tuesday, it was [announced](#) that President-elect Donald Trump nominated Linda McMahon, former Small Business Administration (SBA) head and professional wrestling executive, to lead the Department of Education (ED), signaling a strong focus on school choice, parental rights, and [strengthening the workforce](#) while facing challenges such as potential rollbacks of Title IX protections, restructuring federal education funding, and decisions on student loan policies like forgiveness and repayment plans, all amid opposition from Democrats and teachers' unions. McMahon, a native of North Carolina, presently chairs the America First Policy Institute (AFPI) and AFPI's Center for the American Worker. In her previous role with as head of the SBA, [she focused](#) on rural development, women entrepreneurs, and veterans, and previously served as CEO of World Wrestling Entertainment. McMahon also [serves](#) as the Senior Advisor to America First Works. Despite lacking formal experience in education, McMahon has shown interest in the field through initiatives like [WWE's "GET REAL" campaign](#) promoting literacy and education. [According to colleagues](#), her brief tenure on the Connecticut state school board demonstrated a focus on children's issues and she also received her undergraduate degree in French education. She also served as a member of the Board of Trustees at Sacred Heart University. However, critics, including the [National Education Association](#) and [Education Law Center](#), question her suitability, emphasizing the need for expertise in education policy and advocacy for educators and civil rights. Supporters, [like former assistant secretary Jim Blew](#), argue that McMahon's executive management skills and alignment with school choice priorities make her well-suited to lead ED. In a [press release](#), President-elect Trump voiced that "Linda will use her decades of leadership experience, and deep understanding of both education and business, to empower the next generation of American students and workers, and make America number one in education in the world." McMahon is expected to be hosted for a confirmation hearing by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee for questioning before the vote on her nomination. Her nomination is thought to be less likely to create significant controversy because she has already been confirmed once by the full Senate for her role at the SBA.

PHILANTHROPISTS EXAMINE HOW TO SCALE HIGH-IMPACT TUTORING

Last Tuesday, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (CGLR) hosted a webinar on high-impact tutoring to explore the effects it has in public schools across the United States. The panel featured representatives from several national philanthropies, each offering insights on how to stimulate local funding for community-based programs to enhance high-impact tutoring, which involves students working in small groups with the same tutor for 30-minute sessions, three times a week, over several months. These tutoring sessions can take place either in person or online. Panelists agreed that this structured approach has been shown to consistently produce strong academic outcomes, particularly in helping students achieve grade-level literacy. Over the past four years,

various innovations have emerged to expand and scale tutoring programs, aiming to slow, stop, and reverse learning loss while accelerating equitable academic recovery. The panel also discussed challenges such as workforce shortages and the difficulty of finding qualified professionals to support student learning. A key barrier to implementing high-impact tutoring remains its high cost, though advancements in online tutoring have made it possible to reach larger numbers of students more efficiently. Narric Rome, managing director of [Accelerate](#), highlighted a recent [Johns Hopkins study](#) that identified online high-impact tutoring as the most "effective and affordable" way to provide tutoring at scale. Participants emphasized that philanthropy can play a crucial role in sustaining and expanding effective tutoring models as federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding expires. By presenting compelling data on the success of high-impact tutoring, the panel underscored the urgency of securing local funding to address the current literacy crisis in schools. More information on the CGLR webinar is [here](#).

ED ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL RELEASE OF 2025-2026 FAFSA FORM

On Thursday, the Department of Education (ED) [released](#) the 2025–26 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) ten days ahead of their chosen December 1 deadline. Over 167,000 applications were submitted during a beta testing period involving feedback from students, schools, and other stakeholders. ED, after last year’s flawed FAFSA launch caused delays and disrupted financial aid distribution, hoped to restore confidence in the system with a thoroughly tested rollout of the 2025–26 cycle, aiming for a smoother process. “Our comprehensive beta testing with community-based organizations, high schools and school districts, colleges and universities, software vendors, and state agencies across the country follows industry best practices and has given us the confidence that our systems are ready,” said FAFSA Executive Advisor Jeremy Singer. Following the beta testing, ED says the system has been modernized and improved for user experience, enabling an estimated 650,000 additional Pell Grant recipients compared to last year. Key enhancements include 1) adding over 700 contact center agents since January, with 225 more expected, and extending hours for FAFSA support, 2) streamlining the application process with updated features and resources for students and families, and 3) ongoing efforts to monitor and improve the system during the FAFSA cycle. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona emphasized the FAFSA’s role in expanding college access and affordability and committed to refining the process to ensure accessibility for all students and families. “After months of hard work and lots of feedback from students, schools, and other stakeholders, we can say with confidence that FAFSA is working and will serve as the gateway to college access and affordability to millions of students,” Secretary Cardona said. Meanwhile, House Education and the Workforce Committee Chair Virginia Foxx [criticized](#) ED for releasing the FAFSA form over 50 days late despite the agency’s claims of early availability, emphasizing the need for accurate processing, swift implementation of missing features, and timely future rollouts, while highlighting [recent legislation](#) mandating an October 1 release date.

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4. New Publications

Larger Pay Increases and Better Benefits Could Support Teacher Retention

RAND Corporation (November 2024)

In this report, researchers use the 2024 State of the American Teacher survey to explore a set of factors that could relate to teachers' persistently negative perceptions of their pay between the 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 school years.

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5. In the News

House Passes FAFSA Deadline Act

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The K-12 World Reacts to Linda McMahon, Trump's Choice for Education Secretary

Education Week (November 20, 2024)

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How Linda McMahon Might Approach the Dept. of Education

The New York Times (November 21, 2024)

Optimism, Concern Follow Trump's Decision to Tap Former WWE Exec as Education Secretary

Inside Higher Ed (November 21, 2024)

Massachusetts Student's Punishment for AI Use Can Stand, US Judge Rules

US News (November 21, 2024)

Rounds Introduces Legislation to Eliminate US Department of Education

US Senator Mike Rounds (November 21, 2024)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Tuesday, November 26, 2024

Webinar: Examining the 2024 Election Results

Subject: The National Association of State Boards of Education will hold a webinar to review the results and key takeaways from the November elections, explore what they mean for education policymaking in 2025, and forecast what's likely to top state board agendas.

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Webinar: Parents Rights in Education

Subject: The Heritage Foundation will hold a webinar to examine parental rights on issues involving school curriculum, school administration, gender affirming medicine to privacy, and opt-out rights to school surveys.

Participants: Vernadette Broyles, president and general counsel, Child and Parental Rights Campaign; Erin Hawley, senior counsel, Center for Life & Regulatory Practice, Alliance Defending Freedom; Kim Hermann, executive director, Southeastern Legal Foundation; Tiffany Justice, co-founder, Moms for Liberty; Melissa Moschella, professor, University of Notre Dame Law School; Michael Ramey, president, Parental Rights Foundation; and Sarah Parshall Perry, senior legal fellow, Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, The Heritage Foundation.

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Webinar: State Policies to Build and Retain the Teacher Workforce

Subject: The Learning Policy Institute will hold a webinar as part of the state legislative prep series on “Building and Retaining the Teacher Workforce.”

Participants: Linda Darling-Hammond, Learning Policy Institute; and Susan Kemper Patrick, Learning Policy Institute.

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Webinar: State Policies to Address Teacher Shortages

Subject: The Learning Policy Institute will hold a webinar as part of the state legislative prep series on “Long-Term Solutions to Teacher Shortages.”

Participants: Desiree Carver-Thomas, Learning Policy Institute; and Ryan Saunders, Learning Policy Institute.

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Webinar: AI in Classrooms, Funding, and the Future of Education

Subject: The Hunt Institute will hold a webinar on artificial intelligence in classrooms, the past year’s educational investments, and funding opportunities education leaders can look forward to in 2025.

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Webinar: State Policies to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Subject: The Learning Policy Institute will hold a webinar as part of the state legislative prep series on “Eliminating Chronic Absence.”

Participants: Hedy Chang, Attendance Works; Emily Germain, Learning Policy Institute; Laura Hernandez, Learning Policy Institute; and Anna Maier, Learning Policy Institute.

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Thursday, December 12, 2024

Webinar: Promoting Equity through Data: Resources and Insights for Education Leaders

Subject: The U.S. Department of Education will hold a webinar on “Promoting Equity through Data: Resources and Insights for Education Leaders.”

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

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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

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