



The Consortium of State School Boards Associations Weekly Education Report

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Jared Solomon, Editor

jsolomon@bosepublicaffairs.com

Della Cronin, Editor

dcronin@bosepublicaffairs.com

Bob Moran, Editor

rmoran@bosepublicaffairs.com

Sarah Lamson, Deputy Editor

slamson@bosepublicaffairs.com

The COSSBA Education Report, a weekly publication, provides an executive summary of public policy issues affecting American K-12 education and employment. **With Congressional Recess and the Easter & Passover Holiday break, the Education Report will next publish again on April 28. Be on the lookout for a COSSBA Policy Webinar on the Congressional Budget Reconciliation Process and the potential impact on K-12 schools on Wednesday, April 30.**

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

1. **[News, Publications, & Updates on COSSBA Policy Priorities](#)**
 - **[Child Nutrition](#)**
 - **[House Agriculture Panel Debates SNAP Cuts, Work Requirements:](#)**
On Tuesday, the House Agriculture Committee held a hearing titled, “The Power of Work: Expanding Opportunity through SNAP.”
2. **[Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up](#)**
 - **[Impact on State School Board Associations](#)**
3. **[In Brief – Last Week in Washington](#)**
 - **[Education Research Groups Urge Restoration of Education Data:](#)** On March 25, a coalition of leading education research organizations sent a joint letter to congressional leadership urging immediate intervention in response to sweeping staff terminations at the Department of Education.
 - **[ED, DOJ Launch Title IX Special Investigations Team for Female Students:](#)** On April 4, the Departments of Education (ED) and Justice (DOJ) announced the formation of a joint Title IX Special Investigations Team (SIT) to address a growing number of Title IX complaints and enhance the enforcement of civil rights protections in education, with a particular focus on female students and athletics.

- **AEI Convenes Expert Panel on Reading Instruction in K-12 Classrooms:** On Wednesday, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) hosted a webinar focused on addressing the decoding threshold in reading education, referring to the point at which students can read text accurately and efficiently.
- **Partisan Bills Advance House Education Panel in Markup:** On Wednesday, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce held a markup session to consider five bills, including H.R. 2617 (*Say No to Indoctrination Act*) and H.R. 2616 (*Parental Rights Over the Education and Care of Their Kids Act*).

4. **New Publications**

- **Scaling and Sustaining Pre-K-12 STEM Education Innovations**

National Academies (2025)

The report examines the interconnected factors at local, regional, and national levels that foster or hinder the widespread implementation of promising, evidence-based Pre-K-12 STEM education innovations, to identify gaps in the research, and to provide guidance on how to address barriers to implementation.

- **School Boards Should Focus Budget Deliberations on Student Outcomes, Financial Sustainability**

Brookings (March 2025)

New research findings show that most school board trustees do not actively engage in public deliberations about budgets, and most budget items are approved with little public discussion or consideration of alternatives. The report concludes that modest policy changes at the state and local level could go a long way toward ensuring that school boards are ready and able to perform these roles with fidelity.

5. **In the News**

- **Tennessee Senate Passes Bill Requiring Schools Check Immigration Status of Students**

The Tennessean (April 10, 2025)

- **See Which States Are Telling Trump Their Schools Don't Use 'Illegal' DEI**

EdWeek (Updated April 14, 2025)

- **US Lawmakers Want to Know What is Next for Head Start Amid Chicago Office Closure**

Chalkbeat Chicago (April 9, 2025)

- **Democratic-Led Cities and States Push Back on Threats to Cut US School Funding Over DEI**

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- **The NAEP Test 'Absolutely' Needs to Stay, Linda McMahon Says. The Education Department? Not So Much**

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- **Trump Changes Put School Districts at Financial Risk, Moody's Says**

K-12 Dive (April 8, 2025)

- **States Urge McMahon to Restore Federal Funds She Canceled Without Notice**

EdWeek (April 4, 2025)

6. **Weekly Calendar - What's coming up this week?**
 - **Who Holds the Power of the Purse Right Now?** The Brookings Institution will hold a discussion on "Who Holds the Power of the Purse in Washington Today?" *Wednesday at 3pm ET*

7. **Future Hearings & Events**
 - **Examining the Arguments in Mahmoud v. Taylor:** The Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies will hold a virtual discussion on "Courthouse Steps Oral Argument: Mahmoud v. Taylor," focusing on "whether parents have the right to be notified and opt their children out of classroom lessons on gender and sexuality that violate their religious beliefs." *April 22 at 3pm ET*

8. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**
 - The House and Senate are in recess, returning April 28.

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

10. **About BPAG**

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

CHILD NUTRITION

HOUSE AGRICULTURE PANEL DEBATES SNAP CUTS, WORK REQUIREMENTS

On Tuesday, the House Agriculture Committee **held a hearing** titled, "The Power of Work: Expanding Opportunity through SNAP." During the hearing, lawmakers debated the role of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in promoting employment, with several members and witnesses expressing serious concerns about how proposed cuts and work requirements could negatively affect school and child nutrition. Democrats warned that the proposed \$230 billion in SNAP cuts, alongside a new wave of tariffs and staff firings at the Department of Agriculture (USDA), would not only increase hunger for vulnerable families but also severely impact the supply chain that supports school cafeterias and food banks. Representative Angie Craig (D-MN) and others noted that eliminating food access at this scale would force families to make trade-offs between rent, medical care, and meals, and would strip schools of essential nutrition programs. Expert witnesses like **Dr. Diane Schanzenbach** emphasized that SNAP is a critical economic stabilizer, especially for low-income families with children, and that work requirements do little to improve employment outcomes while significantly reducing food access. She warned of the danger in expanding punitive policies to households with children, which could have far-reaching consequences on child development and educational outcomes. Others urged Congress to expand SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) programs and ensure that nutrition supports remain available during career transitions. Overall, the hearing shed more light on the partisan divides on the future of SNAP, with particular attention to how

policy changes could undermine food security for school-aged children and families. Witness testimony and a recording of the hearing is [here](#).

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

After some setbacks, House Republicans narrowly approved their budget plan last Thursday after House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) negotiated with a number of Republican holdouts who refused to support trillions of dollars in tax breaks without deeper spending cuts. Their approval of the plan that had been passed by the Senate already sets the stage for both chambers to get to work on budget reconciliation legislation— “one big, beautiful bill”—when they return from a two-week recess.

On Thursday morning, Speaker Johnson and Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) told reporters that they are committed to seeking at least \$1.5 trillion in cuts to federal programs and services. The public show was meant to assuage House Republican concerns that the Senate might not support the deep cuts they want. President Donald Trump urged the House on, saying, “Biggest Tax Cuts in USA History!!! Getting close.” Later that day, Speaker Johnson presided over a successful 216-214 vote, marking the next step in what will be a lengthy process to enact legislation promised by President Trump on the campaign trail. Two conservative Republicans voted against it, as did all Democrats. House and Senate Republicans face weeks (probably months) of work as authorizing committees set to the task of writing bill text that will produce the savings required.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) characterized the GOP budget plan as a “toxic scheme” that proposes the largest cuts to Medicaid and food assistance programs ever, “all in service of enacting massive tax breaks to their millionaire donors, like Elon Musk.” Jeffries could find allies among Senate Republicans, as some have already suggested the \$800 billion in House-proposed cuts that could hit Medicaid and other vital programs will be difficult to support. To refute those concerns, Speaker Johnson insisted that Republicans are merely seeking to impose new restrictions on benefits and cut what they portray as waste, fraud, and abuse, following DOGE’s efforts—not deny benefits to those who qualify for them.

The proposal would also raise the nation’s debt limit, satisfying President Trump’s desire to take the politically difficult issue off the table. The country’s debt stands at \$36 trillion, and the Treasury Department has said it will hit its current limit by August. Much work lies ahead for lawmakers.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

A final budget reconciliation product is expected later this spring or summer. Education advocates are expecting proposals to cut the cost of federal student aid programs as well as potential deep cuts to Medicaid, which provides health and special education funding for school systems. The Medicaid cuts could have a significant impact on school budgets and we are watching this area closely.

There have also been possible changes suggested to the school nutrition program, which could add costs to school systems. Direct investments in K-12 education are discretionary and will likely not be at risk in the deliberations, although “school choice” supporters are expected to pursue legislation that will provide tax benefits to donations that support voucher-like programs.

3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

EDUCATION RESEARCH GROUPS URGE RESTORATION OF EDUCATION DATA

On March 25, a coalition of leading education research organizations sent a joint letter to congressional leadership urging immediate intervention in response to sweeping staff terminations at the Department of Education. The letter highlights the abrupt dismissal of more than 1,300 employees, including nearly the entire staff of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and its four key centers—the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), the National Center for Education Research (NCER), and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER)—as well as 243 staff from the Office for Civil Rights. These cuts, following a recent executive order promoting state and local control in education, effectively dismantle the federal government’s capacity to collect, analyze, and disseminate education data. The authors warn that the near collapse of IES undermines its Congressionally mandated responsibilities under the Education Sciences Reform Act and jeopardizes essential resources such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Civil Rights Data Collection, and other foundational data systems. The letter emphasizes that federal data plays a critical role in ensuring evidence-based policymaking, identifying disparities, and distributing funding efficiently—functions that cannot be replicated at scale by states or private entities. Without restoration of staff and mission, education research nationwide could grind to a halt. The coalition calls on Congress to uphold its constitutional oversight role and preserve the nonpartisan, scientific infrastructure that informs education policy and practice. They offer to provide further examples of the real-world consequences and express readiness to assist policymakers in reversing the damage.

ED, DOJ LAUNCH TITLE IX SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS TEAM FOR FEMALE STUDENTS

On April 4, the Departments of Education (ED) and Justice (DOJ) announced the formation of a joint Title IX Special Investigations Team (SIT) to address a growing number of Title IX complaints and enhance the enforcement of civil rights protections in education, with a particular focus on female students and athletics. The SIT will include staff from ED’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Office of General Counsel, the Student Privacy Policy Office, and DOJ’s Civil Rights Division. This team is designed to streamline the Title IX investigative process and enable more coordinated and timely responses to potential violations, while preparing cases for possible DOJ enforcement. According to the announcement, the SIT will utilize a rapid resolution process to address investigations more efficiently than the traditional OCR timeline. Education Secretary Linda McMahon stated that the new team will help ensure timely and consistent enforcement of Title IX and emphasized the administration’s focus on policies affecting women and girls in educational settings. Attorney General Pamela Bondi noted that the collaboration would allow the DOJ to take comprehensive action when civil rights violations are identified in women’s sports or facilities. The launch of the SIT aligns with recent executive orders issued by President Trump asserting that Title IX protections apply based on biological sex and aim to reinforce federal standards for sex-specific programs and spaces in schools.

AEI CONVENES EXPERT PANEL ON READING INSTRUCTION IN K-12 CLASSROOMS

On Wednesday, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) hosted a webinar focused on addressing the decoding threshold in reading education, referring to the point at which students can read text

accurately and efficiently. Expert panelists joined AEI's Senior Fellow, Robert Pondiscio, to discuss new research released by the Advanced Education Research and Development Fund's "Reading Reimagined," which highlights the unique challenges faced by students when trying to synthesize multisyllabic words in English literature. Panelists included Melissa Gude, Chief Academic Officer for the Little Rock School District; Emily Pytell, Senior Director of School Support at the Achievement Network; and Rebecca Kockler, Executive Director of Reading Reimagined. The panelists all shared experiences using Magpie Literacy, a new foundational support tool for students learning to read and write that is specifically targeted toward addressing the decoding threshold. Kockler, who helped develop the tool and lead its pilot programs in Little Rock, shared several key research principles that guided its implementation, including new research in the fields of morphology, orthography, and linguistics education. A central focus of the webinar was the abundance of tools and resources that teachers are given without aligning those tools to classroom instruction or daily practice – research indicates that schools on average spend \$60 per student on 10-12 different tools for literacy. Magpie and Reading Reimagined have worked to counteract this over-saturation of resources by incorporating multiple levels of comprehension, fluency, and linguistics education into one inclusive platform for students. Kockler also noted that she is working alongside major assessment developers, including Educational Testing Service and Stanford University's Rapid Online Assessment for Reading (ROAR), to more fully incorporate the decoding threshold as a foundational benchmark for reading and English fluency instruction at all levels. A full recording of the webinar can be found here.

PARTISAN BILLS CLEAR HOUSE EDUCATION PANEL IN MARKUP

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Education and Workforce held a markup session to consider five bills and one resolution of inquiry. The first two education-focused bills—H.R. 2617 (*Say No to Indoctrination Act*) and H.R. 2616 (*Parental Rights Over the Education and Care of Their Kids Act*)—prompted partisan debate. Republicans asserted that the bills would prevent federal funds from promoting "radical gender ideology" and reinforce parental authority in schools by requiring consent for changes to student pronouns or access to sex-based accommodations. Democrats opposed both measures, citing potential harm to LGBTQ students' mental health and warning against federal overreach into local education policy. Representative Mark Takano (D-CA) stated, "All this bill does is make school feel less safe for children. And when you censor material about a minority group, because it does not align with your ideology, it sets a dangerous precedent." The Committee also considered H.Res. 237, a resolution introduced by Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA), which sought transparency regarding the Department of Education's reduction-in-force measures. Republicans dismissed the resolution as a political distraction, while Democrats voiced concern about layoffs within the Office for Civil Rights and their impact on enforcing educational protections. Labor-related bills H.R. 2262 (*Flexibility for Workers Education Act*) and H.R. 2270 (*Empowering Employer Child and Elder Care Solutions Act*) were also marked up. H.R. 2262 would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to exempt certain voluntary training programs from compensation requirements, while H.R. 2270 aims to incentivize employers to provide dependent care benefits. Republicans described both bills as workforce development tools that modernize employment law. In contrast, Democrats argued that the measures would undermine worker protections, sanction unpaid labor, and encourage longer working hours under the guise of flexibility. While Republicans framed the legislative measures as restoring common sense and supporting families, Democrats accused Republicans of prioritizing divisive cultural issues over meaningful reform in education and labor policy. The vote total on each bill is here.

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4. New Publications

Scaling and Sustaining Pre-K-12 STEM Education Innovations

National Academies (2025)

The report examines the interconnected factors at local, regional, and national levels that foster or hinder the widespread implementation of promising, evidence-based Pre-K-12 STEM education innovations, to identify gaps in the research, and to provide guidance on how to address barriers to implementation. This report comes in response to a mandate within the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022.

School Boards Should Focus Budget Deliberations on Student Outcomes, Financial Sustainability

Brookings (March 2025)

New research findings show that most school board trustees do not actively engage in public deliberations about budgets, and most budget items are approved with little public discussion or consideration of alternatives. The report concludes that modest policy changes at the state and local level could go a long way toward ensuring that school boards are ready and able to perform these roles with fidelity.

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5. In the News

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K-12 Dive (April 8, 2025)

States Urge McMahon to Restore Federal Funds She Canceled Without Notice

EdWeek (April 4, 2025)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Webinar: Who Holds the Power of the Purse Right Now?

Subject: The Brookings Institution will hold a discussion on “Who Holds the Power of the Purse in Washington Today?”

Participants: Eloise Paschoff, professor of law and research professor, Georgetown University Law Center; Michael McConnell, professor and director, Stanford Law School's Constitutional Law Center; David Wessel, director, Brookings Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy; Josh Chafetz, professor of law and politics, Georgetown University Law Center; and Keith Kennedy, former staff director, Senate Appropriations Committee.

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Webinar: Examining the Arguments in Mahmoud v. Taylor

Subject: The Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies will hold a virtual discussion on “Courthouse Steps Oral Argument: Mahmoud v. Taylor,” focusing on “whether parents have the right to be notified and opt their children out of classroom lessons on gender and sexuality that violate their religious beliefs.”

Participants: Stanton Collett, professor and director, University of St. Thomas School of Law's ProLife Center; and Eric Baxter, vice president and senior counsel, Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.

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, returning April 28.

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

[U.S. House and Senate 2025 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
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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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