



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**
 - **Child Nutrition**
 - **House Marks Up USDA Funding Bill with Tense Debate on School Nutrition**: On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Committee considered the Fiscal Year 2026 Agriculture-FDA spending bill, where numerous Democrats raised concerns over the elimination of school nutrition and local food procurement programs.
 - **House Ag Democrats Question Secretary Rollins on School Nutrition**: On Wednesday, the House Agriculture Committee heard from Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins. During the hearing, several Democratic lawmakers expressed deep concern about the administration's cuts to school and nutrition programs.
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
 - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
 - **Hunt Institute Holds Briefing on Early ED Innovative Practices**: On June 5, the Hunt Institute held a webinar as part of their Early Efforts series entitled, “Foundations of Early Literacy,” hosted by Hunt Institute Deputy Director of Early Learning Angela Burch-Octetree.
 - **House Education Panel Holds Hearing on Screen Time in Schools**: On Tuesday, the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood,

Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing on cell phone use in schools, examining the impact of screens on student learning, mental health, and classroom dynamics.

- **Brookings Panel Examines High-Quality K-12 STEM Instruction:** On Tuesday, Brookings hosted an event on effectively integrating high-quality STEM standards into K–12 classrooms, which, as the panel of experts explained, would require a fundamental shift toward student-centered, real-world learning experiences.
- **ED Looks to Labor, Treasury to Administer CTE Programs, Student Aid:** On Wednesday, it was reported that the Department of Education has reached an agreement to transfer billions of dollars and certain operational responsibilities to the Departments of Labor and Treasury.
- **House Oversight Hears from “Sanctuary State” Governors:** On Thursday, the House Oversight Committee held a hearing with “Sanctuary State Governors,” featuring Governors Tim Walz (D-MN), Kathy Hochul (D-NY), and J.B. Pritzker (D-IL) as Republican-invited witnesses.

4. **New Publications**

- **A New State Role for Experienced Teacher Improvement**
Brookings (June 2024)
The report highlights that current professional development practices are flawed and lack alignment with instructional goals and notes that emerging strategies like micro-credentials show promise but require stronger regulation, alignment with standards, and infrastructure to be effective at scale.

5. **In the News**

- **Unanimous SCOTUS Ruling Raises Schools’ Liability in Disability Cases**
K-12 Dive (June 12, 2025)
- **Two Education Companies Are Suing Trump Over Tariffs. Here’s What’s Behind Their Case**
EdWeek Market Brief (June 10, 2025)
- **L.A. Schools Create ‘Perimeters of Safety’ Against ICE Agents**
The 74 (June 9, 2025)
- **The Trump Budget for K-12 Schools: 5 Key Takeaways**
Education Week (June 9, 2025)
- **DC Public Schools Are Banning Cellphones. Here’s What to Know**
Washingtonian (June 6, 2025)

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

- **Can the President Shut Down the Department of Education?** The Federalist Society’s Regulatory Transparency Project will host a virtual panel discussion on “Can the President Shut Down the Department of Education?”
Monday at 2pm ET
- **Examining the Youth Mental Health Collapse:** The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research will hold a discussion on "Mind the Children: How to Think About the Youth Mental Health Collapse."
Wednesday at 12pm ET

- **The BARR Model: Leveraging Existing Resources to Promote Student Success:** As schools nationwide face challenges with attendance, literacy, and student wellness, this webinar with the Hunt Institute and the BARR Center will explore how system transformation and strong student relationships can support holistic success and disrupt traditional school models.
Wednesday at 2pm ET

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

- **Senate floor**
 - Consideration of nominations
 - S. 1582, GENIUS Act, as amended
- **House floor:** In recess

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

9. **About BPAG**

1. **COSSBA Policy Priorities**

CHILD NUTRITION

HOUSE MARKS UP USDA FUNDING BILL WITH TENSE DEBATE ON SCHOOL NUTRITION

On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Committee's **considered** the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Agriculture-FDA spending bill, where numerous Democrats raised concerns over the elimination of school nutrition and local food procurement programs. Subcommittee Ranking Member Sanford Bishop (D-GA) criticized the cancellation of local Farm to School programs, which he said left schools scrambling to feed students and harmed local farmers. Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN) echoed these concerns, noting that a \$13 million USDA grant to a local school food purchasing cooperative in Minnesota had been revoked, hurting both children's access to healthy food and the local agricultural economy. Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) offered an amendment to prevent the USDA from cutting off free lunch eligibility for students who lose SNAP or Medicaid benefits. She warned that changes under the GOP's reconciliation plan would jeopardize universal free school meals at over 180 schools in her district, potentially affecting 420,000 children nationwide and cutting \$700 million in federal school meal funding over six years. Several lawmakers, including Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Frank Mrvan (D-IN), and Bishop, urged reinstatement of the Local Food Purchase Assistance and Local Food for Schools programs. These initiatives were praised for supporting regional farmers and supplying schools and food banks with fresh, nutritious produce. Pingree recounted the fallout in Maine after USDA canceled the programs in March, leading to significant disruptions for schools and over 100 farmers. DeLauro and Mrvan emphasized the economic and nutritional value of these programs, especially for food-insecure communities and children who depend on school meals. In contrast, Subcommittee Chairman Andy Harris (R-MD), consistently defended spending cuts to nutrition programs, arguing fiscal constraints required prioritization, and suggesting that nutrition assistance should not be treated as a sole food source. The funding bill's markup was paused around 4:30pm Wednesday so lawmakers could attend the annual **Congressional Baseball Game**. The markup resumed after the game and was paused again around midnight. Chair Tom Cole (R-OK) cited lawmakers' **scheduling** conflicts as contributing

factors. With the House on recess this week, the Agriculture-FDA markup may slip to the week of June 23.

HOUSE AG DEMOCRATS QUESTION SECRETARY ROLLINS ON SCHOOL NUTRITION

On Wednesday, the House Agriculture Committee heard from Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Brooke Rollins. During the hearing, several Democratic lawmakers expressed deep concern about the administration's cuts to school and nutrition programs. Congresswoman Angie Craig (D-MN) highlighted that school cafeterias in her district had been cut off from sourcing locally grown foods due to canceled USDA programs, while broader nutrition assistance efforts were being “decimated.” Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) sharply criticized the administration for eliminating programs like the Local Food for Schools Program, the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program, and the Leahy Farm to School Program, as well as for slashing WIC and food bank funding. He argued these cuts contradict the national strategy to end hunger and will hurt vulnerable families and small farmers alike. Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski (D-IL) echoed similar concerns, calling the cuts to local food procurement programs “distressing.” She described how such programs supported small farms like Solo Gratia Farm and helped feed vulnerable populations through partnerships with local schools and businesses. Secretary Rollins responded that some funding rounds for these programs remain open but framed changes as part of aligning USDA efforts with the President’s vision. A recording of the hearing and Secretary Rollins’s testimony are here.

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 appropriations process is underway, with the House Appropriations Committee advancing its first spending bills last week. The House also approved last week a request from the White House to rescind over \$9 billion in funds for foreign aid and public broadcasting.

In coming weeks, both chambers of Congress will continue to work through the FY 2026 appropriations process. The House is already moving through subcommittee and full committee markups, and the Senate is expected to release its versions of the spending bills later this month. Significant differences between the House, Senate, and administration proposals will need to be reconciled before final bills can be passed. If agreement is not reached by October 1, Congress may rely on a continuing resolution to temporarily extend FY 2025 funding levels or face the prospect of a shutdown. Again, Advocates for education at all levels continue making the case for sustained or increased federal support as the process unfolds.

In the meantime, the Senate continues to work on the Congressional budget reconciliation package known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, that will likely include significant cuts to Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Senate Agriculture Committee recently released updated legislative text that we are analyzing. While on first look the Senate draft is an improvement over the House passed version that was estimated by the Congressional Budget Office to kick millions of people off of SNAP and at least 420,000 kids off of school meal programs, it is still a significant step in the wrong direction. The goal of Senate Majority Leader Thune (R-SD) is to have the Senate vote on their reconciliation package by the July 4th holiday. Then work could begin to hammer out differences with the House. The COSSBA policy team is

working on updating advocacy materials and will share more details on the legislative package shortly.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

Education advocates are busily making the case for federal investments in K-12 and higher education programs and opposing the deep cuts proposed in President Donald Trump’s FY 2026 budget request ahead of committee action on the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education spending bill, which is scheduled for late July. While appropriators haven’t decided spending levels for the bill, a significant cut for the measure is expected. In the meantime, the Department of Education continues to update [a publicly available resource](#) that details FY 2025 spending allocations for various programs.

The White House’s FY 2026 budget request proposes deep cuts to the Department of Education—reducing overall funding from approximately \$78.7 billion in FY 2025 to \$66.7 billion in FY 2026. Central to the proposal is a sweeping consolidation of K–12 education programs. Eighteen existing programs—including 21st Century Community Learning Centers, state assessments, rural education, literacy initiatives, and arts education—would be merged into a single \$2 billion “K–12 Simplified Funding Program.” This change would represent a net reduction of more than \$4.5 billion from current funding levels. As advocates dig into the proposal, they discover additional potential consequences. For example, critics of the spending blueprint warn that if funding for state assessments drops below a specific threshold, it could trigger provisions under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) that allow states to bypass annual statewide testing requirements.

The administration's budget request also proposes eliminating funding for numerous K–12 programs, including English language acquisition (Title III), migrant education, civics education, gifted and talented programs, and school safety initiatives. While Title I funding for disadvantaged students is preserved, it is clear the White House wants to move toward fewer, more flexible federal funding streams—albeit at lower funding levels. They will face opposition from Capitol Hill in that cause.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

HUNT INSTITUTE HOLDS BRIEFING ON EARLY ED INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

On June 5, the Hunt Institute held a webinar as part of their [Early Efforts](#) series entitled, “[Foundations of Early Literacy](#),” hosted by Hunt Institute Deputy Director of Early Learning Angela Burch-Octetree. The briefing was convened to discuss innovative strategies being used across school districts and preschool programs that have built upon new research in early childhood education (ECE). Panelists included Callee Boulware, Executive Director of Reach Out and Read in the Carolinas; Aruna Gilbert from the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County; and Dr. Maryam Sharifian, Executive Director of James Madison University’s Center for Advancement Research in Education (JMU CARE). The panelists were each provided opportunities to share their focus in the ECE field, as well as cutting edge techniques they have seen employed in their local communities that they hope more programs will draw from. Gilbert and Sharifian both shared emerging research demonstrating the rapid cognitive development infants undergo, even during gestation, and how important it is to support that growth with a healthy, stable environment. There was also a lengthy discussion about academic and practical efforts to expand the understanding of ECE to include infant, neonatal, and pre-gestational stages

of development. A central focus throughout the webinar was the notion that early literacy and childhood health are intimately related for growing children with these developmental processes happening alongside one another. Boulware spoke at length about her efforts in North Carolina to better incorporate early literacy check-ins and practices to primary care/wellness appointments for young children, which has seen promising results. Gilbert also expressed excitement at Palm Beach County's expanding partnership with [Age of Learning](#), which designs Pre-K through 5th grade educational resources and tools to better support young students outside of the classroom with reading instruction. The panel was a productive discussion around the importance of implementing early childhood education interventions across a multitude of settings in a child's life. A full recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).

HOUSE EDUCATION PANEL HOLDS HEARING ON SCREENTIME IN SCHOOLS

On Tuesday, the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education [held a hearing](#) on cell phone use in schools, examining the impact of screens on student learning, mental health, and classroom dynamics. Chairman Kevin Kiley (R-CA) and Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) both acknowledged that while technology can be a valuable educational tool, excessive or unregulated use of smartphones during the school day poses significant challenges. Research shows students spend an average of 90 minutes per day on personal devices during instructional time, contributing to academic decline, increased distractions, cyberbullying, and mental health issues, the Chairman stated. Witnesses testified to these concerns, including Utah Governor Spencer Cox's Special Education Advisor, Dr. Rich Nye. Nye [highlighted](#) his state's successful policy banning phones "bell to bell," citing improved learning, reduced bullying, and better student interactions. Dr. Matthew Gibbins from Richardson ISD in Texas [discussed](#) implementing secure pouches for phone storage and shared that the resulting phone-free environment significantly reduced discipline issues and improved teacher retention and classroom engagement. Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [emphasized](#) the need for educator training in digital wellness and called for restored federal funding for school-based mental health services. Psychologist Dr. Jean Twenge [cited](#) studies linking phone access to reduced academic performance, increased loneliness, and behavioral issues, urging stricter in-school limits on phones. Democratic members criticized the Trump Administration's proposed elimination of the Department of Education and cuts to mental health grants, arguing such actions undermine efforts to support students. Witnesses and members on both sides agreed on the need for local flexibility, better research, and thoughtful policies balancing digital integration with student well-being, especially for students with disabilities or learning needs. Witness testimony and a recording of the hearing are [here](#).

BROOKINGS PANEL EXAMINES HIGH-QUALITY K-12 STEM INSTRUCTION

On Tuesday, Brookings [hosted an event](#) on effectively integrating high-quality STEM standards into K-12 classrooms, which, as the panel of experts explained, would require a fundamental shift toward student-centered, real-world learning experiences. WestEd's Jennifer Childress Self noted that while most states have adopted science standards based on the [Framework for K-12 Science Education](#), implementation lags due to a disconnect between those standards and traditional teacher training. University of West Florida professor and Association for Science Teacher Education President John Pecore emphasized that traditional practices still dominate classrooms, and STEM concepts must be made relevant to students' lives and interests. He also highlighted the emerging role of AI in supporting teachers with lesson design and grading. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics President Latrenda Knighten stressed the importance of early math

education as a predictor of long-term success in STEM and called for instruction that moves beyond lectures toward problem-solving and critical thinking, supported by strategies like project-based learning and brief instructional segments. There was strong consensus among the panel that STEM instruction should begin in early grades (Pre-K–12) and be accessible to all students. This requires robust collaboration between teacher preparation programs and school districts, alongside access to high-quality instructional materials. To engage underrepresented groups, particularly young Black girls, Knighten emphasized equitable access to resources and sustained professional development in marginalized schools. Jennifer Self reinforced the need to value diverse perspectives and connect STEM to students' communities. While technology like AI holds promise, Knighten cautioned that human interaction remains essential, urging both teachers and students to become AI-literate. Ultimately, AI should serve as a tool to support—not replace—teachers, helping students develop as critical thinkers and responsible technology users. A recording of the event is [here](#).

ED LOOKS TO LABOR, TREASURY TO ADMINISTER CTE PROGRAMS, STUDENT AID

On Wednesday, it was **reported** that the Department of Education (ED) has reached an agreement to transfer billions of dollars and certain operational responsibilities to the Departments of Labor (DOL) and Treasury. These actions, consistent with the Trump Administration's broader efforts to potentially close ED, are currently on hold due to a federal judge's ruling. The court temporarily blocked the administration's large-scale workforce reductions at ED, deeming the move an attempt to dismantle the agency without congressional approval. Documents reveal an agreement between ED and DOL to transfer nearly \$2.7 billion in congressionally appropriated funds for career, technical, and adult education grants. The goal is to consolidate workforce development programs and streamline state reporting requirements. Separately, in April, ED finalized an agreement with the Treasury Department to detail nine employees to Treasury to assist with federal student loan collections. This shift followed the departure of a loan collection contractor and staffing shortages at ED after significant layoffs. ED Chief of Staff Rachel Oglesby stated that the court's injunction is "preventing the Department (and other agencies) from pursuing operational efficiencies and cost-savings." While Secretary of Education Linda McMahon has repeatedly emphasized that closing ED requires congressional approval, the administration has continued efforts to reduce its operational scope. The future of the \$1.6 trillion federal student loan portfolio remains under discussion, with Treasury being considered a "natural" home for the program. The extent of ED's authority to transfer functions to other agencies without congressional approval remains unclear and a source of ongoing debate.

HOUSE OVERSIGHT HEARS FROM "SANCTUARY STATE" GOVERNORS

On Thursday, the House Oversight Committee **held a hearing** with "Sanctuary State Governors," featuring Governors Tim Walz (D-MN), Kathy Hochul (D-NY), and J.B. Pritzker (D-IL) as Republican-invited witnesses. Skye Perryman, CEO and Executive Director of Democracy Forward—a nonprofit that has led legal challenges against the Trump Administration—testified as the Democratic witness. At the start, Chairman James Comer (R-KY) permitted non-committee members from Minnesota, Illinois, and New York to temporarily "waive" into the hearing. This rare procedural move allowed them to question their governors directly, highlighting the political tensions surrounding immigration and underscoring state-level frustration amid congressional inaction. Chairman Comer opened by displaying mugshots of undocumented immigrants, blaming Democratic policies for rising crime and accusing the left of permissiveness toward illegal immigration. Acting Ranking Member Representative Stephen Lynch (D-MA) pushed back, citing

violations of due process and instances where individuals with legal status were detained or deported. The governors criticized the Trump Administration’s immigration policies as inhumane and unlawful but agreed that undocumented individuals who commit crimes should be held accountable. They defended their own records on public safety and economic growth and emphasized that immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility. All noted their states lack the resources to act as “shadow ICE agents” and underscored their cooperation with federal law enforcement. Skye Perryman warned of threats to democracy and constitutional governance, citing executive overreach, civil rights violations, and attacks on civil society institutions. The hearing featured frequent political theatrics and “gotcha” questioning. Several non-committee members—rumored gubernatorial contenders—posed pointed questions to their own governors. Republican members veered off-topic at times, raising issues such as the definition of a woman and alleged links to “Antifa.” The hearing lasted eight hours and concluded with Democratic members entering articles into the record about Senator Alex Padilla’s (D) arrest in California. Witness testimony and a recording of the hearing are [here](#).

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4. New Publications

A New State Role for Experienced Teacher Improvement

Brookings (June 2025)

The report highlights that current professional development practices are flawed and lack alignment with instructional goals and notes that emerging strategies like micro-credentials show promise but require stronger regulation, alignment with standards, and infrastructure to be effective at scale.

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5. In the News

Unanimous SCOTUS Ruling Raises Schools’ Liability in Disability Cases

K-12 Dive (June 12, 2025)

Two Education Companies Are Suing Trump Over Tariffs. Here’s What’s Behind Their Case

EdWeek Market Brief (June 10, 2025)

L.A. Schools Create ‘Perimeters of Safety’ Against ICE Agents

The 74 (June 9, 2025)

The Trump Budget for K-12 Schools: 5 Key Takeaways

Education Week (June 9, 2025)

DC Public Schools Are Banning Cellphones. Here’s What to Know

Washingtonian (June 6, 2025)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Monday, June 16, 2025

Webinar: Can the President Shut Down the Department of Education?

Subject: The Federalist Society’s Regulatory Transparency Project will host a virtual panel discussion on “Can the President Shut Down the Department of Education?”

Participants: Jonathan Butcher, Will Skillman fellow in education, The Heritage Foundation; Robert S. Eitel, president and co-founder, Defense of Freedom Institute, former senior counselor to the Secretary of Education; Michael J. Petrilli, president, Thomas B. Fordham Institute; David Randall, director of research, National Association of Scholars; and Kent D. Talbert, former acting general counsel and deputy general counsel, U.S. Department of Education.

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Webinar: Examining the Youth Mental Health Collapse

Subject: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research will hold a discussion on “Mind the Children: How to Think About the Youth Mental Health Collapse.”

Participants: Sally Satel, senior fellow, AEI; Naomi Schaefer Riley, senior fellow, AEI; and Tim Carney, senior fellow, AEI.

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

Webinar: The Hunt Institute-- The BARR Model: Leveraging Existing Resources to Promote Student Success

Subject: As schools nationwide face challenges with attendance, literacy, and student wellness, this webinar will explore how system transformation and strong student relationships can support holistic success and disrupt traditional school models.

Panelists: Dr. Jaalil Hart, K-12 director, the Hunt Institute; Angela Jerabek, executive Director, BARR Center; the Honorable Kirsten Baesler, superintendent of public instruction, North Dakota Department of Education; Dr. Shannon Mortrud, principal, Fargo South High School, North Dakota.

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Contact: Register [here](#).

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7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor

- Consideration of nominations
- [S.1582](#), GENIUS Act, as amended

House Floor: In recess.

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8. 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](#)

[Congressional Budget Office](#)

[Federal legislative information](#)

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9. 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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