



## 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**

- **Funding**

- **Appropriators Debates Science Funding in CJS Bill**: On Thursday, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up their FY 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) funding measure. Committee members debated impacts on education-related funding, particularly in scientific research and STEM engagement.

2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**

- **Impact on State School Board Associations**

3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**

- **USED Announces New NCES Acting Commissioner**: On Monday, the Department of Education announced that Dr. Matthew Soldner will serve as Acting Commissioner of The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).
- **AI Tech Leaders Explore Early Learning Advantages for Students**: On Tuesday, the Campaign for Grade Level Reading's "Learning Tuesdays" webinar, "Designing for Connection: How Technology Can Power Early Learning in Homes & Communities," explored the role of technology in supporting early childhood development amidst systemic disruptions.
- **USED Says SAVE Plan Interest Accrual will Resume**: On Wednesday, the Department of Education announced that interest accrual will resume on August 1 for borrowers enrolled in the Saving on A Valuable Education (SAVE) plan, in

compliance with a federal court injunction that blocked key provisions of the plan.

- **AEI Examines Efforts to Reduce Harmful Tech Impacts on Students:** On Wednesday, American Enterprise Institute (AEI) fellows Christine Rosen, Timothy Carney, and Clare Morell discussed strategies to address the harmful effects of technology on youth mental health during a conversation centered on Morell's recently published book, *The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide To Freeing Kids And Teens From Smartphones*.
- **USED Clarifies Noncitizen Rules on Federal CTE, Adult Education Programs:** On Thursday, the Department of Education issued an interpretive rule clarifying that individuals who are not legally present in the United States are ineligible for participation in federally funded career, technical, and adult education programs.

#### 4. **New Publications**

- **Does a Four-Day School Week Benefit Students?**  
*University of Oregon (2025)*  
Findings from a systematic review of 11 studies on student outcomes show little evidence of positive outcomes from a four-day school week.

#### 5. **In the News**

- **Trump Admin Sues California Over Transgender Athletes in Girls' Sports**  
*ABC News (July 10, 2025)*
- **Education & Workforce, Energy & Commerce, and Judiciary Committees Introduce Bipartisan NIL Legislation**  
*U.S. House Committee on Education & Workforce (July 10, 2025)*
- **Medicaid Cuts in Trump Tax Bill Spark Fears for Child Health, School Services**  
*The 74 Million (July 10, 2025)*
- **AFT, Tech Companies Join Forces On \$23M Teacher AI Training Initiative**  
*K-12 Dive (July 9, 2025)*

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

- **House Appropriations Subcommittee on Fiscal Year 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Bill:** The House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Bill –Subcommittee will mark-up their bill for fiscal year 2026.  
*Tuesday at 12pm ET*
- **Schools vs. Screens: AI, Education, and the Future of Civic Life:** The Youth Power Project (YPP), Stanford's Deliberative Democracy Lab, Design it For Us, and the News Literacy Project will hold a briefing on how artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are reshaping civic education across the United States.  
*Tuesday at 12:30pm ET*
- **Conflict between Trump Administration and States on Education Policy:** The Brennan Center for Justice will hold a virtual discussion on "The Trouble Between Trump and the States on Education Policy."  
*Tuesday at 3pm ET*

- **AI, Online Safety, and Data Privacy:** The Hudson Institute will hold a discussion on "AI, Online Safety, and Data Privacy."  
*Thursday at 9am*

## 7. **Future Hearings & Events**

- **House Appropriations Subcommittee on Fiscal Year 2026 Labor-H and Related Agencies:** The House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a markup of the FY2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill.  
*July 21 at 5pm*
- **Kids Online Safety:** Punchbowl News will hold a discussion on the news of the day and online safety for kids.  
*July 22 at 9:30am*
- **State Approaches to Youth Apprenticeship: Part Two:** The New American Foundation will hold its second series on how three states are harnessing their state's definition of youth apprenticeship (or lack of one) to run effective apprenticeship programs for high-school aged youth.  
*July 24 at 1:30pm*

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

- **Senate floor**
  - Possible consideration of the Rescissions Act of 2025
  - Consideration of nominations
- **House floor:**
  - **H.R. 4016** – Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2026 (Sponsored by Rep. Calvert / Appropriations Committee)
  - **H.R. 1919** – Anti-CBDC Surveillance State Act (Sponsored by Rep. Emmer / Financial Services Committee)
  - **H.R. 3633** – Digital Asset Market Clarity Act of 2025 (Sponsored by Rep. Hill / Financial Services Committee)
  - **S. 1582** – GENIUS Act (Sponsored by Sen. Hagerty / Financial Services Committee)

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

## 10. **About BPAG**

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## 1. **COSSBA Policy Priorities**

### **FUNDING**

#### **SENATE APPROPRIATORS DEBATE SCIENCE FUNDING IN CJS BILL**

On Thursday, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up their FY 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) funding measure. Committee members debated impacts on education-related funding, particularly in scientific research and STEM engagement. The bill proposes a decrease of \$60 million to the National Science Foundation (NSF), representing a 0.67% reduction from previous levels, but rejects the White House's proposal to reduce funding by billions of dollars.

While the bill suggests a cut at the Foundation, it maintains funding for research in artificial intelligence and quantum information sciences, which echoes Administration priorities. The bill proposes a substantial \$3.5 million cut to NSF's general research and education programs, specifically targeting climate, clean energy, and social, behavioral, and economic sciences initiatives. It also proposes the elimination of all diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)-related programs at the NSF, resulting in a reduction of \$1.1 million in funding for the agency. For NASA, the bill would provide \$24.9 billion, with an emphasis on human space exploration, allocating over \$7 billion for lunar exploration and \$1 billion in new investments for Mars-focused programs. However, it reduces Space Science funding by \$2.3 billion, terminating missions deemed unaffordable and cutting lower-priority research. Additionally, NASA's Office of STEM Engagement faces a \$143 million reduction, with some of the cuts affecting its STEM programming and research efforts. Ultimately, the bill was not approved by the panel due to concerns raised by Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) about funding for new facilities for the FBI, which were to move to Maryland. The Administration recently said the agency would move from its current outdated building to the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC, that formerly housed USAID. The future of the bill remains in limbo as lawmakers on both sides of the aisle wrangle with the FBI issue. Related files and a recording of the hearing are [here](#).

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## **2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up**

After the House was called back during its July 4<sup>th</sup> recess week to pass the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and join President Donald Trump for an Independence Day White House signing ceremony, the chamber was out of session last week. The Senate was in Washington, DC, and there was action on the FY 2026 appropriations front. The Senate Appropriations Committee [approved the Agriculture and Legislative Branch bills](#). The Commerce, Justice, Science measure was marked up at the subcommittee level, but did not pass when the panel adjourned amid negotiations regarding relocating FBI headquarters broke down. That spending bill, which also funds the National Science Foundation and other research agencies that invest in STEM education, remains in limbo as of Friday.

As advocates and lawmakers returned from the long weekend, the [Administration's decision to withhold billions of dollars](#) in education funds from states took front and center. The Administration is reviewing these grants, asserting they may not align with their priorities, despite the fact that Congress appropriated funds for the programs in the FY 2025 continuing resolution enacted in March. Left-leaning [New America Foundation has done an analysis](#) of the impact on each school district. Members of Congress—from both sides of the aisle—and advocates are conveying their concerns via queries, letters and the press. At the same time, some Republicans on Capitol Hill have told advocates that the review of grants is the prerogative of the Administration and urged patience. A number of lawsuits that argue the move is illegal are expected to be filed shortly if the Administration refuses to release the funds.

Due to the disruption of the July 4<sup>th</sup> recess week and the subsequent unscheduled recess week last week, the House Appropriations Committee has removed the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education spending bill from the calendar of scheduled markups. Originally slated to move the week of July 21<sup>st</sup> with a Monday Subcommittee mark followed by a full Committee mark on Thursday. It is now not clear if and when the bill may be moved. Debate of the bill is always lengthy and contentious, and given Capitol Hill's positive and negative reaction to the White

House's budget proposal to significantly reduce funding for the Education Department and restructure its K-12 investments and recent announcement to withhold the release of funds, this year will be no different.

The House is scheduled to begin its August recess on July 25<sup>th</sup>; the Senate is scheduled to follow on August 1<sup>st</sup>. There is much both chambers would like to accomplish before then, so perhaps those dates are aspirational right now.

### **How does this impact State School Board Associations?**

The Administration's decision to withhold billions in congressionally appropriated education funds has created uncertainty for state school boards and has likely disrupted budget planning with key programs like Title I and special education. Boards may face pressure from communities and stakeholders to respond, while also grappling with administrative burdens and potential service reductions.

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### **3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington**

#### **USED ANNOUNCES NEW NCES ACTING COMMISSIONER**

On Monday, the Department of Education announced that Dr. Matthew Soldner will serve as Acting Commissioner of The National Center For Education Statistics (NCES). Dr. Soldner has served as Acting Director of The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) since April 2024 and previously led the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) beginning in 2018. In his new role, Dr. Soldner will work closely with Senior Advisor Dr. Amber Northern, NCES staff, and IES staff to ensure NCES reports and data products are relevant and accessible to researchers, educators, and policymakers. He will also oversee the preparation and administration of the 2026 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), scheduled to take place in January 2026 and confirmed to be on track. According to the release, Dr. Soldner expressed enthusiasm about returning to NCES, where he began his federal service career, and reaffirmed his commitment to producing accurate, objective, and policy-relevant data. He emphasized NCES's role in supporting informed decision-making across the education system. Dr. Soldner holds a Ph.D. ~~F~~from the University of Maryland's College of Education. His work focuses on leveraging rigorous evidence to enhance education policy, program implementation, and postsecondary and workforce outcomes. This leadership transition comes as the Department of Education continues broader efforts to modernize and reimagine the role of IES and NCES in supporting the education research and data infrastructure.

#### **AI TECH LEADERS EXPLORE EARLY LEARNING ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS**

On Tuesday, the Campaign for Grade Level Reading's "Learning Tuesdays" webinar, "Designing for Connection: How Technology Can Power Early Learning in Homes & Communities," explored the role of technology in supporting early childhood development amidst systemic disruptions. moderated by Gabe Hakim of Promise Venture Studio, the discussion highlighted innovations that empower families and strengthen connections within learning ecosystems. The first panel, which focused on parent well-being, featured Mel Faxon (Mirza), Sam Gardner (HappyPillar), and Temis Laguna (Literacy Partners). Faxon described Mirza as "TurboTax for the safety net," a tool that simplifies access to benefit programs and significantly reduces application times for families. Gardner explained how HappyPillar uses AI and therapists to provide accessible mental health strategies, coaching parents on interaction techniques to boost

children’s social-emotional skills. Laguna emphasized that Literacy Partners builds adult literacy capacities by honoring families’ cultures and addressing their “cognitive load,” which fosters confidence and engagement. Panelists stressed the importance of designing technology to be low-burden, on-demand, and mobile-accessible, meeting families where they are. The second panel explored ways to strengthen the ecosystem of connection and featured Alejandro Gibes de Gac (Springboard Collaborative/Paloma), Heejae Lim (TalkingPoints), Rex Duval (Nookly), and Omowale Moses (MathTalk). Gibes de Gac shared Paloma’s mission to foster parent-school connections and empower parents to teach their children for 15 minutes a day. Lim discussed TalkingPoints’ goal of building meaningful school-community relationships through accessible communication, noting a 24% decrease in absenteeism among platform users. Duval presented Nookly, an AI co-pilot that helps caregivers and teachers create engaging learning materials such as songs and visual schedules. Moses introduced “Math Everywhere”, a location-based app that promotes real-world, social math learning, described as the “Pokémon Go” of learning. Panelists emphasized that AI should serve as an “unlock” for those dedicated to children, amplifying human efforts rather than replacing them. They underscored the importance of building trust, ensuring accessibility, and creating impactful, user-centered technologies that supplement – but never supplant – the vital roles of parents and educators.

### **USED SAYS SAVE PLAN INTEREST ACCRUAL WILL RESUME**

On Wednesday, the Department of Education announced that interest accrual will resume on August 1 for borrowers enrolled in the Saving on A Valuable Education (SAVE) plan, in compliance with a federal court injunction that blocked key provisions of the plan. The Department had previously paused interest under SAVE to prevent negative amortization, but the injunction limits its authority to do so. Interest will not be applied retroactively. The Department will begin outreach to approximately 7.7 million borrowers enrolled in SAVE, encouraging them to select a legal, Income-Driven Repayment (IDR) plan – such as the Income-Based Repayment (IBR) plan – to ensure continued progress toward loan forgiveness programs and avoid disruptions. Borrowers can use the Department’s loan simulator to compare repayment options. Those already enrolled in IBR, PAYE, or ICR do not need to reapply. Borrowers switching out of the SAVE plan must do so to make qualifying payments toward programs like public service loan forgiveness. A new repayment assistance plan created under the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, signed into law on July 4, will be available by July 1, 2026. Because future enrollment in PAYE and ICR may be restricted, borrowers are urged to consider the IBR plan in the interim. The Department also resumed student loan collections of defaulted loans on May 5 following a five-year pause. As of late June, \$282 million had been recovered. While federal benefit offsets have not yet resumed, wage garnishment is expected to begin later this summer. Additional information is available at [studentaid.gov/courtactions](https://studentaid.gov/courtactions).

### **AEI EXAMINES EFFORTS TO REDUCE HARMFUL TECH IMPACTS ON STUDENTS**

On Wednesday, American Enterprise Institute (AEI) fellows Christine Rosen, Timothy Carney, and Clare Morell discussed strategies to address the harmful effects of technology on youth mental health during a conversation centered on Morell’s recently published book, *The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide To Freeing Kids And Teens From Smartphones*. The panelists explored practical approaches parents can take to foster a screen-free and social media-free environment for their children. Key recommendations included reshaping the conversation around cellphone use in schools, moving beyond screen-time limits to advocate for a full social media detox, and



prioritizing family activities that make screen time communal and intentional. Panelists expressed concern over growing evidence that excessive screen use is linked to stunted or delayed child development and cited research connecting early social media use to increased symptoms of addiction and mental health issues in children. The discussion also highlighted how social media often drives young users toward self-absorption and social isolation, rather than fostering self-expression and community as originally intended. Finally, the panel addressed how policymakers and educators can collaborate to reshape school and community environments to support purposeful uses of technology and provide guardrails against digital overuse for both children and parents. More information and a recording of the hearing are [here](#).

## **USED CLARIFIES NONCITIZEN RULES ON FEDERAL CTE, ADULT ED PROGRAMS**

On Thursday, the Department of Education issued an interpretive rule clarifying that individuals who are not legally present in the United States are ineligible for participation in federally-funded career, technical, and adult education programs. The rule rescinds a 1997 Dear Colleague letter from the Clinton administration, which the Department now states misinterpreted the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) by allowing access to federal benefits for non-qualified individuals. According to the Department, the new interpretation aligns with PRWORA’s restrictions, which limit access to federal public benefits – including postsecondary education – to U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and other “qualified aliens.” The Department emphasized that programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins CTE), the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the Higher Education Act (HEA) are considered federal public benefits subject to PRWORA eligibility rules. Pell grants and federal student loans remain unavailable to individuals without lawful immigration status. The Department will issue notices to grantees of Perkins CTE, AEFLA, and HEA funds reminding them of their responsibility to verify participant eligibility to ensure compliance with federal law. While the interpretive rule does not carry the force of law or mandate enforcement actions, it reflects the Department’s current position. Enforcement of these eligibility requirements is not expected to begin before August 9, 2025. The rule was issued in response to Executive Order 14218, which directs federal agencies to end taxpayer subsidization of benefits for individuals without legal immigration status.

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## **4. New Publications**

### **Does A Four-Day School Week Benefit Students?**

*University of Oregon (2025)*

Findings from a systematic review of 11 studies on student outcomes show little evidence of positive outcomes from a four-day school week.

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## **5. In the News**

### **Trump Admin Sues California Over Transgender Athletes In Girls' Sports**

ABC News (July 10, 2025)

### **Education & Workforce, Energy & Commerce, and Judiciary Committees Introduce Bipartisan NIL Legislation**

*U.S. House Committee on Education & Workforce (July 10, 2025)*

**Medicaid Cuts in Trump Tax Bill Spark Fears for Child Health, School Services**  
*The 74 Million (July 10, 2025)*

**AFT, Tech Companies Join Forces On \$23M Teacher AI Training Initiative**  
*K-12 Dive (July 9, 2025)*

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## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

### 6. Weekly Calendar

#### Tuesday, July 15, 2025

**Markup: House Appropriations Subcommittee on Fiscal Year 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Bill**

**Subject:** The House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Bill Subcommittee will mark-up their bill for fiscal year 2026.

**Time:** 12:00 p.m.

**Contact:** Live stream available [here](#).

**Briefing: Schools versus screens: AI, Education, and the Future of Civic Life**

**Subject:** The Youth Power Project (YPP), Stanford's Deliberative Democracy Lab, Design it For Us, and the News Literacy Project will hold a briefing on how artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are reshaping civic education across the United States.

**Panelists:** Zamaan Qureshi, Design It For Us; Siya Verma, Stanford Deliberative Democracy Lab; Paul Lekas, Software Information Industry Association; and Saanvi Arora, Youth Power Project.

**Time:** 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.; Capitol Visitors Center, room provided upon RSVP.

**Contact:** Register [here](#).

**Webinar: Conflict between Trump Administration and States on Education Policy**

**Subject:** The Brennan Center for Justice will hold a virtual discussion on "The Trouble Between Trump and the States on Education Policy."

**Panelists:** Martha Dalton, journalist, Atlanta Journal Constitution; John King Jr., chancellor, State University of New York; Aaron Saiger, professor of law, Fordham University; and Alicia Bannon, director, Brennan Center Judiciary Program.

**Time:** 3:00 p.m.

**Contact:** Register [here](#).

#### Thursday, July 17, 2025

**Webinar: AI, Online Safety, and Data Privacy**

**Subject:** The Hudson Institute will hold a discussion on "AI, Online Safety, and Data Privacy."

**Panelists:** Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN); and Harold Fuchtgott-Roth, senior fellow and director, Centerr for the Economics of the Internet, Hudson Institute.

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.



**Contact:** Register [here](#).

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## 7. Future Hearings and Events

### Monday, July 21, 2025

#### **Markup: House Appropriations Subcommittee on Fiscal Year 2026 Labor-H and Related Agencies Bill**

**Subject:** The House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a markup of the FY2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill.

**Time:** 5:00 p.m.

**Contact:** Live stream available [here](#).

### Tuesday, July 22, 2025

#### **Webinar: Kids Online Safety**

**Subject:** Punchbowl News will hold a discussion on the news of the day and online safety for kids.

**Participants:** Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA); Anna Palmer, founder, Punchbowl News; Kate Charlet, global director of privacy safety and security policy, Google; and Ben Brody, technology reporter, Punchbowl News.

**Time:** 9:30 a.m.

**Contact:** Livestream available [here](#).

### Thursday, July 24, 2025

#### **Markup: State Approaches to Youth Apprenticeship: Part Two**

**Subject:** The New American Foundation will hold its second series on how three states are harnessing their state's definition of youth apprenticeship (or lack of one) to run effective apprenticeship programs for high-school aged youth.

**Panelists:** Denise Miller, Ed.D., state director, Apprenticeship Colorado; Laz Lopez, associate superintendent, Teaching and Learning at High School District 214, Chair of the Illinois Community College Board; Lancy Downs, senior policy analyst, New America

**Time:** 1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Contact:** Register [here](#).

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## 8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

### **Senate Floor:**

Possible consideration of the Rescissions Act of 2025

Consideration of nominations

### **House Floor:**

**H.R. 4016** – Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2026 (*Sponsored by Rep. Calvert / Appropriations Committee*)

**H.R. 1919** – Anti-CBDC Surveillance State Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Emmer / Financial Services Committee*)

**H.R. 3633** – Digital Asset Market Clarity Act of 2025 (*Sponsored by Rep. Hill / Financial Services Committee*)

**S. 1582** – GENIUS Act (*Sponsored by Sen. Hagerty / Financial Services Committee*)

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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**

**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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