



The Consortium of State School Boards Associations Weekly Education Report LAST WEEK IN WASHINGTON

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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**
 - **House Oversight Holds Hearing on Federal Pandemic Spending:** On Wednesday, February 1, the House Oversight and Accountability Committee held a hearing titled, “Pandemic Spending: A Prescription for Waste, Fraud, and Abuse.” While discussion during Wednesday’s hearing did not focus on pandemic education dollars that were provided to states, several Congressional Members did comment on elementary and secondary school spending that they considered wasteful.
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
 - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
 - **ED’s OET Issues DCL on Maximizing Investment in ED Tech:** In a January 25, 2023 **Dear Colleague Letter**, the Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology (OET) provides information to states, school districts, and eligible partnership grantees on core areas for maximizing investment in innovative, technology-based learning strategies.
 - **NSF Highlights STEM Diversity Trends and Findings in New Report:** On Tuesday, January 31, the National Science Foundation hosted a webinar to highlight the release of a new report, **Diversity and STEM: Women, Minorities,**

and Persons with Disabilities 2023. The event featured several professionals from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES).

- **Education and the Workforce Committee Holds Organizing Hearing:** On Tuesday, January 31, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce held an organizing hearing to adopt a rules and oversight plan for 118th congress. Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC) delivered an opening statement, emphasizing two Republican primary goals: To fix the student loan debt system without harming taxpayers and to boost workforce development to fill skills gaps.

4. **New Publications**

- **Diversity and STEM: Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities 2023** *National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics* (January, 2023)
This new NCSES report, issued every two years, is meant to provide statistical information about these three groups, all of which have historically been underrepresented in the science and engineering enterprise.

5. **In the News**

- **Jordan Fire Off First Subpoenas Against Biden Admin** *Politico* (February 3, 2023)
- **Teacher Shortage Shows Signs of Worsening in Several States** *K-12 Dive* (January 30, 2023)
- **Republicans See Education as Winning Issue in 2024** *The Hill* (January 29, 2023)

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

- **Webinar: Debate of How History and Race are Taught:** Washington Post Live will hold a webinar on "The Debate on How Race and History are Taught."
Monday, February 6 at 11am
- **Webinar: Learning to Read: Applying Universal Design for Learning:** The RAND Corporation holds a virtual discussion on "Understanding How School Districts Are Responding to Political Polarization."
Tuesday, February 7 at 3pm
- **Hearing: House Education and Workforce Committee:** The House Education and the Workforce Committee will hold a hearing on "American Education in Crisis."
Wednesday, February 8 at 10:15am
- **Hearing: House Appropriations Committee:** The House Appropriations Committee will hold a meeting to organize for the 118th Congress.
Wednesday, February 8 at 10:45am
- **Hearing: Senate HELP Committee:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will hold a meeting to organize for the 118th Congress.
Thursday, February 9 at 10am

7. **Future Hearings & Events**

- **Webinar: Creating Conditions and Environments for Thriving Kindergarteners:** The New America Foundation will hold a webinar on the key conditions to help young children thrive.
Tuesday, February 14 at 3pm
- **Webinar: Opportunities to Expand Computer Science Education:** The Education Commission of the States will hold a webinar to explore opportunities to expand computer science education.
Thursday, February 16 at 1pm

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

- **Senate Floor: Consideration of nominees**
- **House Floor**
 - H.R. 185 - To terminate the requirement imposed by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for proof of COVID-19 vaccination for foreign travelers, and for other purposes
 - H.J. Res. 24 - Disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Local Resident Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2022
 - H.J. Res. 26 - Disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022

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

10. **About BPAG**

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

FUNDING

HOUSE OVERSIGHT HOLDS HEARING ON FEDERAL PANDEMIC SPENDING

On Wednesday, February 1, the House Oversight and Accountability Committee held a hearing titled, “Pandemic Spending: A Prescription for Waste, Fraud, and Abuse.” Witnesses included Gene Dodaro, U.S. Comptroller General for the Government Accountability Office; Michael Horowitz, chair of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee; and David Smith, assistant director of the Office of Investigations within the U.S. Secret Service. While discussion during Wednesday’s hearing did not focus on pandemic education dollars that were provided to states, several Congressional Members did comment on elementary and secondary school spending that they considered wasteful. In his opening statement, Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer (R-KY) commented on his plans for the Committee to investigate the \$189 billion in elementary and secondary school emergency relief funds, “money meant to help reopen schools and address learning loss,” saying, “Instead, these funds were often used on unrelated expenditures and even to push divisive ideologies onto our students.” Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) utilized her time to question Mr. Dodaro on elementary and secondary spending that she claimed was used on equity and diversity measures in Illinois, and more specifically, “Drag Queen Story Hour.” “A lot of this money went into things that it should have never gone to,” Greene stated. Greene additionally expressed concern about student learning loss, child mental well-being and Critical Race Theory. Representative Lauren Boebert

(R-CO) also made brief comments on education and voiced concern about attacks on parental rights. An archived recording of the hearing can be found [here](#).

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Last week, the House and Senate continued to make decisions about their Committee and Subcommittee assignments. It seems both chambers have finally completed their assignments, with Senate [Democrats](#) and [Republicans](#) announcing their assignments last week. Of particular interest to education advocates, however, is news that the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee will be led by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Shelly Moore Capito (R-WV).

This week, President Joe Biden will deliver his State of the Union Address to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday night. It [has been reported](#) that his advisers headed to Camp David this past weekend to put final touches on the speech. The address will reportedly "underscore the significant progress our nation has made during one of the most challenging periods in our history" and look ahead to the next two years. He will presumably provide some insight into what will be in the forthcoming FY 2024 budget request, which is expected to be released on March 9.

This week will be yet another busy one.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

On the topic of organizing, as it relates to K-12 education and school boards, last week, the House Education and the Workforce Committee held its organizing meeting. Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC) confirmed her plans for an [aggressive oversight agenda](#) that will touch on the use of COVID relief funds, implementation of Title IX, and child nutrition, among other issues.

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-VT) [shared](#) some of his education plans as well, saying that "pathetically low" teacher salaries are top of mind, and he has plans to introduce legislation that would establish \$60,000 as a minimum teacher salary. He is also calling for "serious gun safety legislation" to help prevent school shootings, and was critical of efforts in Republican-led states to grow school vouchers and school choice policies, saying, "I'm certainly against private school vouchers. Tax money should not be going to support private schools."

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

ED'S OET ISSUES DCL ON MAXIMIZING INVESTMENT IN ED TECH

In a January 25, 2023 [Dear Colleague Letter](#), the Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology (OET) provides information to states, school districts, and eligible partnership grantees on core areas for maximizing investment in innovative, technology-based learning strategies. It says, in part, "To truly recover and reimagine education, we must take bold action to transform systems to address opportunity and achievement gaps. For the field of educational technology, it will require us to consider the ways in which technology can advance equity and should protect students at the same time. Additionally, it will require innovative work

of piloting, refining, and scaling technologies that make a meaningful impact on the holistic learning and development of students or the ‘whole learner.’” The letter offers an overview and examples of federal funds to support digital learning -- including improving and personalizing professional learning and other supports for educators, increasing access to high-quality digital content and resources for students, facilitating educator collaboration and communication, and providing devices for students and educators to access digital learning resources. It also shares example questions to support the selection of high-quality technology strategies related to the critical areas of needs assessment, policy and infrastructure, alignment with instructional approach, professional learning, and evidence. Read more [here](#).

NSF HIGHLIGHTS STEM DIVERSITY TRENDS AND FINDINGS IN NEW REPORT

On Tuesday, January 31, the National Science Foundation hosted a webinar to highlight the release of a new report, *[Diversity and STEM: Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities 2023](#)*. The event featured several professionals from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES). Elizabeth Grieco, director of Science, Technology and Innovation Public Information at NCSES and report author, said the report is meant to provide statistical information about these three groups, all of which have historically been underrepresented in the science and engineering enterprise. "A highlight of this year's edition of Diversity and STEM is the use of a broader definition of 'STEM work', providing a better understanding of STEM representation by different demographic groups," said NCSES Director Emilda B. Rivers. "For the first time, we count in STEM statistics all groups whose work requires a high level of technical knowledge, regardless of their degree." Steven Deitz, an interdisciplinary science analyst at NCSES and report author, overviewed notable findings, including that between 2011 and 2021, the U.S. STEM workforce gradually diversified with increased representation of women and underrepresented minorities. Overall, women made up half of the total U.S. population, but only a third of those were employed in STEM occupations. Deitz continued by noting that in 2021, only a quarter of individuals in the U.S. workforce were employed in STEM occupations. Examining the STEM education background and the connection to the workforce, the report found that nearly two-thirds of women working in STEM jobs in 2021 had at least a bachelor's degree education, compared with less than half of men in STEM jobs, and underrepresented minorities—Hispanic, Black, and American Indian or Alaska Native individuals—made up a higher share of the skilled technical workforce in 2021 than of workers who were employed in STEM occupations with at least a bachelor's degree. At the associate's level only, Hispanic students earned a higher share of science and engineering degrees among U.S. citizens and permanent residents in 2020, relative to the Hispanic share of the college-age population. Additionally, the number of science and engineering degrees earned by women between 2011 and 2020 increased by 63 percent at the associate's level, 34 percent at the bachelor's level, 45 percent at the master's degree level, and 18 percent at the doctorate level. Sethuraman Panchanathan, NSF director, then highlighted the efforts NSF continues to make to prioritize diversity and inclusion throughout its programming and awards. He noted the provisions of the CHIPS and Science Act to scale awards and programming as part of the NSF INCLUDES initiative and new programming specific to science and engineering programs at minority-serving institutions. Panchanathan concluded by urging attendees to keep the focus on these efforts as it will take a “system-wide” approach to continue improving diversity and inclusion efforts throughout the STEM education and workforce ecosystem. For more information, click [here](#).

EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE COMMITTEE HOLDS ORGANIZING HEARING

On Tuesday, January 31, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce held an organizing hearing to adopt a rules and oversight plan for 118th congress. Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC) delivered an opening statement, emphasizing two Republican primary goals: To fix the student loan debt system without harming taxpayers and to boost workforce development to fill skills gaps. Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA) spoke at length about the committee's accomplishments from the 117th Congress and highlighted the Democrats' goal to expand affordable healthcare. Before addressing the Committee's Rules package and Oversight Plan, Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott introduced the 118th Congress committee members, which will consist of 45 Members, with 25 Republicans and 20 Democrats. While discussing Committee Rules, Foxx explained that all COVID-19 practices would be repealed, and the committee would return to in-person proceedings, in addition to requiring witnesses to testify in-person. Ranking Member Scott asked the Committee to consider allowing witnesses to testify via Zoom. He argued that it benefits the witnesses because it creates flexibility and allows the Committee to hear from experts who otherwise would not be able to travel, further noting it was a practice used before the pandemic. Even so, Committee Rules passed with no amendments. Finally, Foxx gave a brief summary of the Oversight Plan, which includes oversight of COVID-19 funding and child nutrition programs, and commented on the significance of exercising Executive Branch oversight. Scott concluded by outlining the Democratic Party goals for the Committee, which included supporting labor unions, maintaining separation between church and state, and providing student debt relief. An archived recording of the meeting can be found here.

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4. New Publications

Diversity and STEM: Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities 2023

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (January, 2023)

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5. In the News

Jordan Fires Off First Subpoenas Against Biden Admin

Politico (February 3, 2023)

Teacher Shortage Shows Signs of Worsening in Several States

K-12 Dive (January 30, 2023)

Republicans See Education as Winning Issue in 2024

The Hill (January 29, 2023)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Key: **E&S** – Elementary & Secondary; **H** – Higher Education; **D** – Disability Policy

Monday, February 6, 2023

Webinar: Debate of How History and Race are Taught (E&S)

Subject: Washington Post Live will hold a webinar on "The Debate on How Race and History are Taught."

Participants: Jelani Cobb, dean, Columbia School of Journalism.

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Webinar: Learning to Read: Applying Universal Design for Learning (E&S)

Subject: The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) will hold a webinar on how scientific insights into universal design can optimize teaching and learning.

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

Webinar: How School Districts are Responding to Political Polarization (E&S)

Subject: The RAND Corporation holds a virtual discussion on "Understanding How School Districts Are Responding to Political Polarization."

Participants: Ashley Jochim, principal, Center on Reinventing Public Education; Ashley Woo, assistant policy researcher, RAND; Heather Schwatz, director of pre-K to 12 educational systems program, RAND; Melissa Diliberti, assistant policy researcher, RAND.

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#)

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Hearing: House Education and Workforce Committee (E&S, H)

Subject: The House Education and the Workforce Committee will hold a hearing on "American Education in Crisis."

Time: 10:15 a.m.

Registration: Live stream available [here](#).

Hearing: House Appropriations Committee (E&S, H)

Subject: The House Appropriations Committee will hold a meeting to organize for the 118th Congress.

Time: 10:45 a.m.

Registration: Live stream available [here](#).

Thursday, February 9, 2023

Hearing: Senate HELP Committee (E&S, H)

Subject: The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will hold a meeting to organize for the 118th Congress.

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Registration: Live stream available [here](#).

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Webinar: Creating Conditions and Environments for Thriving Kindergarteners (E&S)

Subject: The New America Foundation will hold a webinar on the key conditions to help young children thrive.

Participants: Laura Bornfreund (moderator), New America; Hedy Chang, Attendance Works; Rebecca Colbert, National Wildlife Federation; Ann Kay, The Rock 'n' Read Project; and Natalie Walrond, Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety, WestEd.

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Webinar: Opportunities to Expand Computer Science Education (E&S, H)

Subject: The Education Commission of the States will hold a webinar to explore opportunities to expand computer science education.

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

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8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor: Consideration of nominations

House Floor:

H.R. 185 - To terminate the requirement imposed by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for proof of COVID-19 vaccination for foreign travelers, and for other purposes (Sponsored by Rep. Massie / Energy and Commerce Committee)

H.J. Res. 24 - Disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Local Resident Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2022 (Sponsored by Rep. Comer / Oversight and Accountability Committee)

H.J. Res. 26 - Disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022

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

[U.S. House and Senate 2022 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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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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