



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

MAY 8, 2023

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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**
 - **Broadband Connectivity and E-Rate**
 - **House to Hold Hearing on Broadband, Closing Digital Divide:** The House Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee is scheduled to hold a hearing on Wednesday titled, “Closing the Digital Divide: Overseeing Federal Funds for Broadband Deployment.”
 - **Child Nutrition**
 - **Schools Ended Universal Free Lunch. Now Meal Debt is Soaring**
NPR (May 3, 2023)
NPR reports on schools that are experiencing rising cafeteria debt with fewer kids enrolling in free and reduced-price programs. Meanwhile, many states are moving to make meals free for all kids again.
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
 - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
 - **Eighth-Graders’ Understanding of US History, Civics Worsening:** On Wednesday, May 3, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released results from the spring 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams measuring student academic performance in 4th and 8th grade in the subjects of history and civics. Overall, knowledge of civics among the nation's

eighth graders fell for the first time since the federal government began testing children under the current framework in 1998.

4. New Publications

- **The Fine Art of School Engagement**

Education Next (May, 2023)

Education Next examines how expanding arts education affects learning, behavior, and social-emotional growth.

- **Voices from the Classroom 2023: A Survey of America's Educators**

Educators for Excellence (April, 2023)

Voices from the Classroom 2023 explores teachers' perceptions, 40 years later, about the goals of K-12 education and how we should go about measuring its success; the content they are required to teach and the materials and guidance they are provided to deliver it; and their own profession, the union contracts that generally guide it, and what change is needed to make their job more viable.

5. In the News

- **Michigan School District Bans Backpacks over Safety Concerns**

The Hill (May 4, 2023)

- **Code.org Helping Launch Teach.AI to Guide Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Education**

GeekWire (May 2, 2023)

- **Schools Could Lose Funding as Lawmakers Spar over the National Debt Ceiling**

EducationWeek (May 2, 2023)

- **Majority of Principals Attribute Teacher Vacancies to Lack of Applicants**

K-12 Dive (May 3, 2023)

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

- **Addressing Inequality by Supporting Parents and Their Children:** The Brookings Institution will hold a book discussion on "The Parent Trap: How to Stop Overloading Parents and Fix Our Inequality Crisis."

Tuesday at 9:30am ET

- **Closing the Digital Divide: Overseeing Federal Funds for Broadband Deployment:** The House Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee is scheduled to hold a hearing titled, "Closing the Digital Divide: Overseeing Federal Funds for Broadband Deployment."

Wednesday at 10:30am ET

- **Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on FY24 Budget:** The Senate Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "A Review of the President's FY2024 Funding Request and Budget Justification for the Department of Education."

Thursday at 10am ET

7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

- **Senate floor: Consideration of nominees**

- **House floor:**
 - **H.R. 2** – Secure the Border Act of 2023
 - **H.R. 1163** – Protecting Taxpayers and Victims of Unemployment Fraud Act

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

9. **About BPAG**

1. **COSSBA Policy Priorities**

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE

HOUSE TO HOLD HEARING ON BROADBAND, CLOSING DIGITAL DIVIDE

The House Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee is scheduled to hold a hearing titled, “Closing the Digital Divide: Overseeing Federal Funds for Broadband Deployment.” The hearing will be held on Wednesday, May 10, 2023. See [calendar](#) below for more details.

CHILD NUTRITION

SCHOOLS ENDED UNIVERSAL FREE LUNCH. NOW MEAL DEBT IS SOARING

NPR (May 3, 2023)

NPR reports on schools that are experiencing rising cafeteria debt with fewer kids enrolling in free and reduced-price programs. Meanwhile, many states are moving to make meals free for all kids again.

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

Last week, the House was in recess while the Senate was in Washington. Most of the news from the Nation’s Capital was speculation around this week’s expected meeting between House GOP leadership and the White House to discuss how to address the country’s debt ceiling and Republican demands for spending cuts. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) will meet with President Joe Biden on Tuesday, May 9. The meeting will end a three-month stall in negotiations and comes just three weeks before the country is projected to run out of money to pay its bills, according to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. President Biden invited the Speaker and his colleagues in leadership from both parties and chambers: House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY); Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY); and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY). All eyes and ears will be on that meeting and what Congress might do before the end of the month.

Meanwhile, House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Kay Granger (R-TX) told her committee members the dates they will mark up FY 2024 spending bills, without listing the bills that would be marked up on each date. There will be subcommittee markups on May 17 and 18, with full committee action following on May 23, 24, and 25. In June, there will be subcommittee markups of remaining bills on the 7th and 8th, with full committee action coming on June 13, 14, and 15. The Labor, Health and Human Services and Education spending bill will almost certainly be subject to June action, assuming it is marked up at all.

When the House returns tomorrow, the House Education and the Workforce Committee Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development will hold **a hearing** titled, “Examining America’s Workforce Challenges: Looking for Ways to Improve Skills Development.” The hearing signals Committee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx’s (R-NC) intention to pursue updating the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act this year. She and her colleague, Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA) reportedly are trying for a bipartisan approach to the rewrite.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

While Chairwoman Granger provided a schedule for action, she hasn’t shared when subcommittee leaders might know how much money they have to allocate to the agencies and programs under their purview. Even so, it is presumed that the discretionary total for all the bills will be the \$1.471 trillion level set in the **debt ceiling and spending cut bill** House Republicans passed last week. The cut to most non-defense funding, including money dispersed by the Department of Education, would be 22%. House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Robert Aderholt (R-AL) commented directly on the bill that will fund the Department of Education, reportedly saying there is “speculation that there could be a double-digit cut,” yet details of such cuts are unknown.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

EIGHTH-GRADERS’ UNDERTSANDING OF US HISTORY, CIVICS WORSENING

On Wednesday, May 3, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released results from the spring 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams measuring student academic performance in 4th and 8th grade in the subjects of history and civics. Overall, knowledge of civics among the nation's eighth graders fell for the first time since the federal government began testing children under the current framework in 1998. The average scores in history also show a five-point drop. For context, average history marks have fallen for nearly a decade with scores dropping nine points since 2014. Performance is now back to the 1994 score level when the exam was first distributed in its current form. In civics, the two-point downturn puts the average score in 2022 at the same level as 1998 (150 out of a possible 300). For both history and civics, there were widespread declines in scores across most races and ethnicities, and lower-performing students had larger score declines than higher-performing students. In history, students who scored in the bottom tenth percentile had a seven-point drop between 2018 and 2022 and students in the ninetieth percentile had no significant score drop at all. “The latest data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress further affirms the profound impact the pandemic had on student learning in subjects beyond math and reading,” Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said in a **statement**, also pointing to the math and reading NAEP scores published last fall. Peggy Carr, Commissioner, NCES **pointed** to the lack of dedicated classroom time spent on these subjects. “Teachers, practitioners need to get this content in front of students. When you look at what they don't know, and it's not just about reading, it's about content, facts, information about our constitutional system. Students don't know this information,” Carr said. “That is why they're scoring so low on this assessment.” The results can be viewed **[here](#)**.

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Code.org Helping Launch Teach.AI to Guide Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Education

GeekWire (May 2, 2023)

Schools Could Lose Funding as Lawmakers Spar Over the National Debt Ceiling

EducationWeek (May 2, 2023)

Students' Understanding of History and Civics is Worsening

The Washington Post (May 3, 2023)

Majority of Principals Attribute Teacher Vacancies to Lack of Applicants

K-12 Dive (May 3, 2023)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Webinar: Addressing Inequality by Supporting Parents and Their Children

Subject: The Brookings Institution will hold a book discussion on "The Parent Trap: How to Stop Overloading Parents and Fix Our Inequality Crisis."

Participants: Sharita Gruberg, vice president, National Partnership for Women & Families; and Nate Hilger, author, "*The Parent Trap: How to Stop Overloading Parents and Fix Our Inequality Crisis.*"

Time: 9:30 a.m. ET

Registration: Register [here](#).

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Hearing: Closing the Digital Divide: Overseeing Federal Funds for Broadband Deployment

Subject: The House Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee is scheduled to hold a hearing titled, “Closing the Digital Divide: Overseeing Federal Funds for Broadband Deployment.”

Witnesses: TBA

Time: 10:30 a.m. ET

Registration: Live webcast [here](#).

Thursday, May 11, 2023

Hearing: Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on FY24 Education Budget

Subject: The Senate Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a hearing on “A Review of the President's FY2024 Funding Request and Budget Justification for the Department of Education.”

Witnesses: Miguel Cardona, secretary, U.S. Department of Education.

Time: 10:00 a.m. ET

Registration: Live webcast [here](#).

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7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor: Consideration of nominees

House Floor:

[H.R. 2](#) - Secure the Border Act of 2023

[H.R. 1163](#) - Protecting Taxpayers and Victims of Unemployment Fraud Act

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

[U.S. House and Senate 2023 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

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