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**
     - **ED Halts Funding for Full-Service Community Schools**: In December, the Department of Education **halted** continuation funding for 19 multi-year grants under the **Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) program**, abruptly canceling roughly $60 million that had been awarded to support wraparound academic, health, and social services in high-poverty and rural K-12 schools.

2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
   - **Impact on State School Board Associations**

3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
   - **ED Approves Iowa's Returning Education To The States Waiver**: On Wednesday, the Department of Education **approved** Iowa's "Returning Education to the States" **waiver**, making Iowa the first state to receive authorization granting expanded discretion over the use of federal education funds.

4. **New Publications**
   - **How To Increase The Retention of Early Career Teachers**
     Center for American Progress (December 2025)

This survey of early career teachers sheds light on the experiences and factors that assisted or hindered their persistence in the field.

5. In the News

- **CDC, Following Trump's Orders, Weakens US Stance on Childhood Vaccinations**
  K-12 Dive (January 6, 2026)
- **Trump Can Order Employers To Pay Extra H-1B Fee, Court Holds**
  K-12 Dive (January 6, 2026)
- **The Education Department Gave Another Agency Power to Distribute Its Money. It Hasn't Gone Well.**
  Politico (November 24, 2025)

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

- **Helping Youth Flourish**: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) will hold a discussion on "How Do We Help Youth Flourish, Not Just Achieve?"
  Monday at 4pm ET
- **House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Child Care Crunch**: The House Education and the Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Who's Watching the Kids? How Employers, Innovators, and Parents are Solving America's Child Care Crunch."
  Tuesday at 10:15am ET
- **Data and Tools for Better, Fairer School District Boundaries**: New America will hold an event, "Redrawing the Lines that Divide Our Students: Data and Tools for Better, Fairer School District Boundaries."
  Tuesday at 1pm ET
- **America's AI Action Plan**: The House Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee on Research and Technology will hold a hearing on "Assessing America's AI Action Plan."
  Wednesday at 10am ET
- **Building an AI-Ready America**: The House Education and the Workforce Committee will hold a hearing on "Building an AI-Ready America."
  Wednesday at 10:15am ET
- **Findings from the Brookings Global Task Force on AI and Education**: The Brookings Institution will hold an event, "A new direction for AI and students: Findings from the Brookings Global Task Force on AI and Education."
  Wednesday at 11am ET
- **Examining the Impact of Technology on Youth**: The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee will hold a hearing "Plugged Out: Examining the Impact of Technology on America's Youth."
  Thursday at 10am ET
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE) 101**: The New America Foundation and Advance CTE will hold a CTE 101 session to discuss youth apprenticeship intermediaries and advocates new to youth apprenticeship.
  Thursday at 1pm ET

7. **Weekly Calendar – Future Events**

- **A Conversation on the Future of America's Education System**: The Center for American Progress will host former Chicago Mayor and Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel for a conversation on education.
  January 21 at 11am ET
- **Parental Rights After Mahmoud v. Taylor**: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) will hold discussions on "Parental Rights in Education after Mahmoud v. Taylor: Legal and Cultural Assessments."
  January 22 at 12:45pm ET
- **Homeroom with Education Leaders | 2026 Across the Aisle: United in Hope, Divided by Method**: The Hunt Institute will hold an "across the aisle" conversation on their public opinion poll on parent and voter values across the education spectrum.
  January 22 at 3pm ET

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

- **Senate floor**
  - Consideration of H.R.6938, CJS, Energy and Water, and Interior and Environment FY26 Minibus
  - Potential consideration of further appropriations legislation
- **House floor**
  - H.R. 2262 – Flexibility for Workers Education Act (Sponsored by Rep. Hinson / Education and Workforce Committee)
  - H.R. 2270 – Empowering Employer Child and Elder Care Solutions Act (Sponsored by Rep. Messmer / Education and Workforce Committee)
  - H.R. 2312 – Tipped Employee Protection Act (Sponsored by Rep. Womack / Education and Workforce Committee)
  - H.R. 2988 – Protecting Prudent Investment of Retirement Savings Act (Sponsored by Rep. Allen / Education and Workforce Committee)
  - H.R. 4366 – Save Local Business Act (Sponsored by Rep. Comer / Education and Workforce Committee)
  - Complete Consideration of H.R. 4593 – SHOWER Act (Sponsored by Rep. Fry / Energy and Commerce Committee)
  - Consideration of items related to FY26 Appropriations are possible.

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

10. **About BPAG**

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1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

FUNDING

ED HALTS FUNDING FOR FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

In December, the Department of Education (ED) **halted** continuation funding for 19 multi-year grants under the **Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) program**, abruptly canceling roughly $60 million that had been awarded to support wraparound academic, health, and social services in high-poverty and rural K-12 schools. ED allowed the grants to lapse at the end of the calendar

year, arguing that certain projects did not align with administration priorities, particularly citing concerns that some programs incorporated diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)–related activities. ED officials stated the decision reflected a broader effort to reevaluate federal grants and redirect funds toward programs they view as better aligned with merit-based and academic outcomes. The cancellation has prompted legal challenges. **One lawsuit**, filed by the American Federation of Teachers and a Chicago nonprofit, argues that ED violated the Administrative Procedure Act by terminating congressionally appropriated, multi-year grants without notice or required procedural steps. **A second lawsuit**, brought by the attorneys general of Maryland, the District of Columbia, and North Carolina, similarly contends that the mid-stream termination unlawfully disrupted five-year grants that states and school districts had already begun implementing. Plaintiffs emphasize that FSCS funding supports services such as tutoring, mental health care, housing assistance, and family supports, and argue ED failed to consult grantees or offer opportunities for modification before ending funding. At the same time, ED **reversed course in Idaho**, restoring a previously frozen FSCS state-scaling grant administered by United Way of Treasure Valley. After review, ED concluded that Idaho's program complied with federal and state law and did not promote prohibited DEI activities. The decision preserved nearly $30 million in remaining funding and allowed community school services to continue in dozens of Idaho schools, perhaps highlighting a case-by-case approach from the Department toward community school grants.

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

As the New Year begins, Congress continues to work on Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 appropriations bills ahead of the approaching January 30, 2026, expiration date of the continuing resolution (CR) that is funding much of the federal government. Lawmakers have made progress on some spending measures, but the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS-ED) appropriations bill remains unfinished, with uncertainty surrounding timing.

Last week, the House of Representatives passed a FY 2026 "minibus" appropriations package that included several spending bills, among them the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) appropriations bill, which funds the National Science Foundation's investment in STEM education programs and other federal research programs. The package cleared the House floor after extended debate, much of it centered on the scope and value of Community Funded Projects, often referred to as earmarks. Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) **emphasized** fiscal restraint while defending the process. "Through bipartisan, committee-led consensus, we are delivering full-year measures that spend less than current funding, implement critical priorities for our districts, and continue to advance the America First agenda. This was not by accident – it is the result of ending bloated omnibuses, empowering members, and doing the hard work Article I of the Constitution demands," Chair Cole said. Ultimately, House leadership secured enough support to move the package forward.

Democrats underscored the importance of maintaining investments across domestic priorities. "This funding package reflects the hard work of Democrats to push back against the Trump Administration's repeated attacks on American science. While the Administration proposed devastating cuts that would have undermined our national labs, hollowed out basic research, and weakened our global competitiveness, this agreement protects core investments in agencies like the Department of Energy's Office of Science, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology," Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL) **stated**.

While the CJS bill does not directly fund K–12 education programs, its passage signals momentum that may shape consideration of remaining appropriations measures.

Disrupting the process further, in December, Senate Democrats **raised objections** to the LHHS-ED appropriations process following the Trump Administration's use of interagency agreements to transfer certain Department of Education functions to other federal agencies. Appropriations leaders and other senators argued that the agreements could undermine congressional intent and bypass Congress's power of the purse, calling on the Administration to reverse the actions. It's expected that Democrats will try to address these concerns during any future LHHS-ED negotiations. For K–12 advocates, these provisions could have implications for program administration and federal oversight, depending on how final language is crafted.

Even as FY 2026 remains unfinished, lawmakers are beginning to look ahead. The FY 2027 budget and appropriations process is expected to informally begin with the President's State of the Union Address, tentatively scheduled for February 24, 2026. That address will likely outline administration priorities and set the stage for the next round of funding debates, making it clear that the appropriations cycle never really stops.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

Among the FY 2026 spending bills that have not yet been enacted, the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS-ED) appropriations bill funds major education programs, including Title I, IDEA, and other formula and competitive grant programs administered by the Department of Education. Prospects for action on the LHHS-ED bill remain unclear. The measure has historically been one of the most complex and contentious appropriations bills, given its size and policy reach. Disagreements over overall spending levels, education policy provisions, and the role of the federal government in education have contributed to delays. Absent enactment of the LHHS-ED bill, Congress may ultimately rely on another continuing resolution to avoid disruptions.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

ED APPROVES IOWA'S RETURNING EDUCATION TO THE STATES WAIVER

On Wednesday, the Department of Education **approved** Iowa's "Returning Education to the States*"* **waiver**, making Iowa the first state to receive authorization granting expanded discretion over the use of federal education funds. The waiver allows the Iowa Department of Education to consolidate four federal funding streams into a single allocation, with the aim of reducing administrative burden and shifting the focus from federal compliance to student achievement. According to ED, this increased flexibility is expected to redirect nearly $8 million over four years from compliance-related costs to classroom-level investments, including evidence-based literacy initiatives, efforts to strengthen the teacher pipeline, and programs aimed at narrowing achievement gaps. In addition, ED approved Iowa's application for Ed-Flex authority, enabling the state to grant school districts waivers from certain federal requirements without prior ED approval, and committed to working with Iowa to streamline duplicative programmatic and fiscal reporting. This action aligns with the Administration's broader effort to return education decision-making to the states by leveraging existing waiver authority under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to increase flexibility while maintaining transparency and accountability. This

action follows an ED **Dear Colleague Letter** published in July inviting state education agencies, local educational agencies, schools, and Tribal leaders to request these flexibility waivers.

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4. New Publications

How To Increase the Retention of Early Career Teachers
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5. In the News

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The Education Department Gave Another Agency Power To Distribute Its Money. It Hasn't Gone Well.
Politico (November 24, 2025)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Monday, January 12, 2026

Webinar: Helping Youth Flourish
Subject: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) will hold a discussion on "How Do We Help Youth Flourish, Not Just Achieve?"
Participants: Robert Pondiscio, senior fellow, AEI; Stacey Ryan, president, School of Rock; Mike Goldstein, co-founder, Center for Teen Flourishing; and Larissa Phillips, founder, Volunteer Literacy Project.
Time: 4:00 p.m.
Contact: Register **here.**

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Hearing: House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Child Care Crunch
Subject: The House Education and the Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Who's Watching the Kids? How Employers, Innovators, and Parents are Solving America's Child Care Crunch."
Witnesses: Haden Polseno-Hensley, president and co-founder, Red Rooster Coffee Company; Mary Lou Burke Alfonso, COO, Bright Horizons; Alex Grover, CEO, i2M; and Amy Matsui, vice president of child care and income security, National Women's Law Center.
Time: 10:15 a.m.

Contact: Live stream available **here.**

Event: Data and Tools for Better, Fairer School District Boundaries
Subject: New America will hold an event, "Redrawing the Lines that Divide Our Students: Data and Tools for Better, Fairer School District Boundaries."
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Contact: Register **here.**

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Hearing: America's AI Action Plan
Subject: The House Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee on Research and Technology will hold a hearing on "Assessing America's AI Action Plan."
Witness: Michael Kratsios, director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Contact: Live stream available **here.**

Hearing: Building an AI Ready America
Subject: The House Education and the Workforce Committee will hold a hearing on "Building an AI-Ready America."
Time: 10:15 a.m.
Contact: Live stream available **here.**

Event: Findings from the Brookings Global Task Force on AI and Education
Subject: The Brookings Institution will hold an event, "A new direction for AI and students: Findings from the Brookings Global Task Force on AI and Education."
Participants: Rebecca Winthrop, director, Brookings Center for Universal Education; Kara Swisher, editor at large, New York Magazine; and Rida Karim, student, University of Virginia.
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Contact: Register **here.**

Thursday, January 15, 2026

Hearing: Examining the Impact of Technology on Youth
Subject: The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee will hold a hearing "Plugged Out: Examining the Impact of Technology on America's Youth."
Witnesses: Emily Cherkin, author and founder, The Screentime Consultant; Jean Twenge, professor of psychology, San Diego State University; and Jared Cooney Horvath, director, LME Global.
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Contact: Live stream available **here.**

Event: Career Technical Education (CTE) 101
Subject: The New America Foundation and Advance CTE will hold a CTE 101 session to discuss youth apprenticeship intermediaries and advocates new to youth apprenticeship.
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Contact: Register **here.**

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Event: A Conversation on the Future of America's Education System With Rahm Emanuel
Subject: The Center for American Progress will host former Chicago Mayor and Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel for a conversation on education.
Participants: Rahm Emanuel; and Neera Tanden, Center for American Progress.
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Contact: Register **here.**

Thursday, January 22, 2026

Event: Parental Rights after Mahmoud v. Taylor
Subject: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) will hold discussions on "Parental Rights in Education after Mahmoud v. Taylor: Legal and Cultural Assessments."
Time: 12:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Contact: Register and full agenda **here.**

Event: Homeroom with Education Leaders | 2026 Across the Aisle: United in Hope, Divided by Method
Subject: The Hunt Institute will hold an "across the aisle" conversation on their public opinion poll on parent and voter values across the education spectrum.
Participants: Bob Wise, former governor, West Virgina; Jacqueline Scott-Douglas, vice president, Burson Insights; and Javaid E. Siddiqi, president and CEO, the Hunt Institute.
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Contact: Register **here.**

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8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor:
Consideration of **H.R.6938**, CJS, Energy and Water, and Interior and Environment FY26 Minibus
Potential consideration of further appropriations legislation

House Floor:
H.R. 2262 – Flexibility for Workers Education Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Hinson / Education and Workforce Committee*)

H.R. 2270 – Empowering Employer Child and Elder Care Solutions Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Messmer / Education and Workforce Committee*)

H.R. 2312 – Tipped Employee Protection Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Womack / Education and Workforce Committee*)

H.R. 2988 – Protecting Prudent Investment of Retirement Savings Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Allen*

/ Education and Workforce Committee)

H.R. 4366 – Save Local Business Act (*Sponsored by Rep. Comer / Education and Workforce Committee*)

Complete Consideration of H.R. 4593 – SHOWER Act *(Sponsored by Rep. Fry / Energy and Commerce Committee)*

Consideration of items related to FY26 Appropriations are possible.

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

U.S. House and Senate 2026 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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