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**
   - **Teacher Recruitment and Retention**
     - **How Can Districts And States Sustain Teacher Apprenticeship Programs?** School districts and states are increasingly using teacher apprenticeship programs—where paraprofessionals, high-school students, and local community members earn credentials while working in classrooms—to help address teacher shortages and build long-term talent pipelines, but sustaining these programs can be challenging.
   - **Broadband Connectivity & E-Rate**
     - **Since E-Rate Expansion Cuts, Schools Make Difficult Choices on Hotspots**: Since the Federal Communications Commission reversed a recent expansion of the E-rate program that had allowed schools and libraries to get discounted funding for Wi-Fi hotspots and school bus internet, many K-12 districts are scrambling to connect students who lack reliable home broadband and are facing tough budget decisions.

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

3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
   - **AEI Examines The Impact of Classroom Technology on Learning**: On Tuesday, the American Enterprise Institute hosted a virtual event featuring neuroscientist and former educator Jared Cooney Horvath to discuss his new

book, *The Digital Delusion: How Classroom Technology Harms Our Kids' Learning—and How to Help Them Thrive Again*.

4. New Publications

- **The State of Educational Opportunity in America: A 50-State Survey of 23,000 Parents**
  50CAN (February 2026)
  The "State of Educational Opportunity in America: A Survey of 23,000 Parents" is the second edition of a 50-state study from 50CAN and Edge Research. The survey report offers an unprecedented, state-by-state examination of the current education landscape and what is important to parents.

5. In the News

- **Exclusive: Parents Favor Free Tutoring, Summer Camp, Open Enrollment… Annual Testing? No So Much**
  The 74 Million (February 19, 2026)
- **Groups Seek Guidance on Education Credit in GOP Law**
  Bloomberg Government (February 18, 2026)
- **Parents Are Opting Out of School Laptops, Returning Them To Pen And Paper**
  NBC News (February 16, 2026)
- **Policymakers Are Looking To Cut Down Kids' Screen Time. Ed Tech Could Be Included In That.**
  Ed Week | Market Brief (February 13, 2026)

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

- **Supporting STEM Teachers: Insights from Noyce**: The Brookings Institution will hold a discussion on "Supporting STEM Teachers: Insights from the Noyce Program."
  Monday at 2pm ET
- **House Small Business on Career and Technical Education**: The House Small Business Committee will hold a hearing on "Career and Technical Education: Developing the Future of Main Street Success."
  Tuesday at 10am ET
- **House Ed and Workforce Subcommittee on Innovative Approaches to Paid Leave**: The House Education and the Workforce - Workforce Protections Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Balancing Careers and Care: Examining Innovative Approaches to Paid Leave."
  Tuesday at 10:15am ET
- **House Ed and Workforce Subcommittee on Teaching in the AI Age**: The House Education and the Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Building an AI-Ready America: Teaching in the AI Age."
  Tuesday at 2pm ET
- **Future of AI and CS in K-8 Classrooms**: LEGO Education and Code.Org will hold a webinar on what's next for computer science and AI in K-8 classrooms and how your school or district can keep pace.

Tuesday at 2pm ET

- **Senate HELP Committee Markup of Bills**: The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will hold a markup of S. 1602, the "Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Education Act"; S. 1558, the "Understanding the True Cost of College Act of 2025"; S. 3747, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to recognize students who have completed secondary school education in a home school setting as high school graduates; and others.
  Thursday at 10am ET
- **Building Clearer Pathways to Good Work**: The Brookings Institution will hold an event on "From skills to jobs: Building clearer pathways to good work," focusing on "how education systems and labor market institutions can evolve to better support students and workers at every stage."
  Thursday at 10:30am ET

7. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**
   - **Senate floor**
     - **Potential consideration of H.R.7147** Making further consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes (DHS Appropriations)
   - **House floor**
     - **H.R. 4371** H.R. 4758 – Homeowner Energy Freedom Act
     - **H.R. 4626** – Home Appliance Protection and Affordability Act
     - **Procedural Motion Relating to H. Con. Res. 38** – Directing the President pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution to remove United States Armed Forces from unauthorized hostilities in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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

9. **About BPAG**

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1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

HOW CAN DISTRICTS, STATES SUSTAIN TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS?

School districts and states are increasingly using teacher apprenticeship programs—where paraprofessionals, high-school students, and local community members earn credentials while working in classrooms—to help address teacher shortages and build long-term talent pipelines, but sustaining these programs can be challenging amid tight local budgets and uncertain state and federal support; speakers at a *National Center for Grow Your Own* webinar highlighted strategies such as reallocating local teacher vacancy funds, bundling cohorts to negotiate lower tuition with partner colleges, and tapping federal education funds like Title II, Title III, IDEA and Perkins, while state efforts feature grants (e.g., Nebraska's use of a Department of Labor apprenticeship

expansion grant) and legislative funding (such as Maryland's investment in debt-free pathways) to scale and sustain apprenticeship initiatives. Read more from *K-12 Dive* here.

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY & E-RATE

SINCE E-RATE CUTS, SCHOOLS MAKE DIFFICULT CHOICES ON HOTSPOTS

Since the Federal Communications Commission reversed a recent expansion of the E-rate program that had allowed schools and libraries to get discounted funding for Wi-Fi hotspots and school bus internet, many K-12 districts are scrambling to connect students who lack reliable home broadband and are facing tough budget decisions, with some choosing to cut hotspot lending programs or limit devices to the highest-need students because they can no longer count on federal reimbursements and must find other funding or absorb the costs themselves, a shift that leaders say threatens to widen the "homework gap" for low-income and rural learners. Read more from *K-12 Dive* here.

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Last week, Congress was in recess during the third week of another partial federal government shutdown that came after Congress failed to pass final appropriations legislation before January 30th, the expiration date of the latest continuing resolution that was funding the operations of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS remains unfunded, triggering a lapse for agencies such as the Transportation Security Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Secret Service. Essential functions at DHS continue, but many workers are either furloughed or working without pay, and broader operational impacts are anticipated if the impasse continues. Congressional Democrats and Republicans remain in a standoff primarily over proposed reforms to immigration enforcement, including Democrats' calls for body cameras and judicial warrants for certain actions by federal officers — demands that Republicans have resisted.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) said Democrats are seeking "commonsense proposals" for oversight of immigration operations and questioned why Republicans are unwilling to adopt them, framing the demands as aligned with law enforcement practices nationwide. Senator Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), while open to body cameras and additional training, balked at other proposals, saying his priority is ensuring ICE can perform its duties without exposing agents to intimidation. Republican leaders in the House have expressed confidence that a funding deal could be approved by the middle of this week when lawmakers return from recess.

Governors convened in Washington, DC, for the NGA Winter Meeting over the weekend. The meeting traditionally includes solutions-driven conversations on pressing state policy issues, with education listed as one of the major discussion areas alongside energy, economic growth, and artificial intelligence. This year's meeting has already made news for a number of non-education reasons, but the agenda was expected to address ambitious education themes, such as linking education to workforce needs and skills training, emphasizing the role of career and technical education, apprenticeships, dual-enrollment programs, and other pathways that prepare students for in-demand jobs.

Looking to this week, Congress will reconvene and host President Donald Trump on Tuesday for his 2026 State of the Union Address. President Trump is widely anticipated to emphasize themes

of economic growth and affordability, including lower costs for families and stronger U.S. economic performance, building on recent remarks about strong economic indicators and cost-of-living concerns. In addition to economic topics, the address is expected to reiterate key policy priorities of the administration, such as immigration enforcement and national security, as well as broader visions for the year ahead. A Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget request is expected soon thereafter and will set the stage for the work of education advocates during what has become a nearly constant "appropriations season."

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

It's possible that prolonged instability at agencies like FEMA could complicate reimbursement processes tied to disasters or security grants. At the same time, the upcoming State of the Union and anticipated FY 2027 budget request signal that school boards should prepare for continued volatility in federal education priorities — especially around workforce development, CTE, and affordability — and remain engaged in advocacy as Congress enters what is shaping up to be another prolonged appropriations cycle.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

AEI EXAMINES THE IMPACT OF CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY ON LEARNING

On Tuesday, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) hosted a virtual event featuring neuroscientist and former educator Jared Cooney Horvath to discuss his new book, *The Digital Delusion: How Classroom Technology Harms Our Kids' Learning—and How to Help Them Thrive Again*. The discussion was moderated by AEI's Frederick Hess. Throughout the event, Horvath argued that the long-standing trend of rising IQ scores, known as the Flynn effect, has reversed in recent years, which he attributed in part to the widespread expansion of classroom technology. He asserted that while online platforms can increase student engagement, engagement does not necessarily translate into meaningful learning, and he outlined three primary shortcomings of technology-based education. First, Horvath contended that screen-based reading weakens spatial memory and encourages skimming rather than deep comprehension. Second, he argued that digital interfaces disrupt the biological and empathetic interactions between students and teachers that support effective learning. Third, he maintained that technology reduces "friction," which he described as the productive struggle necessary for long-term learning and retention. Although he acknowledged that certain tools, such as targeted tutoring systems and remediation programs, show promise, Horvath emphasized that most research does not demonstrate consistent, large-scale learning gains from classroom technology. As a policy response, Horvath proposed a temporary moratorium on personal devices in K–12 classrooms, along with technology audits and independent evaluations before any reintegration. He concluded that, despite the practical challenges of such reforms, parents and policymakers should carefully reconsider whether classroom technology meaningfully improves student learning outcomes before continuing to expand its use.

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4. New Publications

The State of Educational Opportunity in America: A 50-State Survey of 23,000 Parents

50CAN (February 2026)

The "State of Educational Opportunity in America: A Survey of 23,000 Parents" is the second edition of a 50-state study from 50CAN and Edge Research. The survey report offers an

unprecedented, state-by-state examination of the current education landscape and what is important to parents.

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5. In the News

Exclusive: Parents Favor Free Tutoring, Summer Camp, Open Enrollment … Annual Testing? Not So Much
The 74 Million (February 19, 2026)

Groups Seek Guidance on Education Credit in GOP Law
Bloomberg Government (February 18, 2026)

Parents Are Opting Kids Out Of School Laptops, Returning Them To Pen And Paper
NBC News (February 16, 2026)

Policymakers are Looking to Cut Down Kids' Screen Time. Ed Tech Could Be Included in That.
Ed Week | Market Brief (February 13, 2026)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Monday, February 23, 2026

Event: Supporting STEM Teachers: Insights from Noyce
Subject: The Brookings Institution will hold a discussion on "Supporting STEM Teachers: Insights from the Noyce Program."
Participants: Anna Petersen, director of STEM, Virginia Department of Education; Michael Hansen, senior fellow, Brown Center on Education Policy; Li Feng, professor of economics, Texas State University's Department of Finance and Economics; and Jhosse Prado Guerrero, teacher, Cesar Chavez Middle School's Math Department.
Time and Location: 2:00 p.m.; Brookings, 1775 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Falk Auditorium, Washington, D.C.
Contact: Register **here.**

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Hearing: House Small Business on Career and Technical Education
Subject: The House Small Business Committee will hold a hearing on "Career and Technical Education: Developing the Future of Main Street Success."
Witnesses: Zach Boren, vice president, Apprenticeships for America; Keith Gunuskey, superintendent of schools, Wallenpaupack Area School District; Nikki Nix, chief academic officer, Godley Independent School District; and Mike Gibson, executive vice president, Associated General Contractors of Kansas.
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Contact: Watch online **here.**

Hearing: House Ed and Workforce Subcommittee on Innovative Approaches to Paid Leave

Subject: The House Education and the Workforce - Workforce Protections Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Balancing Careers and Care: Examining Innovative Approaches to Paid Leave."
Witnesses: Julia Squire, vice president of policy and general counsel, National Association of State Workforce Agencies; Adrienne Schweer, fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center; and Greta Kessler, vice president of employee health and benefits, Marsh McLennan Agency, MD.
Time: 10:15 a.m.
Contact: Watch online **here.**

Hearing: House Ed and Workforce Subcommittee on Teaching in the AI Age

Subject: The House Education and the Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Building an AI-Ready America: Teaching in the AI Age."
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Contact: Watch online **here.**

Webinar: Future of AI and CS in K-8 Classrooms

Subject: LEGO Education and Code.Org will hold a webinar on what's next for computer science (CS) and AI in K-8 classrooms and how your school or district can keep pace.
Participants: Andrew Sliwinski, head of product experience, LEGO® Education; and Karim Meghji, chief product officer, Code.org.
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Contact: Register **here.**

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Markup: Senate HELP Committee Markup of Bills

Subject: The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will hold a markup of S. 1602, the "Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Education Act"; S. 1558, the "Understanding the True Cost of College Act of 2025"; S. 3747, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to recognize students who have completed secondary school education in a home school setting as high school graduates; and others.
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Contact: Watch online **here.**

Event: Building Clearer Pathways to Good Work

Subject: The Brookings Institution will hold an event on "From skills to jobs: Building clearer pathways to good work," focusing on "how education systems and labor market institutions can evolve to better support students and workers at every stage."
Participants: Rahm Emanuel, former Chicago Mayor; Martha Ross, senior fellow, Brookings; Marcela Escobari, senior fellow, Brookings; and Cecilia Rouse, president, Brookings.
Time and Location: 10:30 a.m.; Brookings, 1775 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Falk Auditorium, Washington, D.C.
Contact: Register **here.**

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7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor:

- Potential consideration of **H.R. 7147** Making further consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes (DHS Appropriations)

House Floor:

- **H.R. 4758** – Homeowner Energy Freedom Act *(Sponsored by Rep. Goldman (TX) / Energy and Commerce Committee)*
- **H.R. 4626** – Home Appliance Protection and Affordability Act *(Sponsored by Rep. Allen / Energy and Commerce Committee)*
- **Procedural Motion Relating to H. Con. Res. 38 –** Directing the President pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution to remove United States Armed Forces from unauthorized hostilities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. *(Sponsored by Rep. Massie / Foreign Affairs Committee)*

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8. 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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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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