# The Consortium of State School Boards Associations Weekly Education Report

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Jared Solomon, Editor
jsolomon@bosepublicaffairs.com

Della Cronin, Editor
dcronin@bosepublicaffairs.com

Bob Moran, Editor
rmoran@bosepublicaffairs.com

Sarah Lamson, Deputy Editor
slamson@bosepublicaffairs.com

*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. **COSSBA Advocacy**
   - **COSSBA Expresses FY27 Education Funding Bill Concerns**: On June 9, COSSBA sent a letter to members of the U.S. House of Representatives expressing concerns about proposed education funding reductions in the Fiscal Year 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill.

2. **News, Publications, & Updates on COSSBA Policy Priorities**
   - **School Boards**
     - **Brookings Examines Past, Present, Future Of America's School Boards:** On Monday, COSSBA's Executive Director Kathy McFarland joined a discussion on the evolving role of America's school boards, bringing together practitioners and researchers to examine governance challenges, community engagement, and the future of local education leadership.
   - **Funding**
     - **House Appropriators Advance FY27 Education Department Funding:** The House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday approved the Fiscal Year 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill on a 34–28 vote, advancing

legislation that would provide $189.3 billion in discretionary funding, approximately $5.6 billion (3 percent) below the FY2026 enacted level.

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

4. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
   - **ALI Hosts Congressional Briefing on Career-Connected Learning:** On Tuesday, the Alliance for Learning Innovation hosted its third annual bipartisan congressional briefing, drawing representatives from more than 140 institutions to examine how education research and development can support high-quality career-connected learning.
   - **House Education Committee Examines K-12 District Policies:** On Wednesday, the House Committee on Education & the Workforce held an oversight hearing examining local school district policies related to parental involvement, student privacy, and student well-being.
   - **NAEP Releases 9-13 Year Old Long-Term Assessment Results:** On Wednesday, the National Center for Education Statistics released the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress Long-Term Trend assessment results for 9- and 13-year-old students.

5. **New Publications**
   - **Leveraging Education R&D to Support High-Quality Career-Connected Learning: Federal Policy Recommendations**
     *Alliance for Learning Innovation (June 2026)*
     The Alliance for Learning Innovation put forward a set of policy recommendations for Congress and the Trump Administration. The federal government should have a clear research agenda focused on national priorities, with career-connected learning as one of them.

6. **In the News**
   - **Supreme After Years Of Declines, Young Students Show Gains In Reading And Math**
     *NPR (June 10, 2026)*
   - **Federal Agencies Propose Mandatory E-Verify Participation For Grant Recipients**
     *K-12 Dive (June 10, 2026)*
   - **Chairman Cassidy, Hassan, Colleagues Introduce Historic Bill to Improve Child Literacy**
     *U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee (June 8, 2026)*
   - **Trump's $100K Fee For H-1B Visas Struck Down**
     *Higher Ed Dive (June 8, 2026)*
   - **School Board Culture War Conflicts Are Rare—And Declining**
     *District Administration (June 8, 2026)*
   - **Chairman Walberg Hosts Student Winners of Presidential AI Challenge on Capitol Hill**
     *U.S. House Committee on Education and Workforce (June 8, 2026)*

- **‘A Sea Change’: Public School Supporters See Potential in New Tax Credit**
  *The 74 Million (June 10, 2026)*
- **U.S. Department of Education Announces Connecting Talent to Opportunity Challenge Semifinalists**
  *U.S. Department of Education (June 8, 2026)*
- **Treasury Previews Education Freedom Tax Credit Guidance**
  *U.S. Department of Treasury (June 10, 2026)*

7. **Weekly Calendar - What’s coming up this week?**
   - **How to Protect Kids from Chatbots without Bans:** The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation will hold a virtual discussion on “How to Protect Kids From Chatbots Without Bans.”
     *Tuesday at 12pm ET*
   - **Senate HELP Subcommittee on Education & The American Family** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Subcommittee on Education & the American Family will hold a hearing on “The Future of K-12 Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.”
     *Tuesday at 2pm ET*
   - **Recess: Children’s Health, Education Policy, and the Cost of Modern Schooling**: The Heritage Foundation will hold a discussion on “The Death of Recess: Children's Health, Education Policy, and the Cost of Modern Schooling.”
     *Thursday at 10:30am ET*

8. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**
   - **Senate floor:** Consideration of nominations
   - **House floor**: In recess.

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

10. **About BPAG**

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## 1. COSSBA Advocacy Actions

### COSSBA EXPRESSES FY27 EDUCATION FUNDING BILL CONCERNS

On June 9, COSSBA sent a letter to members of the U.S. House of Representatives expressing concerns about proposed education funding reductions in the Fiscal Year 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill. COSSBA highlighted three key issues: a nearly $2 billion reduction in Title I funding for schools serving large numbers of low-income students, the elimination of Title II-A grants that support educator recruitment and professional development, and level funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which would fail to keep pace with rising special education costs. COSSBA emphasized that these long-standing bipartisan programs provide critical support to students, educators, and local school districts, particularly as schools continue to address educator shortages, increasing student needs, and learning recovery efforts. The organization urged Congress to reject the proposed cuts and

advance bipartisan education funding priorities that strengthen public schools and support student success.

## 2. COSSBA Policy Priorities

### SCHOOL BOARDS

#### BROOKINGS EXAMINES PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE OF AMERICA'S SCHOOL BOARDS

On Monday, the Brookings Institution hosted a discussion on the evolving role of America's school boards, bringing together practitioners and researchers to examine governance challenges, community engagement, and the future of local education leadership. Kathy McFarland, Executive Director of COSSBA and Verjeana McCotter-Jacobs, Executive Director National School Boards Association reflected on how the events of 2020 thrust school boards into highly charged national debates, often overshadowing their fundamentally local governance role. Both speakers noted that while polarization and burnout have presented significant challenges, a cultural shift is underway, with board members recommitting to their governance responsibilities and a growing number of candidates running on platforms focused on student achievement and academic success rather than single-issue or politically driven agendas. Speakers emphasized that local governance is most effective when centered on community needs, cautioning against state-level interference that undermines local decision-making while acknowledging the importance of appropriate state accountability measures. Researchers on the panel provided additional data and context, noting that superintendent and school board turnover has increased from 14 percent to 17 percent since 2020. They also argued that there is no evidence that privatization of K–12 education improves student outcomes. Panelists encouraged board members to prioritize active listening as a tool for diffusing tensions and strengthening community relationships. At the same time, they cautioned against applying a business productivity framework to education, arguing that doing so has contributed to declining academic outcomes. Researchers further highlighted that only about 25 percent of community members typically participate in public hearings, calling on institutions to redesign board meetings to make them more inclusive and accessible to the broader public. Overall, the discussion reinforced that while school boards face mounting pressures from national politics and declining public trust, refocusing on local needs, inclusive governance, and student outcomes remains essential to their long-term effectiveness.

### FUNDING

#### HOUSE APPROPRIATORS ADVANCE FY27 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FUNDING

The House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill on a 34–28 vote, advancing legislation that would provide $189.3 billion in discretionary funding, approximately $5.6 billion (3 percent) below the FY 2026 enacted level. Committee Republicans characterized the measure as a realignment of federal education policy toward greater state and local control while reducing or consolidating a number of federal programs. The bill includes a $50 increase in the maximum Pell Grant award, bringing the maximum award to $7,445, and proposes addressing the program's long-term funding shortfall through changes to federal student loan programs. During the 12-hour markup, Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) argued the bill "supports the next generation of medical discoveries" and "upholds educational opportunity" while restoring accountability by eliminating duplicative programs and reducing waste. In contrast, Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) criticized the legislation as part of a broader effort to reduce federal investments in education and workforce programs, warning that the bill would undermine

support for students, families, and vulnerable populations. Debate largely centered on the proposed reductions to education and social service programs, with Democrats expressing concern about the impact on students, schools, and vulnerable populations, while Republicans argued the bill restores accountability, reduces federal overreach, and focuses resources on core priorities. For more details see the Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up.

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## 3. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Congress made uneven progress on Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 appropriations last week, with House appropriators advancing one of their most closely watched spending measures while Senate appropriators remained stuck in negotiations over overall spending levels.

The biggest development came in the House Appropriations Committee, where lawmakers approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) appropriations bill following a marathon markup that stretched roughly 12 hours and featured dozens of amendments and lengthy partisan debate over education, workforce, health care, and social policy issues. The committee ultimately approved the bill on a 34-28 vote.

Subcommittee Chairman Robert Aderholt (R-AL) argued that the legislation strikes an appropriate balance between fiscal restraint and continued federal investment in core priorities. Aderholt said the bill “prioritizes the core mission of the Appropriations Committee” while maintaining key investments in research, schools, and public health programs.

Democrats strongly disagreed, arguing that the bill's spending reductions would undermine federal education, workforce development, and health programs. Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and other Democrats repeatedly criticized the measure during the markup, contending that it reflects administration proposals to shrink the federal role in education and workforce training. Debate over funding reductions and policy riders consumed much of the committee's 12-hour session.

The House's progress stands in contrast to the Senate, where appropriators have yet to begin moving most FY 2027 spending bills. Senators from both parties continue negotiating overall discretionary spending allocations, and disagreements over topline funding levels have delayed committee action. As a result, Senate appropriators have not yet released their version of the LHHS bill and appear unlikely to move quickly until broader spending agreements are reached.

Outside the appropriations process, Congress completed action on a second budget reconciliation package last week. The House narrowly approved the measure after the Senate acted earlier, and President Trump subsequently signed it into law. The legislation provides roughly $70 billion in additional funding for immigration enforcement and border-security activities, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection operations through the remainder of the president's term.

Republicans described the measure as essential to border security. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) defended the legislation as necessary to strengthen immigration enforcement, while House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) and other Democrats criticized both the policy and the use of reconciliation to enact it without bipartisan support.

Attention is already turning to the possibility of a third reconciliation bill. Some House conservatives and Republican policy leaders have begun discussing a "Reconciliation 3.0" package focused on affordability, energy, health care costs, and other economic issues. Representative August Pfluger (R-TX) has publicly advocated for another reconciliation effort, arguing that Republicans should continue pursuing major policy initiatives through the budget process.

Whether a third reconciliation bill ultimately materializes remains uncertain. Republicans have shown a willingness to use reconciliation repeatedly, but the procedural complexity, limited legislative calendar, and competing demands of the annual appropriations process could make another package difficult to assemble. At this point, discussions remain preliminary and no formal proposal has emerged.

Looking ahead, House appropriators are expected to continue marking up additional FY 2027 spending bills, while Senate leaders will continue trying to resolve their dispute over topline spending levels. Those negotiations will determine whether the Senate can begin moving its own appropriations measures before the August recess.

## How does this impact State School Board Associations?

Education provisions in the FY27 spending bill were among the most heavily debated elements of the bill. The legislation would reduce overall Department of Education funding by roughly $8 billion compared with current levels, while eliminating or reducing several programs that Republican members of Congress characterize as lower priorities. COSSBA was closely watching and opposed to the $2 billion cut to Title I funding for schools with large numbers of low income students and the elimination of Title II-A grants for teacher support and professional development. The legislation also essentially level funded IDEA investments. COSSBA's letter to House Appropriators can be read here.

Supporters highlighted a modest increase for Career and Technical Education programs authorized under the Perkins Act and emphasized efforts to provide states with greater flexibility. Opponents focused on proposed eliminations of adult education funding and cuts to teacher development and student-aid programs, arguing that the changes would disproportionately affect disadvantaged students and communities.

The markup also featured broader ideological disputes over federal education policy, diversity and equity initiatives, workforce training, and the proper scope of federal involvement in local schools. While Republicans argued that the bill reins in spending and refocuses federal programs on core functions, Democrats warned that the measure would weaken educational opportunity and workforce preparation.

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## 4. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

### ALI HOSTS CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING ON CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING

On Tuesday, the Alliance for Learning Innovation (ALI) hosted its third annual bipartisan congressional briefing, drawing representatives from more than 140 institutions to examine how education research and development can support high-quality career-connected learning. Opening

remarks framed the discussion around preparing students for a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, raising the question of whether current education systems are adequately equipping students for the future. ALI also released its federal policy recommendations during the briefing, reflecting the organization's commitment to advancing these efforts at the national level. The first panel focused on expanding the evidence base for effective implementation, identifying three key pillars of successful career-connected learning: work-based learning, career navigation, and partnerships that span high school, higher education, and the workforce. Speakers emphasized that successful programs must be scalable, affordable, and practical, while stressing the importance of building coherent state-level systems supported by intentional and transparent funding strategies. The second panel challenged traditional approaches to education, citing a 27 percent decline in student optimism about the future, as measured by Gallup, and arguing that a lack of foundational literacy creates barriers that are difficult to overcome. Panelists emphasized that preparing students is not a choice between college and career, but rather a "both-and" proposition. State-level examples highlighted innovative approaches to career-connected learning. Speakers from Arkansas discussed efforts to expand career pathways and ensure students pursuing those pathways receive equal academic recognition, while speakers from Ohio shared progress in weighted career and technical education funding, soft skills development, career planning, and tracking student outcomes after high school. Overall, speakers agreed that exposure, supportive policy, and skills development are the foundational ingredients needed to prepare students for future opportunities. ALI concluded the briefing by reaffirming its commitment to closing the relevance gap between what students learn and the skills demanded by today's workforce.

## HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE EXAMINES K–12 DISTRICT POLICIES

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Education & the Workforce held an oversight hearing examining local school district policies related to parental involvement, student privacy, and student well-being. The witness panel featured Chicago Public Schools CEO Dr. Macquline King, Loudoun County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Aaron Spence, San Francisco Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Maria Su, and Jonathan Smith, Director of Education and Federal Strategic Advocacy at the National Center for Youth Law. The testifying school administrators presented their respective district initiatives as compliance-based frameworks designed to increase graduation rates, stabilize local operations, and ensure safe, supportive learning environments aligned with state standards and federal regulations. Republican members focused their questioning on expanding parental notification requirements, protecting student privacy in sex-segregated facilities, and ensuring religious liberty protections for educators. They argued that certain district-level gender identity guidelines and policies related to minors' healthcare decisions compromise parental authority and detract from core academic priorities. Democratic members expressed concern that an emphasis on social and ideological debates distracts from addressing declining national math and reading performance, resolving classroom resource shortages, and supporting public school infrastructure. The scope of parental rights emerged as a primary point of discussion, with committee members and witnesses examining the balance between a family's right to guide their child's education and a school district's obligation to maintain equitable learning environments free from discrimination and harassment. Additional discussion focused on operational backlogs within the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), funding stability for Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the implementation of age-

appropriate instruction, and the broader intersection of federal civil rights laws and local educational governance. A comprehensive summary prepared by BPAG is available here.

### NAEP RELEASES 9-13 YEAR OLD LONG-TERM TREND ASSESSMENT RESULTS

On Wednesday, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trend (LTT) assessment results for 9- and 13-year-old students. This national snapshot, which is intended to monitor the academic performance of students in reading and mathematics over an extended period of time, demonstrated a student peak in the early 2010s and a decline following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the new results show encouraging signs of recovery among younger students, with average scores for 9-year-olds increasing by four points in both reading and mathematics between 2022 and 2025. 9-year-olds, who were in preschool when the pandemic hit, are now caught up to where 9-year-olds were immediately before the pandemic in reading. Conversely, achievement among 13-year-olds remained largely unchanged, with no statistically significant improvement in either subject since the last assessment. Critical years for literacy and math skills in the second and third grades were disrupted for these students by school closures, and their scores demonstrate the continued effects of pandemic learning loss. Scores in reading remain below where they were at the start of the pandemic on average, and the report also found that a shrinking number of students in both age groups report reading for pleasure. Researchers are now working to understand the changes that made the difference for younger students compared with previous years. Matthew Soldner, acting commissioner of the NCES, characterized the results as "an optimistic release." A copy of the report can be found here.

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## 5. New Publications

**Leveraging Education R&D to Support High-Quality Career-Connected Learning: Federal Policy Recommendations**

*Alliance for Learning Innovation (June 2026)*

The Alliance for Learning Innovation put forward a set of policy recommendations for Congress and the Trump Administration. The federal government should have a clear research agenda focused on national priorities, with career-connected learning as one of them.

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## 6. In the News

**After Years Of Declines, Young Students Show Gains In Reading And Math**

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*U.S. Department of Treasury (June 10, 2026)*

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## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

### 7. Weekly Calendar

### Tuesday, June 16, 2026

**Webinar: How to Protect Kids from Chatbots without Bans**
**Subject:** The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation will hold a virtual discussion on "How to Protect Kids From Chatbots Without Bans."
**Participants:** Juan Londono, policy analyst, Cato Institute; Becca Branum, deputy director, Center for Democracy's Free Expression Project; Justine Cluck, policy analyst, Future of Privacy Forum; and Alex Ambrose, policy analyst, ITIF.
**Time:** 12:00 p.m.
**Contact:** Register **here.**

**Hearing: Senate HELP Subcommittee on Education & the American Family**
**Subject:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Subcommittee on Education & the American Family will hold a hearing on "The Future of K-12 Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence."
**Witnesses:** Joshua Jones, CEO, QuantHub; Erin Mote, CEO, InnovateEDU; and Cindy Marten, secretary of education, Delaware Department of Education.
**Time and Location**: 2:00 p.m.; 430 Dirksen SOB.
**Contact:** Live stream available **here.**

### Thursday, June 18, 2026

**Webinar: Recess: Children's Health, Education Policy, and the Cost of Modern Schooling**
**Subject:** The Heritage Foundation will hold a discussion on "The Death of Recess: Children's Health, Education Policy, and the Cost of Modern Schooling."
**Participants:** Corey DeAngelis, research fellow, Center for Education Policy, Heritage Foundation; and Spencer Taylor, director, "The Death of Recess."

**Time:** 10:30 a.m.
**Contact:** Register **here.**

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## 8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

**Senate Floor**
Consideration of nominations

**House Floor**
In recess

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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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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

For more information, please visit our website.

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