The Consortium of State School Boards Associations
Weekly Education Report

JULY 6, 2026

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. **With Congress on recess and the July 4th Holiday break, the Education Report will next publish again on July 20th.**

Please use the bookmarks below to navigate to your area of interest:

1. **News, Publications, & Updates on COSSBA Policy Priorities**
   - **Teacher Recruitment and Retention**
     - **International Teachers Needed in U.S. Classrooms Threatened by Visa Delays, Fees**
       The 74 Million (June 17, 2026)
       Some foreign-born educators have had to leave the classroom already. Others might never arrive in the U.S. if Trump's $100,000 H-1B visa fee stands even after being struck down by a federal judge.

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

3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
   - **House Passes Kids Act, Advancing Online Safety, AI Chatbot Protections**: On Monday, the House of Representatives passed the bipartisan Kids Internet and Digital Safety (KIDS) Act by a vote of 267-117, advancing a broad legislative package that would establish new federal requirements for online platforms, AI chatbot providers, gaming services, messaging applications, and data brokers to better protect children and teenagers online.
   - **Brookings on AI and the Future of Teaching and Learning:** On Monday, Brookings held a conversation on AI and schooling highlighted both rising AI use

and growing unease among families. AI usage spikes when schools are in session, yet many parents say technology and screens have made parenting more difficult and left them too anxious to effectively support their children.

- **Judges Block Trump's Public Service Loan Forgiveness Overhaul:** Two federal judges on Tuesday have blocked the Trump administration's overhaul of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, preventing new eligibility restrictions from taking effect on July 1, 2026.
- **House Appropriations Holds OMB Oversight Hearing with Vought:** On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held an oversight hearing with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Russ Vought focusing on OMB's fiscal year 2027 budget request, its role in implementing the President's agenda, and sweeping proposed changes to federal grant rules.
- **Senate Democrats Blast ED's Agency Reorganization:** On Wednesday, Senate Democrats escalated their opposition to the Trump administration's efforts to shift key Education Department responsibilities to other federal agencies, arguing the move unlawfully bypasses Congress and undermines protections for students.

4. New Publications

- **Please Excuse My Child: Unexcused Absences in Student Attendance and Achievement**
  American Enterprise Institute (June 2026)
  The findings in this new report show that systems for recording attendance meaningfully distinguish between the two types of absences, which may reflect different patterns of attendance behavior. The concentration of unexcused absences among the most absent students, their spike around weekends, and their spring rise are consistent with these absences being driven by the choices of students and families, beyond illness or circumstance.

5. In the News

- **Ed Dept Addresses 'Misconceptions' About Special Education Outsourcing**
  K-12 Dive (June 29, 2026)
- **Supreme Court Says Schools Can Separate Athletics Based On 'Biological Sex'**
  K-12 Dive (June 30, 2026)
- **Supreme Court Rejects Trump's Attempt to End Birthright Citizenship**
  The 74 (June 30, 2026)

6. Weekly Calendar – Future Events

- **Inside the FCC's E-Rate Proposal**: The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition will hold a webinar explaining the FCC's draft proposal on E-Rate, including questions about screen time, rural and urban funding, and the future of the program, and will walk attendees through how to file a comment with the FCC.
  July 16 at 2pm ET

7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

- The House and Senate are in recess.

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

9. **About BPAG**

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS NEEDED IN U.S. CLASSROOMS THREATENED BY VISA DELAYS, FEES

Visa renewal delays, proposed $100,000 H-1B visa fees, and broader immigration restrictions are threatening schools' ability to recruit and retain international teachers who fill critical staffing shortages, particularly in high-need and rural districts, raising concerns about greater teacher turnover and worsening classroom vacancies. A federal judge in June struck down the fee as an unauthorized tax, but the Trump administration has said they will appeal, meaning this issue could be headed to the Supreme Court. Read more by *The 74 Million* here.

Back to top

2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Activity on Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 appropriations slowed considerably on Capitol Hill last week. The Senate was in recess, leaving appropriators unable to make progress on bipartisan negotiations over fiscal year spending levels. Meanwhile, although the House was in session for part of the week, appropriations quickly took a back seat to broader legislative challenges, and lawmakers ultimately adjourned early after Republican leaders suffered a procedural defeat on the House floor.

The House had hoped to spend the week considering the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), but those plans unraveled when Republican leaders failed to secure enough votes to adopt the rule governing floor debate on the legislation. Several conservative Republicans joined Democrats in opposing the rule over disagreements involving unrelated legislative priorities and spending issues, preventing the House from proceeding not only with the defense authorization bill but also with other legislation scheduled for consideration. Rather than remain in Washington with no path forward, House leaders canceled the remainder of the week's votes and sent lawmakers home early for the July 4 recess.

The week's most significant appropriations-related event was a House Appropriations Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee oversight hearing featuring Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Russ Vought. The hearing offered members an opportunity to question Vought about the Administration's FY 2027 budget request and OMB's increasingly influential role in carrying out the President's policy agenda.

Members questioned Vought extensively about OMB's proposed revisions to the Uniform Guidance governing federal financial assistance. Critics expressed concern that the proposal could give political appointees greater influence over federal grant awards, including grants supporting

education and scientific research, while Vought defended the changes as necessary to ensure that federal funding aligns with presidential priorities and improves accountability for taxpayer dollars.

Congress will be in recess until July 13. When lawmakers return, appropriators hope to restart work on FY 2027 spending bills before the August recess. That will require Senate appropriators to reach a bipartisan agreement on overall discretionary spending levels so committee markups can resume, while House leaders must find a way to move the appropriations bills that have already cleared committee to the House floor. With fewer than three months remaining before the October 1 start of the new fiscal year, lawmakers continue to face an increasingly compressed timeline for completing the annual appropriations process, making another short-term continuing resolution appear increasingly likely unless negotiations accelerate significantly later this month.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

Education policy featured prominently during portions of the Vought hearing. Democratic lawmakers criticized the Administration's proposal to significantly reduce funding for the Department of Education and questioned OMB's support for efforts to dramatically shrink the agency. Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), the Ranking Member of the full Appropriations Committee, argued that the Administration's budget would "abandon students, families, and educators" by eliminating or reducing longstanding education investments, while other Democrats questioned how the Administration would continue to fulfill its statutory responsibilities under federal education laws with substantially fewer resources.

Vought defended the Administration's approach, arguing that the federal government has expanded well beyond its appropriate role in education policy. He maintained that many education decisions should be made by states and local communities rather than Washington and said the President's budget reflects an effort to focus federal resources on what the Administration considers the federal government's core responsibilities while reducing spending elsewhere. He also reiterated the Administration's support for ultimately eliminating the Department of Education and transferring many of its responsibilities to other federal agencies or returning them to the states, while acknowledging that Congress would have to approve any such reorganization.

Back to top.

3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

HOUSE PASSES KIDS ACT, ADVANCING ONLINE SAFETY, AI CHATBOT PROTECTIONS

On Monday, the House of Representatives passed the bipartisan Kids Internet and Digital Safety (KIDS) Act by a vote of 267-117, advancing a broad legislative package that would establish new federal requirements for online platforms, AI chatbot providers, gaming services, messaging applications, and data brokers to better protect children and teenagers online. The legislation combines provisions from several previously introduced bills, including the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA), COPPA 2.0, the SAFE Bots Act, and other youth online privacy and safety measures, making it one of Congress's most comprehensive efforts to regulate children's online experiences. Among its key provisions, the KIDS Act would expand federal privacy protections to cover teenagers, limit targeted advertising to minors, require stronger parental controls and age-appropriate default settings, impose new data governance and retention requirements, and establish safeguards for AI chatbots, including disclosures that users are interacting with artificial intelligence rather than a human, reminders to take breaks, and referrals to mental health resources

during conversations involving self-harm or other harmful topics. The legislation also adopts a narrower approach to federal preemption than earlier drafts, preserving states' ability to enact stronger child safety protections in many circumstances. The bill now moves to the Senate, where lawmakers are expected to negotiate differences between the House package and the Senate's previously approved version of KOSA, particularly regarding the inclusion of a broader "duty of care" standard for online platforms. While the House measure received broad bipartisan support, Senate leaders and child safety advocates have indicated they will continue pushing for stronger platform accountability provisions before sending a final package to the President.

BROOKINGS ON AI AND THE FUTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

On Monday, Brookings held a conversation on AI and schooling highlighted both rising AI use and growing unease among families. AI usage spikes when schools are in session, yet many parents say technology and screens have made parenting more difficult and left them too anxious to effectively support their children. Speakers warned that the growing use of technology in the classroom may be stunting cognitive development by offloading learning to generative AI and other digital tools. One alarming example cited was that an estimated 40–50% of teens struggle to focus in class because of device distractions. The discussion urged reducing technology-based learning from today's estimated 80% of students' instructional time to closer to 20%, while using AI more strategically to enhance "cognitive activity" rather than create distractions. That means deploying tools that quietly assist teachers with real-time feedback and personalized instruction, rather than relying on student-facing chatbots. Although China was cited as making extensive use of AI in education, its approach emphasizes making classroom AI "present but not visible," giving teachers access to data that helps personalize instruction without requiring students to spend more time in front of screens. Panelists argued that this teacher-centered use of AI is more beneficial for students than the current model of widespread, largely unrestricted use of generative AI and internet-based technologies.

JUDGES BLOCK TRUMP'S PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS OVERHAUL

Two federal judges on Tuesday have blocked the administration's overhaul of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, preventing new eligibility restrictions from taking effect on July 1, 2026. The rulings, issued by federal district courts in Massachusetts and Washington, D.C., found that the U.S. Department of Education (ED) exceeded its statutory authority and, in one case, likely violated the First Amendment by conditioning loan forgiveness eligibility on the activities or viewpoints of borrowers' employers. The challenged rule, issued pursuant to President Trump's executive order on "Restoring Public Service Loan Forgiveness," would have allowed ED to deny PSLF eligibility to employees of organizations determined to have a "substantial illegal purpose," including certain nonprofits involved in immigration services, gender-affirming care, or other activities identified by the Administration. Plaintiffs, including Democratic-led states and nonprofit organizations, argued the rule improperly politicized a longstanding student loan forgiveness program established by Congress in 2007. The courts concluded that ED lacked congressional authorization to redefine qualifying public service employers in this manner and criticized the rule's vague standards and potential chilling effect on

constitutionally protected speech. The existing PSLF eligibility rules remain in effect while litigation proceeds. ED has indicated it is reviewing the decisions and considering its next steps.

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS HOLDS OMB OVERSIGHT HEARING WITH VOUGHT

On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held an oversight hearing with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Russ Vought focusing on OMB's fiscal year 2027 budget request, its role in implementing the President's agenda, and sweeping proposed changes to federal grant rules. Vought defended the administration's fiscal approach, citing the Working Families Tax Cut and H.R. 1 ("One Big Beautiful Bill") as central to reducing non-defense spending while increasing investments in defense, border security, and public safety. He also stated that OMB's budget growth largely reflects increased rent, IT, and security costs rather than staffing increases. Members from both parties questioned Vought about a late-May OMB proposal to revise the Uniform Guidance for federal grants, which governs how federal grants are reviewed and awarded. The proposal would require senior political appointees to review discretionary grant awards before they are issued, clarify that peer review is advisory rather than determinative, and expand agencies' authority to terminate grants midstream. Democrats, including Ranking Member Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), warned that the rule could politicize award decisions at research and health agencies while disadvantaging smaller and rural recipients. Vought argued that the proposal is a necessary extension of the Administration's executive order on fraud and grant oversight and emphasized that it remains subject to public comment. Additional exchanges addressed funding for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), improper payments, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) enforcement levels, and the new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), highlighting broader tensions over impoundment, pocket rescissions, and the balance between fiscal control and program continuity. A comprehensive summary prepared by BPAG is here.

SENATE DEMOCRATS BLAST ED'S AGENCY REORGANIZATION

On Wednesday, Senate Democrats escalated their opposition to the Trump administration's efforts to shift key Education Department responsibilities to other federal agencies, arguing the move unlawfully bypasses Congress and undermines protections for students. In a letter led by Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA), Appropriations Subcommittee Ranking Member Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Senate education committee Ranking Member Bernie Sanders (I-VT), the entire Senate Democratic caucus criticized new interagency agreements transferring special education and civil rights functions outside the Department of Education. The lawmakers argued the administration is prioritizing its goal of dismantling the department over faithfully executing federal education law and improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The reorganization has also drawn bipartisan concern. Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) joined Senate education committee Chair Bill Cassidy (R-LA) in opposing the transfer of special education responsibilities to the Department of Health and Human Services. Collins warned that moving these functions risks treating disability primarily as a medical issue rather than ensuring students receive equal access to public education. Cassidy has previously pledged to work with Tim Kaine (D-VA) on legislation to block the transfer. The Trump administration defended the changes, arguing the interagency agreements fulfill the President's goal of reducing the federal bureaucracy while maintaining federal oversight. Education Department officials said the agreements allow the administration to carry out its

reorganization without disrupting statutory responsibilities, while the Department of Health and Human Services said the agencies are working together to reduce administrative burdens and improve education and employment outcomes for students with disabilities. Congressional approval would still be required to formally eliminate the Department of Education, making a complete shutdown unlikely under the current Senate landscape.

Back to top.

4. New Publications

Please Excuse My Child: Unexcused Absences in Student Attendance and Achievement
American Enterprise Institute (June 2026)
The findings in this report show that systems for recording attendance meaningfully distinguish between the two types of absences, which may reflect different patterns of attendance behavior. The concentration of unexcused absences among the most absent students, their spike around weekends, and their spring rise are consistent with these absences being driven by the choices of students and families, beyond illness or circumstance.

Back to top.

5. In the News

Ed Dept addresses 'misconceptions' about special education outsourcing
K-12 Dive (June 29, 2026)

Supreme Court says schools can separate athletics based on 'biological sex'
K-12 Dive (June 30, 2026)

Supreme Court Rejects Trump's Attempt to End Birthright Citizenship
The 74 (June 30, 2026)

Back to top.

6. Future Hearings and Events

Thursday, July 16, 2026

Webinar: Inside the FCC's E-Rate Proposal
Subject: The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition will hold a webinar explaining the FCC's draft proposal on E-Rate, including questions about screen time, rural and urban funding, and the future of the program, and will walk attendees through how to file a comment with the FCC.
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Contact: Register **here.**

Back to top.

7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

The House and Senate are in recess.

Back to top.

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

Back to top.

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.

. . .

This publication contains links to Internet sites for the convenience of World Wide Web users. Bose is not responsible for the availability or content of these external sites, nor does Bose endorse, warrant or guarantee the information, services, or products described or offered at these other Internet sites. Copyright 2022. Bose Public Affairs Group. Redistribution of this memorandum or its content outside the immediate organization of the intended recipient without the express prior permission of Bose Public Affairs Group is prohibited. Readers are encouraged to send comments about this publication to dcronin@bosepublicaffairs.com.