



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

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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**
    - **Senate Broadband Subcommittee Examines Future of Spectrum Policy:** On August 2, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband held a hearing titled, “The Future of Spectrum.” The hearing examined commercial spectrum challenges across the broadband industry, as well as government, technology, policy, and politics. The Emergency Connectivity Fund and access to reliable Wi-Fi for children was briefly discussed, as well as increasing provider competition through net neutrality.
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
  - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
  - **Biden Administration Actions Address Mental Health Crisis in Schools:** On July 29, the Biden-Harris Administration announced two new actions to strengthen school-based mental health services and address the youth mental health crisis through several grant programs.
  - **New Data Highlights Afterschool Impact on Student Performance:** On August 4, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona released a statement on the National Center for Education Statistics’ (NCES) data showing student recovery throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

#### 4. New Publications

- **Pandemic Enrollment Fallout: School District enrollment Changes Across COVID-19 Response** (*American Enterprise Institute* - July 27, 2022)

This report examines the pandemic’s effect on overall public school enrollment through the 2021–22 school year and by district characteristics including instructional offerings.

#### 5. In the News

- **Researchers say cries of teacher shortages are overblown** (*The Hechinger Report* – August 8, 2022)
- **Remembering Jackie Walorski, a Quiet Force in Congress** (*Time* - August 4, 2022)
- **‘Never seen it this bad’: America faces catastrophic teacher shortage** (*The Washington Post* – August 4, 2022)
- **Simple fixes by Congress could help 250,000 homeless children with disabilities** (*The Hill* - August 2, 2022)
- **GOP now leads Democrats on the issue of education** (*The Washington Times* – August 1, 2022)

#### 6. About BPAG

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### 1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

#### **BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE**

#### **SENATE BROADBAND SUBCOMMITTEE EXAMINES FUTURE OF SPECTRUM POLICY**

On Tuesday, August 2, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband held a hearing titled, “The Future of Spectrum.” The hearing examined commercial spectrum challenges across the broadband industry, as well as government, technology, policy and politics. Witnesses included **Chris Lewis**, president and CEO of Public Knowledge; **Meredith Baker**, president and CEO of CTIA-The Wireless Association; **Andrew Von Ah**, director of physical infrastructure for the Government Accountability Office; and **Dr. Coleman Bazelon**, principal of The Brattle Group. During the hearing, Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) addressed the 12-17 million children that did not have access to reliable internet at home and pointed to the effort he **led** to fund \$7 billion dollars for an Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) “so that kids at home could have it.” Markey noted that the funding is starting to run out and asked Mr. Lewis to discuss whether certain revenues should be “dedicated to ensuring that we have a permanent ECF, so that no child, especially black, brown, immigrant children, in our country, is left behind.” Lewis, a former local school board member, voiced that the “homework gap” is real and responded that there's a number of sources of funding that can be used to continue the ECF. “We've talked about the airways for equity idea where auction revenue can be used and set aside for digital equity funds that can include some of the educational needs from the ECF,” Lewis said. He continued, “Of course, Congress could always appropriate more money to continue on that work. But certainly it's a critical part of making sure that everyone is connected and sees the benefits of high speed quality connectivity.” Senator Markey additionally commented on net neutrality and the importance of “ensuring that

we have a marketplace that allows every voice to be heard and every competitor to be able to compete.” An archived recording of the hearing can be found [here](#).

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## 2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

On Sunday, the Senate delayed their summer state work period or “recess” through the weekend to vote on the budget reconciliation legislation known as [the Inflation Reduction Act](#), since Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) [reached agreement](#) on the bill’s details. The Senate passed the \$700 billion-plus measure on Sunday afternoon, with Vice President Kamala Harris breaking the 50-50 tie. The House is expected back in Washington this Friday to pass that bill, then both chambers will be in recess until after Labor Day.

While President Biden continues to struggle with approval ratings, the enactment of the Inflation Reduction Act will arguably add to legislative accomplishments that include a bipartisan infrastructure package, [the CHIPS and Science Act](#), stimulus packages, and the confirmation of a Supreme Court justice. Democrats hope the accomplishments will help them on the campaign trail. Polls suggest the November midterm elections will be extremely close and midterm elections are historically difficult for the party in power at the time of the election.

While enactment of the Inflation Reduction Act is a win for Democrats, its passage could affect the ability to make progress on other legislation after the recess. Republicans were surprised that the deal came together and unsuccessfully attempted to stop enactment of the [CHIPS and Science Act](#) as a result. They aren’t likely to work with Democrats on much else during this Congress. Advocates hope that the Fiscal Year 2023 spending bills will be enacted before the end of the calendar year, but it is certain that the federal government will be funded by one or more continuing resolutions before they are finalized. That debate is months off. For now, Members, staff and advocates will enjoy the slower pace of August in Washington, DC

### How does this impact State School Board Associations?

With ultimate passage of the Democratic reconciliation package likely to come this week – this may be the last significant legislative success out of Congress until after the election. That means many education issues will likely be on the back burner until 2023 and the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. Passage of the reconciliation bill may also have an impact on the negotiation of final FY 2023 spending levels. Simply leaving funding at last year’s levels is often worse for the programs schools care about and some members of Congress may be significantly less likely to vote for any increased spending, even though the reconciliation bill contained nearly \$300 billion in deficit reduction.

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## 3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN SCHOOLS

On July 29, the Biden-Harris Administration announced two new actions to strengthen school-based mental health services and address the youth mental health crisis. First, the Administration plans to award the first of nearly \$300 million that President Biden secured through the FY 2022 bipartisan omnibus agreement to expand access to mental health services in schools through the

Mental Health Service Professional (MHSP) Demonstration Grant Program and the School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) Services Grant Program. These funding avenues can be used to expand mental health supports through fostering trauma-informed services in schools; expanding mental health services through full-service community schools; and responding to childhood trauma associated with community violence. Second, the Administration is encouraging Governors to invest more in school-based mental health services through several items, including improving conditions for student learning and expanding access to out-of-school programs. These actions build upon earlier investments and [announcements](#) designed to expand access to mental health services for youth and further President Biden's [Unity Agenda](#). Read more [here](#).

#### **NEW DATA HIGHLIGHTS AFTERSCHOOL IMPACT ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

On Thursday, August 4, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona released a statement on the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) data showing student recovery throughout the 2021-2022 school year. The NCES June 2022 data highlights an improvement in student performance and three-quarters of public schools offering summer learning and enrichment programs to help students catch up. "This data shows that through the efforts of this Administration, and with the strong partnership of school leaders, teachers, school staff, families, parents, and students across the country, students have made significant progress just over the course of the 2021-2022 school year," said Secretary Cardona. He continued, "This data shows that school districts across the country are using American Rescue Plan funds to expand access to summer learning and enrichment programs, hire more school counselors, meet the mental health needs of students and educators, accelerate student learning, provide high-quality tutoring, and more." The Department of Education's press release can be viewed [here](#).

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#### **4. New Publications**

##### **Pandemic Enrollment Fallout: School District Enrollment Changes Across COVID-19 Response**

*American Enterprise Institute (July 27, 2022)*

This report examines the pandemic's effect on overall public school enrollment through the 2021–22 school year and by district characteristics including instructional offerings. These enrollment data represent the aggregation of weighty decisions made by millions of families across the country. The sharp enrollment declines provide a sobering, if interim, answer to the question facing school districts after the dramatic initial pandemic enrollment declines: Will students return to public schools?

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#### **5. In the News**

##### **Proof Points: Researchers say cries of teacher shortages are overblown**

*The Hechinger Report (August 8, 2022)*

##### **Remembering Jackie Walorski, a Quiet Force in Congress**

*Time (August 4, 2022)*

**‘Never seen it this bad’: America faces catastrophic teacher shortage**

*The Washington Post* (August 4, 2022)

**Simple fixes by Congress could help 250,000 homeless children with disabilities**

*The Hill* (August 2, 2022)

**GOP now leads Democrats on the issue of education**

*The Washington Times* (August 1, 2022)

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## **THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON**

*Please note, the House and Senate are scheduled for recess starting this week for the month of August through Labor Day.*

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### **11. About BPAG**

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- leveraging our expertise and passion;
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- Creating meaningful impact.

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