



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

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Please note, the House and Senate are in recess from August through Labor Day and as a result, the COSSBA Education Report will be shorter than normal. The full COSSBA Education Report will resume in September after Congress returns.

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: Georgia to Use \$240m More in Federal Cash to Build Broadband** (*US News* - August 12, 2022)
Georgia Governor Brian Kemp announced that the state will spend another \$240 million in federal Covid-19 relief funds to construct broadband internet to rural locations that don't currently have connections
 - **Child Nutrition: Civil Rights Groups Urge USDA to Fix 'Dietary Racism' in School Lunch Programs** (*The Hill* - August 9, 2022)
Twenty-eight civil rights and health care groups have requested that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) address "dietary racism" in national school lunch programs, particularly concerning milk alternatives in schools.
2. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
 - **CDC Updates COVID-19 Guidance for Schools**
The revised guidance lifts the requirement to quarantine if exposed to the virus, deemphasizes screening people with no symptoms, and updates COVID-19 protocols in schools, eliminating a recommendation for test-to-stay after potential exposure.

3. [New Publications](#)

- **[A Failure to Respond: Public School Mask Mandates in the 2021-22 School Year](#)** (*American Enterprise Institute* - August 2022)

This new report finds that applying the new CDC guidance framework to the earlier weeks of the school year shows that millions more students and staff could have safely been afforded optional masking.

4. [In the News](#)

- **[Detroit launches attendance initiatives as rising absenteeism threatens pandemic recovery](#)** (*Chalkbeat* - August 10, 2022)

5. [About BPAG](#)

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE

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CHILD NUTRITION

[Civil Rights Groups Urge USDA to Fix 'Dietary Racism' in School Lunch Programs](#)

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2. In Brief

CDC UPDATES COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

On Thursday, August 11, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **loosened** its guidance for preventing the spread of coronavirus, shifting the responsibility away from schools, businesses, and institutions and onto individuals. Schools will no longer need to screen seemingly healthy students and employees, and the CDC is putting less emphasis on social distancing, dropping the “six foot” standard. The CDC has also removed the quarantine rule for unvaccinated individuals, with the Agency focusing now more on vulnerable populations and how to protect them. The CDC guidance does not change regarding the wearing of masks indoors in “high-risk level” communities, but few school systems have a mask mandate still in place. The guidance does say that schools “should consider flexible, non-punitive policies and practices to support individuals who choose to wear masks regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level.” Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona **said** “this latest guidance from the CDC should give our students, parents, and educators the confidence they need to head back to school this year with a sense of joy and optimism. While COVID continues to evolve, so has our understanding of the science and what it takes to return to school safely.” He continued, “Thanks

to vaccines, boosters, new treatments, and commonsense safety precautions – as well as funding from the American Rescue Plan – our schools have more resources than ever before to provide the healthy learning environments our students need to grow and thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.” Additional news reports from the [Washington Post](#) and [Chalkbeat](#) have helpful background information.

3. New Publications

A Failure to Respond: Public School Mask Mandates in the 2021-22 School Year

American Enterprise Institute (August 2022)

From September 2021 to late February 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advised all students and teachers to mask indoors. On February 25, the CDC adopted new adaptive masking guidance based on local case counts and hospital capacity. This new report published by the American Enterprise Institute finds that applying the new CDC guidance framework to the earlier weeks of the school year shows that millions more students and staff could have safely been afforded optional masking.

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4. In the News

Detroit launches attendance initiatives as rising absenteeism threatens pandemic recovery

Chalkbeat (August 10, 2022)

3. About BPAG

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- strategizing intelligent solutions; and,
- Creating meaningful impact.

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