



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. **Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, the next publication of the *Education Report* will be Monday, December 8.**

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

1. **[News, Publications, & Updates on COSSBA Policy Priorities](#)**

• **[School Nutrition](#)**

- **[SNAP Benefits to Resume in Full But When Remains a Question](#)**: The government shutdown is over, but advocates worry some families may wait days more to see their much-needed food assistance materialize.

• **[IDEA](#)**

- **[Federal Special Education Staff May Get Their Jobs Back, But For How Long?](#)** The deal Congress reached to re-open the federal government requires the Trump administration to reinstate federal workers who were fired in October, including those charged with overseeing the nation's special education laws. But it's not clear how long they'll be back.

2. **[Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up](#)**

• **[Impact on State School Board Associations](#)**

3. **[In Brief – Last Week in Washington](#)**

- **[ED Announces Six Interagency Agreements for Federal Programs](#)**: On Tuesday, the Department of Education announced six new interagency agreements with the Departments of Labor, Interior, Health and Human Services, and State.

- **House Panel Explores Reducing Costs, Improving Outcomes in Higher Ed:** The House Committee on Education and the Workforce on Tuesday held a hearing on how innovation can reshape higher education to lower costs, expand access, and strengthen workforce alignment.
- **House Ways and Means on Modernizing Child Welfare Through Technology:** On Tuesday, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Work and Welfare held a hearing titled, “Leaving the Sticky Notes Behind: Harnessing Innovation and New Technology to Help America’s Foster Youth Succeed.”
- **Youth Apprentices Lead the Way on Expanding Apprenticeship Access:** On Tuesday, November 18, 2025, New America hosted the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship Youth Council as members presented self-designed projects aimed at improving access to apprenticeships for young people.
- **House Panel Examines Strengthening CTE, Transition to Labor:** The House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education on Wednesday held a hearing examining how to strengthen Career and Technical Education (CTE) amid significant concerns about the Administration’s decision to transfer CTE and adult education programs from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor.
- **BPC Examines AI’s Rapid Impact on Education, Workforce Systems:** On Thursday, the Bipartisan Policy Center hosted a webinar examining how artificial intelligence is transforming education and workforce systems. Experts from LinkedIn, SHRM, and Pearson discussed the rapid pace of skills change and the implications for learners and workers.
- **House Education Committee Holds Member Day:** On Friday, the House Committee on Education and Workforce held its annual Member Day hearing, giving non-committee lawmakers an opportunity to outline their legislative priorities across the education and workforce landscape.

4. **New Publications**

- **Are K-12 Students Getting the Evidence-Based Supports They Need? Progress & Challenges Four Years After the Pandemic**
Partnership for Student Success (November 2025)
The report analyzes findings from a third annual nationally representative survey of K-12 public school principals to examine the deployment of evidence-based student supports and evolving student need.

5. **In the News**

- **Education Department Outsources Program Management To Other Agencies**
K-12 Dive (November 18, 2025)
- **Immigrant Student Enrollment Is Dwindling at Schools Across The U.S. Crackdown**
NBC News (November 17, 2025)
- **The Shutdown Is Over, But Thousands of Kids Are Still Locked Out Of Head Start**
The 74 Million (November 15, 2025)
- **In Culture War Backlash, Democrats Sweep School Boards**

Politico (November 21, 2025)

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

- **The State of AI: What It Means For Kids**: Broadband Breakfast will explore how AI is redefining education and childhood in the digital age - and what it means for the next generation's development, creativity, and safety.
Wednesday at 12pm ET
- **Education Department Webinar Series on Student Privacy**: SPPO will host a three-day National Fall Webinar Series. See event details and registration information below.
December 2 | December 9 | December 11 | December 16

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

SCHOOL NUTRITION

SNAP BENEFITS TO RESUME IN FULL BUT WHEN REMAINS A QUESTION

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is set to resume full benefits for November and December after the end of the 43-day government shutdown. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has instructed states to restore the complete benefit allotments. While this is welcome news for the roughly 42 million Americans—including 16 million children—who depend on SNAP, advocates caution that many families may still face delays before funds appear. *The 74 Million's* Jo Napolitano **notes** that 19 states had already issued full November payments (which the USDA asked to be reversed), 18 issued partial benefits, and 13 hadn't issued any yet, resulting in varying timelines for when recipients will actually see their aid. Advocates highlight that the situation is unprecedented—SNAP payments have never before been paused or only partially issued during a shutdown. Meanwhile, families who missed out on full benefits have turned to food banks and schools to meet nutrition needs. **The article** also flags that, although the immediate disruption is resolved, SNAP still faces cuts via the broader budget and the previously passed reconciliation bill that reduced funding by \$186 billion.

IDEA

FEDERAL SPECIAL ED STAFF MAY GET THEIR JOBS BACK, BUT FOR HOW LONG?

During the prolonged federal government shutdown, the initiated sweeping layoffs targeted the office overseeing special education under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). **Multiple sources say** the agency dismissed nearly all staff, raising alarms about the federal government's ability to enforce disability-rights laws and oversee millions of dollars in grants. Legal challenges quickly followed: unions and advocacy groups sued, and a federal judge temporarily blocked the job cuts, citing concern over the disruption to protected programs. Meanwhile, critics warned the changes jeopardize essential protections for students with

disabilities, arguing that without robust federal oversight, many states may lack the resources to ensure appropriate services. The timing and scale of the cuts, amid the shutdown and an agency reorganization, have left many families and service providers uncertain about the continuity of supports for vulnerable students. Read more from *NPR* [here](#).

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Last week on Capitol Hill, lawmakers were developing a strategy to resolve the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 spending bills before the stopgap measure that reopened the government expires on January 30, 2026. The government has just come out of its longest-ever shutdown, before Congress passed—and President Trump signed—a continuing resolution (CR) to keep funding at FY 2026 levels through that January date and a three-bill “minibus” package. The minibuss included funding for Agriculture and the FDA, the Legislative Branch, and Military Construction–Veterans Affairs. House and Senate appropriators are considering the development of additional packages of multiple FY 2026 spending bills that could be debated in December. As one GOP lawmaker put it, advancing these bills “gives appropriators a head start ... before the January 30 funding cliff.”

Looking ahead, the timetable is aggressive. The next minibuss — potentially covering Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, Transportation–Housing and Urban Development, Interior, and Justice — could be taken up very soon.

With only a little more than two months before the current continuing resolution expires, there is growing concern among some lawmakers about whether the remainder of the twelve appropriations bills can be negotiated and passed in time. As one senior observer put it: “If things stall, another stopgap or worse could be on the table.”

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

Appropriations staff report that a compromise FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education spending bill would follow the proposals of the bipartisan proposal approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee earlier this year, versus the partisan plan the House Committee considered. That would mean mostly level funding for Education Department programs. If that is the bill that ultimately passes, it will be interesting to see how those funds are distributed under the auspices of the interagency agreements announced last week.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

ED ANNOUNCES SIX INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS FOR FEDERAL PROGRAMS

On Tuesday, the Department of Education (ED) **announced** six new interagency agreements with the Departments of Labor (DOL), Interior (DOI), Health and Human Services (HHS), and State. The agreements aim to streamline the administration of select federal education programs by shifting certain responsibilities to agencies with relevant expertise. According to the ED, these changes are intended to improve program efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and strengthen coordination across federal systems. Two agreements with the DOL focus on K–12 and postsecondary education. Under the “[Elementary and Secondary Education Partnership](#),” DOL will take on a larger role in administering federal K–12 programs, including managing grant competitions, providing technical assistance, and aligning education initiatives with workforce-development efforts. The “[Postsecondary Education Partnership](#)” expands DOL’s

responsibilities in overseeing many higher education grant programs to better connect postsecondary learning with labor-market needs. The Interior Department will assume greater responsibility for Indian Education programs through a new “[Indian Education Partnership](#).” This agreement integrates ED programs with Interior’s existing work with Tribal governments and Native students, coordinating federal support across elementary, secondary, and postsecondary initiatives serving Native communities. Two agreements with HHS focus on higher education and student-parent supports. The “[Foreign Medical Accreditation Partnership](#)” places HHS in charge of evaluating whether foreign medical school accreditation standards align with U.S. standards. The “[Child Care Access Means Parents in School \(CCAMPIS\) Partnership](#)” shifts administration of the CCAMPIS program to HHS, which already oversees major federal child-care programs. Finally, ED and the Department of State have established the “[International Education and Foreign Language Studies Partnership](#)” to streamline administration of Fulbright-Hays programs by consolidating management under State, which already runs the broader Fulbright Program. You can find a detailed memo on the agreements and structure prepared by BPAG [here](#) and attached.

HOUSE PANEL EXPLORES REDUCING COSTS, IMPROVING OUTCOMES IN HIGHER ED

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce on Tuesday [held a hearing](#) on how innovation can reshape higher education to lower costs, expand access, and strengthen workforce alignment. Members and witnesses agreed that demographic shifts, rising institutional expenses, and changing student needs require new approaches. However, they differed on how to balance innovation with accountability and student protections. Witnesses highlighted a range of emerging models. Adrian College described using course-sharing consortia to expand academic offerings without costly program start-up expenses. The Mississippi Artificial Intelligence Network (MAIN) showcased a statewide strategy to integrate AI competencies across institutions, enabling resource-sharing and modernizing curricula. Campus.edu emphasized the value of synchronous online instruction, proactive advising, and workforce-embedded programs for community-college students balancing work and family demands. EdTrust stressed that innovation must close equity gaps, urging Congress to maintain strong oversight, invest in advising and wraparound supports, and ensure that new models serve low-income and under-resourced students. Members pressed witnesses on the risks and opportunities of innovation—asking whether AI can enhance learning without undermining academic integrity; how dual-enrollment and transfer pathways can reduce student costs; whether course-sharing and online models can reliably maintain quality; and how institutions can modernize while preserving mental-health supports, liberal-arts instruction, and advising infrastructure. Several lawmakers warned that underfunded institutions may struggle to implement innovations effectively. The hearing underscored bipartisan agreement that higher education must evolve, but continued disagreement over the federal role. Witnesses urged Congress to pair innovation with evidence, equity, and strong guardrails to ensure students—not just institutions—benefit from the next generation of higher-education models. A comprehensive summary prepared by BPAG is [here](#).

HOUSE WAYS & MEANS ON MODERNIZING CHILD WELFARE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

On Tuesday, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Work and Welfare [held a hearing](#) titled, “Leaving the Sticky Notes Behind: Harnessing Innovation and New Technology to Help America’s Foster Youth Succeed.” The event examined how emerging tools—such as data-sharing platforms, AI-assisted case management systems, and digital communication tools—can improve

safety, stability, and long-term outcomes for children and families in the foster care system. Subcommittee members from both parties emphasized the urgent need to modernize child welfare infrastructure, noting that many jurisdictions still rely on outdated or incompatible data systems. Witnesses explained how these legacy systems contribute to delayed placements, fragmented case information, and inefficiencies that strain caseworkers and foster families. Witnesses included state child welfare officials, technology developers, and nonprofit leaders working to improve foster care data systems. They highlighted tools that allow caseworkers to upload information in real time, streamline documentation, and enhance communication among agencies, foster parents, and biological families. Several described pilot programs using predictive analytics and case-triage software to help agencies allocate resources more effectively, while stressing that technology must supplement—never replace—human judgment. Throughout the hearing, lawmakers raised concerns about privacy, algorithmic bias, and the risk that AI-driven tools could unintentionally disadvantage marginalized families. Witnesses agreed that transparency, strong ethical safeguards, and federal oversight are essential as agencies adopt more advanced technologies. They also emphasized the need to ensure that smaller, resource-limited jurisdictions are not left behind as states modernize their systems. Subcommittee members concluded that while technology alone cannot resolve long-standing challenges in the foster care system, thoughtful modernization can reduce administrative burdens, improve caseworker retention, and deliver more consistent support to vulnerable children and families.

YOUTH APPRENTICES LEAD THE WAY ON EXPANDING APPRENTICESHIP ACCESS

On Tuesday, November 18, 2025, New America hosted the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA) Youth Council as members presented self-designed projects aimed at improving access to apprenticeships for young people. Youth apprenticeships offer meaningful work opportunities for high school students—especially in rural and underserved communities—yet only about 2% of American youth participate, compared to more than 50% in Germany, highlighting significant untapped potential in the United States. The panel demonstrated the wide diversity of modern apprenticeship pathways, featuring former apprentices who worked in product design at Mastercard, HVAC trades, airport administration, pharmaceuticals, and food service. Their experiences showed that apprenticeships extend far beyond traditional trades to include technology, healthcare, business, and professional services. These programs strengthen collaboration among apprentices, schools, employers, and intermediary organizations, all working together to support student growth—an especially critical feature in rural communities where opportunities are limited. Research presented at the event identified three core elements of effective programs: strong support that helps apprentices develop self-advocacy skills, clear communication among all partners, and opportunities for hands-on and on-the-job learning. Rural programs face distinct barriers, including low awareness, a smaller pool of potential host employers, long travel distances, and, in some communities, high costs of living that make workforce retention difficult. Despite these challenges, successful rural initiatives such as Reach Higher Montana and CareerWise Eagle County have shown promising strategies. These include leveraging staff with deep community relationships, offering externships for educators, adapting programs to evolving student needs, and cultivating word-of-mouth enthusiasm through apprentice testimonials. The presentations underscored the critical role of youth voices in shaping apprenticeship policy and program design. By sharing their lived experiences with decision-makers, young apprentices provide meaningful insights on program

relevance, equity, accountability, and resource allocation—helping to strengthen and expand apprenticeship pathways nationwide.

HOUSE PANEL EXAMINES STRENGTHENING CTE, TRANSITION TO LABOR

The House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education on Wednesday held a hearing examining how to strengthen Career and Technical Education (CTE) amid significant concerns about the Administration’s decision to transfer CTE and adult education programs from the Department of Education (ED) to the Department of Labor (DOL). While members from both parties praised CTE for improving graduation rates, expanding high-skill pathways, and meeting workforce demand, the hearing repeatedly returned to the controversy surrounding the interagency transfer announced by the ED. Democrats argued the move undermines academic rigor, disconnects programs from schools, and represents a broader effort to dismantle ED. Republican members framed CTE as an essential alternative to college and questioned federal inefficiencies but emphasized the need to preserve strong industry partnerships and modernize programs. Witnesses from manufacturing, cybersecurity, aviation, and federal policy highlighted CTE’s value in preparing students for high-wage careers through hands-on learning and industry alignment. They pointed to severe national skills shortages—especially in manufacturing and cybersecurity—along with shrinking educator pipelines, outdated equipment, uneven funding, and the need for earlier career exposure. All stressed that CTE must remain fundamentally education-centered, not reduced to workforce placement. Witnesses also warned that moving Perkins programs to DOL risks lowering standards, reducing equity protections, and reversing decades of bipartisan progress integrating CTE into academics. They urged Congress to increase Perkins funding, expand work-based learning, invest in teacher recruitment, align programs with emerging technologies such as AI and robotics, and strengthen school-industry collaboration. Ultimately, members agreed on the importance of CTE but remained sharply divided on the program transfer, with several calling for CTE to be restored to ED. A comprehensive summary prepared by BPAG is [here](#).

BPC EXAMINES AI’S RAPID IMPACT ON EDUCATION, WORKFORCE SYSTEMS

On Thursday, the Bipartisan Policy Center hosted a webinar examining how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming education and workforce systems. Experts from LinkedIn, SHRM, and Pearson discussed the rapid pace of skills change and the implications for learners and workers. The discussion highlighted that AI adoption has reached roughly half of U.S. businesses and could unlock an estimated \$4.1 trillion in productivity gains nationwide. Yet significant gaps remain in preparing the workforce for this transition. Panelists noted that 25% of job skills have changed since 2015, with projections suggesting that 70% will be different by 2030—making traditional degrees and job titles less reliable indicators of capability and underscoring the need for skills-based hiring and continuous learning. While AI is reshaping many occupations, particularly in computer science, business operations, and other white-collar fields, most jobs are being augmented rather than fully automated. Non-technical factors such as client expectations, legal requirements, and cost considerations continue to protect many roles from full displacement. Panelists emphasized that foundational skills—critical thinking, problem-solving, and learning how to learn—are increasingly essential in an AI-accelerated economy. Workers will need to adapt and reskill throughout their careers rather than rely on static expertise. Federal initiatives discussed included the AI Task Force, expanded workforce Pell Grants for short-term training programs, and private-sector commitments such as providing 250,000 training vouchers to high school teachers.

However, participants also noted the lack of a comprehensive national reskilling strategy. The speakers stressed the urgent need for democratized real-time labor market data, stronger feedback loops between educators and employers, expanded work-based learning models like registered apprenticeships, and coordinated action among policymakers, educators, and industry leaders. These steps are increasingly critical as AI literacy and technical competencies become as fundamental as traditional literacy in preparing students and workers for the future labor market.

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HOLDS MEMBER DAY

On Friday, the House Committee on Education and Workforce held its annual Member Day hearing, giving non-committee lawmakers an opportunity to outline their legislative priorities across the education and workforce landscape. Republican leaders emphasized a highly productive year—passing 29 bills and resolutions—and highlighted efforts to strengthen workforce pathways through expanded hands-on learning to maintain U.S. competitiveness. Several members raised urgent concerns about the potential dismantling of the Department of Education. They noted impacts already visible in the Office for Civil Rights and argued that any restructuring must occur through congressional oversight and Article I authority, not unilateral executive action. Members also flagged serious unresolved issues, including the lack of hearings on school shootings, the need to address antisemitism in schools with the same seriousness as racism, and concerns that newly announced interagency agreements could complicate rather than streamline federal processes for states and institutions. Representative Maxine Dexter (D-OR) called attention to multiple bills focused on the connection between housing stability and educational success, including the *Intergenerational Housing Act*, the *Healthy and Housed Older Adults Act*, and the *College Success Through Stable Housing Act*, along with public-health-oriented proposals such as the *Shield Students from Smoke Act* and the *Farm Workers Smoke and Excessive Heat Protection Act*. Additional proposals included the *Haskell Indian University Act*, which would transfer governance of the only fully Indigenous-serving tribal university from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to tribal leadership, and the *SHARE Act*, aimed at addressing healthcare workforce shortages through streamlined credential reciprocity. Representative David Taylor (R-OH) also previewed the forthcoming *Workforce Flexibility Act*, designed to give local organizations greater flexibility in using federal grants to train workers in skilled trades, particularly in underserved rural communities benefiting from workforce Pell provisions.

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4. New Publications

Are K-12 Students Getting the Evidence-Based Supports They Need? Progress & Challenges Four Years After the Pandemic

Partnership for Student Success (November 2025)

The report analyzes findings from a third annual nationally representative survey of K-12 public school principals to examine the deployment of evidence-based student supports and evolving student need. It concludes that four years after the height of the pandemic, there is widespread use of evidence-based and people-powered student supports—such as high-intensity tutoring, mentoring, student success coaching, postsecondary transition coaching, and wraparound supports—in public schools across the United States.

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5. In the News

Education Department Outsources Program Management To Other Agencies
K-12 Dive (November 18, 2025)

Immigrant Student Enrollment Is Dwindling At Schools Across The U.S.
NBC News (November 17, 2025)

The Shutdown Is Over, But Thousands of Kids Are Still Locked Out Of Head Start
The 74 Million (November 15, 2025)

In Culture War Backlash, Democrats Sweep School Boards
Politico (November 21, 2025)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Calendar

Wednesday, November 26, 2025

Webinar: The State of AI: What It Means For Kids

Subject: Broadband Breakfast will explore how AI is redefining education and childhood in the digital age - and what it means for the next generation's development, creativity, and safety.

Participants: Congresswoman Erin Houchin (R-IN); Amina Fazlullah, Head of Tech Policy Advocacy, Common Sense Media; Jenny Radesky MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Michigan Medical School; Corbin Barthold, Internet Policy Counsel, TechFreedom; Drew Clark (moderator), CEO and Publisher, Broadband Breakfast.

Time: 12PM ET

Contact: [Register here.](#)

December 2025

Education Department Webinar Series on Student Privacy

Subject: SPPO will host a three-day National Fall Webinar Series. See event details and registration information below. [Register here.](#)

- **Day 1:** FERPA 101 and Data Security Best Practices, December 2, 2025, 2-4pm ET covers the basics of FERPA and provides training on current data security best practices for education data systems.
- **Day 2:** Transparency and FERPA 201, December 9, 2025, 2-4pm ET highlights PTAC's research on transparency and dives into scenarios faced by schools and districts.
- **Day 3:** Incident Response and Vetting Educational Technology, December 16, 2025, 2-4pm ET leads participants through a simulated data breach and explores how to assess online educational technology for privacy protections and general FERPA compliance.
- **FERPA's Frequently Asked Questions:** Do you have questions? We have answers! This 1-hour webinar will address some of the most frequently asked questions received by SPPO and PTAC | December 11, 2025, 1-2pm ET:

7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

The House and Senate are in recess for the Thanksgiving holiday.

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8. Links for Up-to-Date Information on Hearings, Legislation, and Events

[U.S. House and Senate 2025 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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