



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

MARCH 11, 2024

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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
 - <u>As The Affordable Connectivity Program Sunsets, What's Next For Schools</u>

K-12 Dive (March 5, 2024)

As signs of the Affordable Connectivity Program's end become increasingly apparent, advocates worry the deep division of digital access for K-12 students will be exacerbated.

- 2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up
 - Impact on State School Board Associations
- 3. In Brief Last Week in Washington
 - Childcare Workforce Leaders Examine Challenges, Solutions: On Monday, the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) hosted a webinar titled, "What Will it Take to Build a Competent, Stable Childcare Workforce?" The virtual event highlighted BPC's recent report containing recommendations for improving the childcare workforce.
 - House Subcommittee on PreK-12 Looks at Benefits of Charter Schools: On Tuesday, the House Education and Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee held a hearing titled, "Proven Results: Highlighting the Benefits of Charter Schools for Students and Families."

• President Joe Biden Delivers 2024 State of the Union Address: Thursday night, President Joe Biden delivered his annual State of the Union address to Congress. The President's address centered on what he considers to be historic achievements he delivered for the American people and his vision for the future. Specific achievements include the CHIPS and Science Act, investments in infrastructure, lowering health care premiums and drug prices and getting rid of junk fees.

4. New Publications

Time for a Pause: Without Effective Public Oversight, AI In Schools Will Do More Harm Than Good

National Education Policy Center (March 2024)

This policy brief explores likely harms if lawmakers and others do not step in with carefully considered measures to prevent potential AI risks. The authors urge school leaders to pause the adoption of AI applications until policymakers have had sufficient time to thoroughly educate themselves and develop legislation and policies ensuring effective public oversight and control of school applications.

• Governors' 2024 Education Priorities: Early Childhood, Curriculum, School Choice, Mental Health

The 74 (March 2024)

Despite the heightened partisan tensions of an election year, governors of both parties have largely downplayed parental rights bills, book bans and other culture-war controversies in their 2024 State of the State addresses, a FutureEd analysis of 38 of the addresses has found. Rather, they have proposed substantial investments in education and practical ways to strengthen learning.

5. In the News

• More High Schools Are Requiring Financial-Literacy Classes. The Pandemic May Have Played A Key Role

MarketWatch (March 6, 2024)

- The Pandemic's Impact on Special Educators

 Inside Higher Ed | Academic Minute (March 5, 2024)
- As the Affordable Connectivity Program Sunsets, What's Next for Schools? K-12 Dive (March 5, 2024)
- <u>Head Start Funding Not Keeping Pace With Rising Child Poverty Rates</u> *K-12 Dive (March 4, 2024)*

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

- <u>Kids and Schools in America's Unequal Communities</u>: New America will hold a virtual discussion on a new report, "Segregation, the Suburbs, and Education Funding: Kids and Schools in America's Unequal Communities."

 Monday at 2pm ET
- Department of Education's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget: The Department of Education will brief stakeholders on the President's fiscal year 2025 budget for the Department of Education. The briefing is hybrid with online registration requested for online participation.

 Monday at 3pm ET

• House Education Subcommittee on Student-Athlete NLRB Classification:

The House Education and the Workforce Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Safeguarding Student-Athletes from NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) Misclassification." *Tuesday at 10:15am ET*

• <u>Senate Budget Committee on The President's FY 2025 Budget Proposal</u>: The Senate Budget Committee will hold a hearing on "The President's FY2025 Budget Proposal."

Tuesday at 10:15am

- <u>Culturally Responsible Educator Prep</u>: The University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education will hold a webinar to highlight strategies and challenges to incorporate culturally responsive and sustaining practices in educator preparation programs.

 Tuesday at 1pm ET
- <u>Senate HELP Subcommittee on Youth Apprenticeships</u>: The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Employment and Workplace Safety Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Youth Apprenticeships: Building Partnerships, Strengthening Career Pathways."

 Tuesday at 2pm ET
- How Afterschool Programs Drive Student Progress: The Campaign for Grade Level Reading will hold a webinar to explore where and how afterschool programs have made and continue to make a significant impact on academic and developmental outcomes.

Tuesday at 3pm ET

• National Assessment Governing Board on Science Assessments: The National Assessment Governing Board will hold a virtual meeting of the Assessment Development Committee to review contextual variables from the National Assessment of Educational Progress science assessment and to briefly hear about other updates on committee work.

Friday at 3:30pm ET

7. Future Hearings & Events

- <u>Getting K-12 Right</u>: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) will hold a discussion on "Getting K-12 Right." *March 19 at 4pm ET*
- Tackling Critical Teacher Shortages-Insights on Federal Policies and Programs: The Learning Policy Institute will hold a briefing to discuss research on the state of the educator workforce, evidence-based approaches to address teacher shortages, and more robust federal strategies that could help ensure a well-prepared, diverse, and stable educator workforce.

 March 20 at 4pm ET
- Promising Pathways Through Experiential Learning: The Albert Shanker Institute, the American Federation of Teachers, and the Center for American Progress will hold an event to highlight various facets of experiential learning, ranging from career and technical education (CTE) to the arts, music, and action civics. Through student-centered approaches, participants will delve into how

experiential learning cultivates deeper understanding and equips students with the skills necessary for promising careers across diverse fields.

March 21 at 9am ET

8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

- **Senate floor**: Consideration of nominations
- House floor:
 - <u>H.R. 6276</u> Utilizing Space Efficiently and Improving Technologies Act of 2023
 - <u>H. Res. 1065</u> Denouncing the Biden administration's immigration policies.

9. Important U.S. House and Senate Links

10. About BPAG

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE

AS THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM SUNSETS, WHAT'S NEXT FOR SCHOOLS?

K-12 Dive (March 5, 2024)

The Affordable Connectivity Program that helped provide broadband services to nearly 23 million households nationwide officially stopped taking applications in early February as federal funds are expected to completely dry up by the end of April, according to the Federal Communications Commission. Though congressional lawmakers proposed a \$7 billion bicameral, bipartisan bill in January to temporarily extend the program, the legislation has stalled. Without the additional funding, the FCC said, millions of people who were connected to home internet services through the Affordable Connectivity Program could lose access. As signs of the Affordable Connectivity Program's end become increasingly apparent, advocates worry the deep division of digital access for K-12 students will be exacerbated. **Read more**.

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

Last week was yet another "shutdown week" in Washington, DC. But this time, Congress was able to pass a package of six appropriations bills that President Biden signed on Saturday to keep those federal agencies open, and now lawmakers will turn their focus to the remaining appropriations bills.

The \$467.5 billion package provides funding for the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, Energy, Interior, Veterans Affairs, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development as well as the National Science Foundation, Food and Drug Administration, military construction and other federal agencies. In the House, once again, more Democrats backed the spending measure than Republicans, giving the most conservative members of the House GOP more grievances with Speaker Michael Johnson's (R-LA) leadership to date. The Freedom Caucus urged Republicans to vote against this bill and have already asked them to oppose the next six-

bill package. The Senate passed the spending package Friday evening with a vote of 75-22, with 21 Republicans voting in opposition and just one Democrat.

In the meantime, following President Joe Biden's Thursday State of the Union Address, the White House's FY 2025 budget request was released today, meaning staff and advocates are reacting to an FY 2025 budget request before half of the FY 2024 appropriations bills are finalized. Confused? Sure. As one seasoned advocate said this week, "We're currently in FY 2024, operating on FY 2023 funding levels, about to get the FY 2025 request."

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

While education advocates await the unveiling of an FY 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education spending plan for FY 2024, which will be half over by month's end, there were some proposals of interest in this first package. Funding for the National Science Foundation is cut by \$479 million, with STEM education suffering a portion of that cut. The Agriculture bill level funds Farm to School grants, and keeps the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) whole, and without any harmful policy riders. At the Justice Department, youth mentoring grants were cut by \$3 million to \$104 million, while some other youth programs also saw some cuts. With a March 22nd deadline looming, Appropriators and their staff's continue to work on the remaining six bills, which include the ones considered more controversial and the two largest—the Labor, Health and Human Services (including Education) and Defense funding bills. Details on those bills are likely to be released later this week.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington CHILDCARE WORKFORCE LEADERS EXAMINE CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS

On Monday, the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) hosted a webinar titled, "What Will it Take to Build a Competent, Stable Childcare Workforce?" The virtual event highlighted BPC's recent report containing recommendations for improving the childcare workforce. The event featured a panel of experts, including Lauren Birchfield Kennedy, co-president of Neighborhood Villages; Marica Cox Mitchell, vice president of Bainum Family Foundation; Walter S. Gilliam, executive director of the Buffet Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska; and Calvin E. Moore, Jr., CEO of the Council for Professional Recognition. Additionally, Caroline Osborn, project associate for the Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), presented key findings from BPC's new report and ECI Director Linda K. Smith moderated the proceeding panel. Osborn summarized the report's findings, which compiled data and recommendations for state and local agencies from various resources. The recommendations included establishing language to better define the childcare profession, determining training pathways needed for childcare workers, generating costbased models for childcare centers, and considering how to allocate public funding to achieve childcare goals. Delving into the current state of early childcare around the country, panelists shared their experiences in the context of the report's findings. Kennedy discussed her efforts running state-level early childhood education programs, explaining the benefits of Neighborhood Village's CDA Apprenticeship Program in increasing the competency of early childhood educators. However, she voiced concern with the lack of increased compensation in recognition of these credentials. Mitchell emphasized issues of incoherence that she says pervades the field and highlighted WeVison Early Ed efforts to create equitable, quality childcare programs.

Additionally, she underscored the opportunity to establish a more defined profession of early childhood education. Moore echoed this sentiment, stating that early childcare has the hallmarks of an undefined field. He discussed the history of Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials and the need for more scalable credentials. Lastly, Gilliam identified several stressors early childhood educators experience, following with what he believes are promising solutions to increase early childcare professionalism and retention. These include increased compensation, quality and consistent training, and comprehensive standards. A recording of the webinar can be found here.

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PREK-12 LOOKS AT BENEFITS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

On Tuesday, the House Education and Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee held a hearing titled, "Proven Results: Highlighting the Benefits of Charter Schools for Students and Families." Subcommittee Chair Aaron Bean (R-FL) urged for expanding charter school access around the country. "Charter schools have since ridden the school choice wave to over 8,000 communities, serving nearly four million students across 45 states. Furthermore, charter school growth is accelerating. Enrollment doubled in the most recent decade. And seventy-four percent of parents would consider sending their child to a charter school if given the chance." Subcommittee Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) offered support for public charter schools if they are "well-regulated, well-funded, transparent, and accountable." On for-profit and private charter schools, Bonamici and Committee Democrats shared their concerns over the lack of guardrails that enable waste, fraud, and abuse of federal funds, and the lack of civil rights protections for students enrolled in these schools. Margaret Raymond, Director of the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, referenced her organization's longitudinal study on charter school performance, testifying that "the charter school community delivered many examples of successful schools and showed that scaling successful models is common." Turning to member questions, full Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-NC) asked Dr. Raymond, "Charter school results for urban and minority students are especially positive. Could you say something more about that?" Raymond responded that urban charter students gained 30 extra days in reading and 28 days in math in a year over their district school counterparts. Black students gained 35 and 29 days, respectively. For students in poverty, it was 23 and 17. Dr. Julian Vasquez Heilig, Founding Board Member of the Network for Public Education disputed the general success of charter schools. "The foundational premise of charter schools was to foster innovation and provide an alternative that would spur improvements within the traditional public school system. Yet, the body of peer reviewed academic research, including my own studies, increasingly questions the efficacy of charter schools in delivering on these promises. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics indicates no significant academic advantage for charter school students over their public-school counterparts," Heilig stated. For more information, click here.

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN DELIVERS 2024 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Thursday night, President Joe Biden delivered his annual State of the Union address to Congress. The address, which ran 67 minutes, was the President's first after Super Tuesday, when he and former President Donald Trump unofficially confirmed their spots as November's presidential candidates. The President's address centered on what he considers to be historic achievements he delivered for the American people and his vision for the future. Specific achievements include the CHIPS and Science Act, investments in infrastructure, lowering health care premiums and

drug prices and getting rid of junk fees. He also addressed plans to protect women's reproductive health, curbing fentanyl, immigration policy, helping veterans, and ending cancer. The list of the First Lady's invited guests reinforced these plans. On education, President Biden said he'd like to "give every child a good start by providing access to pre-school for 3- and 4-year-olds," expand "high-quality tutoring" and summer learning time, and ensure every child learns to read by third grade. He would like to connect businesses to high schools to facilitate "good-paying" jobs" and wants to "make college more affordable." He called for increasing Pell Grants as well as "our record investments in HBCUs and Minority-Serving Institutions." He also touted the benefits of his efforts to "reduce the burden of student debt for nearly four million Americans." In addition, President Biden urged his audience to restore the Child Tax Credit to help working families and reduce child poverty. As he detailed his plans for a "fairer" tax code, he suggested that his plan would result in the possibility to invest in affordable childcare, home and elder care, and paid leave. He also voiced his commitment to protecting and strengthening Social Security. Addressing crime and gun violence, President Biden acknowledged a young guest in the galley whose sister was killed in the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, President Biden said that in the wake of that tragedy he established the Office of Gun Prevention Violence in the White House. In the last moments of the address, President Biden managed to call for addressing the fentanyl crisis, supporting veterans, protecting children online and fighting cancer. A full summary on the hearing is here.

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4. New Publications

<u>Time for a Pause: Without Effective Public Oversight, AI In Schools will Do More Harm</u>
Than Good

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Governors' 2024 Education Priorities: Early Childhood, Curriculum, School Choice, Mental Health

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5. In the News

More High Schools Are Requiring Financial-Literacy Classes. The Pandemic May Have Played a Key Role

MarketWatch (March 6, 2024)

The Pandemic's Impact on Special Educators

Inside Higher Ed | Academic Minute (March 5, 2024)

<u>As The Affordable Connectivity Program Sunsets, What's Next for Schools?</u> *K-12 Dive* (March 5, 2024)

<u>Head Start Funding Not Keeping Pace with Rising Child Poverty Rates</u> *K-12 Dive* (March 4, 2024)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Monday, March 11, 2024

Event: Importance of Music Education in Schools

Subject: The National Association for Music Education (NAFME) will hold an event to highlight the importance of music education in schools.

Participants: Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY); Scott Sheehan, president, National Association for Music Education; Tiffany Kerns, executive director, Country Music Association Foundation; Jenna Dietrich, president, University of Maryland NAFME Chapter; and Christopher Woodside, executive director, NAFME.

Time and Location: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.; 2060 Rayburn HOB.

Registration: Register here.

Webinar: Kids and Schools in America's Unequal Communities

Subject: New America will hold a virtual discussion on a new report, "Segregation, the Suburbs, and Education Funding: Kids and Schools in America's Unequal Communities."

Participants: Nirvi Shah, executive editor, Hechinger Report; Benjamin Herold, fellow, New America's Learning Sciences Exchange and author of "Disillusioned: Five Families and the Unraveling of America's Suburbs;" Zahava Stadler, project director, Education Funding Equity Initiative.

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Registration: Register here.

Event: Department of Education's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

Subject: The Department of Education will brief stakeholders on the President's fiscal year 2025 budget for the Department of Education. The briefing is hybrid with online registration requested for online participation.

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Registration: Register here.

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Hearing: House Education Subcommittee on Student-Athlete NLRB Classification

Subject: The House Education and the Workforce Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Safeguarding Student-Athletes from NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) Misclassification."

Witnesses: Cindy Marten, deputy secretary of education; U.S. Department of Education; James

Kvaal, undersecretary of education, U.S. Department of Education.

Time and Location: 10:15 a.m.; 2175 Rayburn HOB.

Registration: Live stream available here.

Hearing: Senate Budget Committee on the President's FY2025 Budget Proposal

Subject: The Senate Budget Committee will hold a hearing on "The President's FY2025 Budget

Proposal."

Witness: Shalanda Young, director, Office of Management and Budget.

Time and Location: 10:15 a.m.; 608 Dirksen SOB.

Registration: Live stream available <u>here</u>.

Webinar: Culturally Responsive Educator Prep

Subject: The University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education will hold a webinar to highlight strategies and challenges faced to incorporate culturally responsive and sustaining practices in educator preparation programs.

Participants: Nicole Carl, director, Urban Teaching Residency, University of Pennsylvania; Christopher Dean, director, Urban Apprenticeship Program, University of Pennsylvania; Charlotte Jacobs, director, Independent School Teaching Residency, University of Pennsylvania; Jessica Richard, associate director, School Leadership Program, University of Pennsylvania; and Patrick Sexton, executive director, Teacher Education Programs, University of Pennsylvania.

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Registration: Register here.

Hearing: Senate HELP Subcommittee on Youth Apprenticeships

Subject: The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Employment and Workplace Safety Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Youth Apprenticeships: Building Partnerships, Strengthening Career Pathways."

Witness: Steve Day, principal, Cherry Creek Innovation Campus; James Patch, head of operations, Vestas; Brad Rhorer, president and CEO, Ascend Indiana; and Denise Tugade, former member, California Youth Apprenticeship Council.

Time and Location: 2:00 p.m.; 430 Dirksen SOB.

Registration: Live stream available here.

Webinar: How Afterschool Programs Drive Student Progress

Subject: The Campaign for Grade Level Reading will hold a webinar to explore where and how afterschool programs have made and continue to make a significant impact on academic and developmental outcomes.

Participants: Andrew Francis, Foundations, Inc.; Katie Landes, GA Afterschool Network; Jen Rinehart, Afterschool Alliance; Denieka Wicker, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington; and others.

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. **Registration:** Register **here.**

Friday, March 15, 2024

Agency Meeting: National Assessment Governing Board on Science Assessments

Subject: The National Assessment Governing Board will hold a virtual meeting of the Assessment Development Committee to review contextual variables from the National Assessment of Educational Progress science assessment and to briefly hear about other updates on committee work.

Time: 3:30 p.m.

Registration: Full agenda and register here.

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Event: Getting K-12 Right

Subject: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) will hold a discussion on "Getting K-12 Right."

Participants: Cade Brumley, state superintendent of education, Louisiana; Nicole Neily, president, Parents Defending Education; Frederick Hess, director of education policy studies, AEI; Michael McShane, adjunct fellow, AEI; and Darrell Bradford, president, 50CAN. **Time and Location:** 4:00 p.m.; AEI, 1789 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Auditorium,

Washington, D.C.

Registration: Register here.

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Event: Tackling Critical Teacher Shortages- Insights on Federal Policies and Programs Subject: The Learning Policy Institute will hold a briefing to discuss research on the state of the educator workforce, evidence-based approaches to address teacher shortages, and more robust federal strategies that could help ensure a well-prepared, diverse, and stable educator workforce. Participants: Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA); Michael DiNapoli, Jr., deputy director of federal policy, Learning Policy Institute; Susan Kemper Patrick, senior researcher, Learning Policy Institute; Thomas Owenby, associate dean for teacher education, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Jacqueline Rodriguez, CEO, National Center for Learning Disabilities; Clifton Tanabe, dean, College of Education, the University of Texas-El Paso; and Reggie White, 2022-2023 Alabama Teacher of the Year, Birmingham City Schools.

Time and Location: 4:00 p.m.; B-48 Dirksen SOB.

Registration: Register here.

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Event: Promising Pathways Through Experiential Learning

Subject: The Albert Shanker Institute, the American Federation of Teachers, and the Center for American Progress will hold an event to highlight various facets of experiential learning, ranging from career and technical education (CTE) to the arts, music, and action civics. Through student-centered approaches, participants will delve into how experiential learning cultivates deeper understanding and equips students with the skills necessary for promising careers across diverse fields.

Participants: Governor Wes Moore (D-MD); Randi Weingarten, president, American Federation of Teachers and Albert Shanker Institute; Patrick Gaspard, president and CEO, Center for American Progress; Liz Shuler, president, AFL-CIO; Rep. Ro Khanna, (D-CA); Stanley Litow, former vice president of corporate citizenship & corporate affairs, IBM; Raphael

Bonhomme, educator, School-Within-School @ Goding, DCPS; Valerie Holthus, president, Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota, Local 700; Azariah McLymore, attorney and graduate, Newburgh P-TECH program; and Kwesi Rollins, senior vice president for leadership and engagement, Coalition for Community Schools.

Time and Location: 9:00 a.m.; 600 I Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Registration: Register here.

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8. On The Floor of Congress This Week

Senate Floor: Consideration of nominations

House Floor:

- H.R. 6276 Utilizing Space Efficiently and Improving Technologies Act of 2023
- H. Res. 1065 Denouncing the Biden administration's immigration policies.

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

U.S. House and Senate 2023 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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10. About BPAG

<u>Bose Public Affairs Group</u> 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 $\underline{\text{website}}$.

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