



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. **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**
 - **FCC Moves to Restore Net Neutrality:** FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel announced the Commission will vote during its April Open Meeting on April 25 to restore Net Neutrality.
2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-up**
 - **Impact on State School Board Associations**
3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**
 - **ED Announces New Debt Relief Rules, Impacting 30 Million Borrowers:** On Tuesday, the Department of Education (ED) released an initial set of draft rules proposing to provide student debt relief for tens of millions of borrowers across the country.
 - **Senate Appropriators Question HHS Secretary Becerra on Childcare:** On Tuesday, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies heard from Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra on President Joe Biden's FY 2025 HHS budget request.
 - **House Appropriators Hear from DOL Secretary, Examine Registered Apprentices Programs:** On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and related Agencies heard

from Department of Labor (DOL) Acting Secretary Julie Su on President Joe Biden's FY 2025 budget request for the DOL.

- **House Panel Examines Solutions to Protect Children Online:** On Wednesday, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce held a hearing titled, "Legislative Solutions to Protect Kids Online and Ensure Americans' Data Privacy Rights."
- **Education Trust Event Examines Surge of School Book Bans:** On Wednesday, the Education Trust (EdTrust) held a webinar titled, "Can't Be Erased." The event featured a panel of education and civil rights leaders.
- **ED Releases Long-Waited Title IX Rule, Includes LGBTQI+ Protections:** On Friday, the Department of Education (ED) issued its long-awaited Title IX rule, which, for the first time, enshrines protections for LGBTQI+ students and employees, as well as pregnant students and employees, under the civil rights law that prevents sex-based discrimination in federally funded education programs.

4. **New Publications**

- **Career And Technical Education Is A Hidden Weak Spot in Many High Schools' Teacher Workforces**

Brookings (April 2024)

This report highlights how the provision of Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework in high schools, especially in high-growth fields, promotes student engagement, high school completion, and later employment, especially among disadvantaged student groups.

5. **In the News**

- **Title IX Rewrite Focuses Law on Victims, Including LGBTQ Students**
The 74 (April 19, 2024)
- **This Week in 5 Numbers: Education Department Unveils Another Student Loan Relief Plan**
Higher Ed Dive (April 19, 2023)
- **When There's More Money for Schools, Is There an "objective" Way to Hand It Out?**
Education Week (April 17, 2024)
- **92% of School Leaders Concerned About Academic Recovery, NCES Survey Says**
K-12 Dive (April 16, 2024)

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

- **Agency Meeting: President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology:** The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) will hold a meeting to discuss the approval of a new report on "Supercharging Science: Harnessing AI to Achieve Unprecedented Discoveries and Understandings."
Tuesday at 11am ET

7. **Future Hearings & Events**

- **Summit on Education: Reset. Reframe. Reform:** Bringing together researchers, advocates, and policymakers from across the education continuum—early childhood, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development—this two-day summit sponsored by the Center for American Progress will explore a path toward creating a strong progressive agenda for education.
Wednesday, May 1-2, 2024

8. **On The Floor of Congress This Week**

- The House is in recess through Monday, April 29.
- The Senate will convene Tuesday, April 23 to debate House passed legislation providing aid to Ukraine, Israel and the Indo-Pacific region.

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

10. **About BPAG**

1. **COSSBA Policy Priorities**

**BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE
FCC MOVES TO RESTORE NET NEUTRALITY**

FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel announced the Commission will vote during its April Open Meeting on Thursday to restore Net Neutrality, which would bring back a national standard for broadband reliability, security, and consumer protection. If adopted, the Chairwoman’s proposal would ensure that broadband services are treated as an essential resource deserving of FCC oversight under Title II authority. The meeting will be open to the public and streamed live [here](#). If adopted, the reclassification and rules would largely go into effect 60 days after Federal Register publication. The announcement is [here](#).

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2. **Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up**

Capitol Hill was busy once again last week. Fly-ins and tourists are still packing the halls of Congress. In addition, various cabinet members were in committee rooms on both sides of the Capitol defending President Joe Biden’s FY 2025 budget request, which was the only sign of progress in the annual budget and appropriations process. It’s no secret that the FY 2025 process is already behind schedule. It is also assumed that it won’t be complete until after the November elections. Regardless, advocates of every cause are organizing funding requests and sign-on letters, hoping to maximize the results of another process that will be constrained by budget caps enacted via last year’s Fiscal Responsibility Act.

New House Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) continued to make some tweaks to the subcommittees last week, as his ascension and some other events have made for some comings and goings. Representative Chuck Edwards (R-NC) **has been added** to the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee roster.

Other news on the FY 2025 process is in short supply. There are about nine legislative weeks between now and the planned August recess. We’ll see how much progress is made before then.

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

The House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee will be accepting written testimony on the budget from “interested public witnesses,” meaning organizations and institutions interested in the outcome of the annual process, until May 3. This year, the Subcommittee says it is not planning to hold its customary public witness hearing “at this time.” (The subcommittee usually invites a few representative witnesses for the three agencies it is responsible for each year.) The instructions for submitting testimony are [here](#). The Subcommittee will be holding a Member Day hearing in the next few weeks. The Senate Subcommittee has not yet posted its FY 2025 guidance for submitting outside witness testimony.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

ED ANNOUNCES NEW DEBT RELIEF RULES, IMPACTING 30 MILLION STUDENTS

On Tuesday, the Department of Education (ED) [released](#) an initial set of draft rules proposing to provide student debt relief for tens of millions of borrowers across the country. Announced last week by President Biden in Wisconsin, these plans, if implemented as proposed, would bring the total number of borrowers getting relief under the Biden-Harris Administration to more than 30 million. “To date, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken historic action to approve debt cancellation for nearly 4.3 million borrowers, totaling \$153 billion in debt forgiveness through various actions,” the press release states. “Today’s announcement shows that the Biden-Harris Administration is continuing to fulfill our promises to fix a broken higher education system,” said Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “Student loan forgiveness isn’t only about relief for today’s borrowers. It’s about social mobility, economic prosperity, and creating America that lives up to its highest ideals.” The top Republicans from the House Education and the Workforce (E&W) and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committees both provided statements criticizing the Biden-Harris Administration’s newest debt relief plan. E&W Chair Virginia Foxx (R-NC) [asserted](#) that President Joe Biden has “no legal ground to stand upon,” and HELP Ranking Member Bill Cassidy (R-LA) [accused](#) ED of “rewriting the Higher Education Act piece by piece to resurrect this unconstitutional student loan scheme.” Meanwhile, E&W Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA) applauded the move, pressing Congress to “build on the Biden-Harris Administration’s efforts to reduce the burden of student loan debt.” The rules were formally published in the Federal Register on Wednesday for a 30-day comment period. After considering public comments, ED aims to finalize these rules in time to start delivering relief this fall, including for borrowers who have been subject to “runaway interest.” ED says that it will publish a second draft rule focused on providing relief for borrowers experiencing hardship in the coming months.

SENATE APPROPRIATORS QUESTION HHS SECRETARY BECERRA ON CHILDCARE

On Tuesday, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies heard from Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra on President Joe Biden’s FY 2025 HHS budget request. In his testimony, Secretary Becerra praised the Department’s efforts to expand affordable childcare, saying that the FY 2025 budget request provides increased wages for early childhood education workers, funds more than 750,000 slots for children in HeadStart, and provides universal preschool for the nation’s 4,000,00 four-year-old children. He added that it would eventually include the nation’s three-year-olds as well. Full Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and Subcommittee Chair Tammy

Baldwin (D-WI) additionally commended the HHS Department's efforts to expand access to quality childcare for every child. "Programs like [the] Child Care and Development Block Grant and HeadStart are a lifeline for working parents who need affordable high-quality childcare and early learning opportunities for their kids," Chair Murray stated in her opening remarks. These programs invest not only in families, but also in the national economy, she continued. "We need to protect and strengthen the investments we've made to make sure families can find and afford childcare however possible. That means more annual funding, extending stabilization dollars, and hopefully passing my Childcare for Working Families Act." On the costs of childcare, Secretary Becerra asserted that "getting childcare is like having your infant go to college." He noted that the President's proposal would make it possible for some families to qualify to receive childcare services for \$10 a day, saving families approximately \$7,200 a year. The full hearing and Secretary Becerra's testimony can be found [here](#).

HOUSE APPROPRIATORS HEAR FROM DOL SECRETARY, EXAMINE RESIDENT APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related Agencies heard from Department of Labor (DOL) Acting Secretary Julie Su on President Joe Biden's FY 2025 budget request for the DOL. Registered Apprenticeship programs were referenced regularly throughout the hearing, including in Subcommittee Chair Robert Aderholt's (R-AL) [opening remarks](#), where he criticized the DOL's [proposed rule](#) from earlier this year that would overhaul the Registered Apprenticeship program. "Last year, I would have expressed my appreciation and support for the Department's continued commitment to the Registered Apprenticeship program. Unfortunately, earlier this year, your department issued a proposal to reinvent the Registered Apprenticeship in a manner that would imperil the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship," the Chairman stated. He asserted that the DOL's proposed rule would reduce opportunities for American workers and the ability of states to recognize programs and impose national testing requirements. Acting Secretary Su's testimony noted the DOL's \$8 billion request for the Career Training Fund and \$335 million for apprenticeship programs, an increase of \$50 million. She commended these programs for their ability to increase job pathways for underrepresented groups, including women, people of color, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. She also called attention to teacher and childcare apprenticeships, saying that evidence-based training programs are successful in non-traditional apprenticeship industries. Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA) commended the DOL's inclusion of \$5 million for the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations [Grant Program](#), and in response, Acting Secretary Su stated that the DOL is doing "everything we can to break down systemic barriers that have existed for too long." A recording of the hearing and Acting Secretary Su's testimony can be found [here](#).

HOUSE PANEL EXAMINES SOLUTIONS TO PROTECT CHILDREN ONLINE

On Wednesday, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce held a hearing titled, "Legislative Solutions to Protect Kids Online and Ensure Americans' Data Privacy Rights." The hearing focused on the draft of the bipartisan, bicameral, [American Privacy Rights Act](#) (APRA) and other legislation improving data protections such as [COPPA 2.0](#). In his opening statement, Chair Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) praised the APRA for providing a comprehensive national framework for consumer data privacy and security preempting piecemeal state law. Witnesses testified on the many protections the APRA would offer, including data minimization, transparency obligations, opt-out mechanisms, and enforcement provisions.

Mr. David Brody, managing attorney at Digital Justice Initiative, discussed how the APRA data minimization standards could reduce the racial discrimination that currently pervades Big Tech algorithms. However, Brody raised concerns over conflicting authority between the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the primary enforcement agency for the APRA, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Ava Smithing, director of advocacy at Young People's Alliance, shared how algorithms exploited her insecurities, leading her down a harmful path of unrealistic beauty standards and eating disorder content. She emphasized the need for legislation like the [Kids Online Safety Act](#) and comprehensive data privacy laws to protect individuals from such harm. Kara Frederick, director of the Tech Policy Center at The Heritage Foundation, outlined the full extent of the data collected on Americans, impressing upon members the scope of current data collection. Witnesses and Representatives shared a sense of urgency due to the increasing use of data needed for artificial intelligence (AI) models. Member questions focused on specific improvements for the ARPA draft bill. Representative Frank Pallone (D- NJ) inquired over children not receiving additional protection with noticing and consent-based protections in COPPA 2.0. Another common issue was the non-uniform preemption of APRA, which Samir C. Jain, vice president of policy at the Center for Democracy & Technology, noted was a necessary compromise for moving the legislation forward. A recording of the hearing and witness statements are available [here](#).

EDUCATION TRUST EVENT EXAMINES SURGE OF SCHOOL BOOK BANS

On Wednesday, the Education Trust (EdTrust) held a webinar titled, "Can't Be Erased." The event featured a panel of education and civil rights leaders – Heather Harding, executive director of Campaign for Our Shared Future; Dr. David Johns, CEO and executive director at the National Black Justice Coalition; Kurt Russell, 2022 National Teacher of the Year and veteran high school social studies teacher; Ameshia Cross, director of communications at EdTrust; and others. Delving into the recent surge of book bans across the country, the panelists discussed ways to counteract these efforts. Cross began the discussion by revealing that in 2023, 4,000 books were targeted for censorship, a 65 percent increase from 2022. Notably, many of the targeted books centered around black history and LGBTQ+ identities. Russell and Johns underscored the detrimental effects of these bans, highlighting how they perpetuate harmful stereotypes and negatively impact the mental well-being of students, citing the alarming rise of suicide rates among black youth. In response, the panelists advocated for a proactive approach, urging listeners to amplify student voices and direct their advocacy efforts at the state and local levels. In addition, Russell suggested that the focus should be on providing teachers with a sense of purpose and empowering them to stand up for their students amidst mounting challenges to diversity, equity, and inclusion education. Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) concluded the webinar by discussing her sponsorship of the [Books Save Lives Act](#), a piece of legislation that works to counteract the nation's book bans and foster diverse and inclusive learning environments. A recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).

ED RELEASES LONG-AWAITED TITLE IX RULE, INCLUDES LGBTQI+ PROTECTIONS

On Friday, the Department of Education (ED) issued its long-awaited Title IX rule, which, for the first time, enshrines [protections for LGBTQI+](#) students and employees, as well as pregnant students and employees, under the civil rights law that prevents sex-based discrimination in federally funded education programs. The new rule defines sex-based harassment as including harassment based on sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy and related conditions, and

gender identity and sexual orientation. It cements federal protections for LGBTQI+ students and employees that have swung between administrations for over a decade. Among other changes, the new regulations will also revive the single-investigator model, require schools to provide breastfeeding rooms for students and employees, and provide more discretion to schools and colleges to tailor Title IX policies based on their needs. However, many Republicans have voiced opposition to the rule. In a statement, Chair of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, Virginia Foxx (R-NC), argued that the rule undermines existing due process rights and “dumps kerosene on the already raging fire that is Democrats’ contemptuous culture war that aims to radically redefine sex and gender.” The final rule is expected to be published in the Federal Register later this month, after which schools and colleges will have until August 1 to implement it. The unofficial version of the final regulations is available [here](#). In addition, the Department has released a [fact sheet](#), a [summary](#) of the major provisions of the final regulations, and a [resource page](#) for drafting Title IX nondiscrimination policies, notices of nondiscrimination, and grievance procedures.

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4. New Publications

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K-12 Dive (April 16, 2024)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

Agency Meeting: President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology

Subject: The President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) will hold a meeting to discuss the approval of a new report on “Supercharging Science: Harnessing AI to Achieve Unprecedented Discoveries and Understandings.”

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Registration: Live stream available [here](#).

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7. Future Hearings and Events

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Event: Summit on Education: Reset. Reframe. Reform

Subject: Bringing together researchers, advocates, and policymakers from across the education continuum—early childhood, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development—this two-day summit sponsored by the Center for American Progress will explore a path toward creating a strong progressive agenda for education.

Registration: Register [here](#).

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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](#)

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10. 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

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