



The Consortium of State School Boards Associations
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**

• **Article: Biden FCC Nominee at Center of Debate about Broadband Equity**

Bloomberg Government (February 15, 2023)

• **Teacher-Principal Training and Recruitment**

• **Event: Sanders Holds Town Hall on Teacher Pay Crisis:** On Monday, February 13, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, hosted a town hall on Capitol Hill titled, “Respecting our Teachers: A Town Hall on the Teacher Pay Crisis in America.” Sanders was joined by Becky Pringle, president of the National Education Association (NEA), and Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), as well as other educators and teachers.

• **Funding**

• **Press Release: ED Announces Grants to Strengthen Teacher Diversity, Workforce:**

On Wednesday, February 15, the Department of Education (ED) announced grants totaling over \$18 million awarded via the **Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence program** (Hawkins Program) to increase high-quality teacher preparation programs for

teachers of color, strengthen the diversity of the nation’s teacher pipeline, and address teacher shortages.

- **Press Release: ED Awards \$188M to Support Mental Health, Student Wellness:** On Thursday, February 16, the Department of Education (ED) **announced** over \$188 million in awards across 170 grantees in over 30 states to “increase access to school-based mental health services and to strengthen the pipeline of mental health professionals in high-needs districts.”

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

- **Impact on State School Board Associations**

3. **In Brief – Last Week in Washington**

- **ED Partners with Carnegie, Overdeck to Support Family Engagement:** On Friday, February 10, The Department of Education (ED) **announced** that it would be partnering with the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Overdeck Family Foundation to launch the Family Engagement Learning Series. Officially launching on February 28, 2023, the series is designed to help education leaders and practitioners implement family engagement strategies that support student success and provide attendees with evidence-based strategies and research, highlights from the field, and information and resources.
- **Senate Judiciary Examines How to Better Protect Children Online:** On Tuesday, February 14, The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on Protecting Our Children Online. The hearing examined the challenge of ensuring online child safety and privacy, with witnesses testifying to the risks, threats, and harms that children face online.
- **New America Held Webinar on Creating Conditions for Kindergarteners to Thrive:** On Tuesday, February 14, New America and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading hosted a webinar titled, “Creating Conditions and Environments for Thriving Kindergarteners.” The webinar featured an overview of research on how to help students successfully learn through positive learning conditions that accentuate, for example, connection of culture, music, or the outdoors.
- **Field Experts Look at Impact of Workforce Pathways for Youth Grant:** On Wednesday, February 15, AMIKids, Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), and Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) cohosted a webinar titled, “Workforce Pathways for Youth: The Role of Out of School Time” with Jobs for America’s Graduates and former U.S. Department of Labor Women’s Bureau Director. The webinar provided an opportunity for AMIKids, BGCA and JAG to highlight the impacts and outcomes of high-quality workforce development programs that were created and funded by the Department of Labor **Workforce Pathways for Youth grant** (WPY).
- **Bipartisan Reps Introduce Bill to Increase Access to Data Science:** On Wednesday, February 15, Representatives Haley Stevens (D-MI), Don Beyer (D-VA), Young Kim (R-CA), and Jim Baird (R-IN) **introduced** the **Data Science and Literacy Act**, which would increase access to data science education, reduce

course equity gaps for all students, and help build America's 21st century STEM workforce.

4. **New Publications**

- **Inclusive, Innovative Assessments for Students with Learning Disabilities**

National Center for Learning Disabilities (February, 2023)

This paper includes principles that policymakers and assessment developers should consider when creating new assessments, an overview of current proposals, and policy recommendations to realize equity within assessment systems for all learners.

5. **In the News**

- **Ending “Government-Run Monopoly” on Schools is Top Priority for Rep. Virginia Foxx**

Education Week (February 14, 2023)

- **DeSantis Says He Could Do Away with AP Courses Altogether. Here's what that Means for Florida Students**

USA Today (February 14, 2023)

- **Districts Turn to AI to Keep Guns out of Schools**

K-12 Dive (February 15, 2023)

- **Educators Say They Lack Resources to Address Worsening Mental Health Crisis**

K-12 Dive (February 16, 2023)

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

- **Parents' Child Care Choices:** The Bipartisan Policy Center will hold a virtual discussion on "Parents' Child Care Choices: What We've Learned."

Tuesday, February 21 at 3pm ET

- **STEM Education 101:** The STEM Education Coalition Policy Forum will host an event to discuss STEM education policy issues relevant to the 118th Congress.

Tuesday, February 21 at 2pm ET

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

- The House and Senate are in recess until Monday, February 27

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

9. **About BPAG**

1. COSSBA Policy Priorities

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND E-RATE

BIDEN FCC NOMINEE AT CENTER OF DEBATE ABOUT BROADBAND EQUITY

Bloomberg Government (February 15, 2023)

TEACHER-PRINCIPAL TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT

SANDERS HOLDS TOWN HALL ON TEACHER PAY CRISIS

On Monday, February 13, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, hosted a town hall on Capitol Hill titled, “Respecting our Teachers: A Town Hall on the Teacher Pay Crisis in America.” Sanders was joined by Becky Pringle, president of the National Education Association (NEA), and Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), as well as other educators and teachers. During the Town Hall, Sanders announced plans to introduce legislation to pay teachers a minimum of \$60,000 a year, complementing a bill introduced last week in the House by Representatives Frederica Wilson (D-FL) and Jamaal Bowman (D-NY). The Senator, along with Pringle and Weingarten, attributed the ongoing staff shortages across the country to harmfully low pay and “unconscionable” working conditions. “In America today, hundreds of thousands of public school teachers are forced to work two or three jobs during the school year,” Sanders said. He continued, “If we are going to have the best public school system in the world, we have got to radically change our attitude toward education and make sure that every teacher in America receives the compensation that she or he deserves for the enormously important and difficult work that they do.” Weingarten echoed those sentiments, labeling teachers as “nation builders” and “pillars of democracy.” “It’s important to place value on what teachers do... pay is a way to do that,” said Weingarten. Pringle went further, stating that there is a national shortage of professional pay – “a shortage of basic dignity” and respect for those who dedicate their lives to educating the nation’s learners. Several AFT and NEA members also participated, describing having to work second and third jobs to make ends meet and the emotional toll that a lack of respect for the profession has on educators. Senator Sanders’ remarks can be found here, and an archived recording on the Town Hall can be found here.

FUNDING

ED ANNOUNCES GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN TEACHER DIVERSITY, WORKFORCE

On Wednesday, February 15, the Department of Education (ED) announced grants totaling over \$18 million awarded via the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence program (Hawkins Program) to increase high-quality teacher preparation programs for teachers of color, strengthen the diversity of the nation’s teacher pipeline, and address teacher shortages. According to ED’s press release, “The Hawkins Program, named for Augustus F. Hawkins, the first Black politician elected to the House of Representatives from west of the Mississippi River, supports comprehensive, high-quality teacher preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs), and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).” Congress appropriated \$8 million for the grants in the 2022 omnibus, which marks the first time the Hawkins Program has received funding since its creation in 2008. ED redirected an additional \$10 million to the program. “Thanks to President Biden’s leadership, I’m incredibly proud to announce the first-ever Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program grants, which will help Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions recruit and prepare a

new generation of diverse and talented individuals into the teaching profession,” said Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. More information, including a list of the Hawkins Program awardees, can be found [here](#).

ED AWARDS \$188M TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND STUDENT WELLNESS

On Thursday, February 16, the Department of Education (ED) **announced** over \$188 million in awards across 170 grantees in over 30 states to “increase access to school-based mental health services and to strengthen the pipeline of mental health professionals in high-needs districts.” The funding is a result of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), and will enhance President Joe Biden’s **Mental Health Strategy**, part of his Unity Agenda highlighted in his State of the Union address. Communities will be able to use this investment to hire around 5,400 school-based mental health professionals, in addition to training an estimated 5,500 more, broadening access to crucial mental health supports. Moreover, the funds will strengthen the certified mental health providers pipeline for those looking to work in schools with the greatest needs. According to ED, these grants are the first in a series of awards the Department will make over several years – “The largest investment in school-based mental health this country has ever made,” the press release states. “As the President outlined in his State of the Union address, we must do more to tackle our nation’s growing mental health crisis, which is particularly acute among our youth,” said Susan Rice, domestic policy advisor to the President. “These new awards will help connect more students in need to school-based mental health services now and ensure a pipeline of trained professionals to support students in the future. Integrating mental health services into our schools is a key component of the President’s Mental Health Strategy and will help fulfill a key component of the President’s Unity Agenda.”

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2. Budget and Appropriations Wrap-Up

The 118th Congress might finally be organized. Last week, the Senate Appropriations Committee **announced** chairs, ranking members, and rosters for all 12 subcommittees, answering some lingering questions for advocates eager to know who to talk to about critical issues. As had been rumored, the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee has new leadership on both sides of the aisle. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) will chair the Subcommittee; Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) will be the Ranking Member. The panel is also getting two new Republican members—Senator John Boozman (R-AR) and Senator Katie Britt (R-AL).

While Capitol Hill and advocates await the March 9th release of the White House’s FY 2024 budget request, lawmakers are talking about the House Republican proposal to cut discretionary funding for FY 2024 to FY 2022 levels—a reduction of about \$142 billion. The Senate Democratic Policy and Communications Committee issued a scathing **report** that detailed what the cuts would mean if applied across-the-board—with examples. The report also pointed out that if Congress allows defense spending to grow with inflation and health care benefits for veterans grow to the level enacted for next year (its funding is provided one year in advance), all other non-defense discretionary funding would be cut by 30% to get to the FY 2022 target level. House Budget Committee Chairman Jodey Arrington (R-TX) released a **fact sheet** highlighting

last week's Congressional Budget Office's fiscal and economic projections that show growing deficits and debt if the budget grows according to already-enacted spending bills.

Another familiar step in the annual appropriations process has a date. The House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee has announced its public witness hearing date—March 23, 2023. The deadline to submit requests to testify is Friday, March 3, 2023.

Monday is a federal holiday and the House and Senate are in recess for the week. In the meantime, many advocacy groups and those who support them are bracing for March and the return of in-person fly-in days. Talking points, meeting tips, Capitol Hill maps and role playing make their triumphant return!

How does this impact State School Board Associations?

Regarding the Senators leading this Congress' Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, both Senator Baldwin and Capito have been on the Subcommittee for years and are familiar to the education advocacy community. Senator Capito has been more moderate on education issues and spending than most of her other Republican colleagues.

As for the report issued by the Senate Democratic Policy and Communications Committee detailing what discretionary budget cuts would mean for the country, on education, families and children, the report asserts that the Republican proposed budget cuts would:

- Reduce research and education grants by approximately 2,600, which would support 38,600 fewer scientists, technicians, teachers, and students compared to FY 2023.
- Deny access to infant formula, fresh fruits and vegetables, and other necessary foods by removing 1 million participants from the WIC program.
- Worsen the existing crisis in high quality and affordable child care by cutting nearly \$950 million from the Child Care and Development Block Grant.
- Exacerbate the affordable housing crisis and create housing instability for our most vulnerable citizens by requiring significant cuts to the HOME Investment Partnership Program.

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3. In Brief – Last Week in Washington

ED PARTNERS WITH CARNEGIE, OVERDECK TO SUPPORT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

On Friday, February 10, The Department of Education (ED) announced that it would be partnering with the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Overdeck Family Foundation to launch the Family Engagement Learning Series. Officially launching on February 28, 2023, the series is designed to help education leaders and practitioners implement family engagement strategies that support student success and provide attendees with evidence-based strategies and research, highlights from the field, and information and resources. “Research tells us that engaging families helps overcome obstacles to learning and that students are more apt to succeed in school when those closest to them are deeply involved. This new learning series is about equipping educators, school and district leaders, and community partners with the most promising models for deepening relationships with parents and students, and highlighting how

districts can use the American Rescue Plan’s historic \$130 billion investment in education in support of these efforts,” said Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. The [first virtual session](#) will focus on how family engagement can support math and literacy. Subsequent sessions will take place over the next six months on the fourth Tuesday of the month and will focus on attendance and student engagement; student and school safety; student mental health and well-being; kindergarten readiness; and college readiness. More information can be found [here](#).

SENATE JUDICIARY EXAMINES HOW TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN ONLINE

On Tuesday, February 14, The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on Protecting Our Children Online. Witnesses included Kristin Bride, survivor parent and social media reform advocate; Emma Lembke, founder of Log Off Movement; Michelle DeLaune, president and CEO of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; John Pizzuro, CEO of Raven; Dr. Mitch Prinstein, Chief Science Officer of the American Psychological Association; and Josh Golin, executive director of Fairplay. The hearing examined the challenge of ensuring online child safety and privacy, with witnesses testifying to the risks, threats, and harms that children face online. The panel of Senators displayed rare bipartisanship and communicated plans to work together to pass legislation this year that holds tech companies accountable. “There are a number of good legislative proposals to protect our kids, such as the [EARN IT Act](#), which enjoys strong bipartisan support in this Committee,” Chairman Dick Durbin (D-IL) said in his [opening statement](#). “Additionally, for months, I’ve been working on a comprehensive bill to close gaps in the law and crack down on the proliferation of child sex abuse material online: the [STOP CSAM Act](#),” he added. The Chairman noted that he will be releasing a discussion draft on the legislation and plans to move it forward in Committee soon. Ranking Member Lindsey Graham (R-SC) voiced similar sentiments, [saying](#), “The American consumer is virtually unprotected from the abuses of social media. Of all Americans, I think, young people are the most exposed here. Parents feel helpless.” He continued, “I want the people testifying to understand that we’re all listening to you. That all of our ears are open and our hearts are open to try to find solutions. This is the one thing, I think, that unites most Americans.” Survivor parent [Kristin Bride](#) spoke to the harms that occur every day from the “unchecked power” of social media companies, sharing the story of her son that took his own life following experiences of cyberbullying. Advocate [Emma Lembke](#), a college sophomore, detailed her own experiences with social media and the mental and physical consequences that came from increased screen time, which resulted from “constant quantification of my worth through likes, comments, and followers.” She’s now asking that Congress work with her generation to enact meaningful regulation of large tech companies. Experts [Michelle DeLaune](#) and [John Pizzuro](#) spoke to the exploitation of children by online predators, while [Dr. Mitch Prinstein](#) honed in on social media’s effects on mental health and well-being and touted the [Kids Online Safety Act](#). [John Golin’s](#) testimony detailed the issues around apps, websites, and platforms targeting children through unfair practices, arguing that children deserve “to explore in developmentally appropriate ways without being manipulated into spending more time or targeted by algorithms that amplify harmful content.” An archived recording of the hearing can be viewed [here](#).

NEW AMERICA HELD WEBINAR ON CREATING CONDITIONS FOR KINDERGARTENERS TO THRIVE

On Tuesday, February 14, New America and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading hosted a webinar titled, “Creating Conditions and Environments for Thriving Kindergarteners.” The event featured Laura Bornfreund, senior fellow and advisor on early and elementary education for New

America; Sheresa Blanchard, a senior education researcher at SRI International; Hedy Chang, founder and executive director of Attendance Works; Rebecca Colbert, senior director of design and engagement for Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO) at the National Wildlife Foundation; Ann Kay, co-founder and education coordinator of The Rock 'n' Read Project; and Natalie Walrond, director of the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd. The webinar featured an overview of research on how to help students successfully learn through positive learning conditions that accentuate, for example, connection of culture, music, or the outdoors. Blanchard stated that education leaders should be asking themselves how to create a learning environment that makes children feel valued as a part of the education community. Bornfreund added that the responsibility lies with educators to create an environment where everyone in the learning community is able to thrive and emphasized the importance of equity, while Kay stated that educators should be thinking about how to create compelling environments that excite students and begin incorporating those successful tactics in a classroom setting. Building positive, healthy relationships between teacher, student and parent is another crucial component of creating thriving conditions for young learners, Walrond expressed. The panel additionally examined how state and federal governments can support educators in this role, which should include an increased focus on social and emotional health, in conjunction with increased funding for teacher professional development on implementing successful strategies in the classroom. An archived recording of the event can be found [here](#).

FIELD EXPERTS LOOK AT IMPACT OF WORKFORCE PATHWAYS FOR YOUTH GRANT

On Wednesday, February 15, AMIKids, Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), and Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) cohosted a webinar titled, "Workforce Pathways for Youth: The Role of Out of School Time." The event featured Rebecca Corrigan, senior director of education and workforce development services for AMIKids; Michael Ewing, director of program services for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Houston; Greg Wise, managing director of National Workforce Readiness for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America; Alex Knapp, director of policy and advocacy for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America; and Dr. Laurie Todd-Smith with Jobs for America's Graduates and former U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau Director. The webinar provided an opportunity for AMIKids, BGCA and JAG to highlight the impacts and outcomes of high-quality workforce development programs that were created and funded by the Department of Labor [Workforce Pathways for Youth grant](#) (WPY). The grant, created by Congress in fiscal year 2020, is designed to connect youth with high quality workforce preparation and in-demand careers in their community via out-of-school time organizations nationwide. The panel of youth workforce development professionals and subject matter experts shared preliminary results from the first half of the three-year grant and underscored how their programs are empowering youth to take charge of their professional future. Corrigan elaborated on how AMIKids leveraged their WPY grant for year-round programs, including afterschool and summer programming. With the grant, AMIKids developed two models: The Career Exploration Model, which focuses on building self-awareness and building a plan for reaching future goals; and the Pre-Apprenticeship Model, which focuses on a combination of school-based, work-based learning, job readiness, financial literacy skills, industry-recognized certification, and job placement. Ewing explained how the BGCA of Greater Houston utilized their WPY grant for "expanding experiences." They established several programs that connects students with industry professionals, including "Building Industry Leaders," a six-week program that teaches real-estate development to high school students; and "Toyota T-TEN," a pilot eight-week program that provides state-of-the-art hands-on automotive diagnosis and repair training with an emphasis on

skills needed to succeed in the industry. Ewing emphasized how public/private partnership is imperative and highlighted how 80-100 percent of BGCA Greater Houston students have participated in and benefited from these programs. “There are so many jobs out there, we have to do a better job at making sure our kids have the right exposure,” Ewing said. Todd-Smith noted how JAG was primarily an in-school education model, but used the WPY grant to expand into out-of-school-time. She outlined how the JAG model relies on project-based learning, trauma-informed care, and employer engagement. Following individual presentations, the panel came together and articulated how the WPY funding opportunity targeted communities that public money historically has not targeted for career development – out-of-school-time programming. The panel urged Congress, and congressional staff attending Wednesday’s event, to continue their support for the grant program and provide \$20 million in grant funding for fiscal year 2024. An archived recording of the webinar can be downloaded and viewed [here](#).

BIPARTISAN REPS INTRODUCE BILL TO INCREASE ACCESS TO DATA SCIENCE

On Wednesday, February 15, Representatives Haley Stevens (D-MI), Don Beyer (D-VA), Young Kim (R-CA), and Jim Baird (R-IN) [introduced](#) the [Data Science and Literacy Act](#), which would increase access to data science education, reduce course equity gaps for all students, and help build America’s 21st century STEM workforce. The bill supports an Education Department program that encourages educational entities, grade school through college, to apply for funding to increase access to data science and literacy education. “To compete in a 21st-century economy, we need a 21st-century STEM workforce that reflects the diversity that makes the United States the greatest nation on earth,” said Congresswoman Stevens. Congressman Baird added, “Improved access to these tools is essential for building tomorrow’s workforce, and I look forward to working with Congresswoman Stevens to get this bipartisan investment in STEM education across the finish line.” National Council of Teachers of Mathematics President Kevin Dykema weighed in, saying, “As our society and opportunities for students become increasingly data intense and information based, a foundation of data literacy skills based in data science and statistics is all the more important for today’s citizens and a competitive workforce.” A full list of industry and advocate endorsements, including several mathematical education groups, can be found [here](#). The full press release can be read [here](#).

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4. New Publications

Inclusive, Innovative Assessments for Students with Learning Disabilities

National Center for Learning Disabilities (February, 2023)

This paper includes principles that policymakers and assessment developers should consider when creating new assessments, an overview of current proposals, and policy recommendations to realize equity within assessment systems for all learners.

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5. In the News

Ending ‘Government-Run Monopoly’ on Schools is Top Priority for Rep. Virginia Foxx
Education Week (February 14, 2023)

DeSantis Says He Could Do Away with AP Courses Altogether. Here’s what that means for Florida Students

USA Today (February 14, 2023)

Districts Turn to AI to Keep Guns out of Schools

K-12 Dive (February 15, 2023)

Educators Say They Lack Resources to Address Worsening Mental Health Crisis

K-12 Dive (February 16, 2023)

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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

6. Weekly Calendar

Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Webinar: Parents' Child Care Choices

Subject: The Bipartisan Policy Center will hold a virtual discussion on "Parents' Child Care Choices: What We've Learned."

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

Event: STEM Education 101

Subject: The STEM Education Coalition Policy Forum will host an event to discuss STEM education policy issues relevant to the 118th Congress.

Participants: James Brown, executive director, STEM Education Coalition (Moderator); Karen Horting, CEO and executive director, Society of Women Engineers; Allyson Knox, senior director of education policy and programs, Microsoft; Yvonne Lai, associate professor, University of Nebraska; and Rhonda Foxx, head of global corporate governance, Solidigm.

Time and Location: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Registration: Register [here](#).

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7. On The Floor of Congress This Week

The House and Senate are in recess until Monday, February 27.

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

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[U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor](#)

[U.S. Senate Budget Committee](#)

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[Congressional Budget Office](#)

[Federal legislative information](#)

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

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