



The Education Report

MARCH 6, 2026

Della Cronin, Editor

dcronin@bosepublicaffairs.com

Sarah Lamson, Deputy Editor

slamson@bosepublicaffairs.com

The Education Report, a weekly publication of BPAG, provides an executive summary of public policy issues affecting American education. **Please use the bookmarks below to navigate to your area of interest:**

1. [Budget and Appropriations](#)
2. [In Brief](#)
3. [New Publications](#)
4. [In the News](#)
5. [About BPAG](#)

1. Budget and Appropriations

Congress began laying the groundwork this week for the fiscal year (FY) 2027 appropriations cycle, even as the Trump administration has yet to release its formal budget request, which will reportedly be unveiled toward the end of March. It is an unusual dynamic that is already shaping early activity. Long lines on Capitol Hill this week indicate that advocates for every cause are making the case for the programs important to them, no matter where appropriators are in the process.

The House Appropriations Committee held a round of hearings across its subcommittees this week. Early hearings included oversight and budget-focused sessions with agencies and program officials, signaling the committee's intention to start gathering information ahead of drafting spending bills. On Thursday, the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Subcommittee held its traditional ["Member Day" hearing](#), giving House members the opportunity to testify about their funding priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

House Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Cole (R-OK) has framed these early steps as the formal beginning of the FY2027 appropriations process. In [guidance issued to members late last month](#), Cole announced that lawmakers could begin submitting programmatic, language, and Community Project Funding requests. "I am pleased to announce the beginning of the Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations process," Cole wrote in a Dear Colleague letter. He also indicated that subcommittee chairs would begin releasing additional guidance for each of the twelve appropriations bills as the process ramps up.

Traditionally, the White House releases its budget request in early February, providing Congress with the administration's detailed funding proposals. This year, the request has been delayed. Reporting indicates that the Office of Management and Budget has been working through significant internal debates over defense spending, particularly following Defense Secretary Pete

Hegseth's push for a major increase in the Pentagon's budget. Legal machinations around the collection of tariffs and direction that the administration refund them could also be affecting spending plans. Education advocates are understandably nervous that such shifts will come at the expense of education and other domestic investments.

Taken together, the developments this week highlight a familiar tension in the federal budget process: the executive branch sets priorities through its budget request, but Congress ultimately controls appropriations—and this year, the House is beginning its work even before the administration has fully defined its own plan.

[Back to top.](#)

2. In Brief

FIRST LADY ADDRESSES UN SECURITY COUNCIL ON EDUCATION, TECH, PEACE

First Lady Melania Trump [addressed the United Nations Security Council](#) as the United States assumed the rotating presidency of the body in March 2026, marking the first time a sitting First Lady presided over a Security Council session. In her remarks, she emphasized the role of education, technology, and knowledge-sharing in promoting long-term peace and global stability. Trump argued that societies that value learning and access to information are more likely to foster understanding and tolerance, while restrictions on education can limit social and economic progress. She also highlighted the growing role of artificial intelligence and digital connectivity in expanding global access to knowledge, suggesting these technologies could help bridge cultural divides and support future generations. Trump encouraged Security Council members to support broader access to education and technology worldwide as part of efforts to strengthen international peace and cooperation.

TRUMP TAPS ACTING CDC DIRECTOR TO RUN NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

On Monday, President Donald Trump [announced his nomination](#) of Jim O'Neill to serve as Director of the National Science Foundation for a six-year term. O'Neill previously served as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and Acting Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, positions he left in February as part of a leadership shakeup at HHS. O'Neill also held leadership roles at HHS during President George W. Bush's administration, as well as positions within multiple biotech and venture capital organizations. Most recently, he served as CEO of the SENS Research Foundation, where he led efforts to combat age-related diseases such as Alzheimer's, heart disease, and cancer. The last NSF Director, Sethuraman Panchanathan, was appointed by President Trump in 2020 but resigned last April after five years leading the agency. O'Neill's appointment will require confirmation by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee and ultimately the full Senate. A HELP Committee hearing date has not yet been set.

HIGHER ED & WORKFORCE CHAIR BURGESS OWENS ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Congressman Burgess Owens (R-UT) [announced](#) on Wednesday that he will not seek reelection in 2026, citing a desire to pursue the next chapter of his work outside elected office. Owens, who was first elected in 2020, has represented a district covering parts of central Utah and suburbs around Salt Lake City and Provo. His retirement comes as Utah continues to navigate a court-driven redistricting process that could reshape the state's congressional map. During his time in Congress, Owens held a prominent role on the House Committee on Education and Workforce,

serving as chair of the Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee, where he led hearings and policy discussions on topics including college affordability, workforce training, apprenticeships, and preparing workers for emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. His departure will create an open seat in Utah, a state where Republicans currently hold all four House districts.

HOUSE HEARING EXAMINES WORKFORCE TRAINING FOR AN AI-DRIVEN ECONOMY

On Wednesday, the House Education and Workforce Committee's Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee [held a hearing](#) titled, "Building an AI-Ready America: Strengthening Employer-Led Training," focusing on how career and technical education (CTE) and employer-led training programs can address workforce shortages in an increasingly AI-driven economy. Lawmakers from both parties discussed the urgent need for skilled workers in industries such as construction, healthcare, manufacturing, and infrastructure, all of which are undergoing rapid technological transformation. Members underscored the importance of aligning workforce training with real-world job demands, particularly through the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These efforts aim to expand youth apprenticeship programs, improve employer-led training, and strengthen sector-based partnerships between businesses and educational institutions. Witnesses—including leaders from the Wireless Infrastructure Association, CareerWise USA, Wake Technical Community College, and Accenture—highlighted successful employer–education partnerships and emphasized the value of hands-on training that prepares workers for emerging jobs. They noted that programs such as registered apprenticeships can provide practical skills and industry-recognized credentials that help workers meet growing demand in fields related to AI and advanced technologies. Lawmakers also raised concerns about AI potentially displacing entry-level jobs, though many argued that CTE and apprenticeship pathways offer more "AI-resistant" career options by emphasizing practical, in-demand skills. Overall, the hearing reflected bipartisan support for modernizing workforce policies, increasing funding for training programs, and strengthening collaboration between industry and education to prepare the U.S. workforce for the future of work.

APPROPRIATORS HIGHLIGHT COMMUNITY COLLEGES, WORKFORCE PREPARATION

On Wednesday, a group of community college leaders and policy experts testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies during [a hearing](#) titled, "Preparing for the Future: America's Community Colleges." The panel addressed issues including Pell Grants and student payment options, alignment of community college programs with local industry needs, and the impact of federal funding on course and certification offerings. Dr. Patricia Sims noted that "often, the cost of education defeats the purpose of getting one," emphasizing the importance of federal support systems. She shared that 83% of the roughly 10,000 students at Drake State Community & Technical College are Pell-eligible, allowing the institution to serve students who face barriers such as childcare and transportation. Dr. Brad Hall of Blackfeet Community College discussed the challenges posed by unpredictable federal funding for land-grant tribal colleges, whose budgets rely heavily on support from the Bureau of Indian Education. Shawn Morgan of Beville State Community College highlighted the high cost of equipment needed to train skilled workers and argued that AI is unlikely to replace many hands-on trades, noting that program stacking, dual enrollment, and industry certifications help expand access to workforce training. Shalin Jyotishi of the New America think tank advocated for greater federal investment in equipment and training

that prepares community college students for both skilled trades and emerging technologies such as AI. Members of both parties expressed strong support for community colleges and technical training, while some Democrats referenced proposed education spending cuts that were ultimately excluded from the FY26 reconciliation package.

HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ADVANCES FARM BILL AMID SNAP DEBATE

The House Agriculture Committee advanced the “Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026” after a [lengthy markup](#), with Democrats unsuccessfully offering amendments aimed at reversing major changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enacted in the 2025 reconciliation law. Democratic members, led by Ranking Member Jahana Hayes (D-CT), proposed repealing provisions that shift some SNAP costs to states, expand work requirements, and limit future benefit increases, arguing the policies could reduce food assistance and strain state budgets. After the markup, Hayes [said](#) she opposed the bill because it “does not address the needs of families, farmers, or the Ag economy,” adding that the process was “a missed opportunity to rebuild the Farm Bill and work in a bipartisan manner.” The bill maintains roughly \$187 billion in previously enacted SNAP spending reductions and introduces new cost-sharing requirements for states with higher payment error rates. Chair GT Thompson (R-PA) urged his colleagues to vote in favor of the bill, saying, “There is a lot of good being done in this bill, across all 12 titles. For the good of the people we represent, I encourage you all to vote based on what is in the bill, instead of based on what is *not* in the bill.” Advocacy groups raised concerns about the proposal’s potential impact on food insecurity, particularly among college students. Mark Huelsman of The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs [said](#) the measure “neither recognizes nor repairs the policy choices that have led to over four million college students going hungry.” The legislation ultimately passed the committee on a 34–17 vote and now moves forward as part of the broader farm bill process, although few expect this bill to make it to the president’s desk before the end of the 119th Congress.

LHHS-ED MEMBER DAY HEARING HIGHLIGHTS EDUCATION FUNDING PRIORITIES

During a House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies [“Member Day” hearing](#) on Thursday, lawmakers highlighted several priorities tied to education programs and related federal investments as Congress begins work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 spending bill. Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) emphasized the importance of maintaining funding for education initiatives such as Head Start and Pell Grants, describing them as programs that “level the playing field for low-income children” and help students pursue higher education and workforce opportunities. Members also discussed the role of federally funded research conducted at universities, particularly through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and programs like the BRAIN Initiative, which supports neuroscience research and training at academic institutions. Additional remarks connected federal education and research funding to broader workforce and public health outcomes, including support for maternal health research partnerships with minority-serving institutions and investments in scientific research that rely on university-based laboratories. Overall, the hearing underscored bipartisan recognition of the role federal education and research programs play in expanding opportunity, supporting students, and advancing innovation.

HOUSE ENERGY & COMMERCE COMMITTEE ADVANCES CHILD ONLINE SAFETY BILLS

On Thursday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee [held a markup](#) of nine bills related to child digital safety and energy grid resiliency, advancing eight measures to the full House of

Representatives. The three measures addressing child online safety revealed a clear partisan divide. Much of the disagreement centered on [H.R. 7757](#), the “Kids Internet and Digital Safety (KIDS) Act,” which would require online platforms to adopt guardrails against harmful content and implement safer product design practices. The bill also incorporates the latest version of the debated “[Kids Online Safety Act](#).” After several hours of debate and criticism from Democrats—who argued the legislation was too lenient on technology companies—H.R. 7757 advanced to the full House on a 28–24 party-line vote. Much of the discussion focused on the standards software companies would need to meet when identifying minor users of their platforms, highlighting broader ideological disagreements over the federal government’s role in regulating online services. By contrast, [H.R. 2657](#), “Sammy’s Law,” which would require large social media platforms to allow parents to manage and access account data and permissions through safety software providers, passed with a more bipartisan 36–16 vote, suggesting potential common ground on certain digital safety measures. [H.R. 3149](#), the “App Store Accountability Act,” which would require age verification and parental consent for app store downloads by minors, was reported to the full House on a narrower 26–23 vote—the tightest margin of any bill considered during the markup. That debate reflected ongoing concerns about balancing protections for minors with the potential impact on technological innovation. Democrats also pointed to a similar Texas law that was recently temporarily blocked in federal court over First Amendment concerns. Collectively, the advancement of these three bills highlights the committee’s continued focus on addressing risks children face online, while also underscoring a persistent partisan divide over how aggressively the federal government should regulate the digital marketplace. You can watch the full markup [here](#).

[*Back to top.*](#)

3. New Publications

[**Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants: What Districts are Prioritizing with the New Flexibilities under ESSA’s Title IV-A Program**](#)

National Center for Education Evaluation (February 2026)

[**K-12 Education: Lessons Learned from Implementing COVID-19 Relief Funding Provisions Could Improve Future Grant Monitoring**](#)

U.S. Government Accountability Office (February 2026)

[**Fiscal Year 2026 Management Challenges Facing the U.S. Department of Education**](#)

U.S. Office of Inspector General (February 2026)

[*Back to top.*](#)

4. In the News

[**‘What is the point?’: Conservatives spar over Education Department breakup**](#)

Politico (March 2, 2026)

[**Key Federal Education Data Collections Under Review In IES Overhaul**](#)

K-12 Dive (March 4, 2026)

[**McMahon Touts First Year in Office; Dems and Students Push Back**](#)

Inside Higher Ed (March 5, 2026)

Education Department Urged To Broaden ‘Professional’ Student Definition

Higher Ed Dive (March 3, 2026)

[Back to top.](#)

5. 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](#).

...

This publication contains links to Internet sites for the convenience of World Wide Web users. Bose is not responsible for the availability or content of these external sites, nor does Bose endorse, warrant or guarantee the information, services, or products described or offered at these other Internet sites. Copyright 2022. Bose Public Affairs Group. Redistribution of this memorandum or its content outside the immediate organization of the intended recipient without the express prior permission of Bose Public Affairs Group is prohibited. Readers are encouraged to send comments about this publication to dcronin@bosepublicaffairs.com.