

# Federal Legislative Report (119-15)

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## **FY 2026 Budget**

Congress closed out one of the final hurdles to completion of the FY 2026 budget on April 30 with action on the Homeland Security and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, H.R. 7147. The bill fully funds all remaining Homeland Security programs for FY 2026 except those involved in immigration enforcement, ending the 76-day partial government shutdown. Those remaining programs are set to be funded through Budget Reconciliation legislation, which the President has requested to be completed by June 1, 2026.

## **FY 2027 Budget**

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees continue to make progress toward FY 2027 Appropriations legislation. On April 28, Education Secretary Linda McMahon testified at the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to discuss the President's proposed budget for education, which cuts K-12 education by 13%. At the hearing, Senators questioned the impact of the proposed reductions on education in rural areas, the Department's Office of Civil Rights, and other key areas. IASB continues to communicate strong support for federal education funding that fulfills Congressional commitments and provides boards of education with the tools they need to increase student achievement. On April 16, IASB submitted testimony to the House Appropriations Committee in support of these goals; IASB will provide similar testimony to the Senate Committee in May.

In addition to funding for education programs, the House Appropriations Committee adopted the FY 2027 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act on April 29. The bill includes \$37.9 billion for Child Nutrition Programs, with mandatory funding for the School Lunch, School Breakfast, and Summer Foods Programs. This is a \$59 million increase from prior year funding.

## Congressional Actions

### House Clears Way for Action on Stopping Indoctrination and Protecting Kids Act

On April 29, the House of Representatives Rules Committee reported a rule for floor consideration, clearing the way for House of Representatives consideration of [H.R. 2616](#). This bill would require school districts that receive federal funds to obtain parental consent before changing elementary or middle school students' pronouns, names, or bathroom/locker room usage. The legislation also prohibits the use of such funds to teach or advance concepts related to gender ideology. The House adjourned for the May district work period without completing floor consideration. However, this bill may be considered when the House returns the week of May 11.

### Education and Workforce Adopts WIOA bill, Holds Hearing on Equity

The House Education and Workforce Committee adopted legislation, [H.R. 8210](#) reauthorizing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) by a party line vote on April 21. WIOA is the nation's primary workforce development law, authorizing funding for education and training services. Democrats criticized the legislation for moving away from a previously negotiated bipartisan agreement for reauthorization. The lack of bipartisan support will likely impact the chances for House floor consideration.

Also in April, the Committee held a hearing, [\*Leveling Down: How Equity Policies Undermine Excellence and Harm Students\*](#). At the hearing, witnesses and Congressional Members debated the impact of actions intended to promote equity of opportunity and academic success on programs that serve gifted and talented students, rural students, and students with disabilities.

### Legislation to Repeal Federal Tax Credit

Senator Mark Kelly introduced legislation, [the Keep Public Funds in Public Schools Act, S. 4277](#) to repeal the federal tax credit for contributions to organizations granting scholarships for private and public education expenses. The legislation is cosponsored by both Illinois Senators, Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth. While waiting for the Department of the Treasury to issue final regulations on the federal tax credit, 30 states have announced their intent to participate. Illinois Governor Pritzker has said he is waiting for the regulations to be issued before making a decision. The tax credit will go into effect on January 1, 2027.

## **Administration Actions**

### **Department of Justice Investigating Illinois School Districts**

On April 30, the U.S. Department of Justice announced an investigation of 35 Illinois school districts and one charter system to determine whether they have included sexual orientation or gender ideology content in K-12 classes. The investigation will also determine whether parents have been given the right to opt out of such curriculum and whether the districts limit access to bathrooms and locker room spaces based on biological sex. Similar investigations have been launched by both the Department of Justice and the Department of Education in other states. IASB is aware of these investigations and is coordinating conversations at the state level.

### **Department of Education Issues Final Rule defining “Professional” Students**

On April 30, the Department of Education announced the final rule implementing the student loan provisions of last summer’s Budget Reconciliation Act. Of note, the bill defines the categories of “professional” and “graduate” students and sets loan limits for these categories. Education degrees, classified as “graduate” will be subject to annual borrowing limits of \$20,500, with a lower amount available for part-time students, while “professional” students will have access to greater loan limits. IASB, together with the New York State School Boards Association, submitted comments during the consideration of the rule expressing concerns that these lower borrowing limits for graduate programs will impact the pipeline for teaching-related professions, such as school administrators, special education professionals, and other district staff who work with students. COSSBA also submitted comments. Unfortunately, the final rule did not address these concerns. More information about the final rule is available on the [Department of Education's fact sheet](#).

### **Department of Education Issues Grant Notices in Partnership with Department of Labor**

The Department issued grant notices for the Supporting Effective Educator Development Grant Program, the Charter Schools Program Grants to State Entities, and the Competitive Grants for State Assessments Program in partnership with the Department of Labor. The State Assessments Program Grants are of particular interest to IASB because of the [Student Achievement Data and Research Advocacy Tenet](#) authored by IASB. In the [announcement](#) the Department outlined that the grants are intended to “enhance the quality of assessment instruments and systems to promote student academic achievement.” Under an Interagency Agreement, the Department of Labor is administering these programs. More about the grant competitions can be found on the [grants.gov website](#).

## COSSBA Federal Advocacy Conference

Join IASB in Washington, D.C. September 21-23 at the COSSBA Federal Advocacy Conference. Federal proposals to curtail programs that support rural school districts, effective professional development for teachers, students in need of language acquisition assistance, and many other programs will dramatically impact Illinois students and schools. There is no substitute for direct advocacy with federal legislators to share how these programs impact your district's students.

[Register Here](#)

## Advocacy Ambassadors

The next monthly Advocacy Ambassadors Meeting is on Friday, May 15 at noon. If you are not yet an Advocacy Ambassador, [sign up on the IASB website](#). To register for this webinar, visit the IASB [Events Calendar](#).

## Illinois Association of School Boards

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**The vision of the Illinois Association of School Boards is excellence in local school board governance supporting quality public education.**

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