

Federal Legislative Report (119-04)

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Registration Open for the 2025 COSSBA Federal Advocacy Conference

Registration is now open for the Consortium of State School Boards Association's (COSSBA) annual Federal Advocacy Conference in **Washington, D.C., September 7-9, 2025**. COSSBA has reserved rooms at the Washington Grand Hyatt, the location of the conference, but availability is limited. If planning to attend, you are encouraged to register and make your hotel reservations as soon as possible.

At the Federal Advocacy Conference, school board members will spend a day learning about key issues, how to effectively speak with your representatives, and meeting with other board members from Illinois and across the country. Then you will have an opportunity to speak with members of the House and Senate who represent your school district.

[Register for the Federal Advocacy Conference](#)

House of Representatives Passes Reconciliation Bill

The House of Representatives narrowly passed the Reconciliation bill during the early hours of the morning on Thursday, May 22. Among other things that impact K-12 public schools, this bill includes changes to Medicaid and tax credits for individuals who donate towards scholarships for students to attend private K-12 schools. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration. More information on the contents and status of this bill will be coming in the next federal newsletter.

Preliminary Injunction Granted Blocking Revocation of Federal ESSER Funds

As reported last month, the U.S. Department of Education revoked its prior approval of Illinois' request for an extension in over \$77 million in federal pandemic relief ESSER funds. Illinois was one of 17 states to challenge that order and a federal judge in New York issued a preliminary injunction blocking the administration from cutting off access to hundreds of millions of dollars in federal pandemic relief funds for public schools—including the \$77 million for Illinois. The ruling preserves extended spending deadlines, protecting vital funding for local Illinois school districts.

President Trump's Executive Orders

Since taking office President Trump has signed over 150 executive orders (EOs). Many of these orders have been challenged legally. Recent Executive Orders that may impact K-12 public education include:

Advancing Artificial Intelligence Education for American Youth

This EO acknowledges how rapidly Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the world and the necessity to equip students with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to and thrive in a digital world. It also seeks to invest in educators and equip them with the tools to train students about AI and how to utilize AI in their classrooms to improve educational outcomes. An AI Education Task Force is established pursuant to the EO to promote AI literacy and proficiency to ensure an AI-ready workforce.

A Presidential AI Challenge is also established through the EO which must be created within 12 months of the EO and is intended to encourage and highlight student and educator achievements in AI. In order to provide resources for K-12 AI education, the Task Force shall seek to establish public-private partnerships with leading AI organizations, academic institutions, nonprofit entities, and other organizations. These partnerships are tasked with developing online resources focused on teaching K-12 students foundational AI literacy and identifying grants that can be used to provide resources for K-12 AI education. Teacher and educators training opportunities on the use of AI shall also be identified and increasing AI-related apprenticeships shall also be prioritized.

Reinstating Common Sense School Discipline Policies

This EO states that “the Federal Government will no longer tolerate known risks to children’s safety and well-being in the classroom that result from the application of school discipline based on discriminatory and unlawful “equity” ideology.” It notes that the January 2014 Department of Education and Department of Justice jointly issued “Dear Colleague” letter regarding racial disparities in school discipline has been rescinded.

Within 30 days of the date of the EO, issued on April 23, the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall issue new guidance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and State educational agencies (SEAs) regarding school discipline and their obligations not to engage in racial discrimination under Title VI in all contexts, including school discipline. The EO directs the Secretary of Education to take appropriate action with respect to LEAs and SEAs that fail to comply with Title VI protections against racial discrimination in the application of school discipline.

The EO also requires the Secretary of Education to submit a report to the President regarding “the status of discriminatory-equity-ideology-based school discipline and behavior modification techniques in American public education.”

Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future

This EO declares that it is policy of the United States to optimize and target federal investments in workforce development to align with the country’s reindustrialization needs and equip American workers to fill the growing demand for skilled trades and other occupations. It requires a report to be issued within 90 days of the date of this order, issued on April 23, setting forth strategies to help the American worker.

The Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Commerce, and Secretary of Education shall improve transparency on the performance outcomes of workforce development programs and credentials supported through federal investments, including earnings and employment data, for all federal workforce development programs, supported through federal investments, including earnings and employment data.

News and Updates on Additional Federal Topics

Private School Vouchers

NPR, May 14, 2025

AI Laws

News From the States, May 15, 2025

New Grant Program for Charter Schools

U.S. Department of Education, May 16, 2025

U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights Launches Title VI Investigations into Evanston-Skokie School District 65

U.S. Department of Education, May 1, 2025

U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights Launches Title VI Investigation into Chicago Public Schools

U.S. Department of Education, April 29, 2025

OCR Launches Investigations into Illinois DOE, the Chicago Public School District 299, and Deerfield Public Schools District 109 Over Reported Title IX Violations

U.S. Department of Education, March 20, 2025

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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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