

Federal Relations Coordinator Meeting November 3, 2025

Attendees: J Anderson (MO), Aaron Burd (MO), David Carpenter (AL), Jesse Davis (GA), Jeff Drouin (NH), Allison Evertz (MT), Rebecca Fillion (VT), Shannon Goo (HI), Debra Houghton (MS), Troy James (SD), Mark Johnson (NE), Shay Lewis (CT), Naiomi Matsuzaki (HI), Tara McAuliffe (RI), Sue Myers (MD), Nick Neiderhouse (OH), Jerod Phillips (DE), Melanie Rosenberger (PA), John Schilling (CA), Amy Schott (VA), Andrea Sifers (OK), Johnathan Swegles (MI), Mark Terry (TX), Trudy Wilson (UT), Stephen Wiltshire (MA), and Heather Wolf (TN)

NSLAC Registration

- Registration for NAESP NSLAC 2026 is now open. FRCs can [register for the conference here](#).
- NSLAC will take place February 8-February 11, 2026, at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington D.C.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Allie Van Dee at avandee@naesp.org.

Government Shutdown Status

- The current government shutdown has become the longest in U.S. history.
- It is very easy for the government to enter a shutdown, but it is very difficult to end one.
- Shutdowns typically end when the public begins to feel direct and widespread impacts.
- (Note: the shutdown ended on Thursday, November 13.)

SNAP Implications

- The public could experience significant hardships as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) loses funding during the shutdown.
- Several states have filed lawsuits to compel continued funding.
- Federal judges in Connecticut and Massachusetts ruled that the Trump administration must fund the program.
- The administration has agreed to fund half of SNAP benefits, although the specific conditions remain unclear.
- Some stakeholders have suggested using school meal funding to temporarily cover SNAP and replenishing the funds later.

Head Start Implications

- Head Start programs are beginning to run out of funds because the government cannot issue ongoing payments and grants.
- More than 100 programs are expected to wind down this month, affecting over 60,000 children.

- During the Trump administration’s first year, many education-related actions were not visible to the public.
- When the impact of these decisions was felt by the public—in the case of the withheld formula grant funding this summer)—the administration quickly backtracked amid public outcry.

Federal Employee Layoffs

- The Trump administration threatened additional federal employee layoffs after the shutdown began.
- The Department of Education laid off roughly half its workforce, including 450 employees most of whom were concentrated in K–12 areas.
- A lawsuit has been filed seeking to pause these layoffs.

FY26 Funding Outlook

- Once the shutdown ends and Congress returns, lawmakers will resume work on FY26 funding.
- The House plan proposes cutting Title I, eliminating Titles II and III, while also consolidating other K–12 programs and creating state block grants.
- NAESP supports the Senate plan, which maintains all current funding levels.
- Once the House reconvenes, school leaders will be encouraged to contact their representatives to maintain funding at current levels and to accede to the Senate funding figures.

National Principals Month (NPM)

- NAESP held the National Principals Month Policy Briefing, with NASSP and AFSA, where NAESP President April Knight was a featured panelist discussing current issues facing principals such as school safety, cell phone use in schools, and mental health.
 - You can watch a [recording of the webinar here](#).

Department of Education & Secretary McMahon

- The Senate confirmed Kristen Baesler as Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, but, because of the shutdown, she has not been able to be sworn into office.
- Proposal to Downsize the Department of Education
 - Secretary McMahon outlined her vision to significantly downsize the Department of Education (ED).
 - She proposed shifting special education responsibilities to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
 - ED was created by statute, therefore, Congress must pass a new statute to dismantle it.
 - Current law requires that elementary, secondary, and special education offices remain within ED.

- Proposal to Move Special Education to HHS
 - There are rumors of a memo proposing a new Office of Disability within HHS to house special education programs.
 - Details about the structure and responsibilities of this office remain unclear.
 - IDEA remains an education-focused disability law, so moving it to HHS raises legal and implementation questions.
- Potential Legal Considerations
 - The administration may attempt to navigate legal requirements by keeping ED as the fiscal agent that disburses the funds to states and districts while all other program activity such as monitoring and compliance are done within HHS.
 - The final legal interpretation may ultimately be determined by the courts.
- State Waiver Discussions
 - Secretary McMahon has made state flexibility from federal requirements a priority.
 - She has invited states to apply for waivers.
 - Indiana recently submitted a waiver request that would essentially convert all ESSA programs into a block grant.
 - The Department is considering these waiver requests even while the government remains shut down.
 - The administration may issue decisions by the end of the month regardless of the shutdown's status.

Emerging Federal Priorities

- The administration has identified several major funding priorities: supporting AI development and adoption in schools, math instruction, and expanding civics education in preparation for the United States' 250th anniversary.
- Planned initiatives include meaningful learning opportunities in math, curriculum development, and educator preparation.
- NAESP has submitted input emphasizing the essential role of principals in each of these activities.