

FP's 2025 Summer Reading List for Educational Leaders

Insights

5.09.25

Another school year is winding down, and educational leaders perhaps have never been more ready for summer break. From the Trump administration's significant policy shifts to deeply consequential litigation playing out to rapidly evolving technologies, K-12 schools and higher education institutions have weathered a lot this year. We hope your schedules lighten a little during these next few months and allow you time to decompress. As you gear up for the 2025-2026 academic year, we encourage you to browse our summer reading list to get the tools and support you need to tackle it all.



Our 2025 Summer Reading List is packed with nearly 30 education-related insights on a wide range of topics and is **recommended for educational leaders in public, private, and independent K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and higher education institutions**, including:

- presidents, vice presidents; chancellors; provosts; and heads of schools;
- boards of trustees and board officers;
- superintendents, principals, vice principals, and school boards;
- general counsel and legal affairs departments;
- leaders of finance, human resources, admissions, advancement, DEI, technology, and IT;
- athletic directors;
- and more

and more.

Table of Contents

[Immigration Enforcement and Student Visas](#)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion + the New Era of Civil Rights Enforcement](#)

[Education-Related Workplace Law Developments + Best Practices](#)

[Technology, Data Protection, and Modern Challenges in Education](#)

[College Athletics](#)

Quick Primer: In light of the many new developments from the Trump administration, check out our [First 100 Days Report for Employers](#) – particularly the [Education section](#).

Immigration Enforcement and Student Visas

1. [Immigration Enforcement FAQs for K-12 Schools in New Trump Era](#) (February 2025)

Massive policy shifts and executive action from the White House necessitate that K-12 school administrators proactively prepare for interactions with immigration authorities to ensure the well-being of their students and staff as well as legal compliance.

- **School Level:** K-12
- **Subject Matter:** Immigration, Mass Deportations, Sensitive Location Protections, Laken Riley Act, Private School Rights, FERPA, Emergency Planning, I-9 Audits, International Students, SEVP Compliance

2. [Judge Refuses to Halt Immigration Enforcement Actions at Places of Worship: 3 Things Your School Needs to Know](#) (April 2025)

A federal judge denies an effort to stop the Trump administration from moving forward with immigration enforcement actions like deportation raids at religious institutions – meaning enforcement actions can now be carried out on your school campus.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Immigration, Religious Institutions, Sensitive Locations, Litigation, First Amendment, Religious Freedom

3. [What Do Employers and Educational Institutions Need to Know About Revocation of Student Visas? Answers to Your Biggest Questions](#) (April 2025)

International students and recent graduates across the county are facing the possibility of the government revoking their F-1 Student status or J-1 Exchange Visitor status, exposing them to the

possibility of deportation – and educational leaders must urgently assess the risks, understand their responsibilities, and prepare for rapid changes.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Immigration, Student Visas, F-1 Student Status, J-1 Exchange Visitor Status

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion + the New Era of Federal Civil Rights Enforcement

Prerequisite: *Much, but not all, of the recommended reading in this section applies only to educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Make sure you understand the level of federal financial assistance that you receive (if any).* Particularly for private schools, whether you receive federal financial assistance – even indirectly – can be a complex analysis dependent in part on applicable state laws. Consult with legal counsel to determine whether receipt of federal funding is worth the increased regulatory hurdles applicable to receiving such funding.

1. Trump Orders Feds to Combat “Illegal” Corporate DEI Programs: 5 Takeaways for Private-Sector Employers + What You Should Do Now (January 2025)

*President Trump issues a far-reaching executive order related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in not only the federal government but also the private sector – which includes **all private schools**, not just those receiving federal financial assistance. Under the order, the Department of Education has until May 21 to identify up to nine potential civil compliance investigations of higher education institutions with endowments over \$1 billion.*

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed (regardless of federal funding)
- **Subject Matter:** DEI, Title VII, Civil Compliance Investigations

2. From Immigration Raids to DEI and Bathroom Access: How K-12 Schools Should Respond to the First Week of Trump Executive Orders (January 2025)

On his first day back in office, President Trump signs an executive order mandating (among other things) that “federal funds shall not be used to promote gender ideology” and requiring federal agencies to reverse any policies that allow gender-identity based access to single-sex spaces, such as bathrooms and locker rooms.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance (*practice tips focus on K-12 schools*)

- **Subject Matter:** Gender Identity Discrimination, Bathroom Access, Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance

3. Trump Issues 7 New Executive Orders Impacting Higher Ed and K-12 Schools, Ranging From DEI to Discipline to AI (April 2025)

*The Trump administration promises to reform the higher education accreditation system, including by **withholding federal recognition from accreditors that require institutions to adopt DEI practices** as a formal standard of accreditation (and therefore as a condition of accessing federal aid). Six other education-related orders are issued the same day, including one **declaring disparate-impact liability as “wholly inconsistent with the Constitution”** and another **seeking to eliminate the application of school discipline based on “discriminatory and unlawful ‘equity’ ideology.”***

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed (as further specified throughout the insight)
- **Subject Matter:** Higher Education Accreditation, DEI, Title VI, Title VII, Disparate-Impact Liability, K-12 School Discipline

4. Federal Court Blocks Sweeping Title IX Rule for Schools Nationwide: How Your School Can Approach the Changes (January 2025)

A sweeping Title IX regulation that was finalized by the Biden administration last year is effectively wiped off the books by a federal court.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance
- **Subject Matter:** Title IX, Sex-Based Discrimination and Harassment, LGBTQ+ Students, Pregnant Students

5. Education Department Kicks Off New Era of Title VI Discrimination Enforcement: What Your School Must Know + 5 Steps to Take Now (February 2025)

The US Department of Education begins cracking down on “overt and covert racial discrimination” under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act – forcing schools to eliminate race-based considerations from their policies or risk losing all federal funding.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance
- **Subject Matter:** Title VI, Race-Based Considerations, DOE Enforcement, OCR Investigations, Federal Funding

6. Will My School Face Investigation? Feds Announce Race-Based Investigations Into 52 Higher Education Institutions (March 2025)

The OCR announces investigations into 52 higher ed institutions to determine whether they violated Title VI by making race-based decisions in their graduate and scholarship programs – a violation that can result in the loss of federal funds.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance
- **Subject Matter:** Title VI, OCR Investigations, Race-Based Outreach and Recruitment Efforts, Race-Segregated Programs, and Race-Based Scholarship Opportunities, Federal Funding

7. Federal Officials Launch Title IX Special Investigations Team – The 5 Things Higher Education Institutions Need to Do (April 2025)

The federal government takes a dramatic step to reshape Title IX enforcement – one that should prompt immediate action from all colleges and universities.

- **School Level:** Higher Ed Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance
- **Subject Matter:** Title IX, Gender Identity, Transgender Students, DOE and DOJ Investigations, Federal Funding

8. So You're Concerned About Losing Federal Funding: 3 Things Schools Should Do Right Now (March 2025)

Many educational institutions are concerned about the potential threat to their federal funding given the Trump administration's new interpretations of existing federal laws to achieve certain policy goals. What can schools do to preserve their federal funding?

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance
- **Subject Matter:** Title IX, Title VI, State Laws, First Amendment, Academic Freedom, Federal Funding

Education-Related Workplace Law Updates and Best Practices

1. Legally Blind Teaching Applicant Deemed Not Qualified Under the ADA: 3 Lessons for Schools (October 2024)

A federal judge rules in favor of a school district in Texas in a failure-to-hire lawsuit after determining that a legally blind applicant for a teaching position was not a "qualified individual" under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** HR, Hiring, ADA, Disability Discrimination, Litigation

2. Federal Appeals Court Revives University Worker's Equal Pay Claim: How Your School Can Ensure Compliance (December 2024)

In a decision that will have implications for how colleges and universities across the country pay their administrators, faculty, and staff, a federal appeals court revives a former athletic department worker's gender discrimination and equal pay claims.

- **School Level:** Higher Ed (especially public colleges and universities)
- **Subject Matter:** Gender Discrimination, Equal Pay Laws, Litigation, Pay Audits

3. Do's and Don'ts for Your School When Conducting Job Interviews (March 2025)

The job interview is a crucial factor in maintaining a school's community, identity, and safety. But it isn't just a chance to vet applicants for compatibility with school culture and mission – it's also a time for your school to sell the opportunity and learn more about the candidate as a person.

- **School Level:** K-12
- **Subject Matter:** HR, Hiring, Job Interviews, Job Descriptions, Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance, Ministerial Exception

4. SCOTUS Will Soon Decide the Fate of E-Rate Program: Could Schools Lose Their Tech Funding? (April 2025)

The US Supreme Court will decide the constitutionality of the Universal Service Fund, a program established under federal law to fund the E-rate program and promote universal access to telecommunications services. What's at stake for schools? \$4 billion in subsidies for internet, telephone, and related services in public and private schools.

- **School Level:** K-12
- **Subject Matter:** Tech Funding, E-Rate Program, Telecommunications Services, Digital Learning, Economically Disadvantaged Areas, FCC, Litigation, SCOTUS

5. Ohio Public Schools Must Update Policies on Curriculum Content and Religious Instruction: 6 Key Takeaways From New "Parents' Bill of Rights" Law (January 2025)

*Ohio enacts a "Parents' Bill of Rights" law (which took effect April 9) requiring **public schools** to adopt policies on curriculum content concerning sexual concepts, parental notification about students' health and well-being, and time for students to attend courses in religious instruction.*

- **School Level:** K-12 (Public Schools Only)
- **Subject Matter:** Parental Rights, Curriculum Content, "Released Time" Courses

6. Tennessee Lawmakers Narrowly Pass School Voucher Program Bill: 5 Key Takeaways About the Education Freedom Act (February 2025)

A new Tennessee law allows families to use taxpayer dollars to cover the cost of private school tuition. The hotly debated \$447 million statewide school choice program goes into effect for the 2025-2026 school year.

- **School Level:** K-12 (Private Schools Only)
- **Subject Matter:** Vouchers, School Choice, Private School Autonomy

Technology, Data Protection, and Modern Challenges in Education

1. ChatGPT Is Rolling Out a New Version for Universities: Here's What Your School Needs to Know (June 2024)

OpenAI releases "ChatGPT Edu" – a new version that is specifically aimed at higher education. While this new artificial intelligence tool may benefit students, faculty, researchers, and campus operations, there are important considerations to keep in mind.

- **School Level:** Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Artificial Intelligence, GenAI, Technology, Algorithmic Discrimination, AI Policies

2. Nationwide Calls to Ban Phones in K-12 Schools: Key Considerations for Private Schools on Whether to Adopt a Phone-Free Policy (July 2024)

As a growing number of schools consider phone-free policies and legislators call for statewide action, many private schools are also facing pressure from all sides.

- **School Level:** K-12
- **Subject Matter:** School Cell Phone Policies, Legislation, Student Mental Health

3. Education Officials Learn Dangers of AI After Citing False Studies in Official Document: 5 Steps for School Administrators to Avoid Similar Fate (November 2024)

A state education department releases and circulates an official policy document riddled with false citations because administrators used generative AI to help create it, highlighting concerns over the use of GenAI in educational administration.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Artificial Intelligence, GenAI, School Administration

4. Court Backs School in AI Cheating Case: 5 Things Your School Can Do to Avoid Trouble

(December 2024)

A federal judge in Massachusetts upholds a school district's decision to discipline a student for using artificial intelligence for a class project, setting some good ground rules for how your school might best address academic dishonesty in the AI age.

- **School Level:** K-12 + Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Artificial Intelligence, Disciplinary Records, Litigation, Due Process, Academic Integrity

5. How Schools Should Respond to the PowerSchool Cyberattack (January 2025) and **Cyber Threat Escalates: PowerSchool Cybercriminal Returns to Extort Individual Schools Months After Massive Data Breach Purportedly Resolved** (May 2025)

The country's largest provider of cloud-based education software for K-12 schools announces that it fell victim to a massive data breach but assures the thousands of schools and over 50 million students who use the education software that the matter has been resolved. Months later, the cybercriminal returns to extort individual schools.

- **School Level:** K-12
- **Subject Matter:** Data Protection, Cybersecurity, Cyberattacks, Sensitive Personal Information, School Community Communications, Data Breach, Extortion

6. Data Security and International Travel: What K-12 Schools and Trip Chaperones Need to Know (April 2025)

K-12 schools are increasingly sending staff and students abroad for cultural exchanges, academic competitions, service trips, and more. While these trips offer incredible educational value, they can also expose school staff – especially trip leaders and chaperones – to serious digital and data security risks.

- **School Level:** K-12
- **Subject Matter:** International Travel, Data Protection, Cybersecurity, Unauthorized Access, Cyber Theft, Privacy Regulations, FERPA

College Athletics

1. Judge Delays Final Approval of the House v. NCAA Settlement Over Roster Limit Concerns: What Your Athletic Department Should Know + 3 Steps to Get Ahead (May 2025)

The future of college sports hangs in the balance as negotiations over the NCAA's proposed \$2.8 billion antitrust settlement head into overtime.

- **School Level:** Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Student-Athletes, NIL Compensation, Litigation, Roster Limits, Financial Sustainability, Title IX Compliance, House v. NCAA

2. Feds Announce that NIL Payments Will Not Be Subject to Title IX Gender Equity Requirements – What Your School Needs to Know (February 2025)

The US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announces that it has rescinded the Biden-era Title IX guidance on name, image, and likeness (NIL) that had tried to establish ground rules requiring equal payment to male and female athletes.

- **School Level:** Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Title IX, NIL Payments, NIL Agreements, College Athletes, Athletic Financial Assistance, NCAA

3. Caught in a Raging Storm: 5 Steps Your School Should Take as NIL Disputes Continue to Cause Problems for Universities (February 2025)

Another NIL dispute signals that the storm surrounding college athlete compensation will not be calming anytime soon. A lawsuit involving Florida State's head basketball coach is the latest – but certainly not the last – event to impact this new era of college athletics.

- **School Level:** Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** NIL Payments, College Athletes, Athletic Financial Assistance, NCAA, FTC, Risk Mitigation

4. The Final Buzzer on NLRB Push for Student-Athlete "Employee" Status: Everything Your School Needs to Know (January 2025)

The battle over whether student-athletes are employees under federal labor law is over – for now.

- **School Level:** Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Student-Athletes, Labor Law, NLRB, Employee Status, Misclassification, Unfair Labor Practice Charges, Protected Concerted Activity, Joint Employers, Administrative Decisions

5. Play for Pay? Bombshell Ruling Upends Amateurism in College Sports (July 2024)

A federal appeals court becomes the first to rule that student-athletes at NCAA Division I schools can bring a lawsuit claiming they are employees and may be entitled to minimum wage and overtime payments under federal law. While not a final decision on the issue, this ruling paves the way for continued litigation and a potential trial, while also opening the floodgates for copycat litigation throughout the country.

- **School Level:** Higher Ed
- **Subject Matter:** Student-Athletes, Labor Law, NLRB, Employee Status, Misclassification, Unfair Labor Practice Charges, Protected Concerted Activity, Joint Employers, Administrative Decisions

Conclusion

We hope this helps you get caught up on all the latest developments impacting your operations. As always, we will continue to monitor these areas of the law, so make sure you are subscribed to Fisher Phillips' Insight System to get the most up-to-date information. For further information, contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the authors of this Insight, or any member of our Education team.

Related People



Jennifer B. Carroll
Partner
954.847.4716
Email





Kristin L. Smith

Partner

713.292.5621

Email

Service Focus

AI, Data, and Analytics

Counseling and Advice

Data Protection and Cybersecurity

Employers' Rapid Response Team for DHS Raids

Employment Discrimination and Harassment

Government Relations

Immigration

Labor Relations

Litigation and Trials

Pay Equity and Transparency

Privacy and Cyber

Industry Focus

Education

Higher Education

Sports

Trending

New Administration Resource Center for Employers

Related Offices

Cleveland

Columbus

Memphis

Nashville