

April 29, 2024

Chair Robert Aderholt
Appropriations LHHS-ED Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro
Appropriations LHHS-ED Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chair Tammy Baldwin
Appropriations LHHS-ED Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Shelley Moore Capito
Appropriations LHHS-ED Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairwoman Baldwin, and Ranking Member Capito:

The undersigned 68 organizations represent a coalition of education, disability, and other organizations dedicated to fulfilling the funding promise for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On behalf of approximately 7.5 million students with disabilities, their teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, parents, school boards and administrators, we urge you to provide the maximum increase possible in funding for IDEA as part of a fair and proportional allocation for the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 LHHS-Education appropriations bill. **Specifically, we ask that you provide no less than \$16.259 billion for IDEA Part B Grants to States, putting IDEA on a glidepath to full funding, while holding all other education programs harmless from funding cuts.**

As you know, when IDEA was first enacted in 1975, Congress anticipated that the cost of providing education to IDEA-eligible students would be approximately twice that of the cost to educate non-disabled students. Thus, Congress authorized a Federal funding contribution of 40 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure (APPE). In exchange for this Federal funding, states and districts must ensure that all eligible students are provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. However, the closest the federal government has come to reaching its 40 percent commitment was 18 percent in 2004-2006, and in recent years federal funding has leveled off and even been cut.

The IDEA Part B grants to states program is currently funded at \$14.21 billion via annual appropriations, approximately 10.7 percent of APPE. The chronic underfunding of IDEA by the federal government places an additional funding burden on states, local school districts, and taxpayers to pay for needed services, and school programs that are also beneficial to students with disabilities. Funding programs that serve students with disabilities is one of the best measures of Congress' desire to offer a quality education to every single student, and the FY 2025 appropriations bill is a first step in the right direction toward helping Congress realize its IDEA funding commitment.

Moreover, the number of IDEA-eligible children has increased significantly in recent years. The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Education shows that the number of children served by IDEA increased 3.8% from 2021 to 2022¹. This increase in child count, coupled with no significant increases for IDEA, has resulted in a lower average Federal share per child and a lower percentage of APPE.

The full benefit of IDEA Part B investment is only realized when Congress also recognizes the importance of increasing funding for other parts of IDEA to adequately support our nation's students with disabilities. To fully achieve the goal of providing a free appropriate public education for all students, we must provide sufficient funding to support early intervention services, transition services, professional preparation and development, and other critical components within IDEA.

We strongly support a prioritized and meaningful investment in IDEA, without negatively impacting funding for other education programs, and urge Congress to provide a significant increase for IDEA Part B State Grants as you negotiate the FY 2025 appropriations package.

Sincerely,

AACTE: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

AFT

All4Ed

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Music Therapy Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association

American Psychological Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Assistive Technology Industry Association

Association of Educational Service Agencies

Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)

Autism Society of America

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

CAST

Center for Learner Equity

Chiefs for Change

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Coalition for Adequate Funding for Special Education (California)

Coalition for Community Schools

¹ Source: <https://www.advocacyinstitute.org/blog/?p=1250>

CommunicationFIRST
Consortium of State School Boards Associations
Council for Exceptional Children
Council for Learning Disabilities
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
Council of the Great City Schools
EDGE Consulting Partners
Education Reform Now
Eggleston
First Focus Campaign for Children
GLSEN
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE)
ImmSchools
Institute for Educational Leadership
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Los Angeles Unified School District
Moms of Black and Brown Children
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National Association for Music Education
National Association for Pupil Transportation
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Counties
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators (NAESPA)
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities
National Council on Teacher Quality
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Education Association
National PTA
National Rural Education Association
NYS Alliance for Quality Education
San Diego Unified School District

SchoolHouse Connection

Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

The Advocacy Institute

The Arc of the United States

CC: U.S. Senate, Appropriations Subcommittee

U.S. House of Representatives, Appropriations Subcommittee