

Senator Patty Murray
Chairwoman, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Roy Blunt
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Tom Cole
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

September 30, 2022

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Blunt, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

The undersigned organizations represent a coalition of education stakeholders and advocates dedicated to fulfilling the funding promise for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On behalf of the more than 7.4 million students with disabilities, their teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, parents, school boards and administrators, we write to 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) 2023 LHHS-Education appropriations bill. Specifically, we ask that you provide no less than \$16.2 billion for IDEA Part B Grants to States, putting IDEA on a glidepath to full funding.

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 \$13.34 billion via annual appropriations, approximately 13 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, a need that will only be exacerbated as state legislatures respond to the economic downturn by cutting state education funding. This compounds the existing pressure already placed on local budget dollars to cover the federal shortfall and will further shortchange other 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 2023 appropriations bill is a first step in the right direction toward helping Congress realize its IDEA funding commitment.

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.

As you negotiate the current continuing resolution and work toward a final FY23 appropriations package, 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.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
Autism Society of America
Center for Learner Equity
Coalition for Adequate Funding for Special Education
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Council of the Great City Schools
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Moms Of Black And Brown Children
National Association for Music Education
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators
National Association of Pupil Transportation
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID)
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Education Association National PTA
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Rural Education Association
National Rural Education Association
Pennsylvania School Boards Association
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States

CC: Senate Appropriations Committee
House Appropriations Committee