



February 9, 2021

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the National Alliance of Special Education (NASISP), we urge your support for two pieces of critical legislation needed to ensure our nation's schools are equipped to serve all of our students. Taken together, the bills will provide direct financial support to districts' efforts to address COVID-19 and provide long term mandatory full funding of Title I and IDEA, both of which help support our nation's most vulnerable students. NASISP is a coalition representing more than one million Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP). SISP professionals include school counselors, school nurses, psychologists, school psychologists, social workers and school social workers; occupational therapists, physical therapists; art, dance/movement, music therapists, and speech-language pathologists and audiologists. In addition, the major national organizations representing general and special education teachers and administrators are part of the coalition. SISP provide direct supports to students and provide consultation to teachers, families, administrators, and community partners to help ensure all students thrive.

The Keeping Our Pact Act would mandate full funding of Title I and IDEA, both of which have been woefully underfunded for decades. Importantly, when IDEA was enacted, Congress promised to pay 40 percent of the National Average per Pupil Expenditure. The closest the federal government has come to reaching its 40 percent commitment was 18 percent in 2005. Currently the federal funding level is approximately 13%. The chronic underfunding of IDEA by the federal government places an additional burden on states and local school districts; a need that will only be exacerbated as state legislatures respond to the economic impact of COVID-19 and could result in the reduction or elimination of school programs that are also beneficial to students with disabilities.

The Save Educators Jobs Act will save nearly 4 million education jobs, including specialized instructional support personnel who are critical to help address students' learning loss and mental and behavioral health and social emotional learning needs. Since the beginning of the pandemic, more K-12 jobs have been lost than nearly all of the local education jobs lost during the entire Great Recession. Without sufficient funding from the federal government to support states and school districts during the recovery, experts estimate 1.4 million to 1.9 million education jobs will be lost over the next one to two years. These jobs must be protected to ensure schools have the capacity to meet the academic, physical and mental health, and social and emotional learning needs of all students. We urge you to support both of these bills and support efforts for swift enactment.

We are happy to speak further about how Congress can support SISP and the students we serve. For further information, please feel free to contact one of the NASISP Co-Chairs: Eric Masten (emasten@asha.org); Abe Saffer, (asaffer@aota.org), or Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach (kvaillancourt@naspweb.org).

NASISP Members

American Art Therapy Association

American Council for School Social Work

American Counseling Association

American Dance Therapy Association

American Federation of Teachers

American Music Therapy Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association

American School Counselor Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Council of Administrators of Special Education

Council for Exceptional Children

National Association of College Admissions Counselors

National Association of Pupil Services Administration

National Association of School Nurses

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

National Association of Social Workers

National Education Association

School Social Work Association of America

The National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP) is a 501(c)(6) organization that represents over a million Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) nationwide. SISP professionals provide and support school-based prevention and intervention services to address barriers to educational success, ensure positive conditions for learning, and help all students achieve academically and ultimately become productive citizens. SISP collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents, and families to ensure that all students are successful in school. NASISP seeks to empower SISP professionals by encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration, and affirming their role in education's best practices and their involvement in school improvement efforts.

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