

# IDEA FULL FUNDING COALITION



April 24, 2025

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

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

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

The undersigned 64 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 over 7.9 million students with disabilities (approximately 15% of all public school students), 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) 2026 LHHS-Education appropriations bill. **Specifically, we ask that you provide no less than \$16.661 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, IDEA was enacted 50 years ago in 1975. IDEA Part B, Section 611 authorizes the grants-to-states program, which supports special education and related services for over seven million school-age children with disabilities. When the predecessor legislation to IDEA (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) was enacted in 1975, the assumption was that education for children with disabilities was, on average, twice as costly to provide as education for other children. At that time, the law authorized the federal government to provide grants to states to pay up to 40% of each state's "excess cost" of educating children with disabilities. That amount—often termed the IDEA full-funding amount—is calculated by taking 40% of the national average per pupil expenditure (APPE) amount and multiplying it by the number of children served under IDEA. **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 2026 appropriations bill is a first step in the right direction toward helping Congress realize its IDEA funding commitment. Over the last decade, the number of students served by IDEA has grown by 20%, resulting in a historic low federal contribution 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 2026 appropriations package.

Sincerely,

AACTE: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

AASA, The School Superintendents Association

AFT, AFL-CIO

American Academy of Pediatrics

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

APTA Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy

Assistive Technology Industry Association

Association of Educational Service Agencies

Association of Latina Administrators and Superintendents

Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)

Autism Society of America

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

CAST

Center for Learner Equity

Chiefs for Change

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Coalition for Community Schools

CommunicationFIRST

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  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
GLSEN  
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Muscular Dystrophy Association  
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools  
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 (NACo)  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools  
National Association of Private Special Education Centers  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID)  
National Council on Teacher Quality  
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)  
National Down Syndrome Congress  
National Down Syndrome Society  
National PTA  
National Rural Education Association  
SchoolHouse Connection  
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (TED)  
The Advocacy Institute  
The Arc of the United States