

February 6, 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 20515

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

We submit this letter as co-chairs of the IDEA Full Funding Coalition, a group of education, disability, and other organizations dedicated to fulfilling the funding promise for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Our letter and the priorities it outlines are a repeat of a broader coalition letter we sent in March of 2023, a letter that was signed by 59 associations and organizations.

As you move forward with the work to finalize appropriations for federal fiscal year 2024 (FY24), and grapple with cuts to non-defense discretionary funding (including education), we ask you to prioritize the protection of this critical investment IDEA. Our nation's most vulnerable students should be protected from—not bearing the brunt of—funding cuts.

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) 2024 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.**

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 \$14.19 billion via annual appropriations, approximately 12 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 2024 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.

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 2024 appropriations package.

Sincerely,

IDEA Full Funding Coalition Co-Chairs

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Policy Manager

National Center for Learning Disabilities

Noelle Ellerson Ng

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