

July 9, 2020

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Murphy
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Hassan, Murphy, and Van Hollen,

The undersigned organizations represent a coalition of education organizations dedicated to fulfilling the funding promise for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On behalf of more than 7 million students with disabilities, their teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, parents, school boards and administrators, we write to thank you for introducing the Supporting Children with Disabilities during COVID-19 Act. This legislation will provide much needed funding for the more than 7 million students across the country who are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as schools work to re-open schools and effectively serve students while ensuring the safety of all children and students.

The need for additional IDEA funding at this time is enormous. During the unprecedented nationwide school closures due to COVID-19, students served under the IDEA have been disproportionately impacted as the delivery of education and related services moved to distance learning. The chronic underfunding of IDEA by the federal government will only be exacerbated and put additional burden on school districts as state legislatures respond to the economic downturn by cutting state education funding.

The Supporting Children with Disabilities during COVID-19 Act appropriation of \$11 billion for state grants under IDEA, \$900 million for early childhood education programs, and \$300 million for personnel development will be critical to help offset the enormous costs incurred by schools and districts as they make investments in technology products, services, and personnel training and move to re-open schools and educate all students, including students with disabilities.

Thank you for your leadership and recognition of the critical importance of dedicated funding for the IDEA during this time as we work to ensure that schools have the necessary resources to serve every child with a disability and provide equitable educational opportunities to all.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers

American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
Autism Society of America
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Learning Disabilities Association of America
NAESPA
National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National PTA
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Rural Education Association
The Arc of the United States