

IDEA Full Funding

Talking Points- Background and Context

- When the IDEA passed in 1975, Congress understood that it was creating a mandate that would have increased financial impact at state and local levels.
- To assist states and local districts it promised to pay a significant share (40%) of the excess costs of educating a child with a disability (average per pupil expenditure).
- The closest the federal government has come to reaching its 40% commitment was 18% in 2005.
- Since 2004, after adjusting for inflation, annual funding for IDEA increased by roughly 7%, however so did the number of students served under the law.
- Meanwhile the nationwide average per pupil expenditure increased by approximately 18 percent in real dollars.
- Thus, the Federal share of IDEA funding decreased by roughly 30%, significantly hampering State, district, and school resources to meet the needs of children with disabilities.
- States must commit to providing a free appropriate public education to all eligible students as a condition of receiving annual Federal IDEA funds, creating a quagmire for states and local districts: Either fund the shortfall with state and local funds or forfeit Federal funds.

Talking Points for districts:

- Funding the federal, state and local partnership to provide an equal educational opportunity for all students has not worked very well from the local district perspective.
- Share the impact the IDEA Federal funding shortfall has on your district/school/classroom, including the encroachment on your general education budget.
- Explain to your members of Congress the financial relief that would come at the local level when Congress fully funds its commitment.
- Reiterate the importance of IDEA and its pressures on your local budgets and urge them to oppose any effort to further reduce federal effort in this chronically underfunded program.

Concluding talking points/ the ask:

- Investing in IDEA, a federal flagship formula program designed to help level the education playing field for students with disabilities, is an investment in our nation's students and their future.
- It indicates that Congress is serious in keeping its word to help school districts support all students.
- Urge your representative and senators to support the IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 5984 / S. 3213).
- Urge your senators and representatives to safeguard IDEA funding in the FY 23 appropriations process and to invest as much money as possible, with a priority on ensuring that IDEA is funded at a level that at least matches FY 22 plus the supplemental funding provided by the American Rescue Plan (\$15.9 billion). (The President's FY 23 Budget Request of \$16.3 billion does just that, and the House appropriations bill has followed suit.)