

Federal Funding for the IDEA



States and local education agencies have seen significant increases in the cost of providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities. When Congress enacted the predecessor law to IDEA in 1975, the goal for federal funding to support the law was 40 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure (NAPPE), a mark that has never been realized.

Guiding Principles

- IDEA should be federally funded at a level to support the activities required by the law.
- Funding should be provided in a manner that assures success of students with disabilities, including support of education programs that are integrally related to their success.
- States should receive sufficient funds to support administrative activities and to support state-directed initiatives necessary to properly implement the requirements of the law.
- Part C of the law should be proportionately funded ensuring an effective prevention, early identification and intervention program for infants and toddlers.
- Part D should receive sufficient funding to allow personnel development, the development of effective national models of program and service delivery, and research aimed at improving the overall quality of the IDEA.
- The outlying areas and other federal jurisdictions should receive a designated share of funding to support their students with disabilities.
- The increases in federal funding should result from “new federal dollars” and should not come from cuts in federal spending in other education programs.
- Increases in federal IDEA funding require greater flexibility in the maintenance of effort rules, but should include the obligation to use funds for educational purposes.

Legislative Priorities

- Provide full federal funding (40 percent of NAPPE) for IDEA Part B grants to states, including Section 619 (preschool) and increases in federal funding for other IDEA programs, including Part C (Early Intervention) and Part D (Discretionary Programs).
- Simplify the formula for distribution of state funds, providing a breakdown of 80 percent flow-through to local education agencies (LEAs), five percent for state administrative expenditures and up to 15 percent for monitoring, technical assistance, program development and other support programs.
- Allocate a specific minimum amount of funding for administration and direct and support services to schools for small and/or less populated states, outlying areas and other federal jurisdictions.
- Redefine maintenance of effort and non-supplanting requirements in response to significant increases in federal IDEA funding.
- Provide funding to support a coordinated services model for students with disabilities including other programs that have a federal obligation to provide educational and noneducational services.

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 320, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

(703) 519-3800 • FAX (703) 519-3808 • TDD (703) 519-7008 • www.nasdse.org

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