

ISSUE BRIEF



Education Appropriations

RECOMMENDATIONS

CEC urges Congress to:

- **Provide \$13.4 billion to fully fund IDEA's Part B Program in the FY 2018 appropriations bills.**
 - **Support and co-sponsor H.R. 2902, and Senate Bill (when introduced), IDEA Full Funding Act (Part B).**
- **Provide \$412.0 million for IDEA's Part B Section 619 Program and \$513.0 million for IDEA's Part C Early Intervention Program in the FY 2018 appropriations bills.**
- **Provide \$254.0 million for IDEA's Part D Program in the FY 2018 appropriations bills.**
- **Provide at least \$70 million in the National Center for Special Education Research in the U. S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences in the FY 2018 appropriations bills.**
- **Provide \$32 million for the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act in the FY 2018 appropriations bills.**

BACKGROUND

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed into law what we now know as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), pioneering legislation that mandates a free appropriate public education for all children with disabilities. Prior to IDEA's passage, children with disabilities were shunned from school, and plagued by stereotypes, misconceptions, and low expectations. As a civil rights law, over the last 41 years, IDEA has revolutionized the lives of children with disabilities and now serves over 7 million children from birth through young adulthood in every state throughout the country.

Providing Individualized Special Education in Schools

Fulfill Congress's 41-year promise to fully fund special education.

Over 6.8 million school-aged students, in 98% of our nation's schools, benefit from individualized special education and related services provided by IDEA. These services—by special and general education teachers and specialized instructional support personnel—are tailored to meet the specific needs of each child.

Students with disabilities are approximately 13% of the total student enrollment. When IDEA was originally passed 41 years ago, the Federal government pledged to pay 40% of the “excess cost” of educating a student with a disability, what is referred to as *full funding*. Unfortunately, in FY 2017, the Federal share is approximately 15%, leaving states and school districts to pay the balance.

Addressing the Needs of Young Children with Disabilities

Provide \$412.0 million for IDEA’s Part B Section 619 Program and \$513.0 million for IDEA’s Part C Early Intervention Program.

IDEA’s early childhood programs serve over 1.1 million infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families through Part C and Part B Section 619, respectively. Over the last 21 years, both programs have increased the number of children served by approximately 50%.

Despite this growth and positive outcomes for children, federal funding has failed to keep pace. In fact, the federal cost per child has decreased by 40% during this time.

Support education funding legislation that matches the needs of children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents, their families, and the educators who work on their behalf.

Ensuring High-Quality Special Education Services

Provide \$254.0 million for IDEA’s Part D programs and \$70 million for the National Center for Special Education Research to better equip educators and families to address the needs of children and youth with disabilities.

Together, IDEA’s National Activities Program (Part D) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) within the Institute of Education Sciences provide the infrastructure to enable high-quality special education services for children and youth with disabilities. Part D focuses on preparing personnel, disseminating information, providing resources to families, and utilizing technology. NCSER is the primary driver of special education research in the nation, and provides evidence-based practices for classroom teachers. Unfortunately, funding for IDEA Part D and NCSER remains devastatingly low. In fact, in 2011, 30% of NCSER’s budget was cut, resulting in a near stoppage of special education research in 2014.

Meeting the Needs of Learners with Gifts and Talents

As the sole federal initiative supporting students with gifts and talents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, Congress should invest \$32 million in the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act.

There is a growing educational crisis playing out in every state across the nation that receives little attention among policy makers in Washington, DC: A significant “excellence gap” exists at the top achievement levels between ethnic and racial minority students and white students and between low-income students and their more advantaged peers. The Javits Act seeks to remedy this by supporting research and programs to better identify and serve high-ability students from underserved backgrounds. In 2017, the Javits program is funded at \$12 million, following 6 years of receiving little or no funding. However, a \$32 million investment is needed for the Javits program to reach its potential.