

Letter to Congress

The purpose is direct advocacy from school board members and district leaders; designed for email or printed delivery

Subject Line Options

- Keep the Federal Promise: Fully Fund IDEA (40 by 40)
- Congress Must Honor Its Commitment to Special Education
- IDEA Underfunding Is Hurting Local Schools

Dear Congressman/Congresswoman [insert last name]:

I am writing on behalf of the students, families, and taxpayers in [insert Congressional district] to urge you to support full federal funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [insert bill number if available].

When IDEA was enacted, Congress committed to covering 40 percent of the cost of educating students with disabilities. Today, that promise remains unfulfilled. As a result, local school districts are forced to redirect funds from general education, student supports, and locally approved priorities to cover federally mandated services.

In [insert school district], this funding gap has real consequences. Special education costs continue to rise due to increased student needs, workforce shortages, transportation requirements, and specialized services. Yet federal funding has not kept pace - placing increasing strain on local budgets and taxpayers.

Local school boards do not have the option to scale back services. We meet our legal and moral obligations to students every day. But when the federal government does not meet its share, local communities are left to fill the gap. That is why we support the IDEA 40%. I am enclosing the board resolution our school board recently passed to call on Congress to fully fund IDEA at the level originally promised.

Fully funding IDEA would:

- strengthen educational services for students with disabilities;
- reduce pressure on state and local budgets;
- protect funding for all students;
- reinforce trust between federal, state, and local partners,
- and help facilitate better outcomes for all students.

This is not about creating new programs or mandates. It is about honoring an existing federal commitment. We urge you to make full IDEA funding a priority in upcoming appropriations and education legislation. Please support the annual increase for IDEA appropriations outlined in the IDEA Full Funding legislation and share your support with the Appropriations Committee. Our students - and our communities - are counting on your leadership.

Thank you for your service and your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

[insert name]