



May 18, 2026

Chair Russ Aderholt
 House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
 HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
 Washington, DC 20515

Chair Shelly Moore Capito
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
 HHS, Education and Related Agencies
 Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro
 House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
 HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
 Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Tammy Baldwin
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
 HHS, Education and Related Agencies
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Moore Capito, and Ranking Member Baldwin:

The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) urges you to **reject the White House Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 education budget proposal**, which recommends steep cuts, including eliminating specific investments in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Preschool Grants (ages 3-5), IDEA Part D National Activities, block grants and eliminates certain K-12 general education programs, and makes harmful cuts to special education research, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and other key programs. More than 10.25 million children are eligible for special education services under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) - about 15 percent of the nation’s students.¹ We know at least 95 percent of these students attend a public school and that for many of these students, their school is a Title I school due to the high correlation between low-income status and disability.² Given these realities, Congress must continue to *invest in and support* all parts of IDEA, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), education research, other essential programs.

As you know, federal education statutes do not authorize Congress to block grant IDEA or Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funds, and we appreciate that you have continued to fund all authorized programs under both laws. Specifically, IDEA requires the Secretary of Education to issue preschool funds to states and support vital national activities, including parent training and information centers, personnel preparation for special educators/specialized personnel, research on low- and high-incidence disabilities, technical assistance [for districts and states] in evidence-based practices including accessible classrooms/assistive technology, and more.³ These investments are essential to ensuring that states and school districts can provide meaningful educational opportunities and supports to all children with disabilities (ages 0-21) under IDEA and Section 504.

Given the ongoing need for federal investments that help schools meet their obligations under federal laws and to preserve protections afforded therein so that children with disabilities can access early intervention, inclusive education, career and technical education, postsecondary opportunities, employment pathways, and meaningful life outcomes, COPAA urges Congress to increase funding and protect the following programs in FY 2027:

IDEA Part B Sec. 611: \$16.661 B

Part B helps ensure that every student with a disability receives a free and appropriate public education. Currently, states receive just 10% of the 40% special education funding promised with the passage of the IDEA in 1975. This amount will help States -who offset IDEA by \$24 billion annually- and put IDEA on the glide path to full funding.

Fund critical education, research, and civil rights priorities:

IDEA: Part B Sec. 619 (preschool): \$491 M

IDEA: Part C (infants/toddlers): \$632 M

IDEA Part D – National Activities

- State Personnel Development Grants: \$44 M

- IDEA Personnel Preparation: \$135 M

- Parent Training Information Centers: \$38 M

- Education Technology and Media: \$36.1 M

¹ Source: U.S. Dept. of Ed, IDEA Sec. 618 Data, SY 2024-2025, (Feb. 2026): <https://www.ed.gov/data/idea-section-618-data>.

² National Center for Education Statistics, (May 2024) <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg/students-with-disabilities>.

³ See: 20 U.S.C., Part A (Section 1452-1455), Part B (Sections 1461-1465), Part C (Sections 1471-1474), Part D (Sections 1481-1482).

Office for Civil Rights: \$163.8 M
Elementary and Secondary Education Act

- Title I: \$21.58 B
- Title II: \$2.56 B

**Higher Ed: Transition Program: Students
w/Intellectual Disabilities: \$14.3 M**
National Center for Special Ed Research: \$70 M

In addition to these funding recommendations, COPAA urges Congress to **uphold current law by maintaining IDEA and related education programs within the U.S. Department of Education (ED).**

Schools require sustained federal investments to support students with disabilities across the educational continuum, including access to early intervention, preschool through K-16 education including career and technical education (CTE), post-secondary education, vocational rehabilitation, and employment preparation.

Accordingly, Congress must:

- **Support IDEA and maintain all IDEA programs within ED** alongside other federal education laws and programs, including ESEA, career and technical education, and higher education programs;
- **Reject bills or proposals that would dismantle ED**, change or block grant Title I or IDEA funds, and/or move these programs out of ED; and
- **Reject proposals, whether through appropriations or authorization legislation, which would shift IDEA to Health and Human Services (HHS) or another agency.**

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations at this crucial time. Please contact Laura Kaloi, COPAA's federal policy advisor with any questions. She can be reached at 202-210-1494, or lkaloi@stridepolicy.com

Sincerely,



Denise Marshall
CEO

COPAA is an unparalleled peer-to-peer network that enables parents, family members, attorneys, special education advocates, and related professionals to engage in protecting the legal and civil rights of students with disabilities and their families. As the nation's leading authority on special education law, we support parents and mentor those who defend students' educational rights. Our members are also a proud part of the disability community. We provide knowledge exchange, research, training, mentoring, community building; elevate all voices to ensure equitable access to an education; help parents participate as meaningful partners in their child's education, and ensure the laws are implemented; provide legal opinions that open doors for students and shape laws; and, we influence policies that support children and their families.

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