

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR EDUCATION

Federal education investments help support our students and school districts to advance achievement, college and career readiness, and school performance. From Title I grants for disadvantaged students that help raise proficiency levels in reading, math, and other subjects to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) state grant program that helps educate students with special needs, federal investments provide more than \$35 billion each year for K-12 programs.

Congress completed an appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2016 last December that provides greater investments in both Title I and IDEA. The measure (Public Law No. 114-113) provided more than a \$1 billion increase in K-12 education investments, including a \$500 million increase in Title I grants for disadvantaged students and a \$415 million increase in special education grants to states and school districts.

In other areas, the Impact Aid program received a \$17 million increase for basic support payments to school districts educating populations of students whose parents/guardians are enlisted in the armed forces, as well as students who reside on federal properties such as trust lands. The federal investment in English Language Acquisition grants was sustained at \$737 million, helping school districts provide the support for English learners to develop proficiency in English and other subjects and for teachers and other educational personnel to attain the professional qualifications to better serve English learners.

The enactment of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (which prevented across-the-board budget cuts known as “sequestration”) and the enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (which authorizes greater investments in Title I and other elementary and secondary education programs) helped sustain education investments and influence the increases for K-12 programs and early education, such as Head Start.

NSBA POSITION

Increasing the federal share of funding for special education is paramount, and should be addressed before considering future funding for new programs that may not have proven results for program effectiveness. Specifically, funding for competitive grant programs should be weighed against the need to address Congress’ promise to fund the federal share of the more than 40-year-old law (IDEA) that has superseded other budget priorities for the majority of school districts and communities. Again, the federal share of IDEA must be fully funded—as well as requirements from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA /ESSA). Local school districts need capacity-building support for professional development, curriculum development, course materials and instructional changes. NSBA also opposes general budget reductions by formula, such as the across-the-board cuts imposed in FY2013 by sequestration, which circumvent Congress’ responsibility to set funding priorities among

government functions. NSBA's focus for the FY2017 appropriations bill includes investments in foundational programs, such as Title I and IDEA, which benefit millions of our students and thousands of our schools and communities.

TALKING POINTS

- FY2017 Appropriations: Please support a final FY2017 appropriations bill that maximizes the investments in special education, Title I, other K-12 programs, and early education that our students need for a strong future.

Example: "As you negotiate a final appropriations bill for FY 2017, I urge you to support measures that will strengthen investments for special education (currently at \$11.9 billion) and for Title I grants for disadvantaged students (consistent with the amount of at least \$15 billion authorized for Title I under ESSA).

My school district has diverted funds from other education priorities to alleviate the shortfall in federal funds for special education for numerous years. This shifting of funds reduces resources for other students."

Also, state the number of students for which your district provides special education services and the total cost. Then, state what the federal government provides, which does not equate to the 40 percent promised when IDEA was first enacted in 1975.

- Long-Term Budget Priorities: Please support budget proposals to replace the annual budgetary caps and sequestration (across-the-board budget cuts) that are imposed by the *Budget Control Act of 2011*. This law caused more than a \$2.5 billion reduction to education programs in FY2013. Although another round of sequestration was averted in FY2016, and hopefully for FY2017, because of the passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, a permanent solution is needed to prevent further reductions after FY2017 and future fiscal years.

Example: "As the House and Senate negotiate a solution for a FY2017 funding bill, your influence is critical to legislating a proactive, permanent plan to stop the across-the-board budget cuts from the sequester. Sustained investments in reforms and innovative programs that advance student achievement and college and career readiness are key for our district."

BACKGROUND

As the cornerstone of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), recently reauthorized as ESSA, the overall purpose of Title I Part A grants is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and achieve, at a minimum, proficiency on state academic achievement standards and assessments. Title I funding is allocated primarily by formula grants to states and, in turn, to school districts based on the number of children from low-income families and other groups of disadvantaged children residing in these jurisdictions. Children participating in Title I receive primarily reading, language arts, and mathematics instruction through school-wide approaches or targeted assistance strategies. Title I funding is currently \$15 billion in grants to support student achievement efforts at roughly 90 percent of the 14,000 school districts across the nation.

Under IDEA, which provides the major source of federal funding to help school districts fund educational services to students with disabilities, the federal share of funding that Congress promised is 40 percent of the average per pupil cost for every student served under the IDEA. However, the 40 percent promise has not been fulfilled; and, the federal share of special education funding has declined in recent years. The federal share of funding for services provided to approximately 6.6 million students through IDEA is roughly 16 percent, or an estimated national average of \$1,777 per student in 2016. (\$11.9 billion was appropriated for IDEA Part B state grants in FY2016.) IDEA helps fund early intervening services for students, individualized education plans (IEPs), speech-language pathology, psychological services, transition services, and related activities.

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