

April 24, 2026

Chair Robert Aderholt
Appropriations LHHS-ED Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro
Appropriations LHHS-ED Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chair Shelley Moore Capito
Appropriations LHHS-ED Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Tammy Baldwin
Appropriations LHHS-ED Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

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

As you work to develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill, the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) urges you to prioritize students with disabilities, their families, and schools by investing in the programs that support them. Of the 15% of the U.S. school-age population who received disability services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 34% received services for a specific learning disability (SLD) as the primary disability.

Over the past 15 months, federal education and workforce development programs have experienced significant turmoil, jeopardizing the programs that students depend on. NCLD appreciates Congress for their work to pass the bipartisan FY 2026 funding bill that rejected cuts to education and included language clarifying the lack of authority to transfer fundamental responsibilities of the Department of Education (ED). However, we remain concerned about the series of actions that have undermined these investments including interagency agreements, noncontinuation of grants, delays in administering key funding streams, and decimation of staffing including at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and Office for Civil Rights (OCR). NCLD urges Congressional appropriators in not only providing funding levels for agencies and programs, but exercising the needed oversight and accountability of these taxpayer dollars.

Congress must reject the unlawful destruction of the Department of Education and include language blocking and reversing any effort to transfer funding and responsibilities out of the Department of Education, including those administered by Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and OCR.

As you develop FY 27 appropriations legislation, we strongly support the following funding levels for these essential programs, and urge Congress to specify the funding levels in statutory text to ensure federal funds are used for the intended purpose under law:

I. IDEA Funding and Implementation

IDEA is a bedrock law that ensures equal educational opportunities for all children with disabilities. This law requires robust federal support to help states meet IDEA's requirements and support individualized educational access and pathways to employment for students with disabilities.

IDEA funds should not be consolidated or converted to block grants. Technical assistance, funding for personnel preparation grants, and other federal supports for students with disabilities are essential to full implementation of IDEA. Specifically, we ask you to:

- Increase funding for the **IDEA Part B** (Grants to States) to at least \$16.661 billion;
- Increase **IDEA Part B Section 619** (Preschool Program) to at least \$491 million;
- Increase **IDEA Part C** (Ages 0-2) to at least \$632 million;
- Increase **IDEA Part D** (National Activities) to at least the following amounts:
 - State Personnel Development: \$44.4 million
 - Technical Assistance and Development: \$36.2 million
 - Personnel Preparation: \$135 million
 - Parent Training and Information Centers: \$38.15 million
 - Media and Technology: \$36.7 million
- Include the following language in the FY 2027 report:
 - *“Technical Assistance and Dissemination.—The Committee notes the continued inclusion of a requirement for the Department to support staffing levels necessary to fulfill its statutory responsibilities including carrying out programs, projects, and activities funded in this title of this Act in a timely manner. This includes the Secretary carrying out responsibilities to use funds in this and last year’s act to efficiently implement personnel preparation, technical assistance, model demonstration, parent and other training and outreach, dissemination, evaluation and implementation of scientifically-based research activities designed to support high incidence and low incidence disabilities, beginning and current special educators, general educators, specialized instructional support personnel and state and district leaders as required and intended under the IDEA. This also includes supporting activities as required under section 663(b)(4) of the IDEA to provide effective transitions between educational settings or from school to post school settings. In addition, in order to assure children and students with disabilities and their families benefit as intended from rights and services protected by the IDEA, the Committee directs the Secretary to maintain no less than the fiscal year 2025 effort on monitoring of the IDEA and continue to fund all current technical assistance centers and research initiatives supported by the Office of Special Education Programs requirements under the IDEA. Finally, the Committee directs the Department to provide an update in the fiscal year 2028 congressional justification on OSEP’s IDEA monitoring and technical assistance support efforts maintained by funding provided in this act.*

NCLD is also concerned by the Administration’s paperwork reduction pilot proposal highlighted on pages 23-24 of the [Special Education Congressional Justification](#). While the proposal does correctly state that the Secretary cannot waive any statutory requirements under IDEA, it recommends that Congress enable extension on a waiver (currently exists for 4 years) and provide ED an authority to set aside up to \$10 million of the IDEA Part B appropriation to provide technical assistance specifically on reducing paperwork. **NCLD urges appropriators to not adopt these recommendations and uphold current IDEA law. We do not believe these requests will spur greater requests from States for these waivers and if it did, such waivers could have profound implications for access to a free appropriate public education for individuals with disabilities.**

II. Funding for Research and Data

Within IES, National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER) supports high quality and rigorous research on special education and related services and the full range of issues facing children with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, school personnel, and more. Its findings help inform interventions, teaching strategies, and other critical factors in educating children with disabilities. For its FY 2025 Special Education Research Grant competition, NCSEER only sought applications focused on education systems due to resource constraints for funding new research grants. NCLD was dismayed to learn that other FY 2025 NCSEER research and training competitions were recently closed out without making new awards and a recent [analysis](#) by the Knowledge Alliance showed that roughly 85% of the \$77 million designated for special education research remains unspent.

Further, it is essential that there are sufficient resources at ED and IES for executing and improving all existing data collection activities, which are key levers to monitor the implementation of critical legal protections for students. Data must be collected effectively, reported timely, and available in a public and accessible manner. We ask you to:

- Increase funding for **IES** to at least \$900 million, including at least \$70 million for **NCSEER**;
- At least \$100 million for the **Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) program** and at least \$40 million for the **Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)**;
- Include bill language to ensure that FY 2026 and FY 2027 funds provided to IES are apportioned according to the charts in the explanatory text and are obligated and spent expeditiously, in alignment with the final FY 2026 LHHS law;
- Include report language prioritizing funding for Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Innovation Hubs within the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development:
 - *Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs.—The Committee is increasingly concerned with the decline in achievement for students with disabilities and recognizes the need for continued research and improved interventions. The Committee recognizes the importance of NICHD’s funding of Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs, which are the only source of Federal funding available to researchers interested in exploring child development and learning disabilities to conduct randomized control trials and explore the relationships between different variables at work. While learning disabilities do impact an individual’s education and academic achievement, these disorders are brain-based, and so clinical research using the latest technology and advances in neuroscience is essential. To continue robust research into language, reading development, learning disabilities, and disorders that adversely affect the development of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics abilities, the Committee urges NICHD to continue its investment in its Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs.*
- Include report language to ensure timely and accurate release of the Civil Rights Data Collection:
 - *The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a critical biennial data collection on key education and civil rights issues in our nation’s public schools. This data empowers the Office of Civil Rights to administer and enforce civil rights laws while also informing the public. The 2023-2024 CRDC data submission by school districts and schools concluded in April 2025. The U.S. Department of Education publicly announced on their website that this data would*

be available to the public by December 2025, yet the data has yet to be released. The Committee directs the Secretary to release the 2023-2024 CRDC data within 30 days of the enactment of this Act and provide the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with a briefing on the schedule of future CRDC data releases.

- Increase funding to \$58 million for **Comprehensive Centers** and \$60 million for **Regional Educational Laboratories**.

III. Other Critical Education Investments

Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) Programs

Funding for ESSA programs should not be consolidated. Congressional oversight is also essential for ensuring funds serve students as programs intend and that funding is distributed to schools on time. Last summer's withholding of over \$6 billion for programs including programs under ESSA was incredibly disruptive to schools and Congress must maintain oversight to ensure funding is released. We ask you to:

- Increase **Title I** to at least \$21.58 billion;
 - Including at least a \$1 billion increase for evidence-based school improvement activities required under section 1003
- Increase **Title II Part A** (Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants) to \$2.4 billion;
- Increase **Title II Part B** (Innovative Approaches to Literacy) to \$50 million
- Increase **Title III** (Language Instruction for English Learners) to \$1 billion;
- Increase **Title IV Part A** (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants) to \$1.6 billion
- Increase **Title IV Part B** (21st Century Community Learning Centers) to \$1.8 billion;
- Increase **Title IV Part E** (Statewide Family Engagement Centers) to \$25 million;
- Increase **State Assessment Grants** to \$469.1 million.

Higher Education Act (HEA) Programs

NCLD supports increased funding to the following essential federal programs that support all students' access to a well-prepared, experienced, and stable educator workforce to support students with disabilities, including those funded by HEA. We ask you to:

- Increase **Title II, Part A** of the Higher Education Act (HEA) (Teacher Quality Partnerships) to \$142 million;
- Increase **Title II of HEA** (Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence program) to \$45 million;

The Senate LHHS Subcommittee approved \$2 million for the National Center for Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities for FY 2025, but that did not advance with the signing of Continuing Resolution to cover Center operations through the end of FY 2025. Unfortunately, the Senate LHHS language for FY 2026 was also left out of the final Appropriations Package. While a No Cost Extension will keep the Center operational until the end of calendar year 2026, the Center will be forced to close indefinitely without additional funding in FY 2027. We ask you to:

- Include \$2 million funding for the **National Center for Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities**.

Other Programs

We ask you to:

- Increase the **U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights** to at least \$163.8 million;
- Fund **School Based Mental Health Services Professionals** and **School Based Mental Health Services grants** at \$250 million.

IV. Funding for Improving Post-School Employment Outcomes

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State grant program provides formula grants to States agencies to help individuals with disabilities secure competitive integrated employment and support the workforce needs of businesses, as well as supports Pre-Employment Transition Services for transition-aged individuals. VR funding is mandatory and includes an annual cost-of-living adjustment and requires states to match funding. There was a rescission in the FY 2024 bill and, as a result, critical services and supports that make it possible for people with disabilities to join the general labor market have been significantly cut back. We ask you to:

- Increase funding for **Vocational Rehabilitation** to \$4.6 billion

Thank you for considering these requests. Please contact me at nfuller@ncld.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Nicole Fuller
Associate Director of Policy & Advocacy
National Center for Learning Disabilities