



Great Public Schools  
for Every Student

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Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 50 million students that 3 million NEA members teach and support across America, we submit these comments for the record for the subcommittee's hearing on addressing COVID-19's impact on students with disabilities.

Educators are dedicated to providing the attention and support that enables students with disabilities to thrive. Their passion for this mission has only increased during the pandemic as they have partnered with families and students to navigate enormous disruptions in the structured routines so crucial to these students. However, even educators' best efforts cannot overcome the greatest challenge students and educators face: Congress' failure to ensure a free and appropriate education for children with disabilities by funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at 40 percent of the excess cost. We therefore urge you to support the Keep Our Pact Act (H.R. 764), which creates a 10-year path to fully funding both Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act and IDEA.

COVID-19 has exposed and deepened the widespread disparities that existed across America even *before* the pandemic, and it has been [especially harmful to students of color with disabilities](#), according to the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA's Civil Rights Project, greatly restricting their opportunity for an education that meets their needs. The Department of Education under the previous administration failed to offer guidance that would help ensure that students with disabilities would be educated and supported during the pandemic, worsening an already unacceptable situation.

We must address these inequities as quickly as possible; Congress *must* meet its statutory IDEA requirement. NEA supports the coalition of parents, unions, and disability rights organizations that has begun a [petition campaign](#) targeted to President Biden, Secretary Cardona, and members of Congress urging adherence to this requirement.

This is the moment to confront the educational inequities COVID-19 has exposed to the nation. We urge Congress to fulfill the promise made nearly 50 years ago by funding IDEA at 40 percent of the excess cost and providing all students with an education that sparks their curiosity and desire to learn.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association