

Highlights of NEA Support and Mobilization around IDEA and Students with Disabilities

Before, and particularly in the wake of a second Trump administration, NEA has been promoting advocacy and support for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and students with disabilities. This amplification of our work has been made in consideration of the proposals from President Donald Trump. Additionally, support for IDEA and students with disabilities has been a central part of our messaging to protect the Department of Education from being gutted. To that end, we have been running a cycle of online ads to educate, increase awareness, and drive action to contact Congress on a steady cycle. (Please see select samples below.)

In addition, we are working toward the anniversary of IDEA and are planning to use that anniversary to escalate the advocacy, including more ads, videos, and calls-to-action.

Anniversary celebration campaigns

To mark the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 50th anniversary of the IDEA, NEA is launching two related campaigns that honor the history, impact, and ongoing challenges of both landmark civil rights laws. These campaigns will run consecutively, beginning in late spring 2025 and running through December 2025.

ADA 35th Anniversary (July 26, 2025)

ADA, enacted in 1990 after decades of advocacy and activism, is a landmark civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, education, transportation, and public life, ensuring equal access and opportunity for all.

Before the ADA, individuals with disabilities faced widespread barriers and exclusion from many aspects of daily life, including work, school, and public spaces. They were often denied fundamental rights and opportunities. Today, the ADA continues to remove barriers and promote inclusion, but ongoing threats such as proposed cuts to Medicaid and efforts to weaken enforcement put these rights at risk.

To commemorate the 35th anniversary of ADA, NEA has engaged members with disabilities to share their stories, challenges, and best practices via photographs, quotes, and video vignettes to raise awareness about the current state of disability rights and highlight the need for additional protections. The NEA's call to action for the ADA anniversary will focus on stopping proposed cuts to Medicaid, which is essential for many students and educators with disabilities to access the services and supports they need.

IDEA 50th Anniversary (Nov. 29, 2025)

IDEA, first passed in 1975, guarantees students with disabilities the right to a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, with individualized supports and protections. Before IDEA, most students with disabilities were excluded from public schools or received an inadequate education.

Despite its promise, IDEA remains chronically underfunded, with federal contributions far below what was originally intended. For IDEA's 50th anniversary, NEA's advocacy will center on the urgent need for full federal funding to ensure that all students receive the services and opportunities they deserve.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of IDEA, we have invited members who were served under IDEA to share their stories and experiences via video vignettes of how the law ensured they were supported, what it may have looked like without it, and their hopes and concerns for the future of IDEA. The NEA's call to action for the IDEA anniversary will provide members with information on the federal shortfall in funding for their school districts and enable them to share their story with their congressional representatives on how the promised funding would help all students in their schools.

NBI 1 IDEA Funding (in collaboration with Government Relations and Center for Information Technology)

NEA calculated the IDEA full funding amount and determined the amount of additional federal revenue that participating school districts would receive if the federal government fully funded IDEA. Following that calculation, NEA has developed an online dashboard for users to input their ZIP code to access the data. The dashboard will be embedded into the nea.org webpage with links to NEA's Action Center. There, members can advocate for full funding of IDEA through their congressional representatives. This new data will be a helpful tool in NEA's advocacy arsenal, and it will be incorporated into NEA's lobbying and grassroots efforts.

In addition, NEA has been working with Hill champions on the reintroduction of the IDEA Full Funding Act. Reps. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), GT Thompson (R-Pa.), and Sen. Van Hollen (D-Md.) are reintroducing the IDEA Full Funding Act. NEA is seeking a Republican co-sponsor for the Senate bill in order to make it bipartisan in both chambers. This bill provides a 10-year mandatory glide path to full funding. NEA has endorsed the IDEA Full Funding Act.

NEA is also working with coalition allies to leverage the 50th anniversary of IDEA in those efforts—a continuation of NEA's long-standing work toward full funding—as NEA also faces the potential for congressional/administration action to cut funding instead of increasing it. The IDEA Full Funding Coalition held their first Hill Day at the end of April and NEA Government Relations participated in advocating for full funding. There were 10 Congressional meetings that day and there will be more

to come as the coalition plans another Hill day later this year. The coalition plans one activity a month such as social media campaigns, letters to Capitol Hill, and Congressional meetings.

Education and Awareness

Below, you will find a series of resources, social media posts, calls-to-action, and media clips that center or feature NEA and its dedication to supporting and protecting both the IDEA and students with disabilities.

- [What We Learned from Linda McMahon's Confirmation Hearing](#), published Feb. 14, emailed to *NEAToday* subscribers and promoted on social media

Just last week, Trump [called the Department of Education a “con job”](#) and said he wants [McMahon to “put herself out of a job.”](#) The nominee seems prepared to do just that, at tremendous cost to our schools and students. While most decisions around education are made at the state and local level, the federal role—through hugely popular programs such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Title I and Pell Grants—has [been indispensable in supporting our most vulnerable students.](#)

- [Parents of Students with Disabilities: Don't Gut Federal Funding](#)
 - Published Feb.26,
 - Emailed in *NEAToday* email on March 12,
 - Find it in the May issue of *NEAToday* on pg. 36

PARENTS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

'We Need Federal Funding'

By Cindy Long

CUTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WILL HARM VULNERABLE STUDENTS AND PUT SPECIAL EDUCATION JOBS AT RISK

Jackson Tuell is an energetic 5-year-old who loves waffles, jumping on the trampoline, and playing with his sister, Charlie. Jackson is also autistic, non-verbal, and struggles in most academic and social environments.

"But don't let that fool you," says his father, Nick Tuell. "Jackson shows a desire to learn, play with his peers, and always tries again after failure."

Tuell and his wife have been optimistic about Jackson's education, thanks to their Lebanon, Ohio, public school and Jackson's Individualized Education Program (IEP)—the written plan that outlines the special education services, accommodations, and goals tailored to meet the needs of a public school student with a disability.

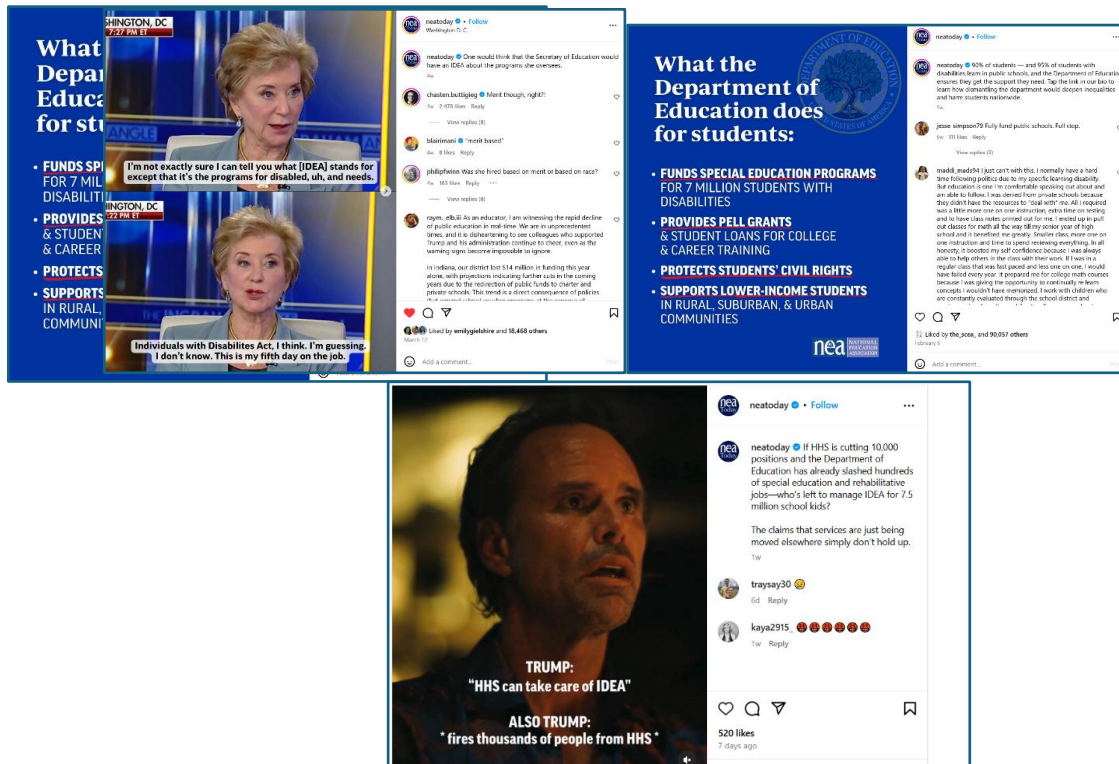
"He is empowered to grow and is able to communicate his needs to those around him," Tuell says.

- May issue will also feature a story on Unified Basketball
- Promoted through Always On ads beginning March 26 – present



- [What Education was like before IDEA](#), published March 19; emailed in *NEA Today* email on March 26; promoted on social media the week of April 2. NEA boosted the article through Always On ads beginning April 3 – present.
 - Includes calls to action
 - Includes IDEA visuals and signage from walk-ins
- [Article](#) on why block granting federal funds is bad news for students, featuring students with disabilities posted Tuesday, April 16.
- Several member creators made social media posts when the executive order was signed. An overwhelming majority of these posts mentioned students with disabilities and/or IDEA funding and included call to actions dedicated to organizing or calling on policymakers and legislators for accountability.





- In the Media:


- [President Becky Pringle quoted on CNN](#): “If successful, Trump’s continued actions will hurt all students ... taking away special education services for students with disabilities, and gutting student civil rights protections.”
- [Executive Director Kim Anderson Interview on MSNBC](#) reacting to Secretary Linda McMahon not knowing what IDEA stands for.
- [President Becky Pringle Interview on MSNBC](#) discussing the impacts of Trump attempting to dismantle the Department of Education, including the attacks on programs and resources that support students with disabilities.
- [President Becky Pringle Interview on CNN](#) discussing the funding that supports students with disabilities, low-income students, and others that Trump is attempting to eliminate.

Mobilization and Calls-to-Action

- [Stop the Dismantling of ED](#)

Stop the Destruction of the Department of Education

Gutting the department will destroy programs and protections that guarantee educational opportunities for all students—whether hunting for schools or support for students with **ADHD, autism, and more**.



Working families across the country are anxious and angry about the executive branch's overreaching actions to dismantle public services.

Now, the administration wants to do away with the Department of Education. Gutting the Department of Education means gutting our public schools, where 90% of students learn.

Tell Congress to push back against the destruction of the Department of Education and stop Trump before he destroys public education.

NEA has created a new online petition to help you voice your concerns. [Sign up for NEA's petition](#) today.

CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name Last Name

Street Address

Postal Code City

State

Email

☐ Sign me up for NEA's e-newsletter

☐ Yes, sign me up for email updates

☐ Remind me later so that I can use Facebook next time

Do not dismantle the Department of Education

Dear [selected official],

Personalize your message

As your constituent, I urge you to protect our children and fight for the Department of Education and the opportunities it provides. Dismantling the department will destroy students' access to critical programs and protections they depend on.

Public schools enroll 90% of America's students and 95% of students with disabilities. Communities of all backgrounds across America. These schools have a special significance in rural areas, where they are often the only schools and also serve as community hubs.

If the Education Department is broken apart, the rights of students—particularly our most vulnerable—to an education that impacts academic success, civil rights protections, and life skills, and progress them for the future, will be undercut. This will not only affect individual students and families, it will ultimately erode shared values: economic disparities, and

- [Fully Fund IDEA](#) Action Alert