

Advocacy During COVID: What to Focus on and How to Deliver the Message



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How Has COVID Impacted Communication with the Hill?

- Congress/Department of Education are closed to visitors, with few exceptions
 - If you meet, expect it to be virtually
- Offices are still scheduling meetings at the same rate
 - Staff are as reliant as ever on outside information to inform their work
 - i.e. how is the pandemic impacting education?
- Inboxes are overflowing
 - If you are communicating with a staff member, you may need to send a nudge



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Advocacy Results During COVID

CEC Emergency IDEA Funding Request, March 2020*

Supporting Children with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$11.3b for IDEA Part B | → | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$11b for IDEA Part B |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500m for IDEA Part C | → | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$500m for IDEA Part C |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$400m for Section 619 | → | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$400m for Section 619 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$300m for IDEA Part D | → | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$300m for IDEA Part D |

*Over 8,000 letters sent



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Additional Emergency COVID Asks

- Provide no less than \$175 billion in emergency relief funds to help school districts address the litany of needs for students playing catch up in the aftermath of COVID-19
- Provide an additional \$100 million for the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grants in Title II of the Higher Education Act
- Appropriate \$5 billion for an Emergency Connectivity Fund, administered through the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) E-Rate program
- Provide emergency funding to support evidence-based professional development on remote learning for special education teachers and support staff



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“Regular Business” Continues

- ❑ Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations
- ❑ Educator shortages
- ❑ Mental health
- ❑ School Climate
- ❑ Planning for the 117th Congress



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How to Get Involved

- Participate in the annual Special Education Legislative Summit, where you can join with your colleagues to advocate!
- Learn about weekly updates from Washington, DC in the Policy Insider:
Check your inbox on Fridays or find it at <https://exceptionalchildren.org/policy-insider>
- Reach out with any questions!
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