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exceptionalchildren.org

November 19, 2021

Chairwoman Patty Murray
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
And Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Roy Blunt
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
And Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
And Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Tom Cole
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
And Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Ranking Member Blunt, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

On behalf of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), a professional association of 22,000 educators dedicated to advancing the success of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents, I urge you to prioritize programs that impact students with exceptionalities as you finalize Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations decisions.

A healthy federal investment in education programs that support individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents is critical to ensuring they can thrive in school and beyond. Unfortunately, these programs have been consistently and woefully underfunded, straining the entire education system including local schools. CEC has been a longstanding, leading voice in support of full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Fully funding IDEA would ensure that infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities are provided access to educators trained to provide specially designed instruction, intervention, support, curricula, devices, and related services that allow them to meet the highest possible outcomes. Fully funding IDEA also ensures access to and support for learning and a quality of life that respects dignity, culture, language, and background.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges to the education system. To fully recover from the pandemic in a sustainable manner, schools and districts will need the meaningful and significant investments promised to them to fully support infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, many of whom have been disproportionately impacted over the last year. Schools and districts will especially need sustained investments in the educator pipeline to reverse the special educator shortage crisis, which has been amplified by COVID-19.

Through your leadership, the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bills have proposed historic increases to IDEA that would begin the process of addressing decades of underfunding. Thus, CEC respectfully requests at a minimum, the highest levels currently proposed for the following programs in FY 2022:

- **IDEA Part B State Grants (Sec. 611) –no less than \$15.5 billion**



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- **IDEA Part B Section 619 – no less than \$503 million**
- **IDEA Part C – no less than \$732 million**
- **IDEA Part D personnel preparation (Sec. 662) – no less than \$250 million**
- **NCSER – no less than \$65 million**
- **Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Grants – no less than \$13.5 million**

Thank you for crafting bills in the House and Senate that would begin to correct the chronic underfunding of IDEA. As you finalize FY 2022 appropriations, I urge you to work with your colleagues to maintain these increases. We simply cannot afford anything less.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Cavitt", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dennis Cavitt, Ed.D.
President
Council for Exceptional Children