

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA, *Chairman*

JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA  
DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA  
DAVID P. ROE, TENNESSEE  
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA  
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN  
MATT SALMON, ARIZONA  
BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY  
TODD ROKITA, INDIANA  
LOU BARLETTA, PENNSYLVANIA  
JOSEPH J. HECK, NEVADA  
LUKE MESSER, INDIANA  
BRADLEY BYRNE, ALABAMA  
DAVID BRAT, VIRGINIA  
BUDDY CARTER, GEORGIA  
MICHAEL D. BISHOP, MICHIGAN  
GLENN GROTHMAN, WISCONSIN  
STEVE RUSSELL, OKLAHOMA  
CARLOS CURBELO, FLORIDA  
ELISE STEFANIK, NEW YORK  
RICK ALLEN, GEORGIA



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND THE WORKFORCE  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

MINORITY MEMBERS:

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA  
*Ranking Member*

RUBÉN HINOJOSA, TEXAS  
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA  
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA  
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT  
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO  
JARED POLIS, COLORADO  
GREGORIO KILLI CAMACHO SABLÁN,  
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
FREDERICA S. WILSON, FLORIDA  
SUZANNE BONAMICI, OREGON  
MARK POCAN, WISCONSIN  
MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA  
HAKEEM S. JEFFRIES, NEW YORK  
KATHERINE M. CLARK, MASSACHUSETTS  
ALMA S. ADAMS, NORTH CAROLINA  
MARK DeSAULNIER, CALIFORNIA

March 25, 2015

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and  
Human Services  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and  
Human Services  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Cole and Ranking Members Lowey and DeLauro:

As you begin writing appropriations bills for the coming fiscal year, we ask for your support in addressing the challenges facing special needs students, their families, and their educators. Toward that end, we urge the Committee to pass a Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill that provides \$13.1 billion for Part B of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). This would provide \$1.6 billion more than is allocated for FY 2015 and increase the federal government's contribution to special education costs to approximately 18 percent of the average per pupil expenditure, matching the highest level of sustained support provided by Congress.

In 1975, Congress mandated educational access and services for students with special needs, with the promise that significant federal investments would support states and school districts in meeting their obligations to these children. The precursor to IDEA, the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act*, authorized federal funding up to 40 percent of the additional cost of educating students with disabilities. Federal contributions have never approached that goal. In fact, the federal government has never come close.

Congress did make progress toward this goal in fiscal years 1995 through 2005. Part B funding during those years more than doubled the federal contribution to the cost of educating students

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
The Honorable Tom Cole  
The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
March 26, 2015  
Page 2

with disabilities, from under 8 percent to more than 18 percent. Regrettably, the last decade has brought steady decreases in the federal contribution. In FY 2015, the federal government is covering just 16 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure.

This decline in funding has profound consequences for children with disabilities and their peers. School districts struggle to offer special needs students the necessary placements, supports, and services they deserve. General education budgets are cut to make up the shortfall. The attached chart highlights this reality.

Although our request still falls short of the federal government's commitment to special needs children, it would generate significant new resources for all states and school districts, giving policymakers and educators more freedom to use state and local funds to strengthen general and special education in their communities.

How Congress spends taxpayers' limited dollars reflects our priorities, and we firmly believe it is time to make students with disabilities a priority. We must stop wasting scarce resources on new and ineffective programs and instead work toward meeting our basic obligation to ensure special needs children are prepared for success after high school. We urge you to renew Congress' commitment to these students, their families, and their educators.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and continued commitment to this effort. We stand ready to work with you in this invaluable endeavor.

Sincerely,



JOHN KLINE  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and the Workforce



TODD ROKITA  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,  
Elementary, and Secondary Education

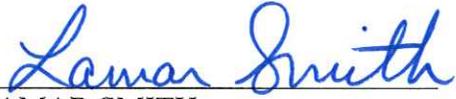


CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS  
Chair  
House Republican Conference



PETE SESSIONS  
Chairman  
Committee on Rules

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
The Honorable Tom Cole  
The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
March 26, 2015  
Page 3



LAMAR SMITH

Chairman  
Committee on Science, Space, and  
Technology

Enclosure

Special Education Grants to States  
(IDEA Part B-611)

**IDEA Funding Gap**

**Current Funding of IDEA**

Since 2009, the average federal share per child has remained stagnant, as has the number of students served, while the national average per pupil expenditure (APPE) has risen about 1 percent per year. The result is a declining federal contribution to the costs of educating students with special needs.

Average Federal Share Per Child (current dollars)

**\$1,741** | **\$1,742**  
FY 2009\* | FY 2015

Students Receiving Services (in thousands)

**6,599** | **6,593**  
FY 2009\* | FY 2015

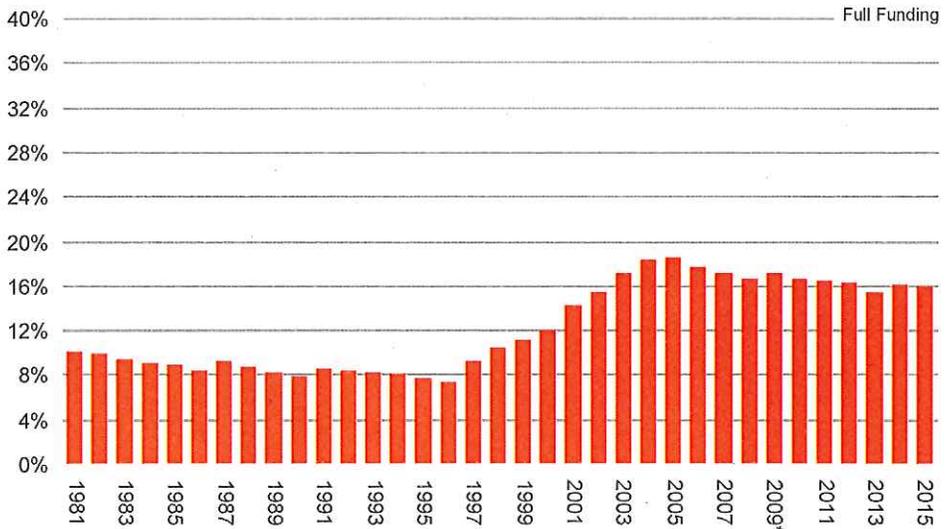
Average Federal Share Per Child, Percentage of APPE

**17.2%** | **16.0%**  
FY 2009\* | FY 2015

**IDEA Full Funding**

The assumption underlying the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its predecessor legislation is that, on average, the cost of educating children with disabilities is twice the average cost (measured as the national average per pupil expenditure or APPE) of educating other children. Congress determined that the federal government would pay up to 40 percent of this "excess" cost, which is referred to as full funding. Since 1981, the first year for which full funding was 40 percent of APPE, the federal share has remained less than half of the federal commitment based on regular appropriations.

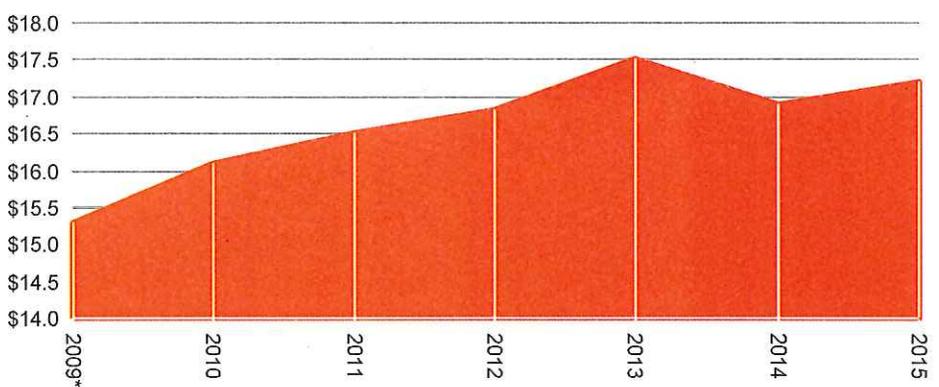
average federal cost share per special needs student



**Federal Cost Shift to States and Districts**

Each year the federal government fails to fully fund IDEA, it shifts the costs for educating students with special needs to states and school districts. Since 2009, the annual cost shift has averaged about \$16.6 billion.

in billions



\* Excludes one-time funds provided under the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Source: NEA calculations based on data from the U.S. Department of Education Budget Service and the Congressional Research Service. For more information, contact Tom Zembar at 202.822.7109 or TZembar@nea.org. | February 2, 2015

Education Policy & Practice Department  
CENTER FOR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Great Public Schools for Every Student

Special Education Grants to States  
(IDEA Part B-611)

**IDEA Funding Gap**

The assumption underlying the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its predecessor legislation is that, on average, the cost of educating children with disabilities is twice the average cost (measured as the national average per pupil expenditure or APPE) of educating other children. Congress determined that the federal government would pay up to 40 percent of this "excess" cost, which is referred to as full funding. Since 1981, the first year for which full funding was 40 percent of APPE, the federal share has remained less than half of the federal commitment based on regular appropriations. Each year the federal government fails to fully fund IDEA, it shifts the costs for educating students with special needs to states and school districts. In the current fiscal year, 2015, the federal appropriation is \$17.2 billion less than full funding, which states and districts must cover.

State	FY 2015		
	Appropriation	Full Funding	Funding Gap and Cost Shift
Alabama	\$179.6	\$448.5	-\$268.9
Alaska	36.2	90.4	-54.2
Arizona	188.5	470.9	-282.4
Arkansas	110.6	276.2	-165.6
California	1,208.1	3,017.7	-1,809.6
Colorado	154.8	386.6	-231.9
Connecticut	131.5	328.5	-197.0
Delaware	35.1	87.6	-52.5
District of Columbia	17.6	44.0	-26.4
Florida	635.8	1,588.1	-952.3
Georgia	329.0	821.9	-492.8
Hawaii	39.3	98.2	-58.9
Idaho	55.5	138.5	-83.1
Illinois	500.2	1,249.5	-749.3
Indiana	255.7	638.8	-383.1
Iowa	120.8	301.7	-180.9
Kansas	105.5	263.5	-158.0
Kentucky	156.2	390.2	-234.0
Louisiana	186.4	465.5	-279.1
Maine	54.1	135.2	-81.1
Maryland	197.8	494.1	-296.3
Massachusetts	280.9	701.6	-420.7
Michigan	394.8	986.0	-591.3
Minnesota	187.6	468.5	-280.9
Mississippi	118.4	295.7	-177.3
Missouri	224.7	561.3	-336.6
Montana	37.0	92.3	-55.4
Nebraska	73.9	184.5	-110.7
Nevada	70.9	177.1	-106.2
New Hampshire	47.0	117.3	-70.3
New Jersey	357.7	893.4	-535.7
New Mexico	90.1	225.1	-135.0
New York	750.5	1,874.7	-1,124.2
North Carolina	327.7	818.5	-490.8
North Dakota	28.5	71.1	-42.6
Ohio	431.5	1,077.9	-646.3
Oklahoma	146.7	366.5	-219.8
Oregon	127.3	317.9	-190.6
Pennsylvania	421.2	1,052.1	-630.9
Rhode Island	43.3	108.1	-64.8
South Carolina	175.0	437.1	-262.1
South Dakota	33.9	84.7	-50.8
Tennessee	235.0	587.0	-352.0
Texas	984.8	2,459.9	-1,475.1
Utah	109.9	274.6	-164.7
Vermont	27.5	68.6	-41.1
Virginia	281.0	701.8	-420.9
Washington	218.1	544.8	-326.7
West Virginia	75.1	187.7	-112.6
Wisconsin	205.7	513.8	-308.1
Wyoming	28.8	71.9	-43.1
Puerto Rico	115.2	287.8	-172.6
Outlying Areas	40.8	102.0	-61.1
Bureau of Indian Education	94.0	234.8	-140.8
Technical Assistance	15.0	32.6	-17.6
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>National</b>	<b>\$11,497.8</b>	<b>\$28,714.6</b>	<b>-\$17,216.8</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Education Budget Service. For more information, contact Tom Zembar at 202.822.7109 or TZembar@nea.org. | February 2, 2015