



# NSBA 2021 Talking Points

## Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA)

Ensuring students with disabilities receive an excellent education is a legal requirement as well as the right thing to do to help millions of students succeed. The federal government has been underfunding the Individuals with Education Act (IDEA) since it was first passed in the 1970s. While promising up to 40 percent in funding, the federal share has been far below that number. Currently it is just about 13 percent. This means states and local school districts provide not only their portion but also the shortfall in the federal obligation. NSBA is calling on Congress and the administration to begin the important path to fully funding IDEA at the levels promised when this landmark legislation was first passed. More than 7 million students are educated through IDEA, and not fully funding it has a ripple effect throughout public schools and communities that impacts all students. If full funding for IDEA is provided, school districts can redirect more resources to innovative and well-rounded education programs to benefit a greater number of students.

School districts provide IDEA services to an estimated 7.4 million students and their families each year. According to the most recent data from 2018, IDEA Part C services were delivered to 409,315 infants and toddlers from birth through age 2; 815,010 children ages 3 through 5 in 2016 were served under IDEA Part B. Over 6,315,228 students ages 6 through 21 were served under IDEA Part B. Public schools would benefit from Congress fully funding the federal share of the national investment in IDEA, thereby funding more services for students with disabilities, as well as provide a spark to transform learning for all students in public schools.

### *NSBA's position on IDEA:*

- President Biden has proposed major increases in IDEA funding in the 2021-22 federal budget. Although Congress provided \$3.03 billion in pandemic-related emergency IDEA Part B and C funding as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (March 2021), more assistance and resources are needed. NSBA supports the administration's proposal for increased funding, which will help school districts better assist students with disabilities as well as positively impacting all students in public schools.
- As NSBA advocated in its transition recommendations to the Biden administration, NSBA calls on Congress and the administration to enact legislation to fully fund IDEA, such as the bipartisan and bicameral IDEA Full Funding Act.
- If Congress and the administration begin discussions to reauthorize IDEA, NSBA urges them to include the important voice of school board members in that process to ensure a greater focus on student outcomes and less emphasis on federal prescriptions.