



July 16, 2025

Dear Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Moore Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

The Center for Learner Equity (CLE) is writing to update our letter dated May 5, 2025 regarding our recommendations for key funding in the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY2026) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill. As the subcommittee knows, our funding recommendations support and strengthen access to public school choice through charter schools and advance the academic success of students with disabilities.

Specifically, given the ongoing actions undertaken by the Administration to reduce staff at the U.S. Department of Education; delay critical FY 2025 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) appropriations funding to states and districts; and the White House's May 2 formal proposal regarding ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), CLE is adamant that **Congress MUST disregard the President's FY 2026 recommendations and expand, not contract, federal education funding.** Specifically, CLE opposes the Administration's proposal to combine funds under IDEA Part B preschool (ages 3-5) and all IDEA Part D National Activities, as well as block-granting ESEA K-12 title programs. These proposed education cuts will be detrimental to students with disabilities, including those attending public charter schools.

To ensure adequate federal funding flows to states and districts so that *all students can thrive*, we reiterate the specific recommendations made in May:

**Recommendation:** Support and increase FY2026 funding for education programs - at CLE recommended levels - so that states can educate all students, including students with disabilities. See below.

**Recommendation:** Include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and related K-12 funding specifics *within* the FY 2026 statute to ensure the allocated funding that supports students with disabilities is firmly articulated by Congress and enshrined in law. Given recent decisions in the final FY 2025 appropriations bills that did not specify funding levels for IDEA and related programs, CLE urges the subcommittee to articulate and include all funding details for IDEA, ESEA, and other education programs within the FY 2026 statute.

**Recommendation:** Maintain existing statutory authority for the Department of Education (Department) to oversee all federal education laws. CLE opposes any federal actions that seek to abolish the Department, reduce or block grant education funding, or alter the Department's important role in protecting the rights and preventing discrimination of students with disabilities.

Regarding the FY 2026 recommended funding levels, the specific programs we highlight for ongoing support and increases are:

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as Every Student Succeeds Act

- **ESEA Title I: \$21.58 billion** to support the 25 million students in high-poverty schools, including public charter schools, that need extra academic support to meet rigorous state-set standards in reading, mathematics, and science and increase their opportunities for success.
- **ESEA Title II: \$2.56 billion** to continue a strong investment in creating profession-ready educators and to help reduce teacher and school leader shortages across the country.
- **ESEA Charter School Programs Grant: At least \$500 million** to support charter school growth and quality, and to ensure that states can provide new charter schools with access to the technical resources and tools necessary to improve and ensure the success of students with disabilities.
- **ESEA School-Based Mental Health Services Professionals grants: \$250 million** to restore essential programming and to be divided equally between the School-Based Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grant and the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant Program. This investment will allow for new and continued grant awards to support state and district efforts to address workforce shortages and increase access to comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- **IDEA Part B Sec. 611—Ages 6-21: \$16.661 billion** to place the IDEA on a 10-year glide path to full funding (or 40% of the per-pupil expenditure promised to districts when the IDEA was first passed in 1975). Today, Congress is providing about 11% of the costs. Congress must commit to consistent increases in the coming 10 years.
- **IDEA Part B Sec. 619—Ages 3-5: \$491 million** to support states providing preschool and early intervention services to preschool-aged children.
- **IDEA Part C—Ages birth to 2: \$632 million** to support early intervention and support to infants, toddlers, and their families from birth through age 2.
- **IDEA Part D—National Activities:** To provide the infrastructure to implement programs for students with disabilities through training and professional development for personnel, technical assistance to states, providing information to parents and more.

- **State Personnel Development: \$44.4 million**
- **Technical Assistance and Development: \$36.2 million**
- **Personnel Preparation: \$135 million**
- **Parent Training and Information Centers: \$38.15 million**
- **Media and Technology: \$36.7 million**

**Higher Education Act: Transition to Post-Secondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities: \$13.8 million** for programs that provide post-secondary opportunities to young adults with disabilities.

**Institute of Education Sciences (IES): \$900 million** to support a comprehensive research program to promote the highest quality and rigor in research and include \$70 million for the National Center for Special Education Research to specifically inform and improve the outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Office for Civil Rights (OCR): \$163.8 million** to support a fully resourced OCR to investigate civil rights complaints for all students, regarding all civil rights statutes within their purview, aligned and consistent with existing legal precedent.

CLE encourages you to use your full authority to write and pass FY2026 appropriations bills that 1) Support and increase funding for education programs so districts can educate *all* students, including students with disabilities; 2) include ESEA, IDEA and other education program funding details *in the FY2026 appropriations statute*; and 3) *maintain existing statutory authority for the Department to oversee all education programs*. CLE appreciates the work of the subcommittee and urges you to intentionally prioritize students with disabilities and the school teams in traditional public and charter schools that support them in the final FY2026 appropriations bills. If we can provide further information, please contact CLE's federal policy advisor Laura Kaloi ([lkaloi@stridepolicy.com](mailto:lkaloi@stridepolicy.com)).

Sincerely,



Jennifer Coco  
Interim Executive Director

cc: House and Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittees

The Center for Learner Equity is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that students with disabilities have equitable access to high-quality public education. The Center for Learner Equity provides research, policy analysis, coalition building, and technical assistance to a variety of stakeholders across the nation.

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