



May 12, 2026

Chair Robert Aderholt
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Chair Shelley Moore Capito
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
HHS, Education and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Tammy Baldwin
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
HHS, Education and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Center for Learner Equity (CLE) is writing to recommend key funding and inclusion of report language in the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY 2027) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill to strengthen schools and districts for the success of students with disabilities. CLE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that students with disabilities have access to high-quality public education opportunities and choices. We provide policy analysis, coalition building, and technical assistance to a variety of stakeholders nationwide. As a leading national voice supporting students with disabilities in both the charter and traditional public school sectors, our funding recommendations advance the academic success of students with disabilities, including by expanding access to public charter schools.

For FY 2027, CLE urges Congress to *expand - not contract - federal education funding* because any cuts to education will be detrimental to students with disabilities, including those attending charter schools. To ensure adequate federal funding flows to states, districts, and schools so that *all students, and especially students with disabilities, can thrive*, we respectfully make the following recommendations:

1. Increase funding for the Charter School Program (CSP): \$500 M

CSP recipients are making targeted investments in field activities and tools that benefit students with disabilities. For instance, CSP State Entity grantee New Jersey Public Charter School Association partnered with CLE to provide technical assistance to their charter school grantees. Together, we determined that special educator retention was a major issue affecting their school communities, and that practical tools were needed. CSP funding supported the development of this [open-source toolkit](#) for the New Jersey charter school community. The toolkit is broadly applicable to all schools and supports any district's efforts to retain special educators.

The most recent CSP competition for [Model Development and Dissemination \(MDD\) grants](#) has produced at least two multi-year CSP awards that center access and opportunity for students with disabilities. The Rhode Island League of Charter Public Schools and the Diverse Learners Collaborative in Tennessee are both engaged in MDD projects focused on students with disabilities and will surface important learnings for the field.

2. Include report language directing the Department of Education to continue to provide technical assistance to states and CSP grant recipients in support of students with disabilities, consistent with prior funding bills.

Charter School Program (CSP).—

Technical Assistance.—The Department is directed to continue to support and evaluate flexibility in the availability and effective use of CSP State Entity technical assistance resources; evaluate how such funds are used to ensure subgrantees are equipped to meet the needs of all students, and specifically students with disabilities and English learners as required by law; and, brief the Committees not later than 90 days after enactment of this act on its actions and continued plans to effectively oversee the CSP program.

With direction from Congress, the Department of Education has evaluated CSP state entity grantees' use of technical assistance dollars from 2017-2020 to improve the quality of education for students with disabilities and English learners in public charter schools¹. This analysis revealed that (1) some states have developed targeted technical assistance to support charter schools and charter school authorizers as they serve these students; and (2) that levels of investment in the delivery of this technical assistance vary greatly². Ongoing inclusion of this report language will help ensure all charter schools have access to the technical assistance designed to support charter schools and educators in their efforts to recruit, enroll, and retain students with disabilities and English learners. In addition, it is important for the Department of Education to update the report as 30 new State Entity grants have been approved or renewed since the report was originally issued³.

3. **Reject recommendations made by the White House that would eliminate, reduce, or block grant funds for any program authorized** under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). States and school districts, especially charter schools that operate as their own local education agency, rely upon these dedicated funding sources to hire educators and specialized staff and educate students.
4. **Include IDEA and related K-12 funding details within the FY 2027 statute** to ensure funding that supports students with disabilities is firmly articulated by Congress and enshrined in law. The Administration has engaged in ongoing actions that have negatively impacted students with disabilities and their educators - refusing to obligate final FY 2025 appropriated education research funds,⁴ withholding nearly \$7 B in K-12 funds from states and districts, cutting IDEA Part D programs, and obliterating the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). CLE urges the subcommittee to articulate and include all funding details for IDEA, ESEA, and other education programs within the FY 2027 appropriations bill.
5. **Clarify that it is through federal statutes that the Department of Education is required 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.
6. **Fund education programs at the highest levels possible so that states can educate all students, including students with disabilities.** The specific programs we are targeting for increases are:

¹ Authorized via explanatory text, sample from FY2021, Page 1650: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-117HPRT43750/pdf/CPRT-117HPRT43750.pdf>

² "How 2017-2020 State Entity Grantees Are Using Technical Assistance Set-Aside Funds" <https://charterschoolcenter.ed.gov/sites/default/files/upload/reports/How%202017-2020%20State%20Entity%20Grantees%20Are%20Using%20Technical%20Assistance%20Set-Aside%20Funds.pdf>

³ Number of SE grants issued in FY22, 23, 24, and 25, which were not included in the cohort of grants studied in the above report. <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-birth-grade-12/charter-school-programs/charter-schools-program-csp-grants-charter-school-developers-opening-of-new-charter-schools-and-replication#awards>

⁴ Knowledge Alliance Resource FY 2025 Appropriations Act IES Funding (May 2026), accessed 5-5-26 https://www.knowledgeall.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Knowledge-Alliance-Resource-FY25-IES-Funding_4.17.26.pdf

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: \$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 enable new and ongoing grant awards to support state and district efforts to address school 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 with 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 FY 2027 appropriations bills that 1) include report language for the CSP that supports technical assistance designed to improve the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students with disabilities in charter schools, 2) support and increase funding for education programs so districts can educate *all* students, including students with disabilities; 3) include ESEA, IDEA and other education program funding details *in the FY 2027 appropriations statute*; and 4) *maintain existing statutory authority for the Department to oversee all education programs*.

CLE appreciates the subcommittee's work and urges you to prioritize students with disabilities and the school teams in traditional public and charter schools that support them in the final FY 2027 appropriations bills. If we can provide further information, please contact CLE's federal policy advisor Laura Kaloi (lkaloi@stridepolicy.com).

Sincerely,



Jennifer Coco
Interim Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Bill Cassidy
The Honorable Bernie Sanders
The Honorable Tim Walberg
The Honorable Bobby Scott

The Center for Learner Equity (CLE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that students with disabilities have meaningful access to high-quality public school choices. Since 2013, our organization has proactively collaborated with states, charter authorizers, special education and charter school advocates, and other stakeholders to advance our mission. We catalyze student success and eradicate the complex, pervasive, and systematic barriers that prevent students with disabilities from accessing quality educational opportunities and choices, robust support, and inclusive environments.

www.centerforlearnerequity.org