



# Protecting and Strengthening Special Education Programs

## Legislative Request

Please cosponsor the IDEA Full Funding Act (S. 1277/H.R. 2598) and support funding IDEA Part B (Section 611) at \$16.661 billion for Fiscal Year 2027. We also urge Congress to maintain strong federal oversight of IDEA within the U.S. Department of Education and reject efforts to move special education programs outside of the Department.

## Background

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed in 1975, guarantees students with disabilities a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) within the Department of Education distributes federal funds, while states and local districts cover the remaining costs. Although the federal government originally committed to funding 40% of the average per-pupil cost for special education services, it currently provides only 10%.

## Impact

The U.S. Department of Education plays a key role in overseeing special education services for students with Down syndrome and other disabilities, ensuring they receive needed supports and services. For this reason, the Office of Special Education Programs must remain fully staffed and functional within the Department of Education.

Fully funding IDEA would strengthen special education systems across states by giving more students access to a free appropriate public education and providing schools with the resources they need to meet student needs. This would improve long-term educational and economic outcomes, including greater success in employment and community life.

**For more information, please contact our policy team at [policy@ndss.org](mailto:policy@ndss.org).**