

# STATE OF KANSAS



CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 241 SOUTH  
TOPEKA, KS 66612

PHONE: (785) 296-3232  
GOVERNOR.KANSAS.GOV

GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

March 16, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jefferies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader Jefferies:

We are writing to urge you to provide a significant increase in federal funding for IDEA Part B Grants to States and put the federal government on a path to fully funding special education services. IDEA was enacted to ensure that every child with a disability receives the education to which he or she is entitled. Passed by Congress in 1975, IDEA committed the federal government to covering up to 40% of the average per pupil expenditures for special education.

However, this commitment has never been met, with funding hovering around 15% annually. This costs states across the country roughly \$25 billion – and Kansas \$300 million – annually. When IDEA passed, it was expected that in exchange for federal funding, states would ensure that students were provided a “free appropriate public education.” In Kansas, we have held up our end of the bargain—and often have even gone above the requirements of IDEA—to provide these mandated services to gifted and special education students. It is past time that Congress fulfills its end of the deal.

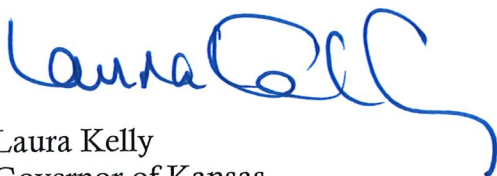
The underfunding of IDEA has placed an undue burden on our state, school districts, and taxpayers. Kansas has stepped up and increased state-level funding to cover part of the federal funding gap as costs increase and a growing number of students need services. Without full special education funding, school districts often have to use general student funding to provide federally mandated IDEA services to students on individual education plans, leaving districts with fewer resources for teacher salaries, early childhood education programs, or career and technical education programs. In effect, Congress’ failure to fully fund special education impacts every student in every community.

That’s why we urge you to increase funding for special education over the next federal budget cycle. It would allow states like Kansas to better serve students with disabilities by improving our early intervention services, keeping qualified educators and paraprofessionals in the classroom, and advancing professional and career development services. With adequate resources, we could invest in innovations that support student growth from early childhood through post-secondary—paying dividends for our economy, workforce, and state.

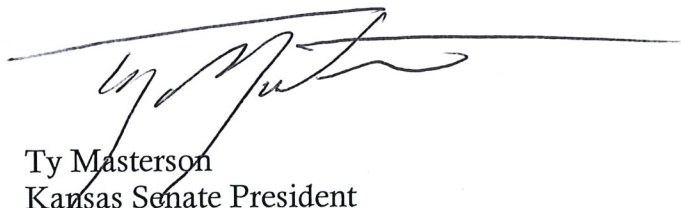
Letter to Speaker McCarthy, Leader Schumer,  
Leader McConnell, and Leader Jefferies  
Re: Federal Funding for IDEA Part B Grants  
March 16, 2023  
Page 2 of 2.

Together, the federal government and states have created a strong public education system that prepares our next generation and fuels our national economic competitiveness. Let's continue that partnership by maintaining the bargain reached with IDEA and fully funding special education. Please reach out if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Respectfully,



Laura Kelly  
Governor of Kansas



Ty Masterson  
Kansas Senate President



Dan Hawkins  
Kansas Speaker of the House



Dinah Sykes  
Kansas Senate Minority Leader



Vic Miller  
Kansas House Minority Leader