



July 19, 2023

Hon. Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
322 Hart SOB  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Hakeem Jeffries  
Democratic Leader  
H-204 O'Neill HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Democratic Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell,

The American Physical Therapy Association strongly urges Congress to avoid any cuts to programs operating under the authority of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). While APTA understands the importance of a balanced budget and responsible spending, cuts to IDEA are a direct threat to the ability of children with disabilities to receive the free and appropriate public education program promised to them under the U.S. Constitution. APTA also urges Congress to adopt the highest proposed IDEA funding levels, ensuring that these vital educational programs survive well into the future.

Children with disabilities from infancy through high school can benefit from physical therapist services. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants support families in promoting their children's development, learning, and participation in family and community life by using their knowledge and skills specifically related to motor and self-care function, assistive technology, and medical and health care science to provide a unique contribution to school and early intervention teams. PTs and PTAs provide services by collaborating with the team, exchanging information with the family, and integrating interventions into everyday routines, activities, and locations to help students benefit from early intervention and educational programs, supports, and experiences.

The work PTs perform in schools is mandated and informed by IDEA. Enacted in 1975, the law guarantees a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of their disability. Whenever possible, these students should be educated alongside their nondisabled same-aged peers. More than 6 million children between the ages of 3 and 21 are eligible for Part B of IDEA's special education and related services mandate. Nearly 400,000 children under the age of 3 and their families are supported by IDEA's early-intervention program, known as Part C.

Proposed FY 2024 appropriations legislation has included cuts of up to 20% to IDEA. This would be catastrophic for the program, as Congress already is not adequately funding IDEA. Congress created a funding standard when the law was enacted that would cover up to 40% of the costs for educational services for students with disabilities that exceed what is required for

general education students. The current reality is that federal funding covers approximately 14.7% of the costs, creating a shortage of billions of dollars.

APTA urges Congress to avoid making such drastic cuts to IDEA funding, and instead to consider the following funding levels:

- Part B Section 611 (Grants to States): \$16.3 billion.
- Part B Section 619 (Preschool Grants): \$503 million.
- Part C (Grants to Serve Infants and Toddlers): \$932 million.
- Part D (National Activities):
  - State Personnel Development: \$53.6 million.
  - Technical Assistance and Dissemination: \$55.3 million.
  - Personnel Preparation: \$300 million.
  - Parent Training and Information Centers: \$49.2 million.
  - Media and Technology: \$41.4 million.

Additionally, we respectfully request funding in the following amounts for additional programs that impact education and outcomes for individuals with disabilities:

- Institute for Education Sciences (IES): \$900 million.
- National Center for Special Education Research (within IES): \$70 million.
- Office for Civil Rights: \$178 million.
- ESSA Title I: \$36.5 billion.
- ESSA Title II: \$3 billion.
- Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability Model Demonstrations & TPSID National Coordinating Center, and National Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center: \$15.2 million.
- Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights program: \$25 million.
- American Printing House for the Blind: \$53.4 million.
- Assistive Technology Act Programs: \$49 million.
- School-Based Mental Health Services Professionals and School-Based Mental Health Services grants: \$428 million.

Education throughout our country is at a critical inflection point. As districts and schools deal with personnel loss, mental health impacts that still are yet to be fully understood, and other pandemic-related challenges, now is not the time to cut funding to support our neediest students. APTA urges Congress to avoid these catastrophic proposed cuts, and to fund IDEA at appropriate levels.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Brian Allen at [brianallen@apta.org](mailto:brianallen@apta.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Herr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Roger Herr, PT, MPA

APTA President