



NSBA Advocacy Institute 2017 CALIFORNIA BACKGROUND

Education Funding

In mid-December, Congress passed a partial-year Continue Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2017 that will be in effect through April 28, 2017. The CR sustains funding for education and other federal programs at levels comparable to FY2016. The budget and appropriations process for FY2017 is halfway complete, pending a subsequent appropriations measure that must be enacted after the current CR expires in April.

Looking ahead to the FY2018 budget, there are two major issues that are outstanding:

- Concerns about another round of across-the-board budget cuts (sequestration) governed by the Budget Control Act of 2011.
- The need to emphasize the importance of maximizing federal investments in Title 1, special education (IDEA) and related education programs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING:

Special education is the only federal education program that is required to be provided even when funding is reduced at the state and federal level. When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was enacted nearly 40 years ago, Congress promised to provide 40 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure to pay for the new federal mandate. However, Congress has never fulfilled that promise.

For California, 40 percent of the current average per-pupil expenditure is just over \$3 billion per year, but in 2014, the federal government provided only \$1.2 billion. In 2013-14, California spent a total of \$11.2 billion in state, federal and local general funds to provide the services required by IDEA. The \$1.2 billion provided by the federal government only equated to 10.32 percent of the total amount spent in California.

This underfunding has had a major impact on a school agency's ability to balance its annual operating budget and maintain quality education programs and services for all children. Over the past nine years, the local contribution by California school agencies for special education has increased from \$2.97 billion to more than \$5 billion. This is especially troubling as the cost of providing special education continues to rise due to the increase in the population of students with high-cost disabilities, such as autism.

CSBA greatly appreciates the \$415 million increase in IDEA funds that special education funding that was provided in the FY2016 appropriations bill. However, CSBA urges Congress and the Administration to continue increasing funding to address the needs of this vulnerable student population and to support legislation which would increase IDEA funding to the promised 40 percent funding level over the next 10 years.

TALKING POINTS:

- **Talk to your Representatives about the need to further increase all aspects of education funding in order to fully address the increased program and reporting requirements of ESSA.**
- **CSBA greatly appreciates recent Congressional actions to increase special education funding, but continues to strongly support further federal funding increases to, at a minimum, meet the needs for funding growth and COLA and eventually meet the 40 percent funding promise.**
- **CSBA recommends increased federal funding to address the specific and increasingly expensive service needs of students diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum.**
- **CSBA urges Congress to support an ongoing increase in funding for infant and preschool grants, as well as funding for intervention services to address a growing special education population.**
- **CSBA urges Congress to also pass legislation to limit the attorney's fees that districts are required pay when there are special education disputes regardless of whether the district is found to be at fault or not.**