

IDEA Full Funding Coalition

January 24, 2014

RE: Reps. Huffman/Polis/McKinley/Harper IDEA Full Funding Dear Colleague Letter

Dear Representative:

The undersigned national education organizations represent a coalition dedicated to advocating for the full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On behalf of students with disabilities, parents, teachers, administrators, and school board members we urge you to sign the Dear Colleague letter being circulated by Reps. Huffman, Polis, McKinley, and Harper which asks President Obama to increase funding for IDEA in his FY 2015 budget proposal.

Over six million children and youth with disabilities and their families across the nation benefit from the services and supports provided by IDEA. To provide special education and related services, it generally costs about double what it costs to educate a student without disabilities. Since 1975, IDEA has required the government to pay up to 40% of this excess cost to help local school districts appropriately educate children and youth with disabilities. Today, the Federal share is only 15%.

This inadequate Federal investment, in combination with the recent budget cuts at the state and local level, has made it increasingly difficult for local schools districts to continue to provide the services that children and youth with disabilities need and are legally entitled to. Investing in IDEA, a federal flagship formula program designed to help level the educational playing field for students with disabilities, is an investment in our nation's students and their future, and represents an indication that the Federal government is serious in meeting its commitment to helping school districts meet the needs of all students.

Therefore, we urge you sign the Huffman- Polis-McKinley-Harper Dear Colleague letter to request that President Obama increase funding for IDEA in his FY 2015 budget proposal. To sign, please contact Nick Hromalik in Rep. Huffman's office at Nicholas.Hromalik@mail.house.gov or call (202) 225-5161, or Jeff Wilson in Rep. McKinley's office at Jeffrey.Wilson@mail.house.gov or call (202) 225-4172.

Sincerely,

AASA: The School Superintendents Association
American Federation of Teachers
Council for Exceptional Children
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Education Association
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of Secondary Schools Principals
Association of Educational Service Agencies
National Rural Education Association
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
National School Boards Association