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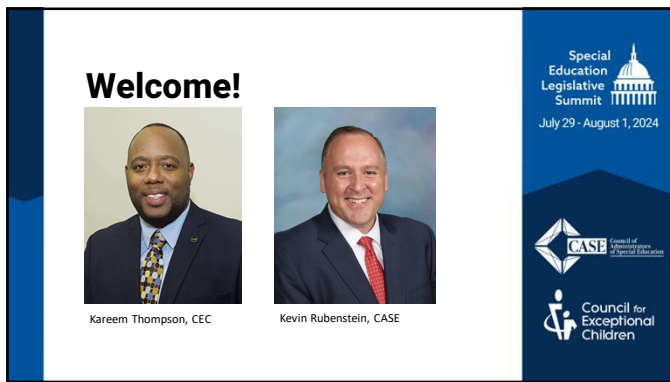
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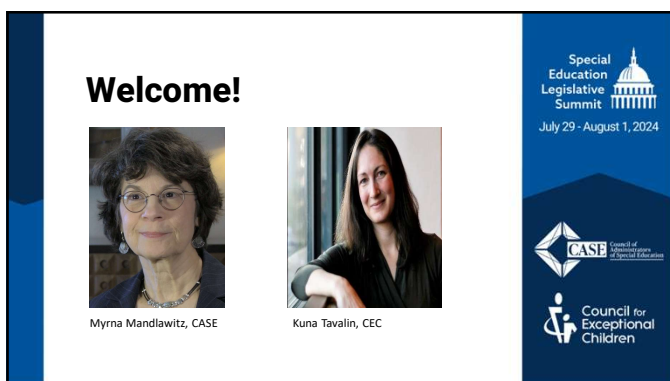
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# Anatomy of a Hill Visit

The Kuna and Myrna Show!

Special  
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Legislative  
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## Q: Why are you in Washington?

A: In the words of Justice Louis Brandeis:

“The most important political office  
is  
that of the private citizen.”

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## IMPORTANT REMINDER!

It is not only your **RIGHT** as a citizen to  
**VOTE** for the candidates of your choice....

It is also your **RESPONSIBILITY!**

This message approved  
by Kuna & Myrna



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## When we talk about Congress...

- We mean 535 individual “small businesses!”
- Each office is unique, but ask yourselves this question:
  - WHAT ARE THOSE BUSINESSES “SELLING?”
  - More importantly as the customer... are you buying?
- Your job as an advocate: To influence what they’re selling and who’s buying!



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## How Congress Operates

Legislating by anecdote.

- Compelling stories often prompt action.
- #HearOurEdStories
- MoC need to hear from “home.”
  - Power of constituency, i.e., YOU!
- Congress is run by “youngsters.”
  - Smart, with power and influence, but not much experience.



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## The Facts: Elections Always Looming!

- Reelection: Always running...or getting ready to run!
  - Reps: Every two years.
  - Senators: Every six years.
- High stakes 2024 Elections:
  - President/VP.
  - 435 House seats; 33 Senate seats (10 R; 19 D; 4 I) + 1 special election (R).
  - Also, FYI, 11 governors (8 R; 3 D).
- Effecting change means staying in office: “Running” affects everything!



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## Is YOUR MoC "Special?"



- **"Yes"** if your Rep or Senator is on –
  - House Education and Workforce (Labor) Committee.
  - Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee
  - Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee or full Appropriations Committee (House or Senate).
- **"Make that Supersized"** if your Rep or Senator is chair or ranking member of any of the above!
- *If they're not "special," do they matter? YES!*

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## "My MoC is on our page. Do we need to meet?"

- **Yes, but some Dos and Don'ts...**
  - **DO** say "Thanks" and "Keep up the good work!"
    - Let staff know you appreciate the member's actions.
    - The more praise for "good acts," the better chance of reinforcing "behavior!"
  - **DON'T** target other members who don't represent you.
    - You're not a constituent, so they don't really care what you have to say.

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
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## Who Cares About Staff? You do!







Staff members have....

Direct access to legislators.

Their bosses' trust.

Knowledge (sometimes!) on issue areas.

INFLUENCE over legislators' decisions and actions!

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## Some Meeting “Don’ts”

-  Being intentionally misleading
-  Not researching MoC and community.
-  Making assumptions based on “hearsay” about staff or MoC.
-  Referring to MoC by first name (unless you really know them), even if staff does!
-  Droning on too long....!

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## Takeaways

- Getting to know staff can be very beneficial.
  - Gatekeepers to power structure.
  - Capacity to influence decisions.
- You can build relationships with Congress from home.
  - Work with district/state staff.
  - Meet with DC staff when they’re “at home.”
- This visit to DC is just ONE STEP in a long advocacy adventure!

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## It’s Your Turn:

### Becoming a Special Education Advocate!

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## Know before you go...

- Which party?
- Legislator's voting record?
- Committee assignments?
- Do constituents favor your issue? The legislator?
- Helpful personal information? Your personal connections?
- Other legislators who can influence their decision?
- "Opposition" arguments?



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## Tips for a High-Impact Meeting

Prepare a concise message.

- Make sure they get WHO you are and WHAT you do!
- Don't worry about hitting every point

Practice your message, so you don't have to read it...but notes are fine!

Don't just talk...be a good listener, too!

No 300-page reports. 1-2 page summaries are great.

Your #1 goal: Become the "go-to" person on special education!

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## Important "Logistics!"

*Time your arrival.* Please be on time!

*Meeting length:* 10-30 minutes (Ask: "How much time will we have?")

*Anticipate last-minute changes:* Staff schedules are fluid...go with the flow!

*Be patient, courteous, respectful...* even if they aren't! No arguing!

*Influence the influencer.* Remember, staff directly advise the member...and you're a constituent!

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### Summing It All Up...

Stay on topic.	Don't distract from the main issue.
Make it "local."	How are constituents affected? DATA!
Go over basics.	Staff may not know an issue, so ask if familiar before getting in too deep.
Watch the clock.	AND the body language! Stop on time, unless staffer encourages more.
Follow up.	"Thanks" and reiterate main points.
Become a "regular."	Keep information flowing & show up often at district events.

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## QUESTIONS??

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## Welcome!



Caden Fabbri, MENTOR   Kate Domanski, National PTA   Myrna Mandlawitz, CASE   Lakeisha Steele, CASEL

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## Issue Brief: Mental Health

Kate Domanski, Caden Fabbri, Lakeisha Steele

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## Protecting Youth Mental Health

Key takeaways from the Surgeon General's Advisory:

Mental health is an essential part of overall health

Mental health conditions are real, common, and treatable. People experiencing mental health challenges deserve support, compassion, and care—not stigma and shame.

Mental health is shaped by a combination of factors

Mental health conditions can be shaped by biological factors, including genes and brain chemistry and environmental factors, including life experiences.

COVID-19 added to pre-existing challenges that youth faced

Since the pandemic began, rates of psychological distress among young people have increased. The pandemic is most likely affecting those who were already vulnerable. This includes youth with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ youth, and other marginalized communities.

Focusing on youth mental health now is critical

We all have a role to play in supporting the mental health of children and youth. Find actionable steps and resources on our priority webpage: <https://thisissurgeongeneral.gov/youth-mental-health/>

Read more information and download the advisory at: <https://thisissurgeongeneral.gov/youth-mental-health/>

Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

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## Why talk about mental health in schools?

- Mentally health children are more successful in school & life.
- There is a growing & unmet need for mental & behavioral health services for children & youth.
- Schools are an ideal place to provide these services.
- Comprehensive MH/behavioral health services support schools' mission: Learning!
- Comprehensive services are essential to creating & maintaining safe schools.

Source: National Assn of School Psychologists.



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## Who Are We?

**MENTOR** is the **unifying champion** for expanding the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships across the United States.

**MENTOR** is the **expert voice** representing a movement that meets young people everywhere they are – from schools, to workplaces, and beyond.

We operate in collaboration with **24 Affiliates across the country** who serve as community-based experts to galvanize local mentoring movements.

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## Why Us?

**Potential is equally distributed; opportunity is not.**

A major driver of healthy development and opportunity is who you know and who's in your corner.

More than 30 years ago, MENTOR was created to expand opportunity for young people by building and convening a youth mentoring field and movement. Since our founding, there has been a **10x increase in young people in mentoring relationships**.



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## Why Now?




We live in a technological age with devices and media that can turn us away from each other while also making us seem as “connected” as ever.



Systemic and growing inequities show up as gaps in opportunity, networks, and access to adult relationships outside of families for our young people.



Mentoring unites us. At a time when research shows that loneliness and isolation are trending upwards, we know that relationships are powerful tools. They bring us together and navigate us to greater connection and opportunity.



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## Why Now?

**Mental Health Crisis** The Surgeon General issued a warning about the state of mental health among America's youth. His public health advisory urged immediate action to support young people's mental health and well-being.

**COVID-19 Pandemic** More than 200,000 young people lost caregivers, parents, or guardians to COVID

**State of the Union** “Let's take on mental health — especially among our children, whose lives and education have been turned upside down,” Biden said, adding later that “we can all play a part — sign up to be a tutor or a mentor.”



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**Mentoring & All Mentors Make a Difference**

We believe that mentoring relationships can be a tool to drive equity and that all young people deserve caring adult relationships outside their family.

That's why we work to create and expand connections for young people *everywhere they are*.

Our movement honors, supports, and elevates positive relationships and *everyone* who mentors young people.

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**“There is no such thing as other people’s children.”**

**Bill Russell**  
 Founding Board Member of MENTOR  
 Boston Celtics Icon, Hall of Fame member, and Civil Rights leader

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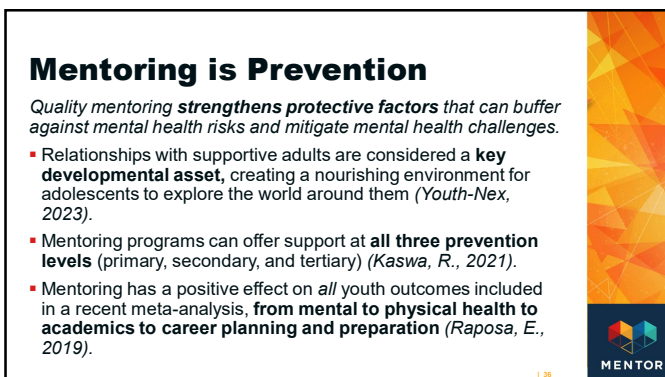
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**Mentoring is Prevention**

Quality mentoring **strengthens protective factors** that can buffer against mental health risks and mitigate mental health challenges.

- Relationships with supportive adults are considered a **key developmental asset**, creating a nourishing environment for adolescents to explore the world around them (*Youth-Nex, 2023*).
- Mentoring programs can offer support at **all three prevention levels** (primary, secondary, and tertiary) (*Kaswa, R., 2021*).
- Mentoring has a positive effect on *all* youth outcomes included in a recent meta-analysis, **from mental to physical health to academics to career planning and preparation** (*Raposa, E., 2019*).

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## Mentoring Improves Mental Health

- Having a mentor is associated with **higher life satisfaction** and **positive wellbeing** in adulthood. (*Chan, et. al., 2024.*)
- Mentored youth report **stronger mental health when they were growing up** and **stronger mental health today as adults**. (*Garringer & Benning, 2023.*)
- Mentoring programs can help **reduce symptoms of depression** and other mental health conditions. (*Bauldry, S., 2006.*)
- Programs that target youth with emotional or behavioral problems are viable candidates for serving as **alternative or adjunctive interventions to improve the mental healthcare service delivery system**. (*Meyerson, D.A., 2013.*)



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## Mentoring Combats Loneliness and Isolation

*Mentoring programs, by definition, connect youth to additional adult or peer supports. **There may be no more direct way to reduce isolation and loneliness for a youth than providing them with a relationship.***

- Mentoring relationships can improve **broader, community-level social connectedness** (*King, C.A. et. al., 2018.*)
- Surgeon General report listed mentoring as a recommended **strategy for supporting youth who are experiencing social disconnection** and associated challenges (*Office of the Surgeon General, 2023.*)



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## What mentoring is not:

- A substitute for professional mental health services from licensed providers
- The sole solution to the youth mental health crisis
- The only funding stream that governments should be investing in to address the youth mental health crisis



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## Opportunities Ahead

To help mentoring programs address the youth mental health crisis, **governments must increase their investment** into community-based organizations and innovative programs that serve young people everywhere they are.

- One in three young people in the United States will not have a mentor at some point in their childhood – **the “mentoring gap”** – which has grown in recent years among Gen Z. (Garringer, M. & Benning, Chelsea, 2023.)
- The average mentoring program has **63 young people on their waitlist**
- Nearly **9 in 10 people** feel that more mentoring is needed in our country
- More than **8 in 10 people** support the use of government funds to grow mentoring opportunities



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## Resources

- [Mentoring and Mental Health Research Summary](#)
- [Mentoring and Loneliness/Isolation Research Summary](#)
- [Advancing Inclusive Mentoring Policy and Programmatic Priorities](#)
- [Becoming a Better Mentor: Strategies to Be There for Young People](#)
- [Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring](#) (fifth edition coming soon!)
  - [Inclusive Mentoring for Youth with Disabilities Supplement](#)
- [National Mentoring Resource Center](#)
  - [Model/Population Review: Mentoring for Youth with Disabilities](#)



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Questions?



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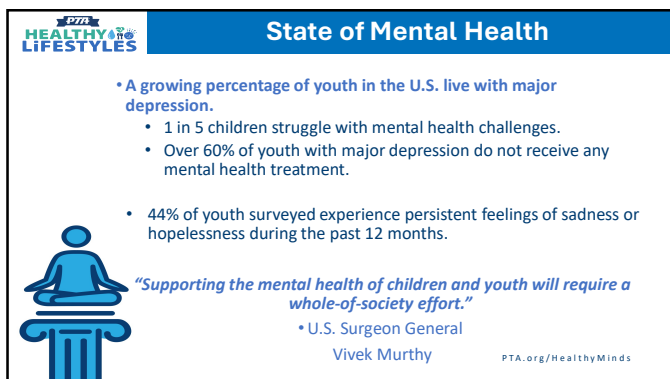
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## HEALTHY MINDS

*a pillar of PTA's Healthy Lifestyles*

Seeks to support PTAs and families on their journey to make **mental health a priority** by providing **tools and resources** to empower families to take **action**.




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### Healthy Minds Components


Listen

Partner

Share

Build

PTA.org/HealthyMinds



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### PTA Healthy Minds Modules

PTA Healthy Minds 101

Building SEL Skills at Home

Building Resilience

PTA.org/HealthyMinds



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### Direct to Parent Resources

- Informational Resources
- Family Activities & Discussion Guides
- Topic-Specific Resources

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### P.T.A.



VERB /PEE-TEE-AY/  
TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S POTENTIAL IN ONE OR MULTIPLE WAYS:

- 1) To invest in your child's potential.
- 2) To volunteer for your child's potential.
- 3) To advocate for your child's potential.



### PTA Advocacy Priorities

- Promoting Effective **Gun Violence Prevention** and Enhancing School Safety
- Prioritizing **Digital Safety** for Children and Youth
- Creating **Welcoming, Supportive and Inclusive School Environments**
- Strengthening **Family School Partnerships**
- Enhancing and Protecting **Funding** for Necessary Education Programs

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## PTA Advocacy

Three "Branches":

- ✓ Local PTA
- ✓ State PTA
- ✓ National PTA

PTA.org/Advocacy

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## How We Can Work Together

- ✓ Access our resources at [PTA.org/HealthyMinds](https://PTA.org/HealthyMinds) or [PTA.org/Advocacy](https://PTA.org/Advocacy)
- ✓ Work with and/or join your PTA partners at the local, state and national level



[PTA.org/Advocacy](https://PTA.org/Advocacy)

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## Our "Asks!"

Members of Congress are urged to:

- Support the *CARE for Student Mental Health Act* in the Senate (S. 4041) to authorize the two MH grants to address the pipeline for and shortages of school-based mental health professionals.
- Provide \$250 million within Safe Schools National Activities divided between *School-Based MH Services Grant* program & *School-Based MH Services Professional Demonstration Grant*.

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## Team Time

The following states will meet in breakout rooms.

- Illinois: Banneker
- Virginia: Bell
- Utah: Whitney


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# RELAY





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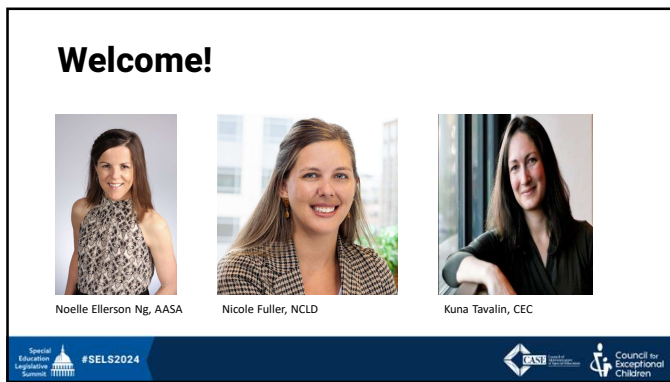
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## Agenda

- Introductions and Stage Setting
- Education Funding Overview
- IDEA Funding Overview
- The “Asks” for CEC
- Advice and Takeaways



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## Important Terms: Reminder

- Authorization
  - Establishes a program and *can* setting funding limits.
  - Example: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Appropriation
  - Funds an authorized program.
  - Example,



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## School Funding 101

- Role of Federal Funding
- LEA Budgets
  - Overview
  - Trends



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### Importance of School Funding

- Why does funding matter? Let's state the obvious: education costs money. It isn't free.
- Money matters for student learning and achievement.
- Money is not the silver bullet. But it DOES matter.

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### Top Five: Federal Funding

- The top five federal programs in the nation's schools come from three different federal agencies.
  - Title I
  - IDEA
  - Medicaid in Schools
  - School Meals
  - E-Rate
- Other agencies with programs that support education: Dept of Interior, Dept of Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health & Human Services, among others.

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### But Remains Below the 2011 Inflation-Adjusted Level (Department of Education Discretionary Funding in Billions of Dollars)

Year	Funding (Billions of Dollars)
2011	\$68.3
2012	\$68.1
2013	\$65.7
2014	\$67.3
2015	\$67.1
2016	\$68.3
2017	\$66.9
2018	\$70.9
2019	\$70.6
2020	\$72.3
2021	\$73.0
2022	\$75.4
2023 PRES	\$88.3
2023 House	\$86.7
2023 Senate	\$83.4
2023 FINAL	\$79.2

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### Importance of Federal Education Investments

- Federal dollars are, on average, ~11% of an LEA operating budget.
- Not a huge, but definitely a significant portion of an operating budget.
- Key federal programs bolster supports for specific populations, and include Title I and IDEA, among others.
  - Title II, IV and Impact Aid are other key USED programs

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### Trends of Education Funding

**PETER S. PETERSON**  
PRESIDENT

The decline in the share of local funding has mostly been picked up by state governments

Share of Education Funding by Level of Government (Percent)

Year	Federal (%)	State (%)	Local (%)
1919	5	15	80
1929	5	20	75
1939	5	35	60
1949	5	40	55
1959	5	40	55
1969	5	40	55
1979	5	45	50
1989	5	45	50
1999	5	45	50
2009	5	45	50
2019	5	45	50
2020	8	47	45

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Public Education Financial Survey, September 2002.  
NOTE: Data are for the school year shown.  
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### Federal Funding Looks Different Across Districts

STATES WITH MORE THAN HALF OF LEAs OPERATING WITH A FEDERAL SHARE

- Greater Than 15%
- Greater Than 11.3%
- Greater Than 4.5%

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## Federal Funding Looks Different Across Districts

State	Fed %	State %	Local %	State	Fed %	State %	Local %	State	Fed %	State %	Local %
Nat'l	11.3	46.1	42.6	KY	18.5	56.2	25.3	ND	17.4	45.1	37.5
AL	16.4	56.2	27.4	LA	17.6	39.1	43.5	OH	8.6	37.8	53.7
AK	21.8	62.9	15.3	ME	10.7	30.5	58.4	OK	16.7	44.6	38.7
AZ	19.5	35.2	44.8	MD	8.7	46.6	44.7	OR	9.7	59.6	30.7
AR	17.6	69.0	13.3	MA	5.7	39.8	54.6	PA	8.3	39.0	52.7
CA	12.4	47.9	39.6	MI	12.3	51.0	36.8	RI	8.1	30.3	61.5
CO	13.4	44.0	42.6	MN	11.7	59.6	29.2	SC	13.8	46.8	39.4
CT	4.8	30.8	64.4	MS	21.2	47.2	31.6	SD	17.8	27.5	54.6
DE	8.1	63.0	28.9	MO	16.6	42.9	40.5	TN	16.1	52.8	31.1
FL	15.1	44.4	40.5	MT	19.3	39.9	40.8	TX	11.9	42.4	45.7
GA	16.0	47.5	36.4	NE	8.6	21.8	69.6	UT	10.0	48.8	41.2
HI	11.4	88.0	0.6	NV	10.0	55.4	34.6	VT	7.6	81.3	11.1
ID	18.1	62.6	19.3	NH	5.9	30.5	63.7	VA	11.0	48.6	40.4
IL	7.4	45.4	47.2	NJ	4.2	34.0	61.8	WA	9.4	71.6	19.0
IN	9.2	55.5	35.3	NM	13.4	71.3	15.3	WV	15.2	51.5	33.3
IA	10.6	44.7	44.7	NY	4.9	44.4	50.8	WI	8.0	48.6	43.3
KS	8.7	61.6	29.7	NC	14.3	63.5	22.2	WY	12.4	51.8	35.8



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## Federal Funding Looks Different Across Districts

AL	HI	NC
AK	ID	ND
AR	KY	NM
AZ	LA	OK
CA	MI	SC
CO	MO	SD
FL	MS	TN
GA	MT	WV

AK	LA
AL	MO
AR	MS
AZ	MT
GA	OK
ID	TN
KY	



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## Allocation of Federal & State Dollars to SEAs and LEAs

- Nearly \$700 billion per year flows through the K-12 public schools.
- The way dollars flow from funding sources to classrooms is complicated and often mysterious.
- Many dollars flow through more than one funding formula before reaching students, making it even harder to follow the money.
- School districts are funded with a combo of state, federal, and local dollars, many of which come with a dizzying list of regulations dictating how, where, and on whom they may be spent.
- Federal grants (Title, IDEA) are allocated to districts based mainly on student need.
- State-provided education funds go through a state-specific funding formula to calculate the amount of the state education budget that will be allocated to each district in the state.
- State general aid funding formulas typically take into account district enrollment, student characteristics, and community wealth.
- States also provide categorical grants that are more similar to federal funds, in that they are restricted to specific kinds of expenditures.

Source: Allouge



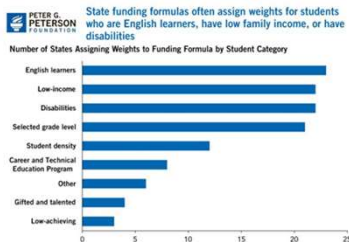
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## How States Allocate Funding



SOURCE: Congressional Research Service, State and Local Funding of Public Schools, August 2019.  
NOTE: The "Other" category includes students who are Native Hawaiian, migrant, homeless, neglected, or delinquent. A state may be counted in more than one category.  
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## School Finance: State Variance



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 Public Elementary Secondary Education Finance Study, May 2020.  
Note: Not every state has data for every year. All states, including the District of Columbia, were ranked in order of per pupil spending. Every 5th state is highlighted for comparison with the national per pupil spending.  
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## Allocation to Specific Schools

- ~50% of funding comes from local revenue sources, the most common of which is property taxes. The dependence on property tax revenues to support schools often reinforces inequity by ensuring that wealthier communities have better-funded schools.
- State funding is often meant to equalize these differences between local school communities but is rarely successful at overcoming these differences.
- Once the LEA has the total revenue projection from each of these sources, LEAs have broad autonomy over how dollars and staffing resources are allocated to each school in the district.

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## But Really: Who?

- Myriad Players
  - Federal: Congress, Administration, and stakeholders
  - State: State board of education, governor, state agency, legislature, stakeholders
  - Local: School board, superintendent, other local government, unions, stakeholder- Role of state and local school boards, superintendents, and principals



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## IDEA Funding & AASA

- Top legislative priority
- It's the closest thing we have to a silver bullet in education
- Proud to co-chair IDEA Full Funding Coalition
- Looking forward to 50 years of IDEA in 2025!



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## Contact Information

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[nellerson@aasa.org](mailto:nellerson@aasa.org)  
 @Noellerson



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National Center for Learning Disabilities

Special Education Legislative Summit  
July 29 - August 1, 2024



CASE Council of Administrators of Special Education



Council for Exceptional Children

## IDEA Funding Overview

Nicole Fuller, National Center for Learning Disabilities

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### Quote from IDEA

*"Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."*

-Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 1400(c)(1)

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### IDEA Full Funding Coalition

We represent a coalition of education stakeholders and advocates dedicated to fulfilling the funding promise for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).



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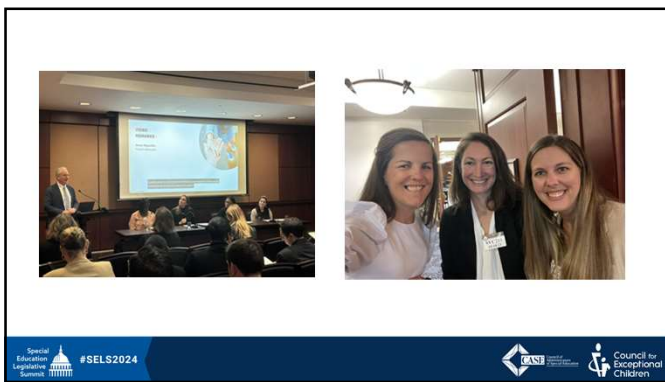
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## IDEA Funding History

When Congress enacted the predecessor legislation in 1975, they strove to ensure that:

- 1) States would provide every eligible child FAPE in the least restrictive environment
- 2) States would not take an untenable financial burden by agreeing to provide special education and related services



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## Use of Funds

Examples of allowable uses of IDEA Part B funds include:

- Adaptive education
- Special education teachers
- Aides and paraprofessionals
- Job coaches
- Interpreters
- Specialized services (e.g., audiology, PT, OT)
- Child find activities
- Specialized equipment
- ESY services
- Evaluations
- Accessible playground equipment
- Transition services
- Assistive technology
- And more



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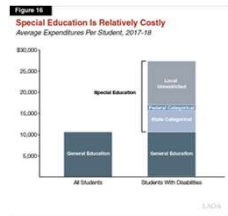
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## "APPE"

National Average Per Pupil Expenditure (APPE) = the metric for the excess\* cost of educating students with disabilities

*\*Congress' then-estimate of educating students with disabilities was that it was roughly double that of a non-disabled student*



Source: California Legal Analyst's Office



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## Some exciting(ish) news

IES has commissioned a National Study on Special Education Spending since the best national estimates of spending are more than 20 years old (!)

American Institutes for Research is conducting a \$5.2 million study, with results expected mid 2026



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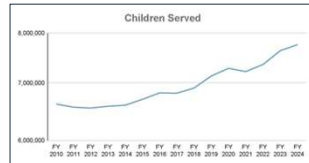
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## Child count has increased

Today, IDEA serves over 7 million children with disabilities, a number that has **increased 12%** over the last decade.

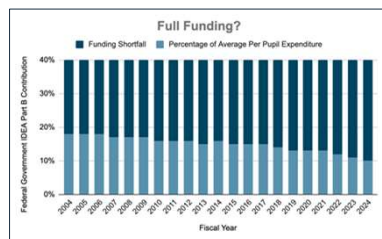
Increase in funding have not kept pace, causing the federal percent of APPE to decrease.



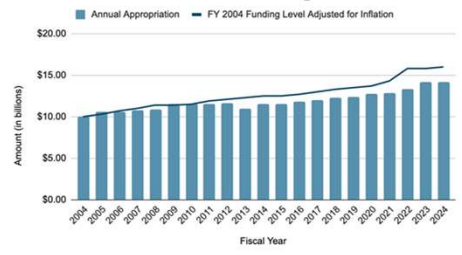
## How is Congress doing?

Congress' final determination was that the government would pay up to **40%** of the national APPE.

In FY23, Congress contributed **11%** of APPE.



## IDEA Part B Funding



## IDEA Full Funding Act

The IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 4519/S.2217) would put funding for IDEA Part B on a glidepath to full funding within a decade.

Check out the cosponsors on congress.gov to see if your Members support!



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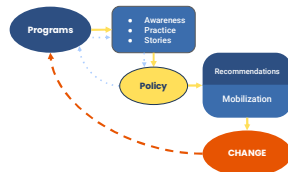
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## The role of advocacy

- Sharing your story and raising awareness
- Bringing advocates together on an issue
- Meeting with decision makers
- Speaking out and asking for a change



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## SELS Appropriations “Asks”

- IDEA, Part B State Grants: No less than \$16.2 billion
  - First step on glidepath to Full Funding
- IDEA, Part C: \$932 million
  - Infants, Toddlers, Families
- IDEA, Preschool (Sec. 619): \$503 million
  - Preschool Grants
- IDEA, Part D Personnel Preparation: \$300 million
  - Pipeline into the special education profession



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## “Asks” Continued

- Jacob K. Javits Gifted & Talented Grants: \$32 million
  - Grants to underserved populations including students with disabilities
- School-Based Health Professionals: \$250 million
  - Shoring the shortage of school psychologists, counselors, and more
- National Center for Special Education Research: \$70 million
  - To support evidence-based practices in the classroom!



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## Advice and Takeaways

- REMEMBER: Despite the politics, FOCUS on the “NEED!”
- What YOU see happening in your school or district matters!
- Having broad support for education funding [IDEA Full Funding!] is important even during tough years like this one
- Building relationships is a key component of advocacy



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### Team Time

The following states will meet in breakout rooms.

- Illinois: Banneker
- Virginia: Bell
- Utah: Whitney

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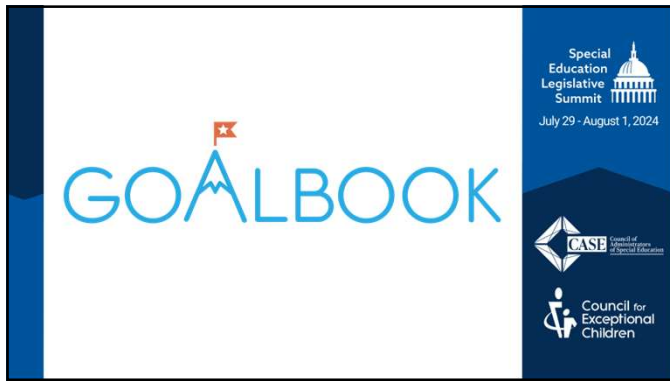
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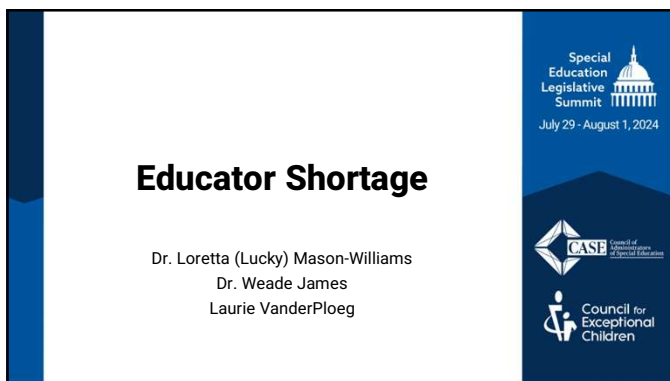
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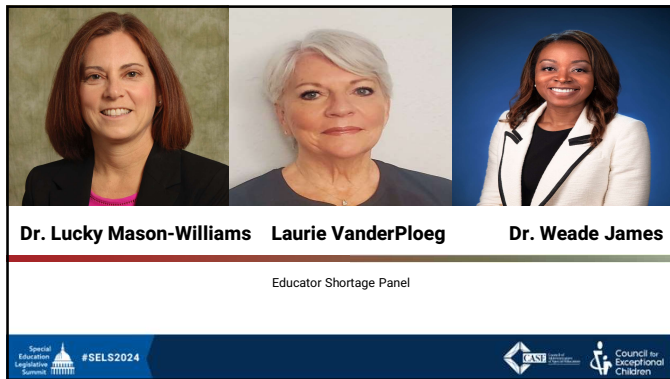
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### Educator Shortage Definition

- U.S. Department of Education added a definition of “educator,” which includes early childhood educators, teachers, principals and other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel (e.g., school psychologists, counselors, school social workers), paraeducators, and faculty
- CEC is aligned with this definition

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### U.S. Department of Education Report

- 7.7 million (roughly 15%) of individuals with disabilities were served under IDEA during the 2023-2024 school year. Up from 13% a decade earlier.
- Increase in special education identification in specific categories.
- Requires more qualified staff!

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### Educator Shortage

- Nearly 9 in 10 schools struggle to hire qualified educators
- 86% of districts had trouble filling their open positions for the 2023-24 school year.
- Around 70% of educators say their school is understaffed, leading to a heavier workload.
- Nearly 60% of schools have trouble finding substitute teachers.
- In K-12 education, 39% of teachers say they feel burned out "very often" or "always."
- More than three-quarters of teachers find their jobs stressful on a regular basis.

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### 2004 Reauthorization of IDEA

- The State educational agency establishes and maintains standards to ensure that paraeducators and assistants are appropriately and adequately trained and supported
- SEC 635 The State has a comprehensive system of personnel development, including the training of paraeducators...612(a)(14)
- SEC 653 The state improvement plan shall address the identified needs for in-service and pre-service preparation for all personnel

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Amendments of 2004, Pub. L. No 108-446, U.S.C. 20 & 1400 et seq.

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## Paraeducator

- 552,677 paraeducators serving children with disabilities and only 487,299 special education teachers (U.S. Department of Education 2024)
- Paraprofessionals' attrition rates have increased over time. The attrition rate for paras in the 2021-22 school year was **23%**, up sharply from 8% in the 2008-09 school year.
- Grow Your Own Program options



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## Shortage Crisis

- Without **significant intervention**, by the 2025-26 school year, there is **projected to be a shortfall of roughly 200,000 public school** teachers.
- Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics projections, between 2020 and 2030, **37,600 new special education teachers** are required to keep up with demand.
  - From 2010 to 2020, the number of students who receive special education services **increased by approximately 800,000 students**.
- In 2018, there were **one-quarter fewer Black and Latinx teacher candidates** enrolled in teacher preparation programs than were enrolled in 2010.



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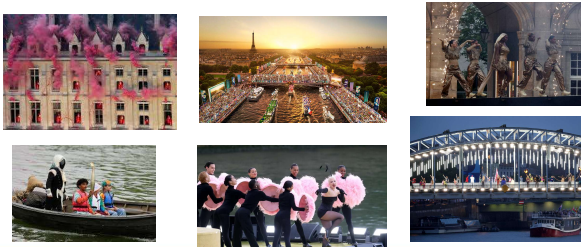
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## Anyone catch the Opening Ceremony?



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## Comprehensive & Well-Coordinated

- ✓ Personnel
- ✓ Sets
- ✓ Audio & visual
- ✓ Permits
- ✓ Athletes
- ✓ Dignitaries
- ✓ Spectators
- ✓ And *boats!*



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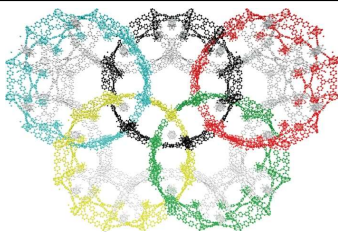
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"Our hypothesis was that it's possible to achieve a ring-shaped cross-section if a four-ended linker with suitable bendability is used to replace the straight linkers while keeping the same connectivity"



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## Complex & Multifaceted



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### We need to move beyond Whac-a-Mole



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### Raise your hand if....

- You were a paraprofessional, but you are not anymore.
- You were a B-12 special education teacher, but you are not anymore.
- You were a building principal, but you are not anymore.
- You were a district leader, but you are not anymore.

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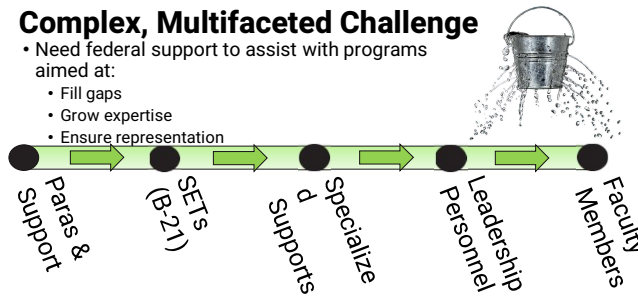
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### Complex, Multifaceted Challenge

- Need federal support to assist with programs aimed at:
  - Fill gaps
  - Grow expertise
  - Ensure representation



Support → Paraprofessionals (B-12) → Specialized Supports → Leadership Personnel → Faculty Members

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## Potential State & Federal Policy Levers

- Lower standards? **NO**
- Fund recruiting efforts (scholarships, grants)? **YES**
- Promote retention programs (mentoring, training)? **YES**
- Improve what we know about the challenge? **YES**



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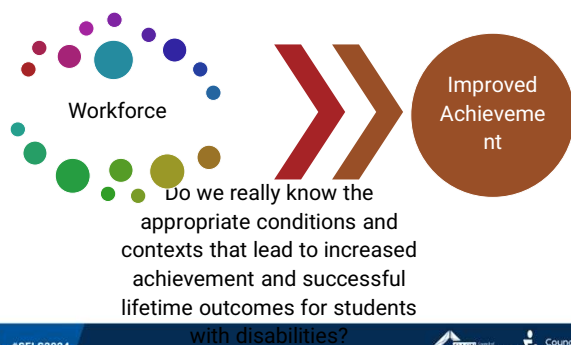
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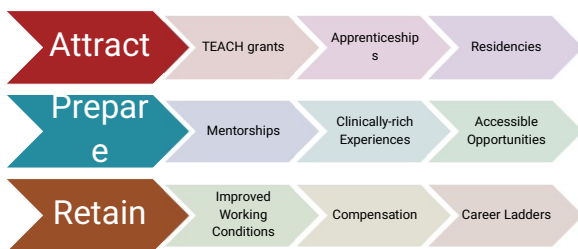
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## What is the Federal Role?



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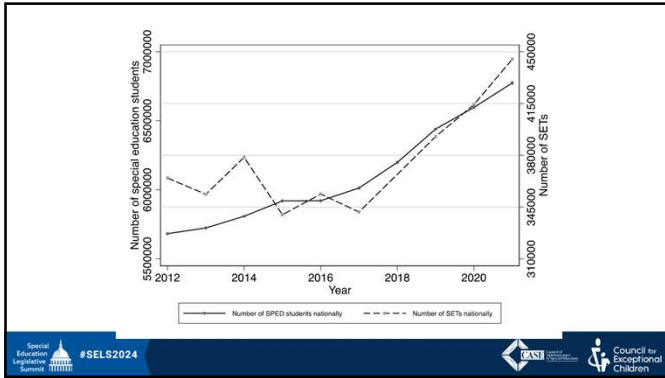
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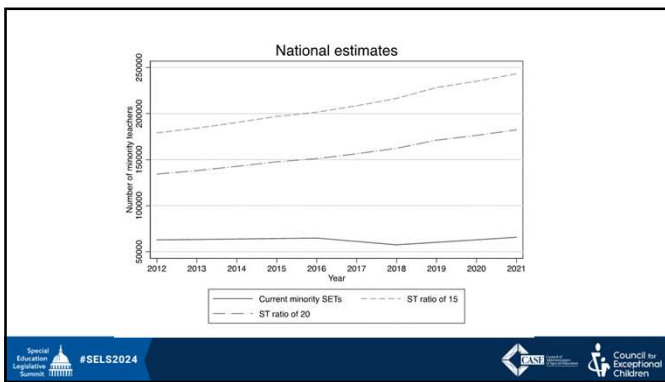
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## Budget Opportunities

- Legislation and other programs to consider for budget priorities to support special educator preparation, effectiveness and retention:
  - ESSA Title I
  - ESSA Title II
  - Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence Program
  - Institute for Education Sciences (IES)

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### Budget Opportunities – Title I

- Title I - Improving Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
  - Title I provides all students with "a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps."
  - FY2023: ED distributed \$18,386,802,000 in Title I funds to states, supporting 182,214 teaching positions.
  - Title I serves a majority (over one-third) of our nation's public school students.

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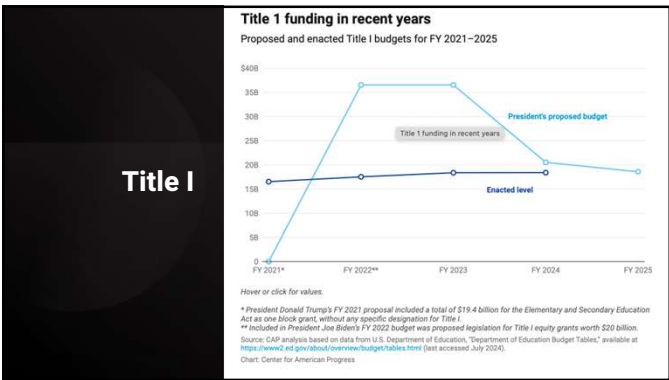
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### Budget Opportunities – Title II

Title II-A: Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants

Provides resources for educator recruitment and retention through high-quality professional development


Title II is also one of the only federal programs that supports school leader preparation.



Title II-B: Teacher and School Leader Incentive Grant Program

Career advancement opportunities that support teacher retention

Provides funding to LEAs, SEAs, and non-profits to develop, implement, improve or expand comprehensive Performance Based Compensation Systems or Human Capital Management Systems.

65% cut from FY2023 to FY2024

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## Opportunities – Hawkins

Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence

- Provides competitive funding to MSIs and TCUs to support the preparation, placement, and retention of diverse educators that reflect the current diversity and needs of the K-12 student population.
- Authorized in 2008, program went unfunded until FY2022.
- Nearly \$18.5 million of new Hawkins funding was awarded in FY2022, and only \$4.3 million in new awards in FY2023.



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## Budget Opportunities - IES

- The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) ensures high-quality research and develops partnerships between IHEs, states and districts to advance education policy and practice.
  - National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER)
- Reduction in funding from FY2023 to FY2024.
- President's FY25 budget: \$816 million
  - \$8 million increase above FY 2023 enacted level
  - \$22 million above the FY 2024 enacted level



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## The Unknown - ESSER

- States and districts must commit use final COVID-relief ESSER funds by September 30.
- What harms will the loss of ESSER funding cause?
- How can states sustain efforts started with ESSER funds to attract, prepare and retain educators?



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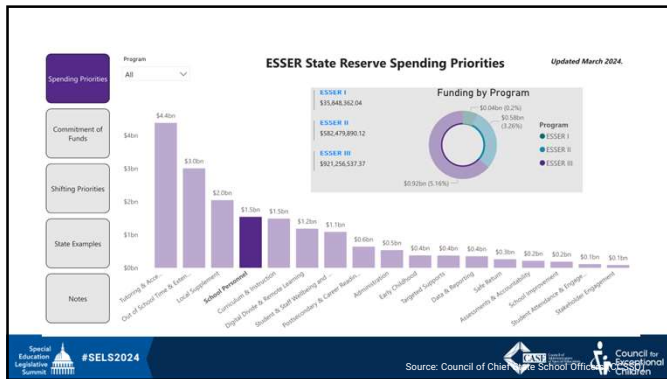
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## The Unknown - The Peril and Promise of AI in Education

- A 2024 national survey of U.S. educators found that majority of teachers expressed "a mix of curiosity and hesitancy about the use of artificial intelligence in the classroom."
- More than a third of teachers believe that AI could support their instruction and capacity, but also have concerns about its use.
- Nearly two-thirds of teachers want more training on how to apply AI in their roles, including its use in lesson planning and differentiated instruction.

(Voices from the Classroom: A Survey of America's Educators, 2024)

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## Urge Members of Congress

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### EDUCATORS for America Act

- Strengthen the educator pipeline by attracting, preparing, and retaining effective educators. Supports comprehensive preparation, provides funding for states to create plans to meet their specific personnel needs, improves workforce, and reduces barriers to entry into the profession.
- Bill sponsors: Sen Jack Reed (-RI); Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC)



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### EDUCATORS for America Act

- Authorizes \$500 million annually for grants to support states in developing and implementing a statewide strategy for meeting their educator workforce needs, including ensuring an inclusive and equitable workforce that supports the recruitment, preparation, and retention of populations that are underrepresented in the field of education, including teachers of color, first generation college students, and teachers with disabilities



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### EDUCATORS for America Act

- Updating and expanding the Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program to focus on residency programs, strengthening the principal and school leader preparation programs, and enabling partnerships to address the need for early childhood educators, school librarians, counselors, and other specialized support personnel
- Reauthorizing the Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program to support Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-serving institutions in expanding and strengthening their educator preparation programs.



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## EDUCATORS for America Act

- Providing recruitment and completion grants to educator preparation programs to ensure that students have the wrap around supports they need to graduate.
- Establishing an education careers opportunity program to expose middle and high school students to the education profession.
- Increasing the capacity of educator preparation programs to meet the needs of the field, including supporting school leader development, faculty professional development and training, offering doctoral fellowships, and promoting innovation and resiliency.



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## Preparing and Retaining All (PARA) Education Act

- Supports efforts to attract and retain paraeducators in preschool and K-12 settings. Supports children with disabilities to participate in inclusive settings.
- Bill sponsors: Sen. Ed Markey (D-M); Rep. Annie Kuster (D-NH)
- This bill directs the Department of Education to make allotments to state educational agencies to assist states, local educational agencies, and educational service agencies in recruiting and retaining paraprofessionals in public elementary schools, secondary schools, and preschool programs.



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## Para Educator Act

- The *PARA Educators Act* would establish a grant program within the Department of Education to support the recruitment and retention of paraprofessionals in public preschool programs, elementary schools, and secondary schools. This legislation would:
  1. Provide funding to support state and district efforts to recruit and retain paraprofessionals.
  2. Prioritize high-need rural and urban areas to ensure grant funding is distributed equitably.
  3. Provide paraprofessionals with access to high-quality professional development programs that will advance in their careers and benefit their students.



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## Supporting Teaching and Learning through Better Data Act

- Data with shortages is lagging, incomplete, and hard to compare across states, failing to reflect the urgency of the issue, requires a National Center for Education Statistics study on current data collections and make recommendations for improvements.
- Bill sponsor: Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)
- Without accurate data, local, state and federal policymakers cannot develop evidence-based solutions to address the unique challenges faced in different states or regions.



#SELS2024



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## Better Data Act

- A major issues lack of access to complete and accurate data on the quantity, quality, and diversity of the teacher workforce. Existing mechanisms-
  - Titles 1 and 2 of Higher Education Act
  - Title 1 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
  - National Teacher and Principal Surveys
  - Teacher Shortage Areas data
- Data is out of date and incomplete for understand full scope of the shortages.



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## Better Data Act

- Require the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to conduct a study on current data collections related to the educator workforce.
- Provide recommendations on strengthening educator workforce data collection, analysis, timelines, and dissemination, that can help stakeholders and policymakers understand and address educator supply, demand and shortages.



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## Better Data Act

- Identify gaps in existing federal data sources, such as the qualifications and credentials of the teacher workforce, compensation information, and number of teachers that have received federal grants, and make recommendations for closing such gaps.
- Create a grant program to support state agencies to increase access to well-prepare and diverse educators and improve state educator workforce data collection analysis.



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## Questions and Answers



Questions by Webinar Audience to be asked during 7/29/24



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Special  
Education  
Legislative  
Summit



July 29 - August 1, 2024



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## Team Time

The following states will meet in breakout rooms.

- Illinois: Banneker
- Virginia: Bell
- Utah: Whitney



#SELS2024

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## Special Education Legislative Summit



July 29 - August 1, 2024




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## Wrap-up/ Next Day



Kareem Thompson, CEC



Kevin Rubenstein, CASE

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## Tomorrow

Grab-and-go Breakfast, 8:00 – 9 am in Edison Foyer



**If you need support...**

**Kuna Tavalin** (202) 669-2669

**Myrna Mandlawitz** (202) 812-8113

**Kevin Rubenstein** (847) 922-0181

**Phyllis Wolfram** (417) 496-5986

**Chad Rummel** (202) 631-0520



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## Transportation

Three Options

- Uber to the name of the building (Cannon, Longworth, Rayburn)
  - \$25-\$35 (beware of Surge pricing)
  - 20-30 minutes depending on traffic (leave early!)
- Metro from King Street:
  - \$3 - \$5 per one way
- Route Options:
  - Blue Line (Direct)
  - Yellow Line (Direct)
  - Yellow Line (Transfer)



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## Team Time

The following states will meet in breakout rooms.

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