



National Coalition on
**Personnel Shortages
in Special Education
and Related Services**

March 8, 2021

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the undersigned members of the National Coalition of Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services (NCPSSERS), we urge your support for two pieces of critical legislation needed to ensure our nation's schools are equipped to serve all of our students. Taken together, the bills will provide direct financial support for districts' efforts to address COVID-19 and provide long term mandatory full funding of Title I and IDEA, both of which help support our nation's most vulnerable students and ensure schools are fully staffed with qualified teachers and specialized instructional support personnel (SISP). NCPSSERS is a coalition representing more than one million Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) and special and general education teachers and administrators. SISP professionals include school counselors, school nurses, psychologists, school psychologists, social workers and school social workers; occupational therapists, physical therapists; art, dance/movement, and music therapists; and speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Our members provide direct supports to students and provide consultation to teachers, families, administrators, and community partners to help ensure all students thrive.

The Keeping Our Pact Act would mandate full funding of Title I and IDEA, both of which have been woefully underfunded for decades. Importantly, when IDEA was enacted, Congress promised to pay 40 percent of the National Average per Pupil Expenditure. The closest the federal government has come to reaching its 40 percent commitment under regular appropriations was 18 percent in 2005, surpassed only by a one-time anomaly of 33 percent in 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Currently the federal funding level is approximately 13 percent. The chronic underfunding of IDEA by the federal government places an additional burden on states and local school districts. That burden will only be exacerbated as state legislatures must respond to the economic impact of COVID-19, possibly resulting in the reduction or elimination of other school programs beneficial to students with disabilities.

The Save Educators Jobs Act will save nearly 4 million education jobs, including SISP who are critical to addressing students' academic learning loss and mental, behavioral health, and social/emotional needs as a result of the pandemic. Since the beginning of the pandemic, more K-12 jobs have been lost than nearly all of the local education jobs lost during the entire Great Recession. Without sufficient federal funding to support states and school districts during the recovery, experts estimate 1.4 million to 1.9 million education jobs will be lost over the next one to two years. These

jobs must be protected to ensure schools have the capacity to meet the academic, physical and mental health, and social and emotional learning needs of all students.

We urge you to support swift passage of both these bills.

We are happy to speak further about how Congress can support SISP and special educators and the students we serve. For further information, please feel free to contact one of the NCPSSERS Co-Chairs: Stacey Glasgow (sglasgow@asha.org), Piper Largent (plargent@nasn.org), or Stacy Skalski (sskalski@naspweb.org).

American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of School Psychologists
National Consortium on Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities
National Education Association
Ohio Association of Pupil Service Administrators
School Social Work Association of America