National **School Boards** Association

Ensuring each student everywhere has access to an excellent and equitable public education where they live, governed by high-performing school board leaders.

NSBA appreciates Congress's commitment to sustaining federal support for programs that promote student success in public schools across the nation. NSBA urges federal policymakers to maintain and expand support, enabling local school districts to meet student needs and foster environments where all students can thrive. We look forward to working with members of Congress to address the nation's school children's needs.

I. Fully Funding and Modernizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

While IDEA mandates that the federal government cover 40% of special education costs, current funding stands at just 14%, leaving local districts to absorb the shortfall. Fully funding IDEA would allow districts to enhance services, hire more special education teachers, and provide needed classroom resources.

Call to Action:

- Support the IDEA Full Funding Act (S. 2217 in the 118th Congress) and the Funding Early Childhood is the Right IDEA Act (H.R. 5141 in the 118th Congress) to restore funding for early intervention services under IDEA Part C and Section 619.
- Stress the importance of shared financial responsibility among federal, state, and local governments.

II. Expanding, Strengthening, and Retaining the Educator Workforce

Addressing teacher shortages and promoting a diverse, high-quality educator workforce are essential to student success. Federal policies can support educator recruitment, preparation, and retention. Teacher shortages disproportionately affect high-poverty, rural, and special education classrooms, worsened by burnout, low pay, and limited resources.

Call to Action:

- Support the PREP Act (S. 2369 in the 118th Congress) to strengthen teacher preparation programs and recruit educators for high-need subjects like STEM and special education.

III. Strengthening Investments in Title I and Career & Technical Education (CTE)

Title I and CTE programs are critical for closing opportunity gaps and preparing students for successful futures. Title I supports schools serving low-income communities by funding targeted interventions like tutoring, literacy programs, and teacher training. CTE programs prepare students for high-demand careers by providing skills, certifications, and real-world experience.

IV. Promoting Digital Access, Digital Literacy, and Cybersecurity

The E-rate program has been instrumental in expanding broadband to schools and libraries. A potential Supreme Court decision this spring on the Universal Service Fund (USF), which funds E-rate, could jeopardize broadband access for millions of students, especially in rural and low-income areas. Congress must be ready to act swiftly to protect E-rate and ensure all students have access to the digital tools they need to succeed.

School districts are increasingly targeted by cyberattacks, jeopardizing student and staff data. Investments are needed to modernize cybersecurity infrastructure. Demand for the FCC's Cybersecurity Pilot Program far exceeded capacity, with requests from schools and libraries totaling $3.7 billion for the $200 million pilot. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which ran out of funding in 2024, provided essential home broadband support for low-income families, including students. Congress should explore sustainable, long-term funding mechanisms for the ACP to ensure families have critical broadband access in the future.

V. Prioritizing Student Health, Wellness, and Safety

Student health, wellness, and safety are foundational to academic success and long-term well-being. Federal policies and funding are critical to support school-based health care, mental health services, and school nutrition.

Call to Action:

- Expand School-Based Medicaid Services: Increase access to critical health services like mental health counseling, vision care, and therapy.
- Address Food Insecurity: Support universal school meal programs to ensure all students are fed and ready to learn.
- Strengthen Mental Health Resources: Increase funding for school counselors, trauma-informed care, and mental health programs.
- Invest in School Safety: Enhance physical security, staff training, and positive school climate initiatives to prevent violence.

VI. Oppose School Vouchers in All Their Forms

School vouchers, education savings accounts (ESAs), and similar programs divert public funds away from public schools, undermining local accountability and equitable education for all students. Congress must reject efforts to expand vouchers and prioritize investments in public schools that serve all students.

Call to Action:

- Oppose the Educational Choice for Children Act: This legislation would establish a federal voucher program, diverting billions from public schools. The legislation is fiscally irresponsible, enables student discrimination, undermines local control of education, and would severely damage public schools that educate 90% of American children.

Advocating for public education ensures that every student has the opportunity to succeed, contributing to the future of our nation. Your voice, backed by clear data and real-life stories, can help policymakers better understand the needs of America's schools and students.

Remember — Education is not a partisan issue.
It is a national priority essential to each student's future and our country's future.

NSBA Beliefs and Resolutions

nsba.org