

Fact Sheet

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Upon enactment of IDEA in 1975, the federal government promised to supply 40% of the costs of providing special education services for students. Despite this promise, the federal contribution proposed for this year will cover only 10% of special education costs nationwide. Meanwhile, the number of students covered by this legislation has more than doubled in the past 50 years, from 3.7 million students in 1976 to a projected 8.3 million students in 2027.



Key Concerns

When Congress Fails to Meet its Promise

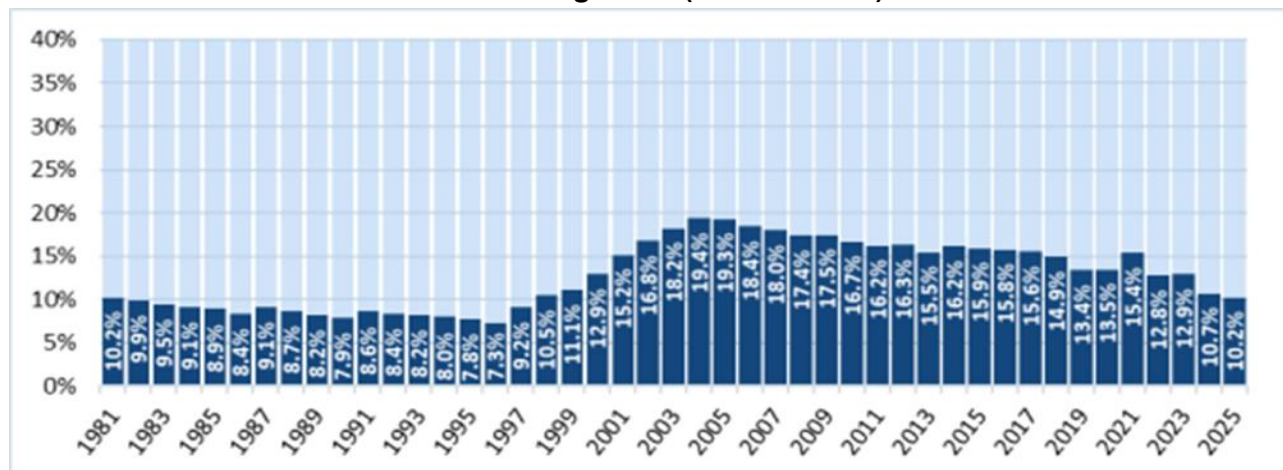
- Every dollar of the federal promise that Congress fails to provide is shifted onto local school districts, who must legally cover these services.
- Special education costs continue to rise due to increased student needs, workforce shortages, rapidly increasing transportation costs, and other essential specialized services. Yet federal funding has not kept pace — placing increasing strain on local budgets and taxpayers.
- Being forced to fund the unfunded federal promise limits the investments school boards can make to increase student achievement.
- Funding the promise will bolster the achievement of all students.

Key Takeaways

Students can't wait another 50 years for Congress to fulfill its promise.

This fall, IASB is partnering with school boards associations across the United States to launch a national campaign urging Congress to keep its 40% promise by 2040. IASB will encourage school board members across the state to pass resolutions calling on Congress to fund the federal IDEA promise by supporting IDEA increases over a 10-year period to reach 40% by 2040.

Historical Comparison of the Percentage of APPE Funded through Appropriations for IDEA and the IDEA Full-Funding Level (40% of APPE) FY1981 to FY2025



IASB Ask: Support the annual increases for IDEA appropriations outlined in the IDEA Full Funding legislation and share your support for these increases with the Appropriations Committee each year.