



Monroe County School Boards Association

Position Paper: Public Education - The Federal Role: Support, Not Governance

In accordance with the United States Constitution, the following principles form the foundation of public education policy:

- **State Authority:** Responsibility for public education rest primarily at the state level.
- **Local Control:** Local school boards must retain final authority and flexibility in designing and implementing programs, assessments, and evaluations.
- **Church-State Separation:** The principle of separation of church and state must be upheld to maintain constitutional integrity.

MCSBA requests: Our membership urges Federal policymakers to ensure full funding for all education related mandates and to eliminate policies that impose financial strain on public schools without adequate resources.

| ISSUES | SOLUTIONS |
|---|--|
| <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any federal legislation not fully funded should be in the form of a recommendation not a mandate. • In NYS, the now permanent Tax Levy Cap and revenue structures for school districts do not provide a mechanism to absorb costs associated with unfunded or under-funded legislation. • Grant opportunities are restrictive and do not provide school districts with sustainable funding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Provide increased and sustainable funding across Title I, II, III, and IV grants to support ESSA implementation and meet the complex instructional demands of all students. This includes addressing the digital divide and providing necessary resources for students with high needs, such as English Language Learners and those with interrupted learning due to traumatic experiences. → Significantly increase ESEA Title II funding to effectively prepare, develop, and retain high-quality teachers capable of meeting the instructional needs of all students. → Oppose any funding streams—such as vouchers or education tax credits—that divert critical resources and attention from the public education mission. For existing Charter School support, implement regulations to ensure greater transparency and accountability for the use of public funds, and prioritize federal support for the effective Community Schools model. |
| <p>I.D.E.A.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEA funding is currently at 14%, not the 40% as originally outlined, despite a significant increase in the percentage of students with recognized disabilities and complex needs in the overall population. • The current "maintenance of effort" (MoE) provision prevents districts from showing efficiencies and reducing special education funding, even if the quality of services is not impacted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increase dedicated federal funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to the level commensurate with its vision and goals, and make this funding a mandatory federal budget item. This full funding is essential to meet the needs of all students and prevent local districts from being forced to cut non-mandated programs that serve all students. → Fix the MoE provision to allow for reduced special education funding where districts can clearly demonstrate that the reduction is due to making efficiencies and does not impact the quality of services. → Provide dedicated federal resources necessary to address critical issues like staff shortages, rising instructional costs, and the need for a broad spectrum of supports for student and family engagement, ensuring all learners can be successful. |
| <p>Title Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Proposed cuts to Title Grant funding have a direct impact on services to support the educational experience of students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The federal government must retain Title I, II, III, IV Grant funding that provides students with the opportunities necessary to be successful in school. |