

August 26, 2025

Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman, Labor, Health, Human Services and Education Subcommittee
272 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0104

Dear Representatives Cole, DeLauro, and Aderholt:

Education is one of the most powerful tools we have to change the trajectory of a child's life. It opens doors to opportunity, lifts families out of poverty, and strengthens entire communities. Every child deserves the chance to reach their full potential, and our nation's prosperity depends on their success.

Children and youth in foster care, like all children, aspire for bright futures. Despite their aspirations and talents, students who are in foster care face many barriers to educational success. [Research has shown](#) that changing schools during foster care is common and can lead to delays in enrollment and records transfers, which affects their ability to stay on track. Children in foster care also experience [over and under identification](#) in special education and have disproportionate rates of [suspension](#) and expulsion and placement in alternative education programs, all leading to lower rates of high school and college graduation.

As leaders in the appropriations process, the undersigned organizations urge you to take actions to ensure the academic success of children and youth in foster care. We ask that you join colleagues in the Senate and provide a funding increase, or at least maintain level funding, for the programs listed below and reject the proposed cuts and consolidations proposed in President Trump's FY 2026 Budget Request.

1. Funds authorized through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as reauthorized through the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 must not be consolidated or block granted. Congress authorized these programs to serve specific purposes and populations. Block granting undermines Congressional intent and limits the ability of specific investments in the nation's children and youth to support their success. By targeting programs for youth in foster care and youth in, or at risk of entering, the juvenile justice system states can develop specific expertise in supporting these student populations. Continuing investments in this targeted funding infrastructure is important to developing effective practices.
2. Allocate an additional \$2.2 billion for Title I, Part A, as a downpayment toward tripling funding for this critical program.
3. Keep each component of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) discrete. Each component serves an important purpose that would be undermined by the administration's consolidation proposal.
4. Enhance the investment in the IDEA and appropriate \$16.661 billion for IDEA Part B and \$300 million for IDEA Part D.
5. Increase or maintain the current investment in Adult Basic Education.
6. Increase or maintain the current level of the Pell Grant and provide sufficient funds to address the full Pell Grant shortfall.
7. Increase or maintain the current appropriation for the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) for exceptional financial need.
8. Increase or maintain the current level of appropriations for the federal Work Study Program.
9. Provide at least \$200 million for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, the only federal program supporting education success for children experiencing homelessness.
10. Increase or maintain the current level of appropriations for Migrant Education Programs.
11. Provide \$1 billion for Title III, which supports English language acquisition for the growing population of English learners in America, currently accounting for over 1 in 10 K-12 students.

When we meet the educational needs of children and youth in foster care, we create a strong and robust education system that supports the success of all students across the country. We urge you to make appropriations decisions that prioritize the educational success of all students, including those impacted by the child welfare system. Please do not hesitate to reach

out to Jenny Pokempner at jpokempner@ylc.org if we can provide more information on the educational needs of children in foster care across the country and in your state.

Sincerely,

Youth Law Center
Advocates for Children of New York
All4Ed
Alliance for Children's Rights, California
AspireMN, Minnesota
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's League of Massachusetts
The Century Foundation
East Bay Children's Law Offices
Education Law Center, Pennsylvania
Families Rising
Family Focused Treatment Association
The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research
Foster Care Training Today
Foster Success
Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide (FAAN)
Generations United
Juvenile Law Center
Legal Aid of Southern Nevada
Legal Counsel for Youth and Children, Washington
National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC)
Nebraska Appleseed
Nevada Coalition of Legal Service Providers
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Nesta Rose Consulting, PLLC
The Stephan Center
Texas Alliance for Youth Success
Treehouse, Washington
Washington Defender Association