

CARES Act Education Funding: *What's In It for Students with Disabilities?*

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act” or the “CARES Act” was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President on March 27, 2020. It provides over \$2 trillion of assistance measures, including \$30.75 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund.

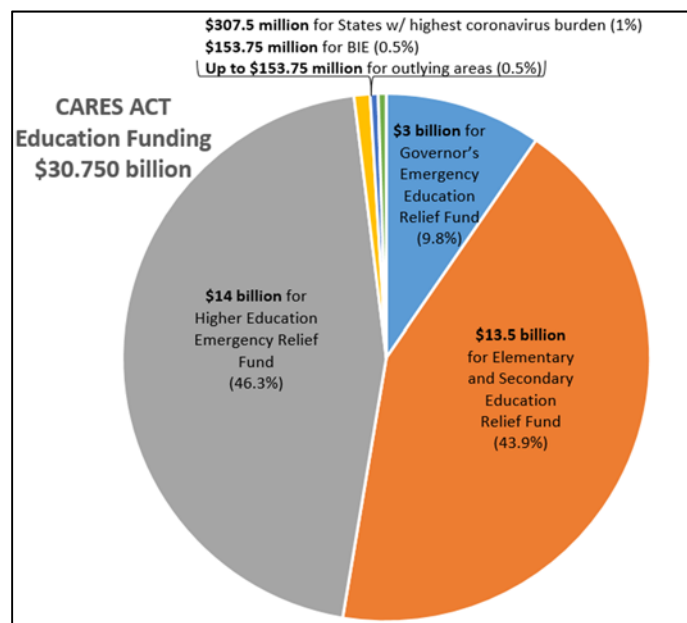
The Education Stabilization Fund includes the following grant programs for K-12 education:

- **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund**

\$13.5 billion available for formula grants (distributed based on the Title I formula under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as the Every Student Succeeds Act) to states, which will then distribute 90% of funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) to meet needs of all students, including students with disabilities. LEA is a term that refers to your school district.

- **Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund**

Governors in each state will receive a share of \$3 billion to allocate at their discretion for emergency support grants to LEAs that the state educational agency deems have been most significantly impacted by coronavirus. As opposed to the formula grants (above), these funds are at the discretion of the Governor to support the LEAs to continue to provide educational services to their students and to support the on-going operations of the LEA.



CARES makes clear that funds from both the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund and the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund can be used for activities authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as well as other education laws. Specifically, listed are activities to address the unique needs of low-income children, **children with disabilities**, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth.

In fact, the application for the [Governor’s relief fund](#) asks states to describe how, with respect to LEAs, the state intends to use the funds to help students and teachers adopt or improve remote learning that serves all students, including **students with disabilities**. The application also asks states to describe the strategies used to serve disadvantaged populations, including **students with disabilities**, with respect to technological capacity and access.

Here’s what you can do to ensure that students with disabilities are included in the use of CARES funds:

- **Contact:** Your [State Department of Education and Special Education Agency](#) to ensure guidance to LEAs that the use of funds includes students with disabilities and to ensure technical assistance to help LEAs implement best practices for remote learning that meets individualized educational programs for students, to provide teachers with professional development, and to inform parents about their rights.
- **Contact:** Your LEA to work on developing plans for funds being used to benefit students with disabilities. These plans could include assistance to help implement best practices for remote learning that meets individualized educational programs for students, to provide teachers with professional development, to inform parents about their rights.

Also, be sure to encourage maximum transparency on planned uses of these new federal funds by posting plans on LEA websites and the state website in languages accessible to students/families in the district.

Estimated amounts that each state will receive are available [here](#).

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