



Federal Policy Agenda for the 117th Congress:

Supporting Individuals With Learning and Attention Issues

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic hit students, families, schools, and communities hard, and it has had an outsized effect on the most systemically marginalized communities – individuals with disabilities; individuals from culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse backgrounds; and communities impacted by poverty. While the challenges facing those communities are numerous, they are not new. The pandemic has exacerbated and shed light on longstanding access and opportunity gaps that have plagued these communities. While Congress has taken small steps to help the students, families, and schools who will bear the brunt of negative outcomes resulting from the pandemic, the work is far from over.

The impact of this public health crisis on our public education system will be long-lasting and demands action now. Leaders in the 117th Congress and the Biden Administration are called to end the disparities within the public education system and ensure that all students – no matter their race, ethnicity, disability status, first language, immigration status, or other identity – have access to a high-quality, equitable education with qualified, effective, and diverse educators, a safe and welcoming learning environment, and opportunities to receive a diploma and succeed after high school. It is time to take bold action; invest in education that is individualized, culturally responsive, and rigorous; and put students with disabilities, students impacted by poverty, and students who are Black, Indigenous, or a person of color (BIPOC) first.

NCLD calls on the 117th Congress and the Biden Administration to:

1

Increase resource equity, access to high-quality learning opportunities, and graduation rates for students with disabilities, students impacted by poverty, students who are BIPOC, and other systemically marginalized students.

2

Invest in research and implementation of early, effective screening and intervention for learning difficulties.

3

Prioritize the development of literacy skills from birth to grade 12 for students at risk of not achieving literacy success.

4

Invest in creating safe, supportive, inclusive learning environments in order to eliminate racial disparities in discipline.

5

Eliminate racial disparities in the identification and placement of students who are BIPOC in special education and improve the special education evaluation process.

6

Strengthen and diversify the educator preparation pipeline.

7

Support the development of culturally applicable and beneficial self-advocacy skills, improve the transition planning process for students with disabilities, and increase access to postsecondary education and workforce success for students with disabilities.