



## MEMO

**To:** Private School Officials  
**From:** ADAC Advocacy  
**Subject:** Federal Funds: ESSA and IDEA  
**Date:** October 29, 2025

Private school officials nationwide are expressing concerns that some Title programs under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) may face reductions or elimination. At this time, no decisions have been made to cut or eliminate any program. Given the current political climate, it is difficult to predict what the future holds for these programs. To be clear, once again, no determinations have been made.

However, in the event that the administration and congressional leaders move to reduce or eliminate programs under ESSA, including Titles II, III, and IV, this memo offers strategic guidance to help private school leaders sustain their programs through alternative funding sources and methods. While acknowledging the importance of federal support—primarily through ESSA and IDEA—the strategies provided focus on maximizing available resources:

### **I. Expected Continuity of IDEA and Title I Funding**

ADAC anticipates that both IDEA and Title I will remain protected. These federal funds are essential for supporting students with diverse learning needs. Based on discussions with administration and congressional officials, we have been consistently reassured that these programs will continue.

### **II. Employ Title I and IDEA Funds for Direct Student Services, Professional Development, and Materials**

With the expectation that IDEA and Title I funding will persist, private school leaders are encouraged to use these resources to deliver direct services such as tutoring, counseling, and specialized instruction. Additionally, these funds can be used for professional development for teachers who have Title I or IDEA-eligible students in their classrooms. Private schools can also use these funds to procure necessary instructional materials to maintain the effectiveness of their Title I and IDEA programs.

### **III. Leverage Title I and IDEA to Secure Private Funding**

Use Title I and IDEA funds to leverage private grants, donations, and community partnerships. Demonstrating ongoing federal support can bolster credibility and attract private funders interested in supporting private school students and educators. For example, you can ask a donor to match your IDEA-funded services. A private school receiving \$30,000 through IDEA funding may need an extra \$30,000 to hire a full-time



special education teacher. Donors often find these matching opportunities particularly appealing.

#### **IV. Utilize Carry-Over Funds**

Private school leaders should actively review and utilize any carry-over funds from previous fiscal years. These funds can be a vital resource for maintaining programs and services during periods of federal funding uncertainty or reduction.

#### **V. Impacts on IDEA Due to Department of Education Staffing Changes and Enforcement Transition**

Although staff reductions have taken place within the U.S. Department of Education and further cuts may still occur, IDEA funding is anticipated to persist. If the U.S. Department of Education were to cease funding altogether, administration and congressional officials have stated that enforcement and compliance responsibilities would be reassigned to other federal agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services. ADAC expects that mechanisms will remain in place to ensure compliance with IDEA requirements, including the handling of IDEA complaints.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to John Elcesser, ADAC Advocacy's Executive Director, at [johnelcesser@theadacadvocacy.com](mailto:johnelcesser@theadacadvocacy.com)