



National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

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NASDSE STATEMENT ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as a milestone along the road of full equality for all individuals with disabilities from birth throughout their lives.

NASDSE was started in 1938 -- long before the enactment of a federal law -- by a group of professionals who were leading the way to open the doors of public schools across the country to children and youth with disabilities. Our schools have come a long way -- we've gone from shuttered buildings to separate and unequal classrooms to today, where most students with disabilities spend at least 80% of their school day in integrated settings. That is indeed good news.

We are well aware that we still have a ways to go. Students with disabilities are still less likely than their nondisabled peers to achieve proficiency on assessments, to go on to college and to be employed as adults. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which puts a heightened emphasis on post-school outcomes for students with disabilities, can help with improving post-school outcomes.

There is more good news in that there are dedicated teachers, specialized instructional support personnel and leaders at both the state and local levels who are committed to improving results for students with disabilities. NASDSE salutes your efforts and thanks you for your dedication.

This anniversary of IDEA rightfully should serve as a time for celebration as well as reflection on where we are and where we need to go. NASDSE looks forward to continuing its efforts to ensure good outcomes for all of our nation's children.

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For more information about NASDSE, please visit our website at www.nasdse.org.
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