

CEC is an international community of educators who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), representing 40,000 professionals who work on behalf of children with exceptionalities, is the national voice for special educators and children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. At this time, there are numerous policy challenges and opportunities that directly impact children and youth with exceptionalities and the professionals who work on their behalf. CEC members serve on the frontline; educating our children and youth today for integral participation in the workforce and society tomorrow.

As a national leader in the formulation of special and gifted education policy, CEC – in close collaboration with its Children and Youth Action Network (CAN) – has created its Public Policy Agenda for the 111th United States Congress. CEC's advocacy priorities emerge from one essential conviction: every child deserves access to a challenging, motivating, and rigorous education. A high quality education requires superior leadership, full financial support, effective instruction, skilled staff, appropriate programs, suitable facilities, family and community support and involvement.

CEC is committed to ensuring that the voice of special education is heard in public policy forums in which special education decisions are made or influenced. While there are many legislative/policy areas of concern to CEC members, CEC's Public Policy Agenda represents those issues indicated as priority policies and is not intended to be an exclusive list, but rather serve as a blueprint for the Council's policy and advocacy work. Therefore, CEC declares the following as its public policy agenda for the 111th United States Congress:

High Priority: Identified by CEC members as needing immediate federal legislation or regulatory attention.

Policy Objectives

- *Elementary and Secondary Education Act:* Advocate for CEC's recommendations during the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including an emphasis on key policies including full funding, assessment systems that measure the achievement of all students; accountability systems that reward quality school performance and seek to improve poor school performance; measuring student progress using multiple indicators such as progress monitoring and growth models; response to intervention; systems that are carefully coordinated and balanced between ESEA and IDEA; and increased funding for and expansion of the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act.
- *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:* Advocate for the reauthorization, regulatory provisions and full implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), with an emphasis on key policies including full funding; outstanding Part C regulations; access to the general education curriculum; assessment; preparing, recruiting and retaining a well-prepared, diverse special education workforce; disproportionate representation; quality conditions for teaching and learning; paperwork reduction; identification and eligibility; discipline procedures; early childhood; transition initiatives; monitoring and enforcement; and family involvement.
- *Gifted Education:* Identify new legislative opportunities to address the unique educational needs of students with gifts and talents and increase the federal role to support states in building the capacity to equitably and appropriately identify and serve students with gifts and talents by advocating for provisions in relevant legislation and policies, including in ESEA, IDEA, appropriations legislation and other pertinent legislation.
- *Medicaid:* Advocate for policies that provide a long-term solution to maintaining the provision of medical services provided through Medicaid to children and youth with disabilities by school districts and early intervention programs, particularly provisions regarding targeted case management; administrative and transportation claiming; and the rehabilitation option.

Priority: Identified by CEC members as needing increasing federal legislation or regulatory attention and will be acted on in concert with the legislative calendar.

Policy Objectives

- *Research in Special Education:* Advocate for increased funding for research in special education and develop recommendations for the reauthorization of the Education Science Reform Act (ESRA).
- *Higher Education Opportunity Act:* Participate in rulemaking process of the implementation of the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

Monitor: Identified by CEC members as relevant but will be acted on only when specific opportunities arise or conditions change members' needs and priorities.

Policy Objectives

- *Workforce Investment Act:* Monitor and advocate for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act.
- *Perkins Career and Technical Education Act:* Monitor and advocate for the reauthorization of the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.
- *Other Legislation/Policy Opportunities:* Advocate for CEC's recommendations for other relevant legislation/policies as introduced.