



June 2014

Promoting Access & Achievement for Children and Youth with Exceptionalities in PK–12 Education

SUMMARY

- Education policy, such as the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) and *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), must emphasize high expectations for students with disabilities.
- The reauthorization of ESEA must support requirements for high standards and learner performance that are intended to foster high quality teaching and learning, equality of educational opportunity to learn, and improved achievement for students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.
- CEC opposes the House-passed *Student Success Act* (H.R. 5) because it weakens accountability measures for students with disabilities, reduces caps, and eliminates funding for education programs serving students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- CEC supports, with some reservations, the *Strengthening America's Schools Act* (S. 1094) in the Senate because it focuses on early learning, reflects high expectations for students with disabilities in the accountability system, and allows coordinated early intervention services to be a jointly supported effort between general and special education. Our concerns include punitive “turnaround models” and an overemphasis on teacher evaluation systems.

For the past 30 years, students with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who work on their behalf have revolutionized the educational and workplace opportunities available to America's 6 million children with disabilities.

Led by landmark legislation, now known IDEA, students with disabilities have had access to an education system that builds upon their strengths and addresses their individual needs. Over the years, as the implementation of IDEA has strengthened throughout schools across our country, children with disabilities have gained access to the general education curriculum and, in many cases, learn alongside their peers without disabilities. This progress has been unprecedented because of dedicated children, families, special educators, and policymakers.

By building on the theme of IDEA that an educational system must address the individual needs of every child, CEC believes ESEA can achieve its noble goals of providing a high-quality education to all children taught by well-prepared, diverse, and successful educators, closing the achievement gap, and ensuring that all children reach a high level of achievement.

By realizing that our education system should address children's individual needs, the unique needs of America's 3 million children with gifts and talents must also be addressed at a time when they have largely gone ignored in federal

legislation. In addition, as education policy shifts to focus on all students, CEC hopes to attract attention to those students who have both a disability and are gifted, a population known as twice-exceptional.

As Congress reauthorizes ESEA, CEC believes that the reauthorization must support requirements for high standards and learner performance that are intended to foster high quality teaching and learning, equality of educational opportunity to learn, and improved achievement for children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents through:

- Supporting a well prepared successful educational workforce.
- Creating meaningful systems that encourage collaborative and supportive measurement, evaluation and reward of professional performance.
- Strengthening assessment and accountability for all children.
- Meeting the unique needs of gifted learners.
- Improving outcomes for all children through the collaboration of all educators.
- Developing improved strategies that create positive school reform.
- Providing full funding to execute the goals and provisions of ESEA.
- Creating systems that are carefully coordinated and balanced between ESEA and IDEA.

Student Success Act (H.R. 5)	
Pros	Cons
✓ Eliminates AYP	× Reduces accountability for students with disabilities
✓ Maintains subgroup disaggregation in accountability system	× Eliminates highly-qualified teacher provisions
	× Reduces caps, eliminates funding; keeps sequestration in place
	× Lacks focus on professional development
	× Ignores high-ability students

Strengthening America's Schools Act (S.1094)	
Pros	Cons
✓ Focus on early learning	× New requirements without adequate resources.
✓ Limits use of alternate assessment	× "Turnaround models" promote firing of staff and other interventions.
✓ Changes to accountability system, focus on Bottom 15%	× Changes to accountability system, focus on bottom 15%.
✓ Early intervening services in general education, UDL, PBIS	× Over-emphasis on teacher evaluation systems.
✓ Mental health supports	× Highly-qualified definition to include individuals still enrolled in preparation program.
✓ Key provisions of CEC-endorsed, <i>TALENT Act</i>	

FY 2015 Appropriation Recommendations for Federal Programs for the Education of Exceptional Children Dollars (in thousands)

Programs	Appropriation FY 2010	Appropriation FY 2011	Appropriation FY 2012	Appropriation FY 2013	Appropriations FY 2014	CEC Recommended FY 2015
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)						
• State and Local Grant Program	\$11,505,211	\$11,482,200	\$11,577,860	\$10,974,866	\$11,473	\$12,906,093
• Preschool Grants Program	\$374,099	\$373,351	\$372,645	\$353,238	\$353,238	\$1,125,000
• Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Program (Part C)	\$439,427	\$438,548	\$442,710	\$419,653	\$438,500	\$1,029,427
• Part D Support Programs						
• State Personnel Development Grants	\$48,000	\$46,846	\$43,900	\$41,630	\$41,630	\$158,135
• Personnel Preparation	\$90,653	\$88,466	\$88,300	\$83,700	\$83,700	\$316,270
• Technical Assistance, Demonstration Projects, Dissemination of Information, and Implementation of Scientifically Based Research	\$49,549	\$48,806	\$46,800	\$44,345	\$44,345	\$168,678
• Parent Information Centers	\$28,028	\$27,972	\$28,900	\$27,404	\$27,404	\$105,424
• Technology Development, Demonstration and Utilization, and Media Services	\$43,973	\$28,644	\$29,600	\$28,047	\$28,047	\$105,424
• Part D Support Programs Total	\$260,203	\$240,734	\$237,500	\$225,126	\$225,126	\$853,931
IDEA TOTAL	\$12,578,940	\$12,578,940	\$12,630,715	\$11,972,883	\$12,489,864	\$15,914,451
Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA)						
• Research in Special Education	\$70,585	\$50,983	\$49,900	\$47,295	\$54,000	\$200,305
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)						
• Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act	\$7,463	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	