



COALITION FOR EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

2014 Legislative Platform

CEES Guiding Principles

A coalition of parent and professional organizations is more effective than individual groups.

Coalition member organizations share a common concern for improving educational opportunities for exceptional students in the State of Florida

Platform positions adopted by the Coalition are endorsed by all member organizations.

CEES 2014

Funding

- Provide increases to the ESE guaranteed allocation for inflation and growth of students including K-12 gifted programs.
- Restore funding of the critical statewide infrastructure support programs for serving students with exceptionalities:
 - Challenge Grants for the Gifted;
 - Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS);
 - Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired (FIMCVI) and special funds for the instructional materials needed by students who are visually impaired;
 - Resource Materials and Technology Center for Deaf / Hard of Hearing;
 - Multi-Agency Network for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (SEDNET); and,
 - Very Special Arts Florida
- Continue intervention programs such as:
 - Blind Babies Program;
 - Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD); and,
 - Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource Centers (university programs).
- Fully fund all student transportation including costs for gifted programs and expenses associated with orientation and mobility training, community based instruction, and job placement services.

Safe Learning Environment

- Ensure that discipline decisions relating to students with disabilities are reviewed individually in the context of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and provide funded training for personnel to handle specific behavioral considerations.
- Prohibit the use of physical restraint for discipline, non-compliance, or convenience of adults.
- Standardize and refine current data collection concerning restraint and seclusion to better inform practices for all districts.
- Fund alternative programs to reduce the large number of referrals to law enforcement, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions to keep students involved in the learning process.
- Eliminate the use of corporal punishment in the public schools.
- Support mental health services for students, including wrap around and community linkages for students PreK-12.
- Support implementation of strategies to eliminate all forms of bullying.

Accountability

- Design performance pay and teacher evaluation systems that measure contributions by ESE resource/itinerant teachers and student services personnel who are working with students across the entire continuum of services.
- Ensure that all administrators or other personnel conducting evaluations of ESE teachers and/or student services personnel have the training or support to recognize the accepted standards for these professionals.
- Utilize student assessment strategies that are empirically sound.
- Reject any attempts to change ESE funding into parent directed savings accounts.

Accountability

- Mandate equivalent academic accountability measures, as are required of the public schools, for students with disabilities enrolled in school choice programs while maintaining recently passed fiscal accountability measures applying to choice programs.
- Ensure that evidence/research-based data is used in the selection of instructional materials, intervention strategies, and resources.

Access and Equity

- Eliminate any possibility that class sizes will be reduced for general education classes by increasing class sizes for students with disabilities because specialized program needs of these students demand teacher to student ratios far below the Constitutional caps while also insuring that opportunities for inclusion for students with disabilities are not reduced.
- Promote early screening and implement effective interventions for all children for academic, emotional, and behavioral difficulties.
- Maintain state statute establishing that students who are gifted have an absolute right to appropriate instruction, and provide appropriate funding across the spectrum of K-12 services, including students who are twice exceptional.
- Increase direct services for exceptional students by reducing the number of instructional preparations and recently required paperwork for personnel working with exceptional students.
- Remove barriers to admission for students with disabilities into secondary career education and postsecondary programs by allowing documentation such as a summary of performance to substitute for current assessment requirements.
- Enhance interventions provided in early school years (pre-K through 3rd grade) and increase access to remedial services for all students who have been retained or are likely to be retained because of FCAT scores or high school end of course exams, especially those students who have been retained multiple times.
- Expand evidence based practices such as Positive Behavior Supports to decrease occurrence of discipline issues for all students and address inequities related to suspension and expulsion.
- Ensure availability of appropriate and accessible instructional materials, including online materials, by including adapted features and specialized formats and assistive technology for access to curriculum and to meet state accountability requirements.

Personnel

- Promote training based upon recent legislative mandates concerning exceptional student education for teachers, teaching assistants, school administrators, and families including functional assessment, Autism, behavioral interventions and response to intervention.
- Require specialized training such as paid internships or competency demonstration for persons credentialed via alternative certification or those adding subject area certification by exam only.
- Protect Chapter 490 and Chapter 491 licensure and certification for school psychologists and behavior analysts.
- Provide adequate numbers of student services personnel (professional school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, behavior analysts, and educational interpreters).
- Study instructional delivery models and implementation of multi-tiered systems of support to insure adequate staffing and training for those who are providing and evaluating services.

Member Organizations

Florida Association for Behavior Analysis
Florida Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired
Florida Association for the Gifted
Florida Association of School Psychologists
Florida Association of School Social Workers
Florida Association of Student Services
Administrators
Florida Branch of the International Dyslexia
Association
Florida Council of Administrators of Special
Education
Florida Council for Children with Behavioral
Disorders
Florida Council for Exceptional Children
Florida Counseling Association
Florida Division of Learning Disabilities
Florida Division on Developmental Disabilities
Florida Division on Career Development and
Transition
Florida Division of Teacher Education
Florida Educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Florida Gifted Network
Florida School Counselor Association
Florida Music Therapists
Learning Disabilities Association – Florida
Pioneer Subdivision Florida Council for
Exceptional Children
VSA Florida

CEES Affiliates

CEC chapters: Bay, Big Bend, Gatorland,
Palm Beach, Sunset, Suncoast, Tampa Bay,
Volusia; FASP of Palm Beach County.

CEES Steering Committee

Diane Johnson, Chair, Tallahassee
Mary Louise Bachman, Tallahassee
Kathy Christenson, Jacksonville
Suzanne Dalton, Tampa
Gene Cash, Ft. Lauderdale
Paula Evans, Sarasota
Terry Wilson, Lakeland

Legislative Award

To recognize the support of the Florida Legislature, the Coalition annually selects a legislator to be the recipient of the CEES Legislative Award. The award is given in appreciation for individual efforts made toward the goal of providing all students with opportunities to reach their full potential. Florida's exceptional students, including those with disabilities and those who are gifted, are the beneficiaries of the leadership exhibited by these recipients.

Legislative Award Recipients

2013-14 Senator Bill Montford

2012-13 Senator Rhonda Storms
2011-12 Senator David Simmons
2010-11 Representative Bill Heller
2009-10 Representative Anitere Flores
2008-09 Representative Steven Precourt
2007-08 Representative Joe Pickens
Senator Carey Baker
2006-07 Representative Joe Pickens
Senator Jim King
2005-06 Senator Evelyn Lynn
2004-05 Representative Ralph Arza
2003-04 Representative Dennis Baxley
2002-03 Representative Bruce Kyle
2001-02 Representative Joe Pickens
2000-01 Senator Richard Mitchell
1999-00 Senator Lisa Carlton
1998-99 Senator Jack Latvala
1997-98 Senator Jim Horne
1996-97 Representative Rudy Garcia
1995-96 Representative Jim Davis
1994-95 Senator Fred Dudley
Senator Bill Turner
1993-94 No Award
1992-93 Representative John Long
1991-92 Representative Tim Jamerson
1990-91 Representative T.K. Wetherell
1989-90 Senator Bob Johnson
Representative Bolley Johnson
1988-89 Representative Sam Bell
1987-88 Representative Tom Gustafson
1986-87 Representative Sam Bell
1985-86 Representative Michael Friedman
1984-85 Senator Carrie Meek
1983-84 Senator Bill Grant
1982-83 Representative Betty Easley
1981-82 Representative Virginia Rosen
1980-81 Senator Clark Maxwell, Jr.
1979-80 Representative Elaine Bloom
1978-79 Senator Curtis Peterson

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