



**CEES Legislative Training
February 1, 2016
Tallahassee, FL**



Committee for Education of Exceptional Students

2016 Legislative Platform

CEESS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

2016 Consensus items related to the Education of Exceptional Students

Safe Learning Environment

- ◆ Continue training for all school personnel and enhance university programs in recognition and treatment of abused children.
- ◆ Continue implementation of strategies to eliminate all forms of bullying.
- ◆ 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 school-based personnel including School Resource Officers (SRO) to handle specific behavioral concerns in a differentiated manner.
- ◆ Prohibit the use of physical restraint in instances other than imminent danger to oneself or others, and provide annual training in the area of restraint and seclusion.
- ◆ Promote alternatives to corporal punishment in the public schools.
- ◆ Eliminate the use of out of school suspension (OSS) and expulsion.
- ◆ 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.

Access and Assessment

- ◆ Establish a class size requirement for students with disabilities who are being served in more restrictive environments such as self-contained and resource settings.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Ensure that Multi-tier System of Supports (MTSS) is provided to all students based on their individual needs, regardless of their exceptionality.
- ◆ Ensure that instructional materials, intervention strategies, and resources are research/evidence based.
- ◆ Ensure availability of appropriate and accessible educational materials including digital materials, by using adaptation features, specialized formats, and assistive technology to access the curriculum and to meet state accountability requirements.
- ◆ Allow the use of classroom accommodations in all assessments including district and state assessments (i.e., not being permitted to read the passages on the writing assessment).
- ◆ Remove barriers for students with disabilities in secondary career education and postsecondary programs by allowing documentation such as previous Individual Education Plans (IEP), 504 plans, and Summary of Performance (SOP), so that students can access appropriate accommodations.

These issues were determined by the following statewide organizations: Florida Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired; Florida Association of School Social Workers; Florida Council of Administrators of Special Education; Florida Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders; Florida Council for Exceptional Children; Florida Division on Career Development and Transition; Florida Teacher Educators Division and Florida Gifted Network.

Funding

- ◆ Increase the ESE guaranteed allocation for students including K-12 gifted programs.
- ◆ Ensure services to exceptional students in the public schools are not penalized by reallocation of resources that may reduce the FEFP or ESE Guaranteed Allocation.
- ◆ Continue to fund critical statewide infrastructure support programs 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)
 - Very Special Arts Florida (VSA)
 - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- ◆ Continue funding for intervention programs such as:
 - Division of Blind Services
 - Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)
 - Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource Centers (university programs).

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 (i.e., Value Added Model).
- ◆ Teacher evaluation systems for teachers of students with disabilities should consider the specific disabilities of the students the teacher is serving and other factors that are specific to special education.
- ◆ Mandate equivalent academic accountability measures, as required of the public schools, for students with disabilities enrolled in school choice programs such as special savings account funding, McKay Scholarships, Personal Learning Accounts, and ensure fiscal accountability for all services using public funds.
- ◆ Eliminate the penalty for high schools that have students with disabilities who may require 5 or more years to meet graduation requirements.
- ◆ Examine the penalties for schools and districts related to the legislation for diploma options in Florida and the use of the national cohort formula for drop out rates.

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Personnel

- ◆ Require training for all teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators, and related services personnel based upon recent legislative mandates concerning exceptional student education.
- ◆ Protect Chapter 490 licensure for school psychologists and Chapter 491 licensure for mental health counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists.
- ◆ Align teacher certification standards to reflect current research and practice.

Mental Health Services

- ◆ Support mental health services for students, which may include wrap around and community linkages.
- ◆ Fund and continue to provide professional development opportunities in the area of mental health.
- ◆ Ensure positive behavior training is provided to all school and district personnel who provide behavioral interventions to students with disabilities.



OUR HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO OUR CEES ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND DEDICATION FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS IN FLORIDA. OUR SINCERE THANKS FOR YOUR GUIDANCE, SUPPORT, AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

SINCERELY,

THE CEES STEERING COMMITTEE:

DR. ROSALIND HALL, PRESIDENT, FL CASE

DR. POINSETTA TILLMAN, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHAIR, FL CASE

VALERIE SCOTT, LEGISLATIVE CHAIR, FL CASE

GAIL ZAVALA, CAN COORDINATOR, FL CEC

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