



President Elect
Kathleen Puckett

December 2008

The Changing of the Guard!

The new year will represent a time of opportunities and many changes as CEC staff and members prepare to work with a new U.S. President and a new Congress. We are optimistic that we will be able to highlight special education/IDEA funding needs and promote services to our infants, children, and youth with special needs and their families. **Dr. Kathleen Puckett** will assume the presidency of CEC on January 1 and five newly elected members will join the Board. Our new members include:

President Elect: Jacqueline Mault

Member-at-Large, Classroom Ranks: Iris Kerbis Cantor

Member-at-Large, Diverse, Ethnic, and Multicultural Groups: Ronald B. Tamura

Members-at-Large, Non-Designated: Elizabeth Drame, Clayton Keller, Eileen B. Raymond

The Board of Directors also appointed **Vincent Harper** to the position of **Student Member**.

CEC was fortunate to have had an exemplary slate of candidates for our membership-wide election and Board-appointed position. All of the candidates displayed a deep commitment to the future of our organization and the advancement of special education.

Retiring Board Members

Many thanks go to our outgoing Board members, who have contributed invaluable time and expertise on behalf of CEC and the field. Their unselfish dedication to advancing the Council's work is highly commendable and deeply appreciated. They are: **Mary Ruth Coleman**, Immediate Past President; Board members **Beverly J. McCoun**, **Sherry Meschko**, **James Siders**, and **Roberta Unger**; and Student Member **Trisha Steinbrecher**.

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Thanks also to our retiring committee chairs, **LaVerne Buchanan**, who chaired the Elections Committee, and **Christy Chambers**, who chaired the Student Committee. We welcome the new Elections Committee Chair **Debbie Ballard** and Student Committee Chair **Andrea Abel**.

Committee membership appointments will be completed shortly and we will post the new membership in January. We much appreciate the many contributions of the following committee members: **Nancy Anderson, Andy Berg, Emily Canty, Laura Cross, Douglas Fuchs, Sandy Keenan, Margaret McLane, Jeanette Misaka, Steve Morford, Alec Peck, Eileen Raymond, Robert Runkel, Scott Sparks, David St. Jean, Karen Storey, Gloria Taradash, James Williams**.



A New Strategic Plan

Another significant transition will be our introduction of the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan developed through collaborative discussions among the Board, CEC staff, and Representative Assembly during the past year. The Strategic Plan was adopted in July and can be viewed by linking to:

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/GovernanceLeadership/StrategicPlan/default.htm>

We are very excited about the plan, as it builds on the newly adopted Core Values, Mission, and Vision statements of the Council, which were developed in January and adopted in April. These were shaped by our new conceptual framework and the most critical issues in the field identified by our membership in a 2007 survey. Our Representative Assembly then prioritized the top 10 issues from this list during its 2007 meeting. CEC's Core Values, Mission, and Vision can be found at:

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/CECsMissionandVision/default.htm>

Staff, committees, and Board members have identified strategies and success indicators for implementing the goals and objectives of the plan during 2009. Kathleen Puckett will describe these activities in her section, titled "2009 Plans and Opportunities."

At the same time, we close our activities on the 2006-2008 Strategic Plan and report our success in meeting many of the goals. A few of the successes in 2008 are highlighted below.

Major Outcomes from the 2006-2008 Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Recruiting and Retaining Members

CEC membership currently exceeds 38,000, with a net increase of 1,808 professional members and 772 student members over last year. Division memberships have also grown by 4%; CASE has met its goal of having over 5000 members and TAM exceeded its goal of 1000 members! The 2008 "Back to School" Campaign recruited over 1100 student members. CEC also initiated the innovative *Take 2* promotion to support the induction of new teachers who were CEC student members. This promotion enables new teachers and administrators to carry over their student membership rates for the first two years of their professional careers. Our goals are to ensure that we maintain members during the lowest salary periods of their profession and to continue to meet their professional development needs through membership benefits during this critical time of induction into the profession.

Goal 2: Advocacy

CEC has continued its exemplary service in promoting full funding for IDEA and focusing on related issues that are critical for the provision of services and supports for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. Major achievements this year included sending more than 2600 member letters to advance CEC's public policy agenda to Congress through the CEC Legislative Action Center! CEC participated in direct lobbying to delay Medicaid regulations that would impact case management services, transportation, administrative costs, and rehabilitation services. CEC also was active in the passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, promoting new provisions that would improve the preparation of teachers and administrators in preschool through high school education, increase post-secondary education opportunities for students with disabilities, integrate technology into teacher preparation, and provide grants to institutions of higher education to prepare future faculty who will educate the next generation of teachers. CEC continued to advocate for students with gifts and talents and engaged in many inter-agency and cross-organizational initiatives to support high-quality services for students and families. For more information, be sure to follow the *CEC Policy Insider*:

http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Policy_Updates&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=29&ContentID=4857

Goal 3: Advancement of the Profession

CEC continues to be active in updating the knowledge and skills of the profession as well as preparing reviewers for program reviews related to NCATE accreditation. The 6th edition of the "Red Book," *What Every Special Educator Must Know: The Standards, Ethics and Guidelines*, will be available in 2009. See the following link for other new publications from CEC:

<http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Publications1>

Goal 4: Financial and Organizational Health

Although this has been a year of economic downturn, CEC has held steady and will be ending the year with a forecasted income over revenues of more than \$200,000. Investments have dropped along with those of nearly everyone in the nation, but we continue to have a significant reserve and plan to “hold the course.” The sound financial base of the organization enables CEC to continue to concentrate on issues that impact our profession through our strategic plan and through our daily membership services. CEC has focused a great deal of energy this year on new technology and social networking. Join CEC’s Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Council-for-Exceptional-Children-International-Headquarters/32298208816>; visit our blogs featured on the Web site; and explore the many presentations, special events, and vendors for the 2009 CEC Convention & Expo in Seattle at <http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ConventionExpo/default.htm>.

Other Accomplishments for 2008

Initiatives to Impact the Profession of Special Education

Almost all of our work extends beyond a single year. We work with our committees, expert panels, and workgroups to address issues of national and professional importance as well as issues that impact the governance and health of CEC. Many of the accomplishments I will describe were possible because of the ability of officers, Board members, and committee chairs to work across appointments and across time. In addressing issues of national importance, CEC developed and, in one case, revised policy or position statements. Noteworthy in 2008 are the following efforts directed at impacting practice in our field:

Response to Intervention (RtI) Position Statement, Revised October 2008. The Board first approved the RtI statement, which was developed by a workgroup in 2007 and reviewed by the Representative Assembly. The position was published in the January 2008 issue of *TEACHING Exceptional Children*. Over the course of the spring and the CEC Convention & Expo, members of CEC and CASE raised questions and requested further clarification of what the tiered approach to RtI meant. Was it a process, fluid and flexible, based on progress monitoring? Or could the tiers be construed as physical placements? In what tiers might special education services and professionals be involved? With the careful work of several members of the Board, staff and thoughtful comments from CASE, the position statement was amended to explicitly address the role of special educators and the fact that RtI and its multiple tiers represent different processes and not placements. The revised CEC Board approved position statement can be found at http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search§ion=Issue_4&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentFileID=2666.

The Board was pleased to be engaged in this process and to spend additional time clarifying phrases that led to unintended confusion. As is always true, position statements evolve to represent the best thinking of the time and current research. We are disseminating this position to national organizations and congressional committees that address issues associated with the inclusion of children with disabilities in general and special education. We encourage our state/provincial units, divisions and members to disseminate and use this position in their advocacy work, practice, and research.

Safe School Policy. Work on this policy was initiated by the Diversity Committee following the 2006 Convention & Expo in Salt Lake City, at a time when some schools in the state were banning clubs for GLBT students. Under the leadership of **Jamie Hopkins**, President in 2006, and **Shernaz Garcia**, then chair of the committee, the members worked with skill and dedication to produce the policy on safe schools adopted by the CEC Board in April 2008. In addition, CEC Headquarters staff developed a brochure titled "Recommendations for Implementing a Positive School Climate" (see <http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=10036>). The policy has received significant attention and praise from leaders in general education as well as special education.

New Diversity Terminology. During the same time period, the Diversity Committee also worked to update diversity terms for inclusion in the CEC Policy Manual Glossary. We plan to infuse the new terminology into all publications and encourage our Units to embrace it and incorporate it in their work. The glossary can be found at <http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/Diversity/CECPolicies/DiversityTerminology2008.pdf>.

Initiation of Evidence-Based Practice. The Professional Standards and Practice Pilot Core Team on Evidence-Based Practice, led by **Rachelle Bruno**, began working in 2007 on a manual to help the field identify practices with a strong evidence base by providing guidance and a systematic way to evaluate research. They completed the manual in the summer of 2008 and it was accepted by the Board, which then voted to provide funding for an initial series of "beta" tests to be conducted in 2009. See the "2009 Plans and Opportunities" section that follows by our next President, Kathleen Puckett.



2008 Initiatives to Enhance Governance and Productivity of CEC as an Organization

While the CEC Board looks outward to issues of national and international importance, we also focus a portion of our efforts on governance and organizational planning and oversight.

Establishment of a Canadian/U.S. Committee. The Board voted to create a new committee based on the recommendations of the U.S.-Canada Workgroup, which was charged to identify ways in which to support Canadian membership within the CEC organization.

Candace Borger, former Canadian CEC President, agreed to chair the committee and members met this past month for their inaugural meeting.

Dissolution of the Canadian CEC (CCEC). Under the leadership of **Diane Vandenbosche**, CCEC President, and **Tammy Mitchell**, Past President of CCEC, the CCEC Board voted to dissolve the organization effective December 31, 2008. They announced their plans to Canadian members of the Representative Assembly in April. CCEC began in 1978 and for a time operated its own office. A commemorative plaque bearing the names of the 30 Canadian CEC Presidents and the organization's logo will be on display in the CEC Headquarters Suite in Arlington, VA. The decision to dissolve was difficult but pragmatic, given current financial constraints. Citizens of Canada and the U.S. were founding members of CEC and the organization includes over 900 members from six active provinces in Canada (British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba). The Canadian CEC units are discussing forming a caucus to address issues specific to Canada. The new Canadian/U.S. Committee will also work to ensure that CEC continues to build on the strengths of the Canadian and U.S. educational systems, governance policies, research, and membership.

Workgroup on Committees, Workgroups, and other Advisory Groups. Board members **Sherry Meschko** and **Elizabeth Drame** undertook the demanding task of co-chairing a workgroup to review the CEC Constitution and Bylaws and CEC policies and recommend revisions in order to ensure that both reflected the new governance structure established in 2000. They and members of their workgroup completed the process this fall. The Representative Assembly and Board had opportunities to discuss the changes through the e-Community and the revised Constitution and Bylaws and policies were adopted during the October Board meeting. Major changes included defining the status and functions of constitutionally mandated committees, Board-established committees, workgroups, and expert panels; clarifying the relationship of the Board to these entities; and outlining reporting requirements and liaison relationships with the President Elect. Finally, this courageous workgroup agreed to rewrite the CEC Committee Chairs Handbook, which was last revised in the 1970s. The new Committee Handbook will be available this spring in time for the CEC Convention & Expo.

Nominations Committee and the Development of Pathways to Leadership. Under the leadership of Immediate Past President **Mary Ruth Coleman**, the Nominations Committee prepared a slate of outstanding candidates for election. They also initiated a new leadership development endeavor titled "Pathways to Success." The committee received surveys from 130 members who had served on the Board and in Unit leadership positions. In addition, they conducted focus groups during the Leadership Institutes in summer 2008. This information was used to create a plan to nurture leadership within CEC. This plan, "Nurturing Tomorrow's Leaders Today: A Plan for Nurturing Leadership Within CEC" will be presented to the Board of Directors for consideration at their January meeting. The Pathways to Leadership Survey and results are summarized below.

The importance of personal contacts, encouragement, and support in recruiting leadership and sustaining leadership commitment cannot be overstated. Personal connections and a desire to serve and make a difference were the most important reasons given for taking a leadership role within the Council. The primary challenges for members interested in leadership are lack of time, resources, and support; workload and other responsibilities; and personal issues. An additional concern was that the pathways to CEC leadership may not be explicit enough for members to understand how they can become involved. Several ideas were given to help nurture leadership within CEC:

- Develop mentoring programs (the Pioneers were mentioned)
- Create student participation activities
- Involve retired members in leadership development
- Look for ways to support individuals so they can participate (e.g., paid travel, reduced registration, support for substitute teachers, etc.)
- Use technology to increase outreach and reduce cost
- Increase level of communication within the organization
- Develop leadership materials (e.g., tool kits, presentations, activities for sessions, training packet for Unit leaders, Leadership 101 guidebook, etc.)
- Continue the Summer Leadership Institutes
- Increase number of leadership development opportunities at Convention
- Create a leadership academy
- Look at CEC structure to see how "chapters" can be encouraged
- Continue to use recognition, awards, and celebrations to express gratitude for those who serve
- Promote tangible benefits for service to CEC

The Nominations Committee greatly appreciates the participation of the leaders who responded to this survey and wants you to know that your voices have been heard!

In summary, it's been quite a year! We've not mentioned all the many day-to-day activities of CEC staff, who ensure that the diverse needs of our membership are met and that CEC remains the recognized and trusted voice of special education. Our year of visits to CEC Headquarters, however, has shown us what a fabulous group of committed individuals they are. They ensure that CEC remains a responsive, vibrant leader among the many educational organizations located in the Washington, DC, area. Dr. Bruce Ramirez and his senior staff provide the leadership, both national and international, that our members deserve. Many thanks to them and to all the dedicated CEC volunteer leaders at the state, provincial, division, committee, and workgroup levels.

2009 Plans and Opportunities

Kathleen Puckett, 2009 CEC President

The new year brings several opportunities our way. CEC's plans for the future include the following:

Teaching and Learning Conditions

The first goal in CEC's strategic plan is to improve the conditions of teaching and learning and to support the highest quality of services for individuals with exceptionalities. In the coming months, the Board of Directors will examine current conditions of teaching and learning in special education programs and begin an initiative designed to encourage career-long professional development that supports the use of effective and validated instructional practices.

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Evidence-Based Practices

CEC has begun a major undertaking to address evidence-based practices in special education. An outgrowth of previous work under the direction of the Professional Standards and Practice Committee, the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Workgroup will be inviting Divisions and other researchers to use the EBP procedure to validate and determine the effectiveness and efficiencies of the process. The EBP Workgroup is chaired by **Rachelle Bruno** and members include **Virginia Buysse, Bryan Cook, Janette Klingner, Tim Landrum, Melody Tankersley, and David Test**. It will report to the Board of Directors through the Professional Standards and Practice Committee, chaired by **Kathlene Shank**.

International Engagement

The Workgroup on CEC's International Role held its inaugural meeting December 5-7, 2008, at CEC Headquarters. Led by **Clay Keller**, this workgroup is charged with examining CEC's international roles, responsibilities, and international presence as a professional organization in special education. Other members of the workgroup include **Rashida Banerjee, Lans Cameron, Elizabeth Drame, Suzanne Martin, Tammy Mitchell, and Humberto Rodriguez**.

Community and Membership

CEC continues to add "high-tech" and "high-touch" activities to maintain its visibility as a strong, vibrant organization with actively engaged members. Look for increased use of CEC's Facebook page to support "high-tech" social networking. Susan Fowler aims to maintain our tradition of "high-touch" activities by chairing the leadership development initiatives of the Nominations Committee.

Public Policy Advocacy

A new President and Congress in the U.S. brings new opportunities for engagement to CEC and the field of special education. The Policy and Advocacy Services Team will work with the CAN leadership to develop activities and strategies that advances CEC's public policy agenda and retains and enhances our standing as the voice and vision of special education.

Organizational Effectiveness

In order to continuously improve organizational performance and effectiveness and provide value to our members, CEC will roll out new technology features for members, Unit leaders, and officers. Look for improved communication and information-posting capabilities using secure SharePoint services.