

Influencing Policymaking at the Grassroots Level

CEC Annual Convention & Expo • April 24, 2010

Welcome Back

- ❖ It doesn't seem like it's been a year since we were last together...
 - Obama Administration Pursuing Legislative Priorities
 - Focus on Healthcare, Healthcare, Healthcare!!!

- But... Also Education

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
- ESEA Reauthorization

“More than any other issue, education is the civil rights issue of our generation and it can't wait—because tomorrow won't wait—the world won't wait—and our children won't wait.”

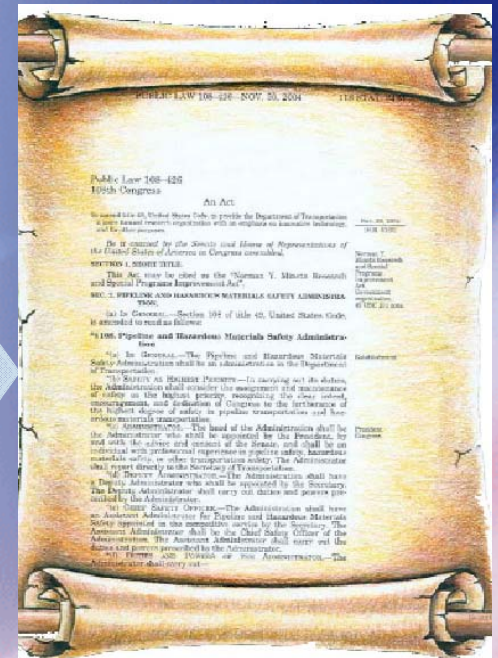
– U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan • September 24, 2009

All Means All

"So today I am calling on all of you to join with us to build a transformative education law that offers every child the education they want and need..."

U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan

- Critical policy issues facing the education community are best addressed in consultation with educators, parents, and students



U.S. Constitution

The First Amendment



- **Congress shall make no law** respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or **abridging** the freedom of speech, or of the press; or **the right of the people** peaceably to assemble, and **to petition the government for a redress of grievances.**

HOWEVER...

"The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously."

Hubert H. Humphrey
Vice President & U.S.
Senator



Key Points for This Discussion

- What Works / What Doesn't
- The Competition and The Noise Level in DC
- Who Are Members of Congress?/Structure and Operations of a Congressional Office
- Strategies for Your Meetings
- Debriefing
- Importance of Follow-up
- Questions

EFFECTIVE???



EFFECTIVE???



EFFECTIVE???



EFFECTIVE???



A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

- **\$3.47 Billion Million in Lobbying Costs in 2009 (\$91 million on education)**
- **13,739 Registered Lobbyists (about 26 per Member of Congress)**
- **Diversity of issues, interests, resources, priorities**

Competing With All That

- CEC's Legislative Agenda, Initiatives & Strategies
 - Outreach Efforts
 - Children and Youth Action Network
 - Congressional Liaison Program
 - Online Legislative Action Center
 - **THIS MEETING**
 - **FOLLOW-UP FROM THIS MEETING**

CEC Congressional Liaison Program

Join CEC's Advocacy Team!

Do You...

- ✓ Have a good relationship with your member of Congress or their staff?
- ✓ Want to advocate for students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents on Capitol Hill?
- ✓ Want to be part of CEC's grassroots advocacy team?

If you answered "Yes", sign up to become a CEC Congressional Liaison today!

The goal of the CEC's Congressional Liaison program is to foster relationships between CEC members and all 535 members of Congress. Classically, Congressional Liaisons are asked to meet with their members of Congress to impart legislative issues concerning students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

Yes! Sign me up to become a CEC Congressional Liaison:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Please let the member of Congress you have an excellent relationship with know you would be helpful for CEC to know.

CEC is pleased to offer the Policy Insider in a new format - a regularly updated blog - as a complement to the weekly report you've come to rely on. The CEC Policy Insider report, which will come via e-mail every Wednesday, will be a round-up of stories from the blog, where you can always find news in its entirety. Sign up for CEC's Policy Insider doest today!

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Introducing Your NEW and Improved Policy Insider!

Welcome to the CEC Policy Insider Blog!

CEC is pleased to offer the Policy Insider in a new format - a regularly updated blog - as a complement to the weekly report you've come to rely on. The CEC Policy Insider report, which will come via e-mail every Wednesday, will be a round-up of stories from the blog, where you can always find news in its entirety. Sign up for CEC's Policy Insider doest today!

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- How to comment

CEC RESOURCES

- Reality.co.Blog
- CEC's RTI Blog
- CEC's Policy Insider Blog

Legislative Action Center

ACTION ALERT!

- Tell the Senate to Promote Funding for Postsecondary Education of Students with Disabilities! [Click Here](#)
- Tell Your Congressman to Support IDEA Full Funding! [Click Here](#)
- Tell the Senate to Increase Funding for IDEA! [Click Here](#)
- Tell the Senate to Fund Grants to Students with Gifts and Talents! [Click Here](#)
- Send a Letter to Congress on Teachers For Students With Gifts and Talents! [Click Here](#)

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<http://capwiz.com/cek/home>

Who are Members of Congress?

- Before they were elected officials they were...
 - Lawyers
 - Educators
 - Business Executives
 - Homemakers
 - Farmers
 - Comic (!!)
 - Physicians
 - Journalists
 - Social Workers
 - Veterinarians
 - Baseball Player

Structure and Operations of A Congressional Office

- **Turbulent, Fast-Paced Environment**
 - **Members scheduled to the minute**
 - **Other groups of constituents in town**
 - **Committee Hearings**
 - **The Workload**
 - **The Unexpected**

Advocacy Methods

Phone Call

Pros: Quick, easy way to discuss issue

Cons: May be difficult to connect, get message across

Email

Pros: Efficient, Can Refine Message Before Sending

Cons: May be difficult to connect, easy to be set aside

Meeting

Pros: Good relationship builder, establishes future contact

Cons: Requires more time than calling or emailing

All Advocacy Methods Require:

- Planning Ahead
 - Assess Past Support When Determining 1-2 Priorities.
 - Prepare a Specific, Measurable “Ask.”
Focus Discussion on 1 or 2 Issues
 - Know Going in that FOLLOW-UP WILL BE ESSENTIAL

Know Your Audience

- A typical Member/Aide may ask themselves:
 - Who are these people?
 - What will they want me to do?
 - **Should I care? Will this make a difference back home?**
 - What can I ask them to do?
 - Will they be satisfied with this meeting?
 - Will they follow-up?

Know Your Audience

- Be ready, know who you're meeting/emailing/talking with
- Good Intro – Name, Hometown, Your Practice and Purpose of Visit
- Deliver Key Message Points
- **THE “ASK”**
- Make Intention to Follow-up Clear

The Follow Up



- Note to Staff
Person in Congressional
Office
- Follow-up with CEC
pubpol@cec.sped.org

SOME TIPS

- ✓ **Allow Your Passion for What You Do Shine Through**
- ✓ Be a Positive Representative of Your Profession, Your Students, Your Colleagues
- ✓ Don't Assume
- ✓ Brief, Simple and Coordinated
- ✓ Own the Talking Points
- ✓ Listen
- ✓ Saying "I don't know" is OK
- ✓ Photo
- ✓ **Deliver the "Ask"**
- ✓ **Set-up Your Follow-up**



Follow-Up is EVERYTHING

- Relationships Make ALL the Difference
- Be The “Go-To” Resource on Gifted Education Issues for Your Senators and Representative
 - Thank You Note
 - Follow-up E-mail
 - Congressional Recess Visits / Town Hall Mtgs
 - Reaching Out to Others...Colleagues, Family, Neighbors
 - Invitation to visit successful gifted ed program

“OK, you’ve convinced me. Now go out there and bring pressure on me.”



THANK YOU!

