Hello CAN Coordinators!

We know it is a busy task to keep your advocacy networks thriving, with the holiday season upon us and the elections taking over the media, a lot can slip through the cracks. But we want all CAN Coordinators to know you can still keep your networks engaged and informed, especially when CEC calls for legislative action. These following tips well help when it comes to keeping your advocacy networks engaged.

Follow These Tips to Keep Your Network Engaged

1. **Double Check Your Strategy.** How are you keeping your network engaged currently? Are you shooting off CAN Alerts to your network the day you get them? Are you asking your state/unit membership chair for updated member lists? Are you keeping your network well informed on CEC's activities through the Policy Insider or CEC's website? Think of your network member profile, - who they are comprised of, what is the best way for them to be contacted, and which ones are responsive and genuinely interested in learning more? Think about new strategies you can employ as CAN Coordinator.

2. **Remember, Personal Touches Are Never A Bad Thing.** When was the last time you reached out to your network to check-in and let them know you are there to be of assistance to them? Personal emails and follows up are important when keeping your network engaged. This can be done by emailing individuals or even emailing your network monthly with a short but sweet greeting. Remember who those people in your network are and how they might be able to provide information you can find useful in your advocacy efforts.

3. **Reach Out Not Too Much.** We all know the dangers of reaching out too little where your network may believe you are no longer making a strong attempt at keeping them informed. Therefore colleagues stop responding to emails and seek little contact. But there is also a fear of too much contact and the results are often similar to when you reach out too little. Try to send
information monthly. When there is a lot to share at the same time, include it all in one big email.

4. **Figuring Out What Works Best for Your Network.** Communication is not only important but it also poses some challenges when figuring out what your network is in need of. You need to find out what they want and what they appreciate. Surveys are never a bad idea. They will give you an idea of what you can do to improve as grassroots leaders. You may ask them questions such as:

- What can I do to improve my communication?
- How often would you like to receive emails from me?
- What topics do you find the most interesting?
- Am I providing enough information in my emails?
- What other types of information should I include in emails?

Questions are not limited to these, think of others!

5. **Social Media Presence Matters.** Facebook and Twitter are the most useful platforms when you are attempting to disperse information. CEC has their own Facebook page and several twitter platforms for various topical areas. It helps CEC to share messages quickly and effectively. Reach out to your network and find out what platforms they use. It could become another way to communicate that is also fun!

6. **Be Open to Meeting In Person.** For those members of your network who happen to be more local, reach out and set up a time to meet with them in person. Particularly if they have expertise in a subject that relates to your current advocacy goals. It can be as simple as meeting for coffee or even inviting them to a local event that has something to do with their career field as it relates to special education. It is always nice to put a face to the name or become reacquainted with a colleague you may have not had a chance to connect with in a long time.

These tips will help you as you begin to prepare new strategies as the year ends and you head into 2016!
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