Update on Recent Board Actions

Dear Unit and Division Leaders,

This letter is to provide an update on recent actions by CEC’s board of directors during its July meeting, including an update of CEC’s strategic plan, an initiative to update branding materials, as well as a policy change concerning public statements.

Strategic Plan Update

Over the past three months, the board has been engaged in updating our strategic plan. Specific areas that were approved include revised objectives for Grassroots Advocacy and Teacher Retention, and expansion of CEC’s Student Membership to include an emphasis on “early career success.” The revised plan will be shared with all units and divisions in the near future. In the area of students and early career success, the board approved a tactic to engage the Inter-Divisional Caucus (IDC) with a specific request. CEC’s board of directors would like the IDC to develop a series of recommendations as to how divisions can encourage increased membership and participation of early career professionals in divisions. The board would appreciate a report from the IDC chair by December 2019.

Updating CEC’s Branding for Units and Divisions

To ensure that CEC, its units and divisions are coordinating our brand identity, CEC staff will be updating the organizations branding guidelines and style guide. In addition, for those units and divisions who use the CEC microsite/community platform, staff will be working with each entity to update the microsites based on the revised branding guidelines. The staff will distribute the revised guidelines and host a webinar on the topic in the fall. Details will be posted in unit and division communities in the weeks ahead.

CEC Policy on Public Statements

The 2018 Special Education Legislative Summit brought together over 260 leaders in Alexandria, Virginia just outside of Washington, DC. The event was a tremendous success, with a day and a half of preparation and a full day of visits with members of Congress. It was hard work, but it was rewarding. One attendee remarked, “this was the best professional event I have ever attended...”

Our mission was to deliver to policy makers important information on key issues that are impacting our field and the children and youth we serve. Months of preparation went into honing the messages and preparing the materials. Depending on the Congressional office, state teams presented issue briefs on four key areas: Education Appropriations; Keep Public Funds in Public Schools; Special Education Teacher and Early Intervention Provider Shortages; and Social Emotional Learning, Positive Climate, and Mental Health Supports.

The strength of our efforts was the result of the unified messages that we were able to deliver to congressional offices, as well as to senior leadership at the U.S. Department of Education. It is in the
spirit of unity and effective practices in public affairs that the CEC Board of Directors passed the following motion:

All official units and divisions in good standing of the Council for Exceptional Children will send all public statements to CEC’s Board of Directors and/or the officers of the organization for review and comment prior to the release of said statement. Further, if the Board of Directors feels that such statement is not aligned with the mission of the organization and/or its policies and practices, and, thus, is not in agreement with the statement, but the division and/or unit choses to issue the statement anyway, it will note in the statement that it does not reflect the views of the Council for Exceptional Children.

This motion will be incorporated into CEC’s policies governing the relationship between CEC and its units and divisions. The intent of this policy to ensure good communication among the 60 units, 18 divisions, and CEC. To the public, a statement that carries the logo, name and tag line of a division or unit of the Council of Exceptional Children fully implies that such a statement is, in fact, on behalf of, or at least approved by, CEC. While each unit and division may not always be in full agreement on a variety of issues, this policy supports the right of units and divisions to make public statements on issues of importance.

Please let me know if you have specific questions concerning these recent board actions. On behalf of the board of directors, I would like to personally thank you for your commitment to the Council for Exceptional Children.

Sincerely,

Laurie VanderPloeg
President

cc: CEC Board of Directors