Advocacy Strategies for New CAN Coordinators

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WELCOME!!
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Today We Will Discuss…

- Grassroots Advocacy – What is it??
- Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators
- CEC’s Responsibility to CAN Coordinators
- Unit’s Responsibility to CAN Coordinators
- Practical Strategies to Become an Effective CAN Coordinator
What is Grassroots Advocacy??

Growing Together: Like minded individuals join together

At the Root: Individual beliefs/ ideas take hold
Competing With All That

Policy Victories!!

- CAN Network/CEC Engaged Members
- CEC Direct Lobbying
- CEC Collaboration with Other Organizations
Know Your Members of Congress

CEC-TAG Legislative Chair, Dr. Julia Roberts with Senate Majority Leader, Senator Mitch McConnell
Playing Offense & Defense
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

• You are CEC’s **Premier Grassroots Advocates**
  – Knowledgeable about CEC’s policy positions and current events
• **Provide leadership** on policy and advocacy issues
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

CEC Provided Info

CEC Members

YOU!

Elected Officials
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Assess Your Network

– Needs Analysis: What is the current status of your CAN Network?
  • Am I succeeding an active CAN Coordinator or has the role been dormant?
  • How active is my network? Do I need to provide intensive supports to get it started or is it already well established?

– Develop an action plan to maximize your grassroots potential (may be informal)
  • i.e. establish a communications plan (forward CEC Policy Insider every Wednesday)
Build Your Network

- On the 16th on every month you will receive a list of CEC members for your state unit/division

- Introduce yourself to your network
  - Share your state unit/division’s vision for advocacy
  - Solicit feedback to identify active/interested CEC members
  - Identify members who are leaders in the field
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Grow Your Network

– Communicate regularly and effectively
– Provide engagement activities
– Follow up!
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Articulating CEC’s Policy/Advocacy Message to CEC Members of Your Network

– Calls To Action
– Newsletters
– Meetings
Develop an Effective Network

- Identify CEC members who are politically active/interested and engage them
  
  • Develop a “Kitchen Cabinet” (informal team of collaborators)
  
  • Identify CEC members with interests in different areas
  
  • Identify CEC members who have a personal/professional relationship with a member of Congress and/or staff

The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

CEC Congressional Liaison Program

Join CEC’s Advocacy Team!

- Do you...
  1. Have a good relationship with your member of Congress or their staff?
  2. Want to advocate for students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents on Capitol Hill?
  3. Want to be part of CEC’s grassroots advocacy team?

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

Program of the CEC, 1730 M Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036. CEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in its programs or activities.
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Articulating CEC’s Advocacy/Policy Message to Elected Officials

- Meetings (in Washington, D.C. or home district office)
- Developing Relationships with Elected Officials & Staff
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Actively Use CEC’s Legislative Action Center
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Issues:

• Funding
• Special Education Research
• Gifted and Talented
• International Advocacy

Funding

Over the last several decades, children and youth with disabilities and those with gifts and talents have received increased supports and services, and access to the general education curriculum—resulting in achievement gains and higher expectations for their performance. Although these accomplishments are not entirely due to funding increases, the reality is that appropriate supports and services require resources.

IDEA

IDEA consists of 4 parts which together help educate children and youth with disabilities from birth through age 21.
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Action Center

How to Personalize Your Letter

CEC has prepared a letter for you to send to your elected officials. We encourage you to personalize the letter to provide information to the policy maker about how the issue will affect children and youth with exceptionalities and their families and the professionals who work on their behalf in your state and local programs. You can edit the letter directly on the Legislative Action Center or send the letter CEC has prepared.

Engagements

Tell Congress to Invest in Education Programs for Children with Exceptionalities!

Budgets are tight and Congress is under extreme pressure to keep funding to a minimum. Tell Congress that education cannot absorb any more funding cuts!
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

CEC’s Position on Current Bills

Federal - HR 1539
A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children.

Introduced
March 15, 2017

Description
A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children.

Original Sponsor
Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY)

Co-Sponsors
Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA)
Conduct Advocacy Training Sessions

- Promote grassroots action at state unit/division meetings and conferences
- Have regional coordinators for large units
- Be a talker and a doer
- Use CEC-provided tools (e.g. staff, legislative action center, etc.)
- Serve at least 2 years
- Serve only 1 unit
Organize Your Network

- Determine how you will organize your email listserv
- Determine any restrictions your school/employer may have on sending out advocacy messages
- Determine how you will identify and engage local CEC members interested in policy
- Identify any politically active/connected CEC members in your network
- Determine a communications schedule
- Determine how you will disseminate CEC Action Alerts
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Maintaining Your Network

- Periodically, update your contact list
- Determine your own outreach efforts to you solicit feedback from CEC members in your network
- Determine how you will have an ongoing, consistent advocacy presence within unit/division
Events Throughout the Year

– 2017 CEC Convention
  • April 19-22

– CEC Leadership Institute and CAN Meeting
  • July 7-9

– Special Education Legislative Summit
  • July 9-12
The Role & Responsibilities of CAN Coordinators

Events Throughout the Year

Volunteer with us at Convention!
CEC’s Responsibilities to CAN Coordinators

What Should CAN Coordinators Expect From CEC’s Policy and Advocacy Team?
CEC Support for CAN Coordinators

Communication of Policy Strategies

– Provide the most up-to-date information on what is unfolding on Capitol Hill, the U.S. Department of Education, and other agencies and organizations

• Emails
• Conference Calls
• Annual CAN Meeting and Meeting at CEC Convention
CEC Support for CAN Coordinators

Provide Messages to Activate/Educate Your Network
CEC Support for CAN Coordinators

CAN Resources Webpage

CAN Resources

As a CAN Coordinator, you are one of CEC's premier grassroots advocates. To help you prepare for this role, CEC has developed the following resources to assist you in starting or enhancing your grassroots network.

New CAN Coordinator Introduction Materials:
- Welcome Letter
- Key Ingredients for a Healthy CAN
- Obtaining Unit/Division Member Emails
- CAN Do - Branding Yourself, Creating an Effective CAN Business Card
- Strengthening Grassroots Advocacy: A Toolkit for the Everyday Activist
- Policy Insider Flyer
- Legislative Action Center Flyer

PowerPoint Presentations:
- You're a CAN Coordinator, Now What?
- Expanding Your Reach, Coalition Building
- Maximizing Your Potential on Capitol Hill: Developing Relationships with Elected Officials
CEC Support for CAN Coordinators

@CECAAdvocacy

Follow us on Twitter for up-to-the-minute policy updates!
CEC Support for CAN Coordinators

Add Us to Your Listservs:

- Debz@cec.sped.org
- Katieg@cec.sped.org
Schools Must Do More Than Provide a “merely more than de minimis” Education Program

The U.S. Supreme Court today issued a unanimous opinion in the case, Drewry F. v. Douglas County School District, ruling in favor of the parents of a Colorado student with autism who indicated that the district did not meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) thereby, denying him a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. wrote the opinion said, “When all is said and done, a student offered an educational program providing ‘merely more than de minimis’ progress from year to year can hardly be said to have been offered an education at all.”

On January 11th, the Supreme Court justices heard the case deliberating what the level of educational benefit that school districts must confer upon children with disabilities to provide them with FAME guaranteed by the IDEA. Drewry F. v. Douglas County School District is focused on a Colorado boy with autism, whose family asked the justices to clarify what educational benefits an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must provide. Drew F. (Drew) was provided an IEP from preschool through 4th grade, where he was a student in Douglas County School District. For 5th grade, Drew was enrolled in a private school after his parents disagreed with the County’s proposed IEP for 5th grade, stating it was too similar to the goals for earlier years. Drew’s parents filed a lawsuit in federal district court, stating that he had been denied FAME and seeking tuition reimbursement for his private school, where they say he has made academic, social, and behavioral progress.

Drew and his parents asked the eight justices to weigh in after the federal district court ruled that the IEP was “substantively adequate” after clarifying that the educational benefit was “merely more than de minimis.” Douglas County School District counters that a standard desired by the family could potentially escalate the number of court cases. The school district stands behind the court’s decision.

CEC Policy and Advocacy staff and several CEC members had the opportunity to sit in on the Supreme Court oral argument and hear the deliberation first hand. The argument...
Unit/Division’s Responsibilities to CAN Coordinators

HOW CAN YOUR UNIT/DIVISION HELP YOU?
CAN Coordinators Need Support from Their State Unit/Division:

- Explain the importance of advocacy from the national and local perspectives
- Advocacy = CEC member benefit
- Increases opportunities to engage CEC members
- Ensure that state unit/division leadership understands the responsibilities of both the CAN Coordinator and CEC
- Collaborate with your state unit/division to achieve your goals
- Financial support to attend Annual CAN Meeting and other outreach efforts
Practical Advocacy Strategies

• Develop Local Coalitions
• Use Traditional/Social Media
• Connect with other CAN Coordinators!
• Brainstorm with CEC Policy Staff!
Thank you!!

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