“Funding Flexibility Bill” Plays Shell Game with Education Resources at Expense of Students Who are Disadvantaged

Arlington, Va., July 8, 2011 — The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is calling on Congress to oppose the Funding Flexibility Act (H.R. 2445), legislation that fails to address the nation’s most pressing education issues and instead seeks to play a “shell game” with limited education resources.

The legislation encourages diverting — or outright eliminating — funding from programs with deep historical roots that address inequities in educational opportunity, such as the Education for the Disadvantaged Program (Title I) in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)/No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Established in 1965 in response to the War on Poverty, Title I continues to provide much-needed opportunity to more than 17 million U.S. children living in poverty. Currently, 2.5 million students with disabilities are also eligible for support from this landmark legislation.

While H.R. 2445 allows for transferring funds from ESEA to a small program called Early Intervening Services within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it does so at the expense of other education programs that benefit students with disabilities.

“CEC wholeheartedly agrees that additional funding is needed to implement Early Intervening Services — resources that often go to supporting response-to-intervention programs. But this approach of robbing Peter to pay Paul under the guise of ‘flexibility’ does nothing to help the full education community,” stated Deborah A. Ziegler, CEC’s associate executive director for policy and advocacy.

Additionally, the proposed legislation allows for the redirecting of resources away from programs supporting English Language Learners, Native American students, and after-school programs. Ziegler maintains that is not in the best interest of the nation’s students to pit education programs against each other.

“Providing flexibility in the absence of any real investment in established programs that have a track record of increasing student achievement does not provide school districts with the tools for success,” Ziegler stated.

Read more on CEC's Policy Insider blog.

Let your representatives know where you stand! Take action with CEC's Legislative Action Center.

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The Council for Exceptional Children is an international community of professionals who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. CEC’s mission is to improve, through excellence and advocacy, the education and quality of life for children and youth with exceptionalities and to enhance the engagement of their families.

For more information about CEC, visit www.cec.sped.org.