ISSUE BRIEF

Promoting Access & Achievement for Children and Youth with Exceptionalities in PK-12 Education

SUMMARY POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ESEA Reauthorization Bills – Student Success Act (H.R.5) passed the Committee on Education and Workforce on February 11, 2015. Every Child Achieves Act (S.1177) passed the HELP Committee on April 16, 2015.

- Education policy, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) must emphasize high expectations for students with disabilities.

- The reauthorization of ESEA must support requirements for high standards and learner performance that are intended to foster high quality teaching and learning, equality of educational opportunity to learn, and improved achievement for students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.
The reauthorization of ESEA must support the following requirements:

- Maintain accountability measures for students with disabilities
- Maintain disaggregation of subgroup data
- Maintain 95% student participations rate for all students
- Include early intervening services in general ed, UDL, PBIS
- Maintain the 1% cap on alternate assessments based on alternate assessment standards
- Prohibit modified standards and assessments
- Maintain Javits Gifted and Talented Act
- Include provisions from the TALENT Act
- Include early childhood programs
- Maintain MOE
- Prohibit Title I portability provisions
- Allow but not require new teacher evaluation systems
- Maintain a focus on professional development
- Include adequate funding

**BACKGROUND**

For the past 30 years, students with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who work on their behalf have revolutionized the educational and workplace opportunities available to America’s 6 million children with disabilities.

Led by landmark legislation, now known IDEA, students with disabilities have had access to an education system that builds upon their strengths and addresses their individual needs. Over the years, as the implementation of IDEA has strengthened throughout schools across our country, children with disabilities have gained access to the general education curriculum and, in many cases, learn alongside their peers without disabilities. This progress has been unprecedented because of dedicated children, families, special educators, and policymakers.

By building on the theme of IDEA that an educational system must address the individual needs of every child, CEC believes ESEA can achieve its noble goals of providing a high-quality education to all children taught by well-prepared, diverse, and successful educators, closing the achievement gap, and ensuring that all children reach a high level of achievement.

By realizing that our education system should address children’s individual needs, the unique needs of America’s 3 million
children with gifts and talents must also be addressed at a time when they have largely gone ignored in federal legislation. In addition, as education policy shifts to focus on all students, CEC hopes to attract attention to those students who have both a disability and are gifted, a population known as twice-exceptional.

As Congress reauthorizes ESEA, CEC believes that the reauthorization must support requirements for high standards and learner performance that are intended to foster high quality teaching and learning, equality of educational opportunity to learn, and improved achievement for children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents through:

- Supporting a well prepared successful educational workforce.
- Creating meaningful systems that encourage collaborative and supportive measurement, evaluation and reward of professional performance.
- Strengthening assessment and accountability for all children.
- Meeting the unique needs of gifted learners.
- Improving outcomes for all children through the collaboration of all educators.
- Developing improved strategies that create positive school reform.
- Providing full funding to execute the goals and provisions of ESEA.
- Creating systems that are carefully coordinated and balanced between ESEA and IDEA.