

CEC Policy and Advocacy Team Receives Martha J. Fields Award of Excellence

Arlington, Va., Oct. 24, 2012 – The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Policy and Advocacy Team received the 2012 National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) Martha J. Fields Award of Excellence at the NASDSE Installation and Awards Ceremony as part of their Annual Conference on Oct. 23.

The Martha J. Fields Award of Excellence is presented to an individual or organization that has made extraordinary contributions to the NASDSE organization, its mission, and goals. The candidate, individual, or organization must have made significant contributions to the NASDSE organization in support of services to state agencies to facilitate efforts to maximize educational outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

“CEC is honored to receive the Martha J. Fields Award of Excellence and continue to partner with the outstanding professionals at NASDSE,” said CEC Executive Director Bruce A. Ramirez.

“Both CEC and NASDSE work determinedly to support policies and actions that improve the educational success and quality of life for students with disabilities, as well as support the individuals that educate and provide services to students with disabilities.”

CEC’s emphasis on influencing policy at the federal, state, and local levels to better the lives of children and youth with disabilities dates back to the vision of the organization’s founder, Elizabeth Farrell, set forth in 1922. Over the last 90 years, CEC has led advocacy efforts to support the developmental, academic, and lifelong success of individuals with disabilities, and was notably instrumental in the passage and implementation of the Education for All Handicapped Students Act in 1975, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

CEC’s bi-annual legislative agenda provides a blueprint for the organization’s ongoing advocacy activities and is developed with the direct input of its members, who are frontline special educators. CEC continues to be a leading voice for special education within the halls of Congress and the U.S. Department of Education.

For years, CEC has collaborated with NASDSE and other organizations to pursue legislation that benefits children and youth with disabilities and the educators who work on their behalf. Through this collaboration, the organizations have raised awareness of critical issues confronting special education policy such as the impact of sequestration – automatic funding cuts – on special education; addressing the persistent challenge of personnel shortages in special

education; and promoting an assessment and accountability system that includes students with disabilities.

Find out more information about [NASDSE](#) or the [Policy and Advocacy](#) efforts of CEC.

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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 engagement of their families.

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