

CEC's Revised Special Education Teacher Preparation Standards Available

Arlington, Va., Dec. 4, 2012 – The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has approved the initial and advanced Preparation Standards for special educators recently revised by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

The standards support CEC's continued leadership in performance-based recognition of special education preparation programs in the United States and internationally. Both the initial and advanced Preparation Standards encompass seven standards with twenty-eight major elements that align with the standards of all professional association partners in NCATE.

“Recent research shows that teachers are the most important school-based factor in determining student achievement,” said Executive Director Bruce A. Ramirez. “These standards will help us continue our work to improve the preparation and quality of special education teachers.”

Since 2002, it has been CEC's position that all programs, traditional and nontraditional, preparing special education teachers regardless of affiliation, location, or intensity, demonstrate that they adhere to CEC's preparation standards by seeking CEC's professional recognition through the performance-based process of program review. More than 70 percent of educators entering the profession each year currently graduate from NCATE accredited programs.

Currently, 29 states require their special education preparation programs to submit for CEC recognition, with the balance of states having signed agreements that they will move program approval standards into alignment with CEC standards. Through 2011, CEC has reviewed and recognized approximately 2,000 undergraduate and graduate special education preparation programs.

The new CEC Initial Level Special Educator Preparation Standards focus on: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences; Learning Environments; Curricular Content Knowledge; Assessment; Instructional Planning and Strategies; Professional Learning and Ethical Practice; and Collaboration.

The new CEC Special Education Specialist Advanced Preparation Standards focus on: Assessment; Curricular Content Knowledge; Programs, Services, and Outcomes; Research & Inquiry; Leadership and Policy; Professional and Ethical Practice; and Collaboration.

New among the preparation standards is a focus on curricular content knowledge. The research in general education has made clear that the educator's understanding of the central concepts and structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry related to the academic subject-matter content

areas they teach makes a significant difference in student learning. The new standard is necessary because beginning special education professionals use knowledge of general and specialized curricula content to make them accessible to individuals with exceptionalities.

These updated standards are currently available on [CEC's website](#) and will be published in a revised edition of [What Every Special Educator Must Know: Ethics, Standards and Guidelines](#) in 2013.

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*CEC is an international community of educators who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. CEC's mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy. **For more information about CEC, visit www.cec.sped.org***

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