

For immediate release
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President's Education Budget has few Increases for SpEd; Ups Investment in Preschool, Overall Education Budget

April 11, 2013, Arlington, Va. – President Obama's proposed fiscal year 2014 budget, while containing sizeable increases in public education funding, does little to fulfill the federal government's commitment to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a pledge made in 1975 and never met.

While there are aspects of the President's budget that the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) commends, CEC is concerned about the lack of investment in special education programs.

“CEC is pleased the President for proposing this 4.5 percent increase for education and repealing the devastating, automatic across-the-board cuts known as [sequestration](#), which stripped more than \$600 million from special education programs,” said Deborah Ziegler, Associate Executive Director for Policy and Advocacy at CEC. “The President is sending the nation a clear signal that he is serious about education.”

CEC was pleased to see an increase of \$20 million in funding for the IDEA Part C Infants and Toddlers Program. This wise investment in early intervention will help ensure that our youngest children with disabilities and their families will receive services as early as possible. Also of interest to CEC was the President's call to increase the investment in special education research which provides educators with evidence-based interventions to support the academic, developmental and social needs of children and youth with disabilities.

CEC is disappointed, however, that there will be little new investments for special education programs which serve school aged children (Part B), preschool children (Part B sec. 619) and the support programs which facilitate the implementation of IDEA (Part D). The President's budget would bring the federal share per preschool child with disabilities down to historic lows; and proposes to cut the Personnel Preparation program, which provides educators with the tools needed to be effective in their teaching practice.

School districts rely on a healthy federal investment in special education to support the implementation of services for children and youth with disabilities. CEC will continue to actively advocate for increasing funding for all IDEA programs, particularly to reverse this trend of underinvestment.

“We have conveyed to Congress and the Administration the need for increasing federal investment in all IDEA programs, and this budget makes it clear that our work is not finished,” Ziegler said. “Another opportunity to fully fund IDEA and youth with disabilities has, sadly, been missed. We look forward to working with the Administration toward one day seeing that promise fulfilled.”

CEC is also concerned that the Administration does not even mention the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, thereby ignoring the only federal program addressing the needs of our nation’s 3 million students with gifts and talents.

Recent studies indicate an underrepresentation of students from low-income or minority backgrounds as top performers on statewide assessments and the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Known as the *excellence gap*, this achievement discrepancy typically carries through a student’s educational career and beyond. Our national investment in education programs must recognize and correct this issue; our nation cannot afford to squander its talent.

“This makes our members’ work and advocacy even more important, and CEC’s members stand ready to work with the Administration and Congress to develop policies that support positive educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities and gifts and talents,” Ziegler concluded.

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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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