

## **CEC Opposes Legislative Proposals to Siphon Public Funding to Private Schools**

### ***Public funding “follows the child,” but special education protections do not***

**Arlington, Va., Feb. 4, 2014** – The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is calling on Congress to reject two legislative proposals that, if enacted into law, would divert public education funding to private schools, which are not required to implement the same Federal legal protections for children and youth with disabilities as public schools.

“These voucher proposals introduced by Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Senator Tim Scott (R-S.C.) use language about “school choice” when, in fact, the legislation would limit and weaken protections for students with disabilities and their families under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),” said CEC President Robin D. Brewer.

“Allowing public funding to be used for private schools that are not bound to uphold IDEA sends the wrong message to children with disabilities and their families,” Brewer said. “IDEA’s protections ensure that children with disabilities are not segregated as they were 40 years ago, prior to the law’s passage. Doing right by children with disabilities means adhering to IDEA.”

Under the two proposals, private schools could receive public education funding but could ignore key tenants of IDEA, such as ensuring students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment, have access to an Individualized Educational Program, and receive special education and related services.

“Supporting the needs of children and their families starts by investing in public education and the established programs that states and school districts rely on to provide a free appropriate public education, a hallmark of IDEA,” Brewer continued.

In June 2011, CEC’s Board of Directors affirmed its opposition to school vouchers for children and youth with disabilities as being contrary to the best interests of children and youth and their families, the public school system, local communities, and taxpayers. Further, CEC believes that vouchers both contradict and undermine the central purposes of civil rights laws designed to protect children and youth with disabilities. [Read CEC’s Position on School Vouchers.](#)

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**The Council for Exceptional Children (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. Visit us at [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org).

