

*Teacher Education Division  
Council for Exceptional  
Children*



March 25, 2010

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable John Kline  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline:

On behalf of the Higher Education Consortium for Special Education and the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, we are pleased to provide recommendations for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA is critical legislation for students with disabilities and we look to the reauthorization to consolidate the gains made on behalf of these students and address the challenges encountered during implementation.

Our nation continues to face critical shortages of fully qualified special education teachers and general education teachers who are skilled instructors of students with disabilities. Since 80% of students with disabilities spend about 50% of their school day in general education classrooms, it is critical that general education teachers be able to work effectively with students with disabilities. If we are to close the achievement gap, we must address both the shortage of special education teachers and the quality of the instructional skills of teachers who work with students with disabilities.

The Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE) is comprised of 54 universities with doctoral programs in special education. Our member institutions are at the forefront of teacher education, research and development in special education. We work extensively with local and state education agencies to ensure that teachers and other professionals have the skills they need to provide a free appropriate public education to all students with disabilities.

The Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children focuses on supporting children, youth, and families of individuals with exceptionalities by preparing special educators. Our membership of over 2000 individuals canvases the United States and is the largest professional organization in the nation representing those who prepare special education teachers and teacher educators.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of students with disabilities. For additional information, please contact Jane West at [jwest@aaacte.org](mailto:jwest@aaacte.org).

Sincerely,

Ben Lignugaris-Kraft, HECSE President  
Utah State University

Patty McHatton, TED President  
University of South Florida