



Educators with  
Disabilities Caucus  
Council for Exceptional Children  
  
Spring 2009

An electronic newsletter to share information and activities for and about the  
Educators with Disabilities Caucus (EDC)

## Mission:

To support and advocate for educators with disabilities in teacher training and professional settings

### *Educators with Disabilities: The Need for a Position Paper Regarding Educators with Disabilities* By Jennifer Diliberto, Greensboro College

In October 2008, the Educators with Disabilities Caucus (EDC) contacted Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) regarding the development of a position paper to discuss the concept of educators with disabilities. The idea for a position paper surrounding *educators with disabilities* began during EDC's fall 2008 Board Meeting Conference Call. During the meeting, the group discussed the challenges within teacher education of knowing when a disability adversely affects a person's performance in the classroom as a teacher. Since most members on the conference call are *educators with disabilities*, we knew the positive effects a disability can have on teaching individuals with disabilities, but we all struggled with defining the line for when a disability adversely

**About one-fourth of college students with learning disabilities attend teacher education programs**

affects a teacher's performance. In January 2009, the CEC Board discussed the paper submitted on behalf of the EDC Board entitled, *Why the Council for Exceptional Children Needs a Position Paper on Educators with Disabilities*. Currently, EDC is waiting to hear back from CEC regarding the idea of a position paper.

About one-fourth of college students with learning disabilities attend teacher education programs (Wertheim, Vogel, & Brulle, 1998). Many teachers and teacher education candidates do not disclose their disabilities because of fear of discrimination and/or rejection (Riddick, 2003). Disclosure, mentors, and support groups all aid to the success of individuals with disabilities

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### *Points of Interest:*

- ☺ **EDC Meeting**  
**April 2, 2009**  
**8 AM-9:30 AM**  
**Seattle**  
**Sheraton Hotel**  
**Madrona Room**
- ☺ **Board Member Openings:**
  - ☺ **Secretary**
  - ☺ **Treasurer**

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EducatorswithDisabilities/default.htm](http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/Communities/Caucuses/EducatorswithDisabilities/default.htm)

## Message from the EDC Chair



Greetings Educators with Disabilities Caucus (EDC)!

I hope that everyone is having a wonderful spring semester! There are many things going on with EDC, and I am happy to be able to give you a spring update.

### **DIVISIONS**

The four divisions within EDC have been working steady to keep information updated and members informed. I would like to give you a brief overview of who is in charge and what they are up to. First of all, Marcie Povitsky is in charge of the Newsletter and Website Committee. During the fall, the EDC website has been overhauled, and we have distributed and posted a new newsletter. Jennifer Miller is in charge of the Membership and Outreach Committee. We have had five new members join EDC during the fall. She is in charge of maintaining our membership status and networking EDC so that others can find and join our efforts. (Usually, our best time to recruit new members is during the CEC convention, and I hope that will continue this year). Dr. Rich Evans is in charge of the Research and Special Topics Committee. He keeps us updated on what is going on with educators with disabilities in research efforts or publications. He also wrote our feature article in the last EDC newsletter. If you haven't had an opportunity to read his article, I hope that you will. Finally, Dr. Jennifer Diliberto is in charge of the Support and Mentoring Committee. She works hard to promote EDC and establish and maintain mentoring pairs for our members.

### **COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE**

The Council for Exceptional Children's conference will be here before we know it. In this newsletter, you will find the dates of the general and board meetings for EDC in Seattle. I hope that everyone can make these meetings. CEC is a wonderful time to network with other professionals, bask in all of the professional development opportunities, and increase your knowledge through a wide variety of presentations from scholars and professionals working in the field of special education. Please take every possible opportunity that will be provided for you at the conference this year. I know that I always come away from CEC refreshed and recharged. I hope that you will too.

### **OTHER NEWS**

EDC still has some positions open (i.e., secretary and treasurer). If any of you are interested in assuming either of these roles, please contact me [khaselden@fmarion.edu](mailto:khaselden@fmarion.edu). One position that has been filled has been done so by Dr. Rich Evans. He will now serve as co-chair of EDC along with me. The governing board of EDC unanimously voted that he would serve as co-chair of the caucus. He and I will split the responsibilities of the four divisions of EDC. I am thrilled that he has agreed to work with me as we continue the efforts of EDC. And I am thrilled to have some help!

I hope that each of you has a wonderful ending to the spring semester. If you need anything or have any questions, you can always contact me!

Please spread the word of EDC!

Polly G. Haselden, Ph.D.

Chair of Educators with Disabilities Caucus

## EDC Committee News

Being an EDC member is great...Being on the EDC Board is even better!  
EDC is currently looking to fill the following positions:

**Secretary**

**Treasurer**

### Support and Mentoring Program Committee

**Chairperson: Dr. Jennifer Diliberto, Assistant Professor at Greensboro College**

**Contact: [jdiliberto@gborocollege.edu](mailto:jdiliberto@gborocollege.edu)**

The *EDC Mentoring Program* seeks to pair professionals and college students as a means of support, guidance, and resource sharing. The project is voluntary – Mentors donate their time and expertise to support a mentee, who may be new in his/her career or recently reenrolled in a teacher preparation program. Currently, EDC is working on redesigning our *Mentoring Program* by creating new mentor/mentee application forms. In addition, we are investigating strategies for locating mentees in teacher education programs. At this time, we are seeking both mentors and mentees. If you are interested in becoming a mentor or could benefit from the expertise and experience of a mentor, then please contact Dr. Jennifer Diliberto at [jdiliberto@greensborocollege.edu](mailto:jdiliberto@greensborocollege.edu). We need your participation to make the program successful.



### Research and Special Topics Committee

**Chairperson: Dr. Richard Evans, Assistant Professor at Angelo University**

**Contact: [Richard.Evans@angelo.edu](mailto:Richard.Evans@angelo.edu)**

My name is Richard Evans; I am currently the Special education Program Coordinator (Advisor) at Angelo State University. I received my Bachelor's in Elementary and Special Education and a Master's in school administration from Angelo State University and my PhD in Educational Psychology from Texas A&M University. But the most important thing I want you to know about me is I am an individual with a learning disability (or as I like to say "I learn differently"). I am working with EDC as Chair of the Research and Special Topics Committee. We need your participation to make EDC successful. If you come across any interesting research that would be of interest to members of EDC then please contact me, Dr. Richard Evans at [Richard.Evans@angelo.edu](mailto:Richard.Evans@angelo.edu). I hope to see everyone in Seattle!



### Newsletter and Website Committee

**Chairperson: Marcie Povitsky, Site Coordinator at Towson University**

**Contact: [mpovitsky@towson.edu](mailto:mpovitsky@towson.edu) (Subject: EDC)**

Hello EDC members! I hope you are enjoying the second EDC Dialogue that I have done. I also hope you have visited our website to see all of the updates we have made recently. As you can see, the website and newsletter are continually evolving, but they cannot exist without you. If you see something that you feel would be appropriate for the Dialogue and/or website, please feel free to contact me. If you have comments on our updated website/revamped Dialogue, please be sure to send those along as well. Finally, I am looking forward to seeing everyone bright and early at our meeting during the Seattle Convention (information is on the front page of this newsletter, in our new "Points of Interest" section.)



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(Riddick, 2003; Gerber, Ginberg, & Reiff, 1992; Wertheim, Vogel, & Brulle, 1998). Because individuals with disabilities feel uneasy about disclosure, providing proper support becomes challenging and nearly impossible.

Currently, teacher education programs face moral and ethical decisions when admitting candidates with disabilities. Teacher educators are faced with challenging questions: a) When and where do teacher education programs draw the line for a candidate with a disability? b) How do you decide when a disability will hinder one's ability to be an effective teacher? c) Will the future teacher be able to access modification and accommodations in a future teaching setting without discrimination and/or rejection? d) What about the teacher with a disability that might be successful in specific situations, but not all? As teacher educators, is it ethical to allow them to continue in a teacher education program knowing that an ideal teaching setting is needed for success?

School systems face some of the same questions when hiring an individual with a disability: a) How will the individual's disability hinder their performance as a teacher? b) What are the financial and/or non-financial costs of implementing the modifications and accommodations needed for the teacher with a disability to be successful? c) Am I discriminating based on disability if I do not hire the teacher with a disability, because I believe their disability might hinder their performance as a teacher?

A position paper addressing some of these challenges might help teacher educators advocate for candidates with disabilities. In addition, it would serve as a basis for educating others (e.g., principals, administrators, professors) about individuals with disabilities teaching in 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms. With more education and understanding, individuals with disabilities might become more open to disclosure, thus, allowing them to access tools needed for being a successful teacher. It could also open doors to more research in the area of teachers and teacher education candidates with disabilities. Currently, there is a lack of research in this area. In addition, most of the research to date is in the area of learning disabilities. The range of disabilities represented by the members of the Educators with Disabilities Caucus clearly demonstrates that individuals from a variety of disability categories teach in all settings (e.g., K-12, higher education).

### References

- Reiff, H. B., Gerber, P. J., & Ginsberg, R. (1997). *Exceeding expectations: Successful adults with learning disabilities*. Austin, Texas: PRO-ED, Inc.
- Riddick, B. (2003). Experiences of teachers and trainee teachers who are dyslexic. *Inclusive Education*, 7 (4), 389-402.
- Wertheim, C., Vogel, S.A., & Brulle, A. R. (1998). Students with learning disabilities in teacher education programs. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 48, 293-309.

*Spotlight on Scholarships and Internships*

<http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/disabled.phtml>

The site for FinAid has a disability resources page including financial aid strategies and scholarship opportunities.

<http://www.ncset.org/youthtowork>

The web site for the new coalition of corporations, nonprofits, academic institutions and federal agencies established to promote internships and mentoring programs for young people with disabilities.

**The Hearne Award:** The Hearne Award is sponsored by the ABA's Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law and is to be presented to an individual who has performed exemplary service in the furtherance of access to justice for people with disabilities, or an organization or group that furthers the goal of full participation for people with disabilities in society. **Applications are due April 1, 2009.**

**CDRF Quality Of Life Grants:** The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation (CDRF) awards grants in 13 categories, including health promotion, employment, sports and recreation, and advocacy, to fund programs across the globe that help people with paralysis become more fully integrated members of society. Grants that focus on improving the health of individuals are funded through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**The Washington Center For Internships And Academic Seminars (TWC):** This prestigious educational nonprofit organization offers an academic program combined with internships in Washington, DC. They offer a fully inclusive program, including accessible housing.

**AAPD Administered Summer Internships For College Students With Disabilities:** AAPD administers two prestigious internships. One is funded by the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation and places students in congressional offices in Washington, DC. The second, funded by Microsoft, is for students majoring in information technology and accepted candidates will work in various agencies in the executive branch of the federal government.

**AAAS Sponsors Entry Point! Entry Point!:** A program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, offers internship opportunities for college students with disabilities in Science, Engineering, Mathematics, Computer Science, and some fields of Business.

**Emerging Leaders Internships:** This program is administered by the National Business & Disability Council and provides internships for college students with disabilities. These internships are located in several geographic locations and with a wide range of companies.

**Fred Fay Advanced Leadership Forum:** Sponsored by the Boston Center for Independent Living and members of the Leadership Forum Advisory Council.

**Workforce Recruitment Program:** The WRP's stellar database of individually interviewed and pre-screened college and university students with disabilities is available to meet your summer or permanent workforce needs. This pipeline program is co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Department of Defense.

**Career Gateway:** A web-based service of Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) for employers and graduating college and university students where students can post their resumes and employers can search for qualified candidates.

**Scholarship For Graduating Seniors With Learning Disabilities:** The National Center for Learning Disabilities annual awards the Ann Ford Scholarship of \$10,000 to an outstanding high school senior with a learning disability who is committed to completing a college degree.

**Visit the EDC website for more information on all of these opportunities!**