FOCUS on Research

Newsletter of the DIVISION FOR RESEARCH COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

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President's Message
Reauthorization of the Education Sciences Research Act

CEC-DR Offers Recommendation for Advancing Research for Students with Disabilities

Audrey Sorrells, PhD, *Texas Christian University*
with Wendy Oakes, PhD, and Elizabeth Talbott, PhD

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) unveiled a draft of bipartisan legislation called the *Advancing Research in Education Act* (AREA) on December 5, 2023. This act would amend the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA). On December 12, the HELP Senate Committee voted to approve the AREA. This legislation, sponsored by committee chair Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and ranking member Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), aims to revitalize the ESRA, first enacted in 2002, emphasizing enhancements to the research and data infrastructure crucial for understanding America's education system. The legislation signaled a significant stride toward advancing research and positive outcomes for the nation's 7.7 million infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Specifically, the senators asked the education community to provide feedback regarding (a) increasing the effectiveness of existing federal education research, statistics, and technical assistance programs; (b) improving the capacity of practitioners across education systems to identify and implement evidence-based practices; (c) mobilizing education research and statistics to more effectively reach educators and

system leaders; and (d) bolstering partnerships among educators, school systems, institutions of higher education, localities and states, and the federal government in utilizing education research to improve teaching and learning and postsecondary access and success.

Arguably, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its mandate for free, appropriate education, nondiscriminatory assessment, and placement in the least restrictive environment have enhanced the experiences, expectations, opportunities, and accomplishments of children and youth with disabilities. However, many students with disabilities continue to experience significant gaps in achievement compared to students without disabilities. Despite the advances made in special education, there remains a critical need for timely, rigorous, relevant research that improves outcomes for all students with disabilities.

The nation's education system is facing significant challenges in serving its most vulnerable students: declining academic achievement, widening gaps in student opportunities, worsening student mental health outcomes, and acute teacher short-

CEC-DR Diversity Committee Spotlight

Federico Waitoller, PhD
University of Illinois

Are your New Year's resolutions to secure more funding and publish more papers? If you nodded your head, you must listen to the latest episodes of *DiveIn*, our equity, diversity, and inclusion podcast in special education research. We have two insightful interviews, one with the new editors of *Exceptional Children*, and one with the new National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) commissioner, Nathan Jones. Both interviews will motivate you and give you a head start on publishing and grant writing in 2024. Listen at *https://divein.alitu.com/1?order=newest*, or subscribe via *Spotify* or *Apple Podcasts*.

The Diversity Committee is looking for new members! If you would like to join our team, please email me at *fwaitoll@uic.edu*. ■

Conquering Challenges in Social Media Recruitment for Education Research

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Vignette

I* learned firsthand about the pitfalls of social media recruitment, initially finding it easy and accessible. With one click, I was able to share questionnaire links on various forums with my target audiences. However, the ease turned into a nightmare when I woke up one morning to thousands of responses. Despite implementing a proactive survey design and having robust security measures in place, I managed to gather over 208,000 responses within five weeks. Only 113 could be confidently authenticated. When recruiting practitioners to participate in focus groups, only 1 out of 800 respondents turned out to be a genuine participant. The manual sifting through fraudulent responses and handling incentive-focused emails made the entire process time-consuming, exhausting, and expensive, albeit humorous at times (see Figure 1). As I discussed my ordeal with peers working on their dissertations, the shared stories were equally mind-blowing, for example, one colleague had a fake participant show up for an in-person interview! These experiences prompted a shift in recruiting strategies and motivated us to write this cautionary article.

Figure 1. Sample Email Exchange with Professional Survey Takers.

On Wed, Oct 11, 2023, at 7:53 AM, ▮▮▮▮▮ <xx@gmail.com> wrote:
I just submitted it. Will I get the gift card today?

On Fri, Oct 13, 2023, at 4:17 AM, ▮▮▮▮▮ <xx@gmail.com> wrote:
So after I completed the survey no response back?

On Fri, Oct 13, 2023, at 8:28 AM, Researcher wrote:
You are not a real participant. I have measures to gauge, and I know that you are just wasting your time and mine. Please stop sabotaging my work and find a different source of income instead of preying on graduate students.

On Fri, Oct 13, 2023, 2:30 PM ▮▮▮▮▮ <xx@gmail.com>
W## you mean. You got my response now and you telling me some bull $h## . I don't blame u I blame myself for wanting to help your stupid and foolish self .

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*This vignette is based on the experiences of the authors.

Social Media as a Recruitment Powerhouse

Widespread adoption and reach. *Social media*, defined as "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.), has evolved into a powerful tool for research participant recruitment (Zindel, 2023). A substantial percentage of adults ages 18–49 (80%) and ages 50–64 (73%) regularly engage with various social media platforms (Pew Research Center, 2021). This widespread adoption positions social media as an ideal avenue for recruiting participants and allows for effective targeting of specific interest groups and populations across diverse geographical regions (Kosinski et al., 2015; Zindel, 2023). The use of social media has successfully engaged over 10 million participants in psychology research and helped topple the barriers to access for historically underrepresented perspectives and populations (Akers & Gordon, 2018; Kosinski et al., 2015; Teo et al., 2018).

Social media platforms facilitate efficient and less labor-intensive recruitment, which is especially advantageous for garnering self-report data and for targeting hard-to-reach populations (e.g., Qian et al., 2022). The Internet and social media have greatly impacted survey research (Saleh & Bista, 2017; Zindel, 2023) and have maximized the potential for recruiting participants in the fields of social sciences, where historically the numbers of participants in studies were significantly smaller and more homogenous (e.g., Kosinski et al., 2015). However, it is important to note that leveraging social media for research recruitment comes with its own set of challenges.

Challenges in Recruiting Through Social Media

Sample representation. When utilizing social media for survey recruitment, non-probability-based sampling results in unequal representation of the target population. Achieving robust and unbiased research outcomes hinges on ensuring sample representativeness, where biases within the recruited sample can significantly impact the generalizability of study findings (Lehdonvirta et al., 2020). For instance, recruiting primarily from Facebook may introduce age and gender biases towards a specific age and gender distribution. Over-reliance on platforms like LinkedIn may lead to an economic bias associated with professional networking, excluding diverse perspectives. Hence, researchers must diversify recruitment strategies to mirror the broader population of interest and address these challenges (Zindel, 2023).

Survey fatigue. Another challenge with online recruitment is the phenomenon of "survey fatigue." This issue stems from overexposure during recruitment efforts, especially when multiple individuals simultaneously seek participants on the same platforms for similar purposes. Balancing participant engagement without overwhelming them is a delicate task that necessitates careful consideration of the frequency and timing of recruitment messages (e.g., Davies et al., 2023). Researchers need to be responsive to feedback during recruitment and follow-up attempts, where they actively adjust their strategies based on both responses and non-responses.

Platform dynamics. Changes in the platform's algorithms can impact the visibility of recruitment posts. Adapting to these changes, such as constant reposting and adjusting advertisement language, is pivotal for successful recruitment strategies (e.g., King et al., 2014). Navigating platform dynamics is essential to optimize advertisement visibility and enhance overall recruitment effectiveness.

Fraudulent responses. Finally, leveraging social media for research recruitment introduces challenges particularly in addressing fraudulent participation in digital research (Davies et al., 2023). The parallel growth in online research has seen an uptick in fraudulent participants responding to surveys (Burnette et al., 2022; Glazer et al., 2021; Goodrich et al., 2023; Salinas, 2023; Storozuk et al., 2020). The impact of fraudulent responses extends beyond compromising survey integrity. It invalidates results, introduces bias, and disrupts participant recruitment for specific criteria (Chandler et al., 2020; Dupuis et al., 2019). Aside from undermining data credibility, fraudulent responses strain resources, with artificial intelligence (AI)–generated responses and professional survey takers contributing to the complexity. Incentive abuse and professional survey takers introduce fake or low-quality responses, jeopardizing data integrity and escalating costs. This pollution risk underscores the necessity for vigilant measures to protect survey outcomes. Thus, careful forum selection and targeted recruitment become critical for direct respondent validation. Fraudulent participants also affect randomization and group parity, posing challenges for both quantitative and qualitative studies (Jones et al.,

2021; Roehl & Harland, 2022). Fraudulent participation in digital research, the most taxing challenge that we have encountered, can profoundly influence research findings. To address this issue, we compiled frequently used prevention, identification, and management strategies and considerations of fraudulent participants.

Mitigating Fraudulent Responses

To establish a robust defense against illegitimate sign-ups, researchers could implement measures and protocols for identifying and removing suspected fake participants. While there's no single foolproof method to prevent fake participants, suggested strategies and validation measures can effectively minimize their impact during recruitment. These strategies are particularly valuable when applied throughout the survey process incorporating safeguards before, during, and after data collection (Lawlor et al., 2021).

Study preparation and sharing recruitment documents. Before data collection, researchers could implement preventative measures in questionnaire format, recruitment material disbursement, and recruiting strategies (Lawlor et al., 2021; Teitcher et al., 2015). For example, researchers can employ prevention-focused recruitment strategies prior to data collection. First, researchers can provide participants with single-use or personalized links to limit survey visibility, although challenges like fake responses persist, generated by robots and professional survey takers seeking incentives (Teicher et al., 2015). In our experience using professional survey platforms (e.g., Qualtrics), the use of anonymous links and QR-codes for recruitment have invited thousands of fake responses generated from both robots and professional survey takers. These techniques not only help filter out potentially fraudulent submissions but also contribute to the overall reliability of the gathered data.

Purposeful participant sampling and rigorous design. To enhance response validity and counteract fake participation, researchers can utilize purposeful participant sampling, pre-screening questions, and generally a rigorous study design (Chandler & Paolacci, 2017; Hulland & Miller, 2018; Jones et al., 2015). Researchers can employ targeted recruitment materials and strategically share them on specific closed social media pages or groups relevant to the audience. They can also introduce

an additional layer for participation and obtain consent by requiring respondents to answer pre-screening questions before survey access. This can filter out non-eligible participants. And for those who succeed in bypassing the pre-screening in their quest for incentives, the information from the screeners can be used to cross-reference fill-in responses in the questionnaire and act as an additional authentication layer. To further bolster the integrity of collected data, additional strategies include using trick questions, using instructional manipulations, and assessing the seriousness of responses throughout the screening form and measures (e.g., Lawlor et al., 2021).

Tailored incentives for target population. Incentives are often essential to motivate participation in research and have been found to be effective in enhancing recruitment and diversifying the sample (Manzo & Burke, 2012; More et al., 2022). Financial incentives, including monetary rewards or continuing education units, are widely used to attract genuine participants and discourage fraudulent responses (Hsieh & Kocielnik, 2016). However, determining the appropriate incentive amount poses a challenge, as higher incentives may influence behavior, potentially leading to dishonesty and an increased risk of fake responses (Cyr et al., 2013). Overreliance on financial compensation for motivation in online research poses risks of insincere participation, potentially compromising response quality (Aycock & Currie, 2013). Researchers can try to position their research in a way that is beneficial to their participants, where they can provide feedback and feel involved or invested in the process and outcome. These types of participatory strategies are identified as more impactful motivators than financial incentives (Kaba & Beran, 2014). Participants motivated solely by financial compensation, along with professional survey takers and robots completing online questionnaires, pose a persistent threat to survey data integrity. The hypervigilance of researchers is essential, regardless of whether the incentive has been dispersed. See Figure 2 for an example of how the "faker" responded when the researcher tried to appeal to their better nature and emphasize the importance of not interfering with the data collection process. Even after the researcher's efforts, the fraudster stayed confident in staying involved.

Conquering Challenges... (continued from page 4)

Figure 2. Sample Response to Identified Fraud.

On Mon, Nov 6, 2023, 10:03 AM, ██████ xx@gmail.com wrote:

Hello! My colleagues also completed the survey, but did not receive your gift card. Can you tell me what happened?

On Mon, Nov 7, 2023, 2:30 PM, ██████ xx@gmail.com wrote:

As you wish! I apologize to you and you can delete my data and also take back your gift card because I haven't used it yet. However, I want to tell you that the economic downturn in the United States has made it impossible for me to find any job, and I have no choice but to engage in fraud.

On Mon, Nov 7, 2023, 3:14 PM, ██████ xx@gmail.com wrote:

I appreciate your advice, but I regret that I can't stop my fraud unless I can find a job, which I think will take a long time. Can you tell me how you identified me as a liar?

Cross verification of participant information.
Researchers could include verifiable information, such as school-associated email or professional credential numbers, to enhance participant authentication. However, the cost and benefits of these verification strategies should be carefully considered, as additional steps may lead to potential participant dropouts. In one of our experiences, the professional certification number of the targeted participants was publicly listed, which enabled fake participants to access publicly available information about board-certified behavior analysts and correctly fill out the demographic questionnaire section of the survey. This situation required the researcher to contact each respondent to verify their participation in the survey (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Confirmation Correspondence.

RE: Please confirm your participation
On Tues, Oct 10, 2023, 4:17 PM, ██████ xx@gmail.com wrote:
Hello, May I ask when I can receive the gift card?

On Tues, Oct 10, 2023, at 7:51 PM Researcher wrote:
Unfortunately, your data had too many discrepancies. You were flagged as an imposter. I in fact contacted Sarah Empey MA, BCBA and she had no idea about this study. So will you please stop filling out questionnaires randomly, you are ruining my study and postponing my graduation date. Warmly,

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Technology countermeasures. Utilizing all security measures provided by survey platforms (e.g., Qualtrics, 2020) is very helpful in maintaining the integrity of the survey process. These platforms regularly update with improved security features, thereby making it harder for bots to manipulate surveys. Researchers can use these advances to enhance data security and reliability, and locating tutorials on all available features is a worthwhile investment. As one example, researchers can employ CAPTCHA (i.e., a randomly generated sequence of distorted letters and/or numbers presented as an image alongside a text box) and other questions to distinguish humans from bots. This widely used technology serves as a preventive measure to ensure the legitimacy of participants (Aust et al., 2013). By incorporating CAPTCHAs, researchers add an extra layer of security, mitigating the risk of automated responses.

Additionally, deploying cookies, which are small data packets, can effectively flag computers that have already participated, preventing multiple submissions from the same device (Teitcher et al., 2015). Many professional survey platforms offer settings to enable this feature, adding an extra layer of protection against data manipulation. Directly inquiring about participants' identities, such as email addresses, unique passwords, or names, proves beneficial in identifying potential multiple submissions (Lawlor et al., 2021). Survey metadata, including IP (Internet protocol) addresses, geolocation, and submission dates, also play an important role in pinpointing and preventing fraudulent activity. Challenges can still arise as participants can easily create multiple email addresses or mask metadata, such as IP addresses (Hauser et al., 2019).

Identifying fraudulent responses. Post–data collection, exclusionary approaches can focus on identity verification, analyzing response patterns, and examining metadata (Gosling et al., 2004; Mustanski, 2001). Simultaneously, during and after data collection, researchers can utilize response monitoring and data validation techniques. They can analyze completion times and other factors to identify inconsistencies or patterns that may indicate fake responses. Analyzing attention-check and randomized response questions can help pinpoint insincere or misleading answers. Filtering duplicate IP addresses can help in monitoring and verifying response authenticity. Finally, ensuring consistency with demographic information, analyzing open-ended responses,

and cross-verifying with external data can further enhance the overall quality and reliability of survey data.

Conclusion

While social media enables participant recruitment for educational research to be more accessible than ever, multiple challenges—namely fraudulent responses—are proving costly to researchers and a major threat to data integrity. While preventive and exclusionary approaches are effective at mitigating fraudulent responses, they come with costs for researchers and participants. Preventive measures, like screening questions, can burden participants, and exclusionary methods may compromise privacy (Lawlor et al., 2021). Researchers must ethically choose methods that balance fraud prevention and participant welfare. The evolving fraudulent landscape requires an adaptive fraud management plan, especially in projects providing incentives. Ethical decisions on response exclusion demand an informed process guided by a conceptual framework, enabling researchers to navigate complexities and recognize genuinely eligible participants (Tabak et al., 2017). We hope this article provides practical and thought-provoking caution as you continue your important research in our field. ■

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2023–2024 DR Doctoral Student Scholars

Jean B. Crockett, PhD, *University of Florida* | Mary Theresa Kiely, PhD, *CUNY Queens College*

Kristen Merrill O'Brien, PhD, *George Mason University*

Co-Chairs, DR Doctoral Student Scholars Program

CEC-DR is pleased to announce the 16th cohort of scholars selected through an internationally competitive process to participate in the **2023–2024 DR Doctoral Student Seminars in Special Education Research (DRDSS)**. The Division commends all the students who applied and their nominators for upholding a high standard of scholarship, especially considering the continuing challenges presented by the pandemic. We would also like to thank the panel of reviewers, who participated in the selection process, and our seminar leaders.

The 2023–2024 Cohort of DR Doctoral Student Scholars in Special Education Research

Scholar	Nominator	Institution
Tessa Arsenault	Sarah Powell	University of Texas, Austin
Chauntea Cummings	Michelle Cumming	Florida International University
Kate Connor	Amber Ray	University of Illinois
Lauren Fischbacher	Anna Osipova	California State University at Los Angeles
Deidre Gilley	Jenny Root	Florida State University
Hoda Hashemi	Matt Brock	Ohio State University
Lindsey Kaler	Nathan Jones & Elizabeth Bettini	Boston University
Jia Ma	Stephen W. Smith	University of Florida
Laura Meehan	Zorka Karanxha	University of South Florida
Christina Novelli	Scott Patrick Ardoin	University of Georgia
Juliya Pattammady	Laudan Jahromi & Matthew Zajic	Teachers College, Columbia
Cherish Sarmiento	Adrea Truckenmiller	Michigan State University
Lucia Zook	Hannah Schertz	Indiana University

The Division is very grateful to the **Hammill Institute on Disabilities** for its generous sponsorship of the DRDSS program—an online seminar and discussion series designed to foster connections among students at different universities and contribute toward raising the standard of research in the field through sustained inquiry into the question, "What makes for excellence in special education research?"

Seminars will be led this year by Dr. Elizabeth Bettini (Boston University) and Dr. Matt Brock (the Ohio State University), the recipients of the 2023 Martin J. Kaufman Distinguished Early Career Award; and Dr. Karen Harris (Arizona State University).

All graduate students attending the CEC 2024 Convention in San Antonio, Texas, are invited to attend the DR Colloquium on Friday, March 15, 2024, dedicated to graduate student development. For more information, see the conference website (***https://cecconvention.org/2024/session-browser***). ■

Congratulations to Our DR 2024 Award Recipients!

The figures below feature all of our faculty and student awardees.

2024 AWARDEES

AWARDS

Distinguished Researcher from Underrepresented Groups Award

Beth Harry
University of Miami

Martin J. Kaufman Early Career Research Award

Jason Chow
Vanderbilt University

Research Improving the Educational Access, Experiences, and Outcomes of BIPOC Students with Disabilities Award

Aaron Campbell
University of Missouri

Early Career Publication Award

Elizabeth Stevens
University of Kansas

Kauffman-Hallahan-Pullen Distinguished Researcher Award

Linda Mason
George Mason University

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DIVISION FOR **RESEARCH**
COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Congratulations... (continued from page 9)

2024 AWARDEES

STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS

Meta-analysis/Meta-synthesis

Katie Lane
University of Connecticut

Quantitative Design

Elizabeth Sarah King
UT Austin

Single-Case Research Design

Deidre Gilley
Florida State University

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DIVISION FOR RESEARCH
COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Open CEC-DR Board Positions

Please consider one of the following open CEC-DR Board positions. It is a great way to get involved and meet notable special education researchers from across the nation.

VICE PRESIDENT (one-year term; four-year board commitment)

- Serve in the place of and with the authority of the president in case of the president's and president-elect's absence or inability to serve;
- Serve as the chairperson of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee;
- Serve along with the chair of the Knowledge Utilization Committee as a member of the CEC Program Advisory Committee (PAC) in planning the CEC Annual Convention;
- Program for the Division for the subsequent year, including attending PAC meetings and coordinating proposal review and session scheduling;
- Serve as Program chair for the Division's presence at the annual convention during their year as president-elect;
- Serve on other committees and task forces in such capacities as the president, with approval of the Executive Committee Board, may designate;
- Assume the responsibilities of one of the Division's representatives to the CEC Representative Assembly, including taking the Representative Assembly's agenda to the Division Executive Board.

TREASURER (four-year, renewable term)

- Serve as custodian of the funds of the Division;
- Pay expenses approved by the Executive Board and on authorization of the president;
- Make an annual report of the financial status of the Division to the Executive Board and at the annual business meeting;
- Prepare and submit an annual budget for approval by the Executive Board prior to a vote by membership at the annual meeting before the next fiscal year;
- Transfer all monies and records to the new treasurer within 15 days after installation;
- Serve on the Finance and Long-Range Planning Committee.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Oversee Membership Committee, which entails:

- Maintain an active record of members and provide all officers and committee chairpersons with such a list; Maintain an active program for the recruitment of new members, with approval of the Executive Board;
- Support Council Headquarters in its follow-up of membership renewal;
- Be responsible for membership transactions with Council for Exceptional Children Headquarters; Keep a written record of the activities conducted to maintain and increase membership;
- Provide information regarding the work of the committee to Publication and Media Committee for use in communications with members (e.g., newsletter, website, social media).

THE FINANCE AND LONG-TERM COMMITTEE CHAIR

- Plan and recommend to the Executive Board specific strategies and actions designed to enhance and improve the financial status and capabilities of the division;
- Provide information regarding the work of the committee to Publication and Media Committee for use in communications with members (e.g., newsletter, website, social media).

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND RESEARCH ADVOCACY LIAISON

- Serve as a liaison with CEC governmental liaison and other entities as authorized by the president with the approval of the Executive Board;
- Prepare recommendations for the Executive Board concerning relations with government and other relevant entities;
- Prepare timely communications to inform the membership of advocacy, litigation, legislative issues, and administrative agency programs (e.g., DOJ, IES, NIH, NSF, OSEP) related to the education of people with exceptionalities;
- Prepare recommendations and written comments approved by the Executive Board in response to advocacy, litigation, legislative issues, and administrative agency programs (e.g., DOJ, IES, NIH, NSF, OSEP);
- Provide information regarding the work of the committee to Publication and Media Committee for use in communications with members (e.g., newsletter, website, social media).

CEC-DR NEWSLETTER CO-EDITOR

- Serve with the current newsletter editor to feature relevant DR news and information;
- Help prepare the newsletter that is published four times a year;
- Work with Hammill editors to get out the final version of each newsletter;
- Generate and solicit innovative features and content to be considered for the newsletter.

Please reach out to the DR secretary, Maria Hugh, at *mariahugh@ku.edu* to apply for an open Board position.

2024 CEC Convention DR Schedule

Date and Time*	Session Name	Presenter(s)	Format/Location
Wednesday, 3/13, 3:30 pm–4:30 pm	Writing Support for Middle School Students with Disabilities	Linda Mason, Stephen Cuillo, Alyson Collins, Jenna Basile	Concurrent session/TBD
Wednesday, 3/13, 2:15 pm–3:15 pm	Building Behavior Intervention Capacity and Confidence in Special Education Paraprofessionals (Data Blitz)	Kassandra Spurlock, Sarup Mathur, Carrie Brandon	Data Blitz/TBD
Wednesday, 3/13, 2:15 pm–3:15 pm	The Effects of MTSS and SWPBIS on Students' Attendance	Nicholas Gage	Data Blitz/TBD
Wednesday, 3/13, 2:15 pm–3:15 pm	Understanding the Gaps in Preparing General Educators to Manage Behaviors	GaKyung Jeong	Data Blitz/TBD
Wednesday, 3/13, 2:15 pm–3:15 pm	Update of the Evidence—Implementing Ci3T: How Are Teachers Faring	Rebecca Sherod, Nelson Brunsting, Wendy Oaks	Data Blitz/TBD
Thursday, 3/14, 9:15 am–10:15 am	DR Showcase: Special Education at Intersections: Past, Present, Future Research on Equity	Audrey Sorrells, Alfredo J. Artiles, Aydin Bal, Mildred Boveda, Tammy Ellis-Robinson	TBD
Thursday, 3/14, 10:30 am–11:30 am	Bullying and Youth with Disabilities: Impact on Youth Mental Health	Chad Rose, Christopher Claude	TBD
Thursday, 3/14, 11:45 am–12:45 pm	Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports Network: Integrating Academic and Behavioral Supports	Michael Coyne, Kathleen Lane, Allison Gandhl, Erica Lembke, Nathan Clemens	TBD
Thursday, 3/14, 1:00 pm–2:00 pm	Word Connections: Reading Intervention for Students in the Intermediate Grades	Jessica Toste	TBD
Friday, 3/15, 9:15 am–10:15 am	Let's Talk About Writing! Enhancing Teacher Practice through Meta-Analysis	Stephen Ciullo, Alyson Collins	TBD
Friday, 3/15, 10:30 am–11:30 am	Executive Function and Stress Regulation: Implications for Adolescents' School Achievement	Michelle Cumming, Sharde Theodore, Natasha Schreiner, Norma Urquiza, Patricia Gann, Helen Flores	TBD
Friday, 3/15, 10:30 am–11:30 am	Graduate Student Research Colloquium: Exploring the Hallmarks of Excellent Special Education Research	Mara Theresa Kiely, Kristen M. O'Brien, Jason Chow	TBD
Friday, 3/15, 11:45 am–12:45 pm	Effective Speech Generating Device Use and Autism Spectrum Disorder	Jena Randolph	TBD

Local time

Please be sure to check the final conference schedule for any updated room changes.

2024 CEC Convention DR Schedule (continued from page 14)

Date and Time*	Session Name	Presenter(s)	Format/Location
Saturday, 3/16, 9:15 am–10:15 am	Teacher Well-Being	Dusty Columbia Embury	Multi-Presentation/ M108
Saturday, 3/16, 9:15 am–10:15 am	Mindful Teachers	Laura Clarke, Jennifer Blakeman, Kim Puckett, Dusty Columbia Embury	Sub-Presentation/ M108
Saturday, 3/16, 9:15 am–10:15 am	Understanding Well-Being for Teachers Experiencing Secondary Trauma	Adam Jordan, Kasey Jordan	Sub-Presentation/ M108
Saturday, 3/16, 9:15 am–10:15 am	Supporting Teacher Retention Through a Trauma-Informed Lens	Nicole Reddig, Janet VanLone	Sub-Presentation/ M108

DR Events

Date and Time*	Event	Location
Wednesday, 3/13, 9:00 am–12:00 pm	CEC-DR Executive Board Meeting	Room: 007C
Thursday, 3/14, 5:00 pm–9:00 pm	CEC Safari @ 5:00 pm	Safari – TBD
	CEC-DR Reception (with DLD and DEBH) @7:00 pm	Reception – Jack Gunther Pavilion at the Brisco
Friday, 3/15, 5:00 pm–6:30 pm	CEC-DR Business Meeting and Awards	TBD

Local time

President's Message *(continued from page 1)*

ages in early childhood and special education. Education research can elucidate a path forward to overcome these challenges and ensure that evidence-based practices are getting into the hands of practitioners, and they in turn are using these practices in their teaching. Educators and school administrators across the country need additional support to understand, implement, and adapt evidence-based practices to improve teaching and address their students' unique learning needs. Identifying and implementing evidence-based practices helps all students with disabilities to receive a high-quality education from early childhood to postsecondary. AREA will advance the design and implementation of research that enhances outcomes for students with the greatest educational needs, including those who historically and systemically experience insurmountable odds and face severe inequities in addressing their academic, social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties.

The AREA will build upon the progress of the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) by increasing the rigor and quality of education research, development, and evaluation while expanding IES's role in translating evidence into actionable information to improve teaching and learning. AREA will also make IES timelier and more responsive to the needs of the field and increase the use of evidence to address pressing challenges facing students and educators, with an emphasis on improving student outcomes and access to high-quality educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

ESRA has been implemented effectively for over two decades, yet there are clear areas for improvements and enhancement based on recent evaluation, advances in the field, and changes in data and evidence policy for special education and students with disabilities. In 2002, when the ESRA was signed into law and established IES, it did not include authority for research related to the education of children and youth with disabilities. At that time, the federal special education research program was authorized by a different law (the IDEA) and administered by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)/Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). When IDEA was reauthorized in 2004, it moved the special education research authority to ESRA, created a new administrative unit within IES (National Center for Special Education Research; NCSER), and transferred responsibility for the

special education research program to NCSER. Many of the core provisions within ESRA must be updated to recognize special education and children and youth with disabilities, particularly in the IES mission, definitions, priorities, membership of the National Board for Education Sciences, and explanation of achievement gaps. For NCSER to be an equal partner within the IES structure, changes must be made to ESRA. The legislation from the Senate HELP Committee is a major step toward the inclusion of disabilities. CEC-DR recommended the following: revise the mission, definitions, functions, and priorities of the IES to strengthen the inclusion of special education, thereby recognizing the discipline's focus on developmental, academic, behavioral, social, and emotional well-being, and functional/transition outcomes of children and youth with disability from birth through adulthood. The hard work in revising ESRA is a testament to the comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of youth with disabilities through rigorous research in this legislation.

CEC-DR is actively collaborating with peer organizations, partners, and the HELP Committee to improve special education research and research on individuals with disabilities. On April 19, 2023, and in an email to the Committee on December 6, 2023, representatives on behalf of the CEC-DR executive board and members provided comments highlighting the importance of connecting the reauthorization to include disability. Other suggestions from the CEC-DR included (a) strengthen the NCSER; (b) support the vitality of IES by fostering strong, consistent leadership; (c) recognize special education throughout the structure of IES; (d) authorize the appropriation of sufficient federal funding for research activities supported through NCSER and other IES centers; and (e) support and fund relevant and scientifically rigorous research to bridge the research-to-practice gap. The full letter and recommendations can be read *here*.

The National Academies' 2022 report was instructive in developing our recommendations for this reauthorization. We believe that IES could strengthen partnerships through explicit calls for teacher education research in special education, which should be an urgent priority for our nation in an era of teacher shortages. Special education researchers have long partnered with families, school and community leaders, health care providers, and school professionals. Special education research partnerships are critical to continued progress

President's Message (continued from page 14)

for young people with disabilities, and federal investments must be increased and expanded for the momentum and support for special education research to be sustained. Examples include the need for research funding for career and technical education; the need to advance the education of youth with disabilities who are English learners; the need to advance the application of evidence-based assessment to determine whether interventions work (and for whom they work, under what conditions and in what settings); and the need to advance research in evidence-based practices using innovative research designs, such as single case methods and qualitative inquiry.

A major pushback from many researchers providing comments on the reauthorization was the inclusion of the term "statistically." We recommended that Congress delete the term, suggesting that its inclusion narrows the empirical approaches education scientists can use to define evidence. It excludes rigorous scientific approaches used in special education, such as single case research design (SCD), which is characterized by tight experimental control, replication of a functional relation between interventions and student outcomes, valid and reliable measures, and data collected over time. SCD may or may not include tests of statistical significance. SCD is appropriate to use with those small numbers of students who have disabilities and unique learning needs, for whom interventions need to be adapted and personalized (e.g., African American children/youth and English learners with disabilities).

AREA aligns with many recommendations from the CEC-DR for the ESRA reauthorization and that reflect our expertise in special education research and the vital role of the NCSER. The goals of CEC-DR include establishing and promoting partnerships with educators and families to design, conduct, and interpret research in special education, particularly related to including diversity methods and diverse scholars of color. We commended the senators for the comprehensiveness and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in this

reauthorized law. Providing special educators, school leaders, and school professionals with evidence-based practices is essential to advance those high expectations established under federal law, resulting in successful outcomes for all children and youth with disabilities.

The Division for Research is enthusiastic about advancing the process in the Senate and eagerly anticipates a dialogue with the House of Representatives. We were pleased to see the Senate HELP Committee's comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of youth with disabilities through rigorous research in the AERA legislation. CEC-DR and the members of our research community strongly encouraged the full Senate and House to swiftly consider and advance this bill, marking a vital milestone in bolstering our education system and the ability to have relevant, meaningful, valid, equitable, and reliable data and more evidence to support decision-makers, administrators, parents, and learners with disabilities. As the bill moves forward, we encourage DR members to submit comments and recommendations to the DR Board to include in future invited communications with Congress.

Finally, in addition to specific feedback provided to the HELP Committee, the CEC-DR recommended that the Committee also include provisions designed to strengthen the special education teacher workforce that were introduced by Senators Kaine (D-VA) and Collins (R-ME) in the **_PREP Act_**. Senate Bill 2369, _Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals Act of 2023_, which is to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for teacher and school leader quality enhancement and to enhance institutional aid.

On behalf of the executive board and members of CEC-DR, I want to thank Wendy Peia Oakes, past president (who was president at the time the letter was submitted to Congress), and Elizabeth Talbott, chair, Public Policy and Advocacy, for their leadership and contributions in ensuring that CEC-DR and youth with disabilities were among the more than 500 official voices submitted and considered in the Advancing Research in Education Act. ■

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