

**COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**July 12-13, 2025  
Minutes**

**Saturday, July 12; 1:00 – 5:00**

**1.0 Official Items**

**1.1 Call to Order**

President Julie Bost called the regular meeting of the Council for Exceptional Children Board of Directors to order at 1:03 p.m. ET.

**1.2 Record of Attendance and Determination of Quorum**

Executive Director Chad Rummel called the roll. A quorum of the following Directors was present:

Bost, Julie (P)  
Tillotson, Ben (PE)  
Thompson, Kareem (IPP)  
Lesh, Jenn (T)  
Adl, Anna  
Bala, Radha  
Braddock, Amy  
Diliberto, Jennifer  
Lewis, Concetta  
Mixon, Toni  
Moore, Adam  
Otheim, Wendy  
Rivera, Mabel  
Smith-Dixon, Zelfphine

Not present: Ruby Owiny

**1.3 Adoption of Agenda**

**MOTION:** Anna Adl moved to approve the agenda.

Amy Braddock seconded.

**Motion passed.**

### 3.6 Fundraising and Development Update

Claire Jagla, CFRE (Certified Fund-Raising Executive), joined CEC as its first Director of Development in January 2025. She began her career as a special education teacher in Texas and served as a Fulbright Grantee teaching English in South Korea. She has six years of fundraising experience at Teach For America and, most recently, the Fulbright Association.

#### Fundraising Vision

CEC's Fundraising mission: CEC cultivates an inclusive community of donors and partners to drive philanthropic investment, ensuring long-term sustainability and lasting impact on high-quality, equitable, and inclusive education for individuals with disabilities.

#### Donor Pyramid

- Apex: Foundations
- Middle: Major & Mid-Level Donors
- Base: Donors & Members

Claire shared the metaphor of the CEC community as a community of fishes, and, for the purpose of fundraising, she divided the fish community into three areas of a donor pyramid. At the top are “sharks” or foundations, the middle is “big fish” or major and mid-level donors, and at the bottom, “little fish” are donors and members. All levels are important, as general fundraising strategy is to engage many people and move some of them “up” the donor pyramid. Her fundraising vision is that we are all fundraisers, a thriving and active community of people “fishing.”

#### Current Board Fundraising Strengths

- Genuine enthusiasm for CEC's mission, programs, and impact
- Strong sense of ownership and leadership in fundraising campaigns
- Grassroots fundraising experience and peer-to-peer outreach skills
- Competitive spirit that drives fundraising success
- Commitment to long-term impact through legacy giving and planned gifts

Success looks like more board members building skills in multiple strength areas. Strong fundraising comes from within. It's important for our board and volunteers to demonstrate both strong fundraising and giving. Board members invest an exceptional amount of time, talent and resources in CEC. Potential funders, particularly foundation partners, will expect that 100 percent of the CEC National Board of Directors donates to CEC. She asked board members to contribute annually at a level at which they feel comfortable and thanked board members for their service and for their commitment to CEC.

#### 2025 Strategies

- Small: Put Management Systems in Place
- Medium: Initiate “Friends of CEC”  
[Friends of CEC](#) is a monthly giving community. Members commit to giving \$10 or more per month and receive special recognition, impact updates, and invitations to exclusive “Friends” events.
- Large: Increase the number of members in the [Elizabeth Farrell Society](#) (EFS)

The EFS is comprised of donors who make a lifetime or legacy donation of \$10,000 or more, which can be fulfilled through cumulative annual gifts, a one-time contribution, or a bequest and receive tailored stewardship opportunities aligned with CEC initiatives, an exclusive annual conversation with CEC's Executive Director and President, public recognition (CEC website, select communications, and an invitation to the annual Donor Reception at the CEC Convention.

- Huge: Foundation Grants

#### 2025 Goals: Sustainable Growth

The 2025 fundraising goals reflect sustainable growth in dollars, number of donors, number of donations and new donors. CEC is on track to meet those goals as of the end of June 2025. Strategically, we're working on developing foundation partnerships, building the Elizabeth Farrell Society, starting a monthly giving society (Friends of CEC), and putting fundraising operational systems in place this year.

	2024 Totals	2025 Goals	Mid-Year 2025 Totals
<b>Fundraising Goal</b>	<b>\$50,792</b>	<b>\$58,410</b>	<b>\$26,385</b>
<b>Number of Donors</b>	444	500	<b>343</b>
<b>Number of Donations</b>	599	700	<b>395</b>
<b>Donor Renewal Rate</b>	29%	35%	<b>20%</b>
<b>New Monthly Donors</b>	0	20	<b>1</b>
<b>Grants</b>	0	2	<b>1</b>
<b>Elizabeth Farrell Society</b>	0	3	<b>0</b>

#### 2028 Vision

By 2028, CEC fundraising will have the following strengths:

- Network: Our vibrant donor community—including Elizabeth Farrell Society members and Friends of CEC—drives our fundraising success.
- Legacy: A growing community of major donors advances CEC's mission, including through legacy gifts.
- Foundations: Foundations make meaningful, strategic investments in CEC that amplify CEC's impact and drive long-term success.
- Systems: CEC's fundraising nimbly responds to funding opportunities and has structures in place to best support donor relationships.

#### 2025 Campaigns

Claire thanked board members for their participation and future participation in this year's fundraising campaigns:

- Advocacy Matching Campaign (May)
- Friends of CEC Monthly Giving Program (August)
- Giving Tuesday Campaign Peer-to-Peer Giving (December)
- End-of-Year Campaign (December)

Board members can support CEC fundraising by committing to the Elizabeth Farrell Society, joining the Friends of CEC, serving as a Giving Tuesday peer fundraisers, and serving on the Development Committee.

## **2.0 Mega Issue Related Items**

**MOTION:** Jenn Lesh moved a motion to approve piloting a new process for slating candidates for election to be done under the purview the board, rather than being done by the Leadership Development Committee (LDC).

Concetta Lewis seconded.

**Motion passed.**

This decision was made to allow the LDC to focus on its charge to “(i)dentify, recruit, and develop a well-qualified and diverse pipeline of volunteers for leadership positions, responsive to the current and future needs of CEC.” Three options on how to move forward will be presented to the board at its November meeting; therefore, no bylaws changes are necessary at this time.

## **3.0 Discussion Items**

### **3.1 Professional Standards and Practice Committee Recharter Motion**

**MOTION:** Kareem Thompson moved the motion to approve the committee’s recharter application, including the request to add three additional members to the committee beginning in 2026.

Anna Adl seconded.

**Motion passed.**

### **3.2 Finance-Related Items**

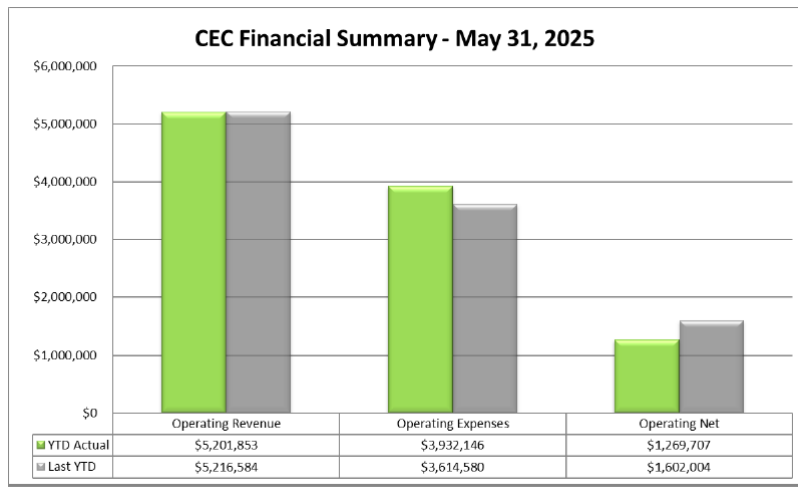
#### **3.2.1 Financial Deep Dive & Asking Questions**

Chief Financial Officer Craig Evans provided explanations about the key financial information tracked and documents that are provided/presented to the Board of Directors, with examples based on the actual May 2025 YTD financials. Items covered were:

- Statement of Activities (aka “Income Statement”)
- Statement of Financial Position (aka “Balance Sheet”)
- Budget Monitoring
- Reserves
- Quarterly Projections

#### **3.2.2 Treasurer’s Report – May 2025 Financials**

CFO Craig Evans reported the following financial statement analysis for the year ending May 31, 2025:



**Key highlights:**

- Operating Cash = \$2.3M
- Investment Reserves = \$1.2M
- Operating Net Surplus/(Deficit) = \$1.3M
- Net Assets = \$2.7M

Major Revenue Centers	YTD Actual	% of Annual Budget
Convention	\$2,530,374	103%
Membership	\$832,570	37%
Partnerships (inc. Expo)	\$865,905	105%
Publications & Merch.	\$213,548	28%
Prof. Development & Solutions	\$340,210	82%
LCE Subscriptions	\$115,855	41%
Component Services	\$98,675	46%
Journals	\$60,881	34%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$5,201,853</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,932,146</b>	<b>51%</b>

**3.10 Policy & Advocacy Process – moved on agenda**

Executive Director, Chad Rummel, provide an overview of how CEC addresses its policy and advocacy efforts.

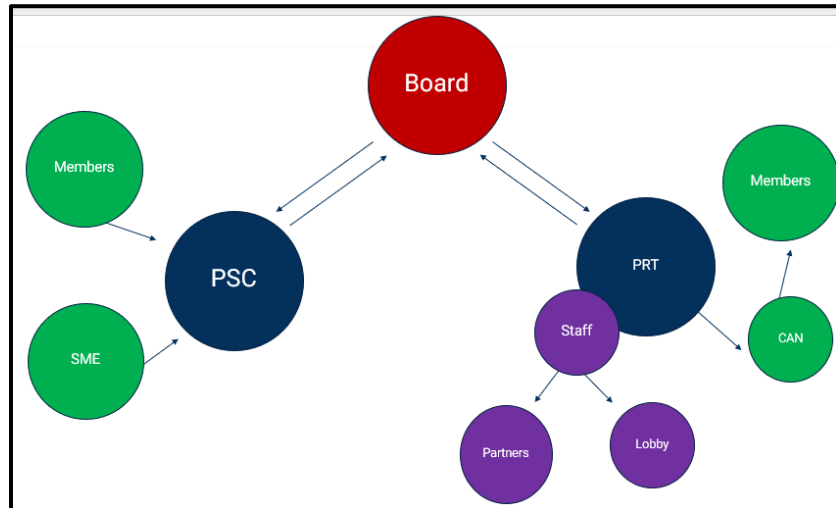
CEC's Mission Statement, below, includes specific reference to advocacy.

Cultivating, supporting, and empowering education professionals who work with individuals with disabilities by:

- **Advocating for education professionals and for individuals with disabilities, and/or gifts and talents;**

- Advancing professional practice and scholarly research;
- Promoting diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility;
- Building networks, partnerships, and communities.

There are a number of entities that each play a vital role in CEC's policy and advocacy:



PRT = CEC's Policy Response Team (President, Executive Director, Policy and Advocacy Advisors, Policy Steering Committee Co-Chair(s) and President Elect)

SME = Subject Matter Expert

CAN = CEC's Children and Youth Action Network

#### Terminology / Definitions

- **Position:** Viewpoint on issues relevant to the field
- **Policy:** Overarching guiding principle or law
- **Advocacy:** An active process of supporting a particular policy

#### Positions are:

- Any official opinion, no matter how formal or informal, such as:
  - Press Release
  - Comment in News Article
  - Inferred by What We Actually Do
  - Issue Brief
- If it's important enough, it is formalized into a Position Statement
- They are created using data and best practice, regardless of use
  - i.e., We feel the same way about seclusion/restraint, regardless whether it's a Senator asking or a local school principal

#### Policies:

- Occur at any level
  - Local school/classroom guidance
  - State DOE mandates
  - Federal DOE guidance or policies
  - Federal laws

- We want the policies to be in alignment with our positions
  - If we want it bad enough, we advocate for them

#### Advocacy:

- How we get policy and practice to align with our positions
  - Communicating to policymakers
  - Sharing resources that align with best practice
  - Promoting positions through media/communication
- CEC's advocacy is mostly at the federal level
  - Support states in doing state-level advocacy, but no state government wants to hear from a national organization
- Members may do advocacy based on our positions

#### The role of CEC's Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Kuna Tavalin:

- A part-time contractor who has other clients
- Has no authority over CEC positions
  - She is NOT a position advisor; She conveys, but does not create
- Maintains connections on Capitol Hill and in Coalitions
- Does not act without CEC approval (letters, appointments, responses, etc.)
  - Meets twice weekly with Chad, additional meetings with Laurie VanderPloeg, Associate Executive Director for Professional Affairs
- Supports the Policy Steering Committee; advises the Policy Response Team; supports the Children and Youth Action Network
- Available to Divisions, Units and Members for consultation/training

#### The role Laurie VanderPloeg plays as Associate Executive Director for Professional Affairs:

- Subject Matter Expert on content/positions
- Advisor on all things Department of Education
- Supports the PSC; Member of the PRT
- Occasional meetings on Capitol Hill with Kuna
- Final decider on action when Chad is not available

#### The role Chad Rummel plays as Executive Director:

- Overseer of "the system"
  - PSC, PRT, lobbyist all following protocol
  - Determines which political coalitions to participate in
- Ensures advocacy actions represent the official positions of the Board
- Oversight of unofficial positions and positions "adjacent" to CEC
  - E.g., Supporting broadband internet for schools
- Meetings on Capitol Hill with Kuna
- Signatory on all communications about appropriations
  - President or President/Chad are signatory on all other communications
- Final decision maker on action, communication

#### The role of the Board of Directors:

- Ensures there are necessary, qualified positions in place
- Measures success of our advocacy – are we making progress and do we have the power we want/need?

- Participates in sharing positions and advocacy
  - Action Alerts
  - Special Education Legislative Summit
  - Sharing communications
- Keeps PSC, PRT, Staff abreast of issues that require positions or advocacy
- Final decider when issues arise for which CEC does not have a clear position

How position statements are created:

- Responsibility of the Policy Steering Committee
- Intentionally separated from advocacy/PRT
- Process
  - Topic determined by PSC or by Board
  - Drafting using committee and subject matter experts
  - Sent to members for comment period
  - Revised and submitted to Board for approval, along with documentation of process
  - Board approves the process was followed (not all verbiage)
- Include research, data and recommendations

When does CEC craft a formal position?

- Must be directly relevant to our mission
- Must be worthy of needing documentation
- Must have an identified audience(s) of people who will use the statement to affect policy
- Questions to ask:
  - Is NOT having a statement actually taking a position?
  - Will this empower change or action?
  - Can our community reach consensus (not agreement)?

CEC's current position statements:

- Academic Subject Matter Content of the General Curriculum and Special Educators
- Assessment and Accountability
- Educating Children with Disabilities in Charter Schools
- Educators with Disabilities
- Exit Exams for Students with Exceptionalities
- Federal Role in IDEA
- Funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
- Maltreatment
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Promoting Positive and Equitable Outcomes for All Children and Youth with Disabilities in All Educational Settings
- Restraint and Seclusion Procedures in School Settings
- Safe and Positive Climate in School and Community Settings
- School Vouchers / Public Funds
- Secondary Transition Services
- Special Education and the Community Outside the Education System
- Special Education in the Schools
- Special Education's Responsibilities to Adults with Disabilities
- Strengthening the Teacher Workforce
- Teacher Evaluation
- Teaching Mathematics to Students with Disabilities



### 3.3 Family Partnerships Workgroup Final Report & Recommendations

There was no motion made to receive the report nor regarding the recommendations made by the Family Partnerships Workgroup. The president will follow up with the workgroup.

### 3.4 50th Anniversary of IDEA Workgroup Progress Report

**MOTION:** Ben Tillotson moved to the following items, as requested in the report:

Video and Event Budget: for professional video compilation, promotional materials, and logistics for November/Convention events.

Preliminary budget estimates:

- Video editing/compilation outsourcing **\$3000.00**
- Zoom level event at webinar size: **\$240** for one-month larger limit (up to 1k people, \$900 for 3k people). An alternative is A free YouTube live stream, details TBD.
- Swag: T-shirts to be sold throughout the Fall as CEC travels to various divisions' events and at the CEC 2026 Convention. These are expected to bring in revenue.
- Convention events: activities and budgets still to be determined.
  - **\$10,000.00** to upgrade the Opening Reception at Convention to include IDEA activities and swag.

Toni Mixon seconded.

**Motion passed.**

### 3.5 Preventing Conflicts of Interest on the Board

Executive Director, Chad Rummel, provided a brief overview of how to recognize real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

Board Member Fiduciary Responsibilities		
Responsibility	Meaning	Examples
Duty of Care	Be informed	Data, counsel, history. Come prepared
Duty of Loyalty	Put the organization first	Avoid conflict, declare conflict
Duty of Obedience	Follow the rules	Bylaws, mission, policies

Another equally important responsibility is foresight, which sets great organizations apart from good ones. Foresight emphasizes proactively learning from the future to make better decisions and act with stakeholders and successors in mind. This foresight integrates with existing fiduciary responsibilities by promoting a deeper, more ethical, and future-oriented approach to governance beyond simple compliance.

Conflicts of Interest

- Not Always Financial
  - Personal Gain vs. Undue Influence
- “I’ll just recuse myself” is not always sufficient.
- Usually occurs because someone with power has influence (not necessarily control)—sometimes power can be diluted temporarily
- Potential conflicts should be declared, no matter how big or small

The spectrum of conflicts of interest ranges from situations that have no conflict to those with actual, substantial conflicts that can compromise decision-making and public trust. This spectrum includes three main types: actual conflicts where bias is present, potential conflicts where a future conflict is possible, and perceived conflicts where there's an appearance of bias or impropriety, even if no actual bias exists.

The following questions to consider were discussed relative to several scenarios presented:

- Does the person with the potential conflict of interest have potential influence that may affect decision-making? Can that power be diluted without a recusal?
- Is there a potential that the person might personally benefit from their own influence OR someone with whom they are closely connected benefit?
- Is there a potential that the person may influence a decision that would have a negative impact on CEC? (or a positive impact?)

How conflicts of interest can be avoided:

- Education
- Requiring an annual conflict of interest statement
- Controlling who gets power; i.e. Member vs. Affiliate
- Fair approaches to decisions; i.e. RFPs
- Avoiding solo control of power

### **3.6 Fundraising and Development Update (Jagla) – presented earlier in the day**

### **3.7 Fundraising and Development Committee Interim Report**

**MOTION:** Jenn Lesh moved to support the Fundraising and Development Committee in advancing a proposed Charter Application that redefines the Committee's purpose, function, structure, including the establishment of a newly named advisory group—positioning it as a strategic catalyst for innovation, partnership, impact, and long-term advancement in support of the Council for Exceptional Children's mission and strategic goals.

Because this was a motion from a committee, no second was necessary.

**Motion passed.**

### **3.8 Components 5-Year Strategic Plan**

**MOTION:** Concetta Lewis moved the motion to approve the Component 5-Year Strategic Plan as presented.

Amy Braddock seconded.

**Motion passed.**

The plan, as presented, is attached hereto.

### 3.9 President Elect Report

President Elect, Ben Tillotson, requested that his report be included in the Discussion Items so that he could provide an update to the Board about his new podcast series, “Rewriting the Narrative,” which launched July 1st.

Episode 1: “Building a Better Future: Funding, Tech, and the Special Education Workforce” Glenna Gallo & Dani Kovach. There were 272 downloads in 3 days!

- Top 50%: About 30 downloads in the first 7 days.
- Top 25%: Around 100-120 downloads.
- **Top 10%: Around 400-500 downloads.**
- Top 5%: Around 1,000 downloads.
- Top 1%: Over 4,500 downloads.

Upcoming:

Episode 2: “Policy & Advocacy: Not Just for Lawmakers” Kim Kackstedt

Episode 3: “How School Leaders Shape Teacher Success & Retention” Dr. Andy Jacks and Denise Zervoudis in partnership with the Lead IDEA Center

On the Horizon:

Episode 4: “Tackling the Disability Employment Gap” Kelie Babcock-Hess

Episode 5: TBD around highlighting IDEA

There is a plan to create a form where people can suggest podcast guests or topics, and Sharyn Weiss, Director of Strategic Partnerships, is working on identifying sponsors.

### 3.10 CEC’s Policy & Advocacy Process – presented earlier in the day

### 3.11 Division Relations Committee 2025 Interim Report

In its report, the Division Relations Committee had asked for input on a few of items. As those were operational items, Executive Director, Chad Rummel, addressed those with the committee staff liaison, so no discussion was necessary.

### 3.12 Council for Educational Diagnostic Services Name Change Request

**MOTION:** Jennifer Diliberto moved the motion to approve to change the name of the Council for Educational Diagnostic Services Division to the Division of Evaluation and Assessment for Learning (DEAL).

Because this was a motion from a committee, no second was necessary.

**Motion passed.**

### 3.13 Diversity Committee Interim Report

**MOTION:** Concetta Lewis moved to **not approve** waiving the conference registration fee for the six members of the Diversity Committee or provide them with an opportunity to volunteer or receive a discounted rate in order to attend the CEC annual convention.

Because this was a motion from a committee, no second was necessary.

**Motion to NOT APPROVE passed.**

For a few years, CEC has not had volunteers working at the convention but, instead, hires locally individuals who have the relevant training for working at conventions. This has increased efficiency and reliability.

#### **4.0 Policy Items (Public or Operational)**

##### **4.1 Position Statement on The Federal Role in IDEA**

**MOTION:** Ben Tillotson moved the motion to adopt “CEC’s Position Statement on The Federal Role in IDEA,” and as recommended by the Policy Steering Committee.

Because this was a motion from a committee, no second was necessary.

**Motion passed.**

The position statement is available here:

[https://exceptionalchildren.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/Federal%20Role%20in%20IDEA%20-%202025\\_0.pdf](https://exceptionalchildren.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/Federal%20Role%20in%20IDEA%20-%202025_0.pdf)

##### **4.2 Gift Acceptance Policy (\*)**

**MOTION:** Anna Adl moved the motion to approve CEC’s Gift Acceptance Policy.

Jennifer Diliberto seconded.

**Motion passed.**

The draft policy is attached.

#### **5.0 Reports / Pro Forma Items**

##### **5.1 Consent Agenda**

**MOTION:** Anna Adl moved to approve the consent agenda, with the Diversity Committee’s report being moved to Discussion Items.

Adam Moore seconded.

**Motion passed.**

###### **5.1.1 Board Minutes**

###### **5.1.1.1 March 2025 (Board Meeting)**

###### **5.1.1.2 April 2025 (Online Vote: LDC Slate)**

###### **5.1.1.3 May 2025 (Online Vote: Moore BoD Mid-Term Appointment)**

###### **5.1.2 Committee and Workgroup Reports**

- 5.1.2.1 Finance & Audit Standing Committee (Interim)
- 5.1.2.2 Leadership Development Committee (Quarterly)
- 5.1.2.3 ~~Diversity Committee (Interim)~~ moved to discussion items
- 5.1.2.4 Honors Committee (Interim)
- 5.1.2.5 Policy Steering Committee (Interim)
- 5.1.2.6 Professional Standards and Practice Committee (Interim)
- 5.1.2.7 Publications Committee (Interim)
- 5.1.2.8 Student and Early Career Committee (Year-End)
- 5.1.2.9 Yes I Can Committee (Interim)
- 5.1.2.10 General Education Outreach and Support Workgroup Update
- 5.1.3 Officer's Reports
  - 5.1.3.1 President (Bost)
  - 5.1.3.2 Immediate Past President (Thompson)
  - 5.1.3.3 Treasurer Report (Lesh)
  - 5.1.3.4 Executive Director's (Rummel)

**5.2 Board Committee Liaison Updates (Verbal)**

**3.5 Preventing Conflicts of Interest on the Board** – presented earlier in the day

**7.0 New Business**

There was no new business

**Adjournment**

Without objection, President Bost adjourned the meeting at 5:02 pm.

## **Sunday, July 13; 9:00 – 11:00**

### **1.0 Official Items**

#### **2.0 Official Items (1:00)**

##### **2.1 Call to Order**

President Julie Bost called the regular meeting of the Council for Exceptional Children Board of Directors back to order at 1:03 p.m. ET.

##### **2.2 Record of Attendance and Determination of Quorum**

Executive Director Chad Rummel called the roll. A quorum of the following Directors was present:

Bost, Julie (P)  
Tillotson, Ben (PE)  
Thompson, Kareem (IPP)  
Lesh, Jenn (T)  
Adl, Anna  
Bala, Radha  
Braddock, Amy  
Diliberto, Jennifer  
Lewis, Concetta  
Mixon, Toni  
Moore, Adam  
Otheim, Wendy  
Rivera, Mabel  
Smith-Dixon, Zephine

Not present: Ruby Owiny

#### **Executive Session: Treasurer and President Elect Interviews and Appointments**

The board voted in Executive Session to appoint David Royer to the positions of Treasurer (2026-28) and Concetta Lewis to the position of President Elect (2026-28).

### **8.0 For the Good of the Order and Adjournment**

Without objection, President Bost adjourned the meeting at 10:55 am.



## 2025-2030 CEC Component Strategic Plan

<b>Goal: Expand and strengthen a diverse component volunteer pipeline</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outcomes/Metrics</b>
1.1 Support Components in building and maintaining a strong volunteer pipeline	<p>1.1.1 Revamp the current process for collecting prospective volunteer information with Divisions &amp; Units.</p> <p>1.1.2 Develop a comprehensive process for disseminating information about volunteer opportunities</p> <p>1.1.3 Help components get volunteers into their volunteer pipeline</p>	<p>1.1.1 25% of all components will have all 10 leadership positions filled by the end of 2026.</p> <p>1.1.2 50% of all components will have all 10 leadership positions filled by the end of 2027.</p>
1.2 Enhance the support CEC provides to volunteer leaders by offering additional resources and training opportunities to empower their leadership skills and effectiveness	<p>1.2.1 Create an onboarding template for new volunteer leaders</p> <p>1.2.2 Organize the Component Resource page by volunteer position.</p> <p>1.2.3. Create a micro learning series for volunteer leaders</p>	<p>1.2.1 Annual survey of volunteer leaders to assess their satisfaction with the resources and training provided and maintain 80% satisfaction.</p> <p>1.2.2 Reorganize and fully updated resource page launched by Q1 2027. Track engagement: At least 20% increase in page views within 3 months of launch</p> <p>1.2.3. Launch new micro learning series with at least 4 on-demand videos by Q2 2027. At least 80% of attendees will indicate they gained new knowledge or skills through survey.</p>
1.3 Establish a program to regularly recognize and celebrate the contributions of volunteer leaders, fostering a culture of appreciation and engagement within the organization	<p>1.3.1 Consistently highlight a volunteer of the month</p> <p>1.3.2. Update Volunteer Appreciation Week to support components in recognizing their volunteer leaders</p>	<p>1.3.1 Monitor the frequency of Volunteer of the Month highlights, aiming for six recognitions in 2026 and achieving monthly consistency by 2027</p> <p>1.3.2 Gather feedback from both volunteer leaders and component organizers on how to improve Volunteer Appreciation Week moving forward, including suggestions for future activities and recognition strategies. With a 5% click-through rate of volunteer appreciation messaging and highlights</p>



<b>Goal: Support component organizational &amp; membership growth</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outcomes/Metrics</b>
2.1 Support components in membership growth and retention	<p>2.1.1. Ensure all components communicate a consistent, compelling, and localized messages about the value of CEC membership. Assist with helping components to share this message utilizing impactful marketing and outreach tools.</p> <p>2.1.2. Acquire a user-friendly dashboard that provides leaders with streamlined access to member data, enabling them to easily interpret key metrics and enhance communication within their component.</p> <p>2.1.3. With new dashboard, create member onboarding and retention templates to improve communication between the component and their members.</p> <p>2.1.4 Provide an incentive to components who achieve and maintain a retention rate of 75%</p>	<p>2.1.1. By December 2026, at least 75% of components will achieve a minimum annual membership growth rate of 2%</p> <p>2.1.2. Obtain a Component Management Tool/Software and onboard 100% of all components by 2029</p> <p>2.1.2. 75% of Components have a quarterly or bimonthly newsletter using these templates by 2029, with a 5% click rate.</p> <p>2.1.3. At least 50% of components achieve a 75% retention rate by year 2029.</p>
2.2 Inform components of legal & fiduciary responsibilities and provide support to uphold requirements	<p>2.2.1. Update the Components Assurance Form and review process.</p> <p>2.2.2. Create a check list of legal and fiduciary responsibilities for components.</p> <p>2.2.3. Offer an a micro learning series regarding legal and fiduciary responsibilities for component leaders.</p>	<p>2.2.1. Launch the new Component Assurance Form by Q4 in 2026, with a target of at least 75% of components submitting the form by the established deadline.</p> <p>2.2.2. At least 75% of component leadership will indicate agreement (e.g., 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree') with the statement, 'I understand my legal and fiduciary responsibilities,' in the annual leadership survey.</p>
2.3 Support components in sustaining financial stability	<p>2.3.1. Create a customizable, and easy-to-use budget template that components can quickly adapt for their own needs.</p> <p>2.3.2. Support each component in diversifying their revenue streams by encouraging the</p>	<p>2.3.1 At least 75% of component leadership will indicate use of an annual budget in the Component Assurance Form.</p> <p>2.3.2 At least 50% of components will report at least 1 non-dues revenue-generating stream of income by year 2029.</p>

2025-2030 CEC Component Strategic Plan

	development and implementation of non-dues revenue options. This will reduce dependence on membership dues, increase financial stability, and promote long-term sustainability.	
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<b>Enhance membership engagement to foster community connection and participation</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outcomes/Metrics</b>
3.1 Deliver resources to assist components with regularly communicating with their members	3.1.1. Acquire a Component Management Tool that provides leaders with sample calendar, templates, resources and tools to improve communication within their component. 3.1.2. Provide components with best practices for communicating with members on a variety of platforms (email, social media, direct mail, etc.).	3.1.1. Obtain a Component Management Tool/Software and onboard 100% of all components by 2029. 3.1.2. All Components have a quarterly or bimonthly newsletter using these templates by 2029 with a 5% click rate
3.2 Provide support and resources to assist components in identifying engagement opportunities within their membership	3.2.1. Facilitate peer-to-peer engagement and learning opportunities by supporting the planning, promotion, and execution of regional conferences and social events that encourage collaboration among units and align with CEC's strategic plan.	3.2.1 With collaboration with CEC's Professional Development team, develop a plan to organize and execute at least one regional conference by Q4 2027 3.2.2 At least 75% of regional conference attendees will report increased engagement with CEC through post-event survey
3.3 Collaborate with components to repurpose CEC professional development resources for their members	3.3.1. Create opportunities for collaboration to ensure resources are customized to meet the distinct needs of the component and their members. 3.3.2. Develop guidelines or frameworks that help components customize and repurpose CEC professional development resources. 3.3.3. Establish a centralized, web page where components can contribute, explore, and share innovative strategies for repurposing CEC professional development resources.	3.3.1. Collect input from at least 15 components in 2027. 3.3.2. At least 50% of components will report utilizing CEC professional development resources in the annual leadership survey by Q4 2028. 3.3.3. Launch and maintain a centralized webpage for component collaboration on repurposing CEC PD resources, with at least 10 unique contributions within the first year by Q4 2028.

<b>Goal: Strengthen connections and collaboration between CEC and components</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outcomes/Metrics</b>
4.1 Develop a mentality of ambassadorship across all of CEC and within component leaders	<p>4.1.1. Prepare a quarterly update highlighting upcoming CEC activities and relevant news for volunteer leaders.</p> <p>4.1.2. Provide each component with physical materials to promote CEC at local conferences and meetings.</p> <p>4.1.3. Amplify the voice of volunteer leaders by spotlighting their efforts in CEC communications.</p>	<p>4.1.1. Annual survey of volunteer leaders to awareness of CEC activities and relevant news and achieve 75% awareness by 2029.</p> <p>4.1.2. Track the effectiveness of engagement and reach of the provided physical materials by tracking how many components receive and utilize the promotional materials at local conferences and meetings.</p> <p>4.1.3. Highlight a volunteer leader quarterly in a CEC communication (newsletters, social media or website).</p>
4.2 Develop and expand the Unit Advancement Program (UAP) & managed services	<p>4.2.1. Develop the UAP to include a clear roadmap and a 12-month timeline.</p> <p>4.2.2. Expand the UAP's KPI's to prioritize membership growth and retention.</p> <p>4.2.3. Survey participating at 1 year post-completion of the UAP.</p> <p>4.2.4. Enhance the exit plan and long term sustainability strategy for Units that complete the UAP.</p>	<p>4.2.1. All participating Units will complete the UAP within 12 months.</p> <p>4.2.2. All participating Units will see at least a 5% increase in membership growth and retention rate.</p> <p>4.2.3. Through annual survey, 75% of leaders will report an understanding of their legal and fiduciary responsibilities.</p>
4.3 Streamline communication strategies from CEC to component leaders	<p>4.3.1. Publish a monthly newsletter to component leaders.</p> <p>4.3.2. Create a centralized webpage where volunteer leaders can access resources and announcements in one convenient location.</p> <p>4.3.3. Designated CEC staff will connect with component leaders and engage in information sharing based on their volunteer roles.</p>	<p>4.3.1. Track newsletter open rates each month and aim for a 5% annual increase in open rates.</p> <p>4.3.2. Track website page views each month and aim for a 5% annual increase in page views.</p> <p>4.3.3. By the end of Q4 2026, 70% of component leaders will have engaged in role-specific communication or support from designated CEC staff at least two times per year.</p>



## **Gift Acceptance Policy**

### **Council for Exceptional Children**

*Updated March 27, 2025. Pending CEC Board of Directors approval.*

### **About the Council for Exceptional Children**

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the success of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

With a vision of high-quality education that is inclusive and equitable for individuals with disabilities, CEC's mission is to cultivate, support, and empower education professionals who work with individuals with disabilities by:

- Advocating for education professionals and for individuals with disabilities, and/or gifts and talents
- Advancing professional practice and scholarly research
- Promoting diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility
- Building networks, partnerships, and communities

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this gift acceptance policy is to further CEC's mission by governing the acceptance of gifts to CEC and providing guidance to donors and their professional advisors in completing gifts.

This policy helps donors understand the following:

- CEC only accepts philanthropic support that aligns with its mission and priorities
- Donor-restricted gifts are only approved if they are not over-restrictive in nature
- Donor-restricted gifts are used to fulfill the donor's intent

### **Donor's Use of Legal Counsel**

CEC urges all prospective donors to seek the assistance of personal legal and financial advisors in matters relating to their gifts, including the resulting tax and estate planning consequences. CEC does not offer legal or tax advice to donors.

## **CEC's Use of Legal Counsel**

CEC will seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to acceptance of gifts when appropriate. Review by counsel is recommended for (but not limited to):

- Gifts of securities that are subject to restrictions or buy-sell agreements.
- Documents naming CEC as trustee or requiring CEC to act in any fiduciary capacity.
- Gifts requiring CEC to assume financial or other obligations.
- Transactions with potential conflicts of interest.
- Gifts of property that may be subject to environmental or other regulatory restrictions.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Members of the Board of Directors must avoid direct or indirect personal conflicts of interest and are annually required to complete and submit a Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Statement to the CEC Board of Directors President.

Employees and members of the Board of Directors shall not receive commissions or other fees on outright or planned gifts.

## **Privacy**

CEC is committed to respecting the privacy of donors. The types of donor information that it collects and maintains are as follows:

- Contact information (name, address, telephone number, and email address)
- Giving information
- Information on events attended, publications received, and special requests for program information
- Information provided by the donor in the form of comments and suggestions

CEC uses donors' information to understand their interests in its mission and to update them on the organization's plans and activities. It is shared with staff, board members, volunteers, and consultants only on a "need-to-know" basis. The organization also assures donors that their names and addresses will not be shared with any third party unless permission has been granted.

For those who do not wish to be included on a mailing list or to update their contact preferences, donors should contact CEC by emailing [giving@exceptionalchildren.org](mailto:giving@exceptionalchildren.org) to have their names removed.

## **Recognition**

CEC will recognize donors for their support in a variety of ways, including signage, print materials, websites, and email communications. Donors who do not wish to be publicly recognized can choose “Anonymous” when donating or contact CEC to have their names removed from public lists.

## **Use of Gifts**

CEC solicits and accepts gifts to support its programs for purposes that will help the organization further and fulfill its mission.

CEC’s Executive Director will make all recommendations and decisions regarding the review of gifts as indicated below.

## **Gift Designation**

CEC allows for donors to direct gifts to one of its five endowments or to specific programming to a limited degree as program-specific gifts.

Otherwise, gifts to CEC are solicited as unrestricted, to be used for programs and operations without restriction.

- **Program-specific Gifts:** These gifts are made for current operating purposes but restricted by donors or other outside agencies to a specific purpose. Any restrictions are subject to approval by the Executive Director.
- **Endowment Gifts:** CEC will accept gifts designated to its five endowments, which support long-range operations and strategic initiatives.

## **Designated Funds**

CEC will accept gifts of \$10,000 or more to designate funds for specific purposes consistent with CEC’s mission. If a program discontinues, CEC reserves the right to redirect funds to a similar initiative.

## **Named Funds**

Endowed funds of \$50,000 or more may be named for the donor, pending approval by the Executive Director. CEC reserves the right to refuse any named gift that is inconsistent with its mission or values.

## **Gifts Generally Accepted Without Review**

CEC accepts the following types of gifts without prior review:



- **Bequests and Beneficiary Designations:** Donors are encouraged to include CEC in their wills and as a beneficiary under trusts, life insurance policies, annuities, and retirement plans.
- **Cash:** Acceptable as checks, money orders, credit cards, and online payments. Check payments must be sent directly to CEC's lockbox address.
- **Charitable Lead and Remainder Trusts:** CEC will accept designation as a beneficiary of these trusts.
- **Marketable Securities:** Securities will be promptly sold.

### **Gifts Accepted Subject to Review**

Some gifts require prior review, including:

- **Tangible Personal Property:** Gifts such as art, collectibles, and equipment must align with CEC's mission and be marketable.
- **Life Insurance:** CEC will accept life insurance policies where it is named as both beneficiary and irrevocable owner.
- **Real Estate:** All real estate gifts require review, including environmental assessments when applicable.

### **Gifts Not Accepted by CEC**

CEC will not accept a gift under the following conditions:

- The gift would violate its corporate charter.
- The gift would result in losing its IRC § 501(c)(3) status.
- The gift would be too difficult or expensive to administer in relation to its value.
- The gift is for purposes outside CEC's mission.
- The gift is from industries that conflict with CEC's values.
- The gift would damage CEC's reputation or have other unacceptable negative consequences.

CEC does not accept gifts of cryptocurrency.

Decisions on gifts acceptance will be made by the Executive Director.

### **Gift Beneficiaries**

Donors have no role in selecting beneficiaries of their gifts. However, donors and board members may serve on selection committees for other gifts.

**Annual Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by CEC's Board of Directors and updated as needed.

**Donor Bill of Rights**

CEC adheres to the Donor Bill of Rights, ensuring transparency, ethical stewardship, and donor confidence in philanthropy.