



CEC 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION **Candidate Biography**

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Veronica Williams is a special education leader, educator, and advocate dedicated to improving outcomes for students with disabilities through collaborative leadership, sound policy, and practical implementation. She serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of West Georgia, where she prepares future special education leaders and educators in special education law, ethics, and leadership. She also brings more than a decade of experience in public education, including leadership roles in state education agencies and one of Georgia's largest virtual public schools.

Veronica has served in numerous leadership roles within the Council for Exceptional Children, including President of the Georgia CEC, where she worked to strengthen professional learning opportunities, expand member engagement, and build partnerships across the state. She remains actively involved in advancing the profession through conference planning, leadership development, and advocacy for high-quality services for exceptional learners.

Throughout her career, Veronica has been committed to bridging research, policy, and practice. Her experience spans special education compliance, IDEA implementation, educator preparation, strategic planning, and organizational leadership. She believes effective leadership is rooted in listening, collaboration, and ensuring that educators have the knowledge and support they need to serve every learner well.

As a candidate for the CEC Board of Directors, Veronica is committed to strengthening member engagement, elevating practitioner voices, supporting emerging leaders, and advancing policies that improve outcomes for children and youth with exceptionalities. She is honored to be considered for the opportunity to serve the profession she is passionate about and to help shape the future of CEC through inclusive, thoughtful, and service-oriented leadership.

Veronica Williams, J.D.



**Clinical Assistant Professor
University of West Georgia**

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Why do you want to run for the CEC Board of Directors and what is a goal that you have for the organization?

I am seeking a position on the Board of Directors to continue serving an organization that has played a meaningful role in my growth as a leader in special education. Through my service as the Georgia unit president, I have seen firsthand the impact CEC has in connecting educators, elevating practice, and advocating for students with disabilities. I am committed to continuing that work at a broader level.

A key goal I have for the organization is to make advocacy more accessible and actionable for educators at the local level. While educators are deeply committed to their students, many do not always see a clear pathway to engage in advocacy efforts or understand how their voice connects to larger systems and policy decisions.

I would like to support CEC in strengthening that connection by helping to develop practical tools, clear communication pathways, and opportunities for engagement that empower educators to advocate with confidence. By bridging the gap between policy and practice, we can ensure that the voices of educators directly inform decision-making and ultimately improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

What leadership experiences within CEC (student and/or local chapter, state/provincial unit, special interest divisions or state/provincial subdivision, CEC international committee/workgroup) have prepared you to lead in this capacity?

My leadership experience within CEC, particularly serving as my unit president, has prepared me to contribute effectively at a governance level. In this role, I have partnered with board members to set strategic priorities, support long-term planning, and ensure alignment with CEC's mission while maintaining a clear distinction between governance and operations.

I have engaged in governance competencies including strategic planning, policy alignment, and organizational oversight. My work has involved reviewing and guiding key initiatives such as conference planning, member engagement, and outreach strategies with a focus on sustainability, impact, and mission alignment rather than implementation alone. I have also contributed to informed decision-making by considering data, stakeholder input, and organizational goals.

Additionally, my experience collaborating with educators, higher education faculty, and community

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS (cont'd)

partners has strengthened my ability to lead with a stakeholder-informed perspective while upholding the broader interests of the organization. My professional background in compliance and legal frameworks further supports my understanding of fiduciary responsibility, ethical decision-making, and accountability.

These experiences have prepared me to serve on the Board of Directors with a strong governance lens—focused on setting vision, ensuring accountability, and supporting the long-term effectiveness and integrity of the organization while advancing outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Board members must engage in strategic thinking, advocacy, and collective decision-making. Describe a time you influenced change related to special education, equity, or inclusion. What was your role, and what did you learn from the experience?

In my role supporting special education compliance, I identified a pattern where students with disabilities were being withdrawn for truancy without the IEP team being notified or engaged in problem-solving around attendance. This raised significant concerns related to equity, access, and the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), as attendance challenges are often directly connected to a student's disability.

I took the lead in elevating this issue by collaborating with school leadership, attendance teams, and special education staff to review current practices and identify gaps. I advocated for a shift in approach that required IEP team involvement prior to withdrawal decisions, ensuring that attendance concerns were addressed through an individualized, student-centered lens.

As a result, we implemented clearer procedures that prompted earlier intervention, improved cross-team communication, and reinforced the responsibility to consider disability-related factors before making withdrawal decisions. This change helped ensure that students were not inadvertently excluded from services without appropriate review and support.

Through this experience, I learned the importance of using both compliance knowledge and collaborative leadership to influence systems-level change. Advocacy is most effective when it is grounded in both legal understanding and a commitment to equitable outcomes, and when it brings stakeholders together around a shared responsibility to serve students.

CEC is committed to diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility. Discuss your commitment to DEIA.

My commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility is rooted in both my professional

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS (cont'd)

work and my leadership within special education. Throughout my career, I have focused on ensuring that students with disabilities—particularly those from historically marginalized communities—have meaningful access to high-quality instruction, appropriate services, and equitable outcomes.

In my current role, I lead compliance efforts that center on equitable access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). This includes strengthening IEP development practices, ensuring culturally and linguistically responsive communication with families, and addressing systemic barriers that can disproportionately impact students, such as access to evaluations, services, and instructional supports. I have also worked to build staff capacity by providing clear, actionable guidance that helps educators translate legal requirements into inclusive, student-centered practices.

As a leader within CEC, I have prioritized inclusive engagement by creating opportunities for diverse voices—across educators, families, and stakeholders—to be represented in conversations and decision-making. I believe accessibility is not only about compliance, but about intentional design that allows all members to participate fully.

My commitment is to continue advancing DEIA by promoting policies, practices, and professional learning that center equity, amplify diverse perspectives, and ensure that all students and educators feel seen, supported, and empowered within our systems.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Years of CEC Membership: 6

Division Membership(s):

Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)

Division of Leaders and Legacy (DLL)

Teacher Education Division (TED)