



# Communiqué

Council for Educational Diagnostic Services

A Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

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## **President's Message: Sharpening our Cadre of Tools**

**Carol A. Layton**

What kind of assessment tools do we as educational diagnosticians have in our tool box? For our role in schools, the repertoire of needed tools remains extensive. Not only must we keep our knowledge of the administration and interpretation of assessment tools up to date, we also must possess tools regarding the knowledge of recent assessment procedures such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and the appropriate selection and implementation of research-based strategies. Among a myriad of other knowledge and skills, educational diagnosticians face varied assignments and challenging professional tasks.

Last month, I taught a special seminar on RTI for individuals preparing for educational diagnostician certification. This course is part of a sequence of required assessment courses. Questions arose from my graduate students, who were accustomed to working with other methods of assessment and eligibility. As the students versed themselves in the competencies needed for RTI, many embraced the single-subject focus on each student's needs and subsequent progress. However, others questioned how educational diagnosticians fit within the RTI model. As the course progressed, the students became comfortable with the concepts of RTI. They could see the need to add RTI tools to a continuum of assessment skills that they possessed and were ready to implement.

Educational diagnosticians should flourish with the implementation of RTI and other processes that are dependent

on consistent research-based interventions. No other special education professional has been skilled to implement the approach with such expertise and experience. The use of RTI as one of the tools useful in determining eligibility for learning disabilities is promising. The skills needed are already an essential part of the cadre of tools for educational diagnosticians. We must advocate for our role as hands-on assessment personnel that have the expertise to fulfill the promise of RTI or other new evaluation procedures. RTI may be the answer to some questions; however, we will also be prepared to offer other evaluative information based on a rich background in instructional strategies and assessment tools.

As educational diagnosticians, we will be part of the solution to help implement RTI, and offer a combination of evaluative approaches that lead to the recommendation of specific research-based strategies. As diagnosticians, we should be sharpening our foundational knowledge regarding research-based strategies and interventions. We need to continually seek new information regarding links from assessment data to individual educational programs. Our skills in single-subject design will be instrumental in graphing baseline information, aim lines, trend lines, phases of intervention, and maintenance.

Implementation of IDEIA calls for verification of scientifically-based instruction in academics before the eligibility process for learning disabilities. Special education has used single-subject design as a research base for decades. Educational diagnosticians are uniquely equipped to make the assessment/intervention leap to RTI. As a field, educational diagnosticians continue to train, learning new assessments and ap-

plying results to successful interventions for students. Now, as a field, we will offer expertise in RTI along with knowledge in assessment instruments and effective interventions. As a field, we will partner to unify this systematic and data-based method to complete a comprehensive evaluation for students who require special education services. Let's be prepared to combine our ability to collect and interpret assessment information for students with special needs. Our tool kit stands ready to help with solutions that will enhance the lives of students with learning difficulties.

## **Call for Nominations**

**Nancy Halmhuber,  
Past-President**

Nominations are open for the position of vice president on the CEDS Board for a term beginning July 1, 2008. The vice president is elected for a two-year term, succeeds to the presidency for two years, and continues as immediate past-president for an additional two years. In total this is a six-year commitment. A complete listing of duties and responsibilities is available in the CEDS Constitution on the CEDS website (<http://www.unr.edu/educ/ceds>).

In accordance with the CEDS Constitution, any group of 10 active CEDS members may submit a nomination petition for these positions. Nomination petitions must include the names, signatures, and addresses of the members submitting the nomination petitions. A letter from the nominee should accompany the petition, accepting the nomination and including the nominee's complete vita, home, work, and

*(continues next page)*

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e-mail addresses, and telephone number. All candidates must be members in good standing of CEDS and CEC.

## CEDS Annual Conference

**Jazzing up Assessment IV:  
Do you know what it means to miss  
New Orleans?**

**New Orleans, Louisiana  
October 18–20, 2007**

The Council for Educational Diagnostic Services is pleased to announce its annual conference. The audience of the conference is diagnosticians, psychologists, university faculty, special and general educators, and learning consultants. Assessment, both formal and informal, implications for instruction, and interventions will be the focus. Topic areas include but are not limited to: autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, assessing culturally/linguistically diverse students, assessment and accountability, assessment and the IEP process/product, functional/authentic assessment, curriculum based measurement, response to intervention, evaluation of programs and interventions, test development/construction.

## Member of the Year Nominations

**Patricia Frawley,  
Professional Standards Chair**

Nominations are currently being accepted for the annual CEDS Member of the Year award. Any current CEDS member may nominate another member who has supported the work of CEDS in terms of their

**Nominations are due by October 15, 2007.** Send nomination petitions to Dr. Nancy Halmhuber, CEDS Past-President, 12901 Drury Lane, Plymouth, MI 48170.

The keynote presentation, focusing on behavioral assessment and intervention, will be made by **Randy Kamphaus**, Distinguished Research Professor at Georgia State University; editor of *School Psychology Quarterly*; and author of 12 books, five psychological tests, and more than 70 journal articles and book chapters.

Other confirmed presenters include **Cecil Reynolds** on the *School Motivation and Learning Strategies Inventory* as well as the *Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales*, **Frank Gresham** on *The Social Skills Improvement System*, **Dr. Kamphaus** on the *Behavior Assessment System for Children—2nd Edition Screening System*, and **Kathleen Williams** on the new *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test* and the *Expressive Vocabulary Test*. Other than during the keynote, three concurrent sessions are expected to run throughout the conference.

Conference registration forms and hotel information are available on the CEDS Web site (<http://www.unr.edu/educ/ceds>). Registration must be submitted by **October 3, 2007** to receive a discount. For further information contact Gene Schwarting ([gschwart@fontbonne.edu](mailto:gschwart@fontbonne.edu)).

committee involvement, conference attendance, or promotion of the CEDS mission in any manner. Nominees should be current CEDS members with documentation supporting their contribution to CEDS. Nominations should be submitted to Pat Frawley ([pfrawley@spf12.org](mailto:pfrawley@spf12.org)) by **September 20, 2007**. The award will be presented in New Orleans at the annual conference in October 2007.

## Leann DiAndreth-Elkins, Editor

*Communiqué* is the official quarterly newsletter of the Council for Educational Diagnostic Services (CEDS), a division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Subscriptions are by membership to CEDS. Web postings are made thirty days after the newsletter is sent to members. The editor encourages responses, ideas, and inquiries. Submissions of previously unpublished material are welcome for consideration.

### Editorial Address:

Leann DiAndreth-Elkins •  
CEDS Editor • College of  
Education • Box 41071 •  
Lubbock, TX 79409-1071  
Phone: 806-742-1998 x458  
Fax: 806-742-2179  
E-mail: [leann.elkins@ttu.edu](mailto:leann.elkins@ttu.edu)

### Assessment for Effective Intervention:

The official quarterly research journal of CEDS is *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, provided through CEDS membership. The primary purpose of the journal is to publish empirically sound manuscripts that have implications for practitioners. Submittals are encouraged; guidelines are available on the CEDS Web site.

### CEDS Web site:

[www.unr.edu/educ/ceds/](http://www.unr.edu/educ/ceds/)

### CEDS Business Address:

1110 N. Glebe Road  
Arlington, VA 22201

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## Proposed Advanced Common Core Standards

The proposed advanced common core standards for Knowledge and Skills/Educational Diagnosticians are available for review on the CEDS Web site (<http://www.unr.edu/educ/ceds>). Comments and suggestions are welcome as the standards are finalized for inclusion in the next Red Book of CEC. Please e-mail comments to Pat Frawley ([pfrawley@spfk12.org](mailto:pfrawley@spfk12.org)) by **September 20, 2007**.

## CEC Representative Assembly Meeting

### Nancy Halmhuber and Joan Hofmann, Assembly Representatives

The CEC Representative Assembly (RA) is a platform for divisions, states/provinces, and students to have their voices heard. It serves as an advisory capacity to the CEC Board of Directors (BoD). As such, the RA helps build consensus on critical issues and serves a reflective role in how CEC is doing as an organization and responding to member needs.

The following highlights the RA meeting at the CEC conference in April. The CEC Strategic Plan includes four areas: recruiting and retaining members, financial and organizational

health, advocacy, and advancement of the profession. A membership survey indicates that updating knowledge and skills is important in continuing CEC membership. The financial position of CEC is healthy, with a positive balance for 2007. In the advocacy arena, CEC has published easily understandable analysis of IDEA regulations, trained 35 CAN Coordinators in 2006, and published the CEC Public Policy Agenda. Ongoing issues and workgroups include RTI discussion, implementation of an evidence-based practices pilot study (Chair, Rachele Bruno, Past CEDS President), nominations to nominations committee, CEC Division membership requirements, and identification of critical issues to present to BoD.

For additional information, contact Joan Hofmann ([jhofmann@sjc.edu](mailto:jhofmann@sjc.edu)) or Nancy Halmhuber ([ng90@mac.com](mailto:ng90@mac.com)).

## CEDS Member Profile

### Connie Nielson, Membership Chair

Guess who I ran into at the Summer Institute on Student Progress Monitoring in Nashville . . . Gale Mayronne Szubinski Niquin!! More affectionately know as Gigi (or G.G. since it stands for Grandma Gale), many of you probably know her already. I thought she might be a good person to spotlight since she is working on the local arrangements for our upcoming CEDS conference in New Orleans this October. Gale has been active in CEC as an officer for the Louisiana unit, as well as divisions for TED and CEDS. In 2004 she served as chair for the LAC when CEC was in New Orleans.

Gale is a native of New Orleans and is currently moving back to town finally having been displaced by Katrina. She received her BS from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University

and her MEd and PhD from the University of New Orleans. She has been a special education teacher, an educational diagnostician, a principal, a consultant, and an adjunct professor. Presently, she is the project director and doctoral mentor for the PAM-RTI (Response to Intervention through the Pupil Assistance Model) project that incorporates research-based practices which allow schools to systematically measure and enhance the achievement of all students. The project is being implemented in over 80 schools in Louisiana. She has co-authored two books and numerous journal articles. She has been very successful in writing and receiving a ton of grant money from 1998 to the present. And the list of staff development and presentations she has done goes on and on!

Truth be told though, I hear that she would rather be singing and dancing and partying which makes me really believe her when she says that she is a native of New Orleans. So when we all see her at the CEDS conference, let's make sure to have her tell us where we can get the best Mojitos and Hurricanes in town.

## CEC Fall 2007 Web Seminars

Advance your career and complete your professional development requirements without ever leaving the office. Web Seminars are the new standard for providing professionals with engaging learning opportunities across topics necessary for career advancement. Cost effective too! Web seminars allow your entire staff to participate for a one-time registration fee for the entire group! CEC delivers topics and subjects necessary for your career advancement. All you need is a computer, internet connection, and telephone! Check out the fall line-up: <http://www.cec.sped.org/webseminarcw.pdf> or call 888/232-7733 to learn more and register! Early registration discounts available!

## RTI: A Practical Guide for Every Teacher

**Oct. 25–26, 2007**

**San Diego, CA**

**Nov. 15–16, 2007**

**Washington, DC metro area**

3 tiers, 2 days: For educators who are new to Response to Intervention (RTI) approach, this workshop is a practical guide for every teacher. It offers an overview of key concepts and guidelines of RTI that benefit students in inclusive classrooms. Presenter and co-author of *Response to Intervention: A Practical Guide for Every Teacher*, Cara Shores, demonstrates how general and special education teachers can use research-based intervention to effectively individualize instruction, monitor student-progress and much MORE! Early registration discounts and group rates available at <http://www.cec.sped.org/webrticw.pdf> or call 888/232-7733!

## Volunteers Needed!

The CEDS Governmental Relations Committee is seeking volunteers to be part of a small group of “activists” who will work together to draft letters to congressional representatives on behalf of the CEDS organization re-garding issues before

Congress. If you are interested in serving on the Governmental Relations Committee and would like to know more about this effort, please contact Stephen Walker ([walkerst@nku.edu](mailto:walkerst@nku.edu)) for details.

## A Children’s Action Network Report: Three Things to Watch This Year

**Stephen Walker, Governmental Relations Committee Chair and CAN Coordinator**

1. Fully Funding IDEA is still on the radar for the U.S. Congress. Two bills have been introduced to fully fund IDEA. One has been offered by Congressman John Larson (D-CT), and another bill has been introduced by Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD). If you want to see a sample letter of support or use the CEC Policy and Advocacy Center to contact your congressional representatives on this matter, go to the CEC Web site (<http://www.cec.sped.org>) and click on the Policy and Advocacy link. Then select Legislative Action Center, and the rest is easy. Children with disabilities cannot wait another 32 years for Congress to fulfill its promise!
2. The Higher Education Act is up for reauthorization. If you are reading this newsletter, then you know the value of post-secondary education. This reauthorization is an opportunity to extend postsecondary opportunities to students with dis-

abilities. It is also an opportunity to address the critical shortage of special education faculty in higher education through new grant and loan programs to attract more students into doctoral programs. Please keep up to date on the progress of this reauthorization through the CEC Legislative Action Center.

3. The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind Act is likely to occur yet this year. CEC has recommended that this reauthorization blend the strengths of IDEA and ESEA. America’s 6.9 million children with disabilities and 3 million children with gifts and talents must be more carefully considered in the new law. Some have suggested that this reauthorization may not be completed next year, but several powerful representatives are working hard to get this important legislation through Congress this year. Please check the CEC Policy and Advocacy Center from time to time to see progress on the reauthorization and to send your congressional representatives an e-mail to communicate your feelings and share your professional knowledge.