



# Communiqué

Council for Educational Diagnostic Services

A Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

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## President's Message:

David W. Walker

I hope everyone was able to attend the 2008 CEDS Annual Conference, “Kicking Up Assessment on Route 66,” in Albuquerque, New Mexico. **Kathie Good**, your CEDS President-Elect, and those who worked with her put on an excellent conference for you. I am still excited and figuring out ways that I can use all the great ideas I got at the conference! The two sessions presented by **Cecil Reynolds** on Thursday—“*Development & Application of the RIAS and CTMT*” and “*Targeting the “I” in RTI ... School Motivation and Learning Strategies Inventory (SMALSI)*”—were well done. And the keynote address presented by **Dr. Socorro Herrera**: What a keynote! I hope that those of you who were able to attend the conference were able to attend something in each of the following strands: Standardized Assessment, Bilingual/ESL Assessment, RTI/LD issues, and Professional Development.

In addition to sessions in these four great strands, the other sessions that didn't fit into any of these strands were wonderful. The CEDS Social, sponsored by Pearson-Clinical Assessment, on Thursday evening was a great party. I sure do love to PARTY!!

If you weren't able to attend this year's CEDS annual conference, I hope that you will be able to attend next year's conference to be held at the Crowne Plaza in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in October 2009. I know that those of you who live on the East Coast have been waiting a long time for CEDS to come back, so please support the 2009 CEDS conference with your attendance.

The last thing I want to say in this address is to apologize to those I may have offended in my first presidential address. I certainly did not mean to offend you. I'm referring to my failure to mention anything about the **National Certification for Education Diagnosticians (NCED) and the NCED Board**. In about 2003, the CEDS Executive Board members decided that they needed to do more related to the last statement of belief in the CEDS mission statement: “to work for more adequate programs of recruitment, education, and certification of personnel involved in diagnostic and prescriptive programs for children and youth.” As a result, that

CEDS Executive Board started the NCED as an organization that would establish a national certification for educational diagnosticians and other professionals who performed the functions of an educational diagnostician but held a different job title. The first year in which educational diagnosticians could sit for the NCED certification exam was 2007. A total of 511 individuals from the following 12 states received the NCED certification: Alabama, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. I—and the CEDS Executive Board—are very proud of the individuals who passed the exam. We also hope that those who did not pass the exam will retake it and eventually obtain the NCED certification. I want to also mention that in order to take the NCED exam, and to hold the NCED, an individual must be a member of CEDS; therefore, the NCED has also added to our CEDS membership. I want to thank those of you on the NCED Board or who have served on the NCED Board in the past for your efforts. I also want to acknowledge those CEDS Executive Board members who had the foresight and courage to give birth to the NCED. Those of us who hold the National Certification as an Educational Diagnostician, and I count myself among you, thank you.



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## Don't Forget to Say Thank You!

**Stephen Walker**, *CEDS Governmental Relations Committee Chair and Children's Action Network Coordinator*

Amid the partisan bickering that all too often consumes Washington, some very good things are happening and will continue to occur in Congress over the next year. First, on September 25, 2008, President Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments into law. The ADA amendments make important changes to the definition of the term *disability* by rejecting the findings of several Supreme Court decisions that had narrowed the scope of the law by ruling that individuals who could compensate for their disabilities with medications, medical devices, or prosthetics did not qualify for protections granted by the ADA. The amendments retain the ADA's basic definition of *disability* as an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland said,

Tens of millions of Americans will enjoy even fuller rights—the rights we intended for them when we passed the first ADA.

Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, a key supporter of the bill, commented,

The protections afforded under this historic law have been eroded, and the result is that people with serious conditions like epilepsy or diabetes could be forced to choose between treating their conditions and forfeiting their protections under the law. . . . This bill is about restoring the ADA to where we intended it to be 18 years ago and to give clear instructions to the Court.

In this CEDS newsletter column, you are frequently asked to contact your congressional representatives to advocate for proposed legislation. Perhaps this might be a good time for us to remember to say “thank you” to our representatives for a job well done.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110-315) was enacted on August 14, 2008. This law reauthorizes the Higher Education Act of 1965, which authorizes the various federal student aid programs that are responsible for the majority of financial assistance to postsecondary students. This law had its last significant revision in 1998, and the last reauthorization expired more than 4 years ago. Although rule making is still in progress, it appears that through the advocacy and hard work of CEC and other organizations some real progress has been made in this area of education law. Once again, perhaps it is time to say “Thank you.”

To stay informed on the critical issues such as funding for IDEIA, the upcoming reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, and other important legislation affecting the lives of children with exceptionalities, please visit the CEC Legislative Action Center by going to <http://www.cec.sped.org> and clicking on the Policy and Advocacy link. Select Legislative Action Center (left frame). You will find policy analysis and an opportunity to directly contact your congressional representative using well-prepared and thoughtful letters created by the CEC staff. In most cases you will receive a reply from your representative that will let you know where she or he stands on the issues that are important to you.

**Leann DiAndreth-Elkins**,  
Editor

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### 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. Submissions are encouraged; guidelines are available at <http://aei.sagepub.com>

### CEDS Web site:

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## Member Profile: Rebecca Davis

### Connie Nielson, Membership Chair

Rebecca Davis is co-chair for the program committee for the CEDS annual conference. I hope you had a chance to meet her while you were in Albuquerque. She is also currently an assistant professor of special education and administrator for Eastern New Mexico University. Becky started her career in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in speech pathology from New Mexico State University. She was a speech pathologist for Lovington Municipal Schools in Lovington, New Mexico; Bossier City, Louisiana; and Oscoda, Michigan. She also was a speech pathologist and early childhood teacher for the Department of Defense School System in Zaragoza, Spain. That sounds like fun, but better still, she was named Teacher of the Year by the Department of Defense School System, Mediterranean Region, for school years 1983–1984 and 1984–1985!

In 1992, Becky earned her MCD in communication disorders from Louisiana State University. Following this, she was a principal at the junior high and elementary levels and an adjunct professor at College of the Southwest in



Hobbs, New Mexico, and later at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. She received her EdD in special education from Texas Tech in 2003, where her advisor was none other than our own past president, Dr. Carol Layton. Becky states,

I feel very fortunate to have known Dr. Layton as a mentor and as a friend. Her commitment really demonstrates the impact that one individual can have upon students' achievement and their subsequent professional growth—and challenges me to “live up” to that model.

Becky has been awarded various grant moneys and has made numerous presentations at local and national workshops and conferences. Her favorite topics include “Parents of Hispanic Children with Disabilities,” “Thinking Musically,” and “Teaching Concepts Through Creative Expression.”

Becky has been married for 36 years to Roger, and they have three children (Adam, Todd, and Tracie) and two grandsons (the “generals”—Jackson and Grant—who belong to Adam). She also has a “foreign exchange” daughter in Norway and a very spoiled Yorkie-Choodle (Yorkie-Chihuahua-Poodle) named Maizy. She plays the piano for Jackson Avenue Baptist Church and also has a children's choir and puppetry group there. Becky helps her niece with her 4-H projects: raising goats and chickens and doing lots of baking.

## Professional Standards

### Pat Frawley, Chair

At a recent meeting of the Professional Standards and Practice, Knowledge and Skills subcommittee, an announcement was made that our Advanced Common Core Standards received final approval and will be published in the next edition of the Redbook.

CEC's strategic Plan, which was approved in July 2006, was introduced and reviewed at the meeting. The plan has the following goals:

- **Goal I** addresses teaching and learning conditions by seeking to improve conditions and support the highest quality of services for individuals with disabilities.
- **Goal II** addresses evidence-based practices by fostering and communicating the use of evidence-based practices in general and special education and early intervention.
- **Goal III** seeks to foster mutual understanding and international partnerships that support professionals and improve the lives of individuals with exceptionalities.
- **Goal IV** centers on promoting growth and diversity in membership in order to build a more engaged community.
- **Goal V** relates to advancing government policies that impact teaching and learning.
- **Goal VI** focuses on continuous improvement of organizational performance.

## Election Information: Nominees for CEDS Positions

Watch your e-mail for the electronic ballot in February!

### Treasurer (2009–2011)

**Becky Davis**, an assistant professor at Eastern New Mexico University, is the coordinator for the university's distance education site in Hobbs and teaches graduate-level coursework in special education and assessment. She has an extensive special education background. Becky began teaching in 1981 and has held New Mexico licensure as an educational diagnostician for 6 years. She holds current New Mexico licensure in special education, speech/language pathology, administration, and early childhood education, giving her relevant, practical experience in multiple assessment areas. She serves as one of two Representative Assembly members from New Mexico for CEC. Becky brings a fresh perspective to the CEDS organization and a commitment to increasing membership in the southwestern division. A member of the Secretary of the New Mexico Public Education Department's Committee on Assessment, she has helped shape assessment practices in New Mexico. Her membership on Eastern New Mexico University's Assessment Committee has provided additional experience. Becky has been actively involved in the planning and coordination of state and national conferences.

**Brenda Gilliam**, a professor of special education at The University of Texas at Tyler, served as chair of the Department of Early Childhood, Reading, and Special Education through 2007–2008 and is currently coordinating the Special Education and Educational Diagnostician programs in the School of Education. Brenda's background includes 5 years as a special education teacher and 10 years as an educational diagnostician. She has an extensive history of leadership in special education: CEC governor from Texas, Texas CEC president, and Small Special Education Programs Caucus (SSEPC) chair in the Teacher Education Division of CEC, as well as a variety of other officer positions in these organizations. Brenda has experience working with budgets and financial data: She currently is treasurer of CEDS and has been treasurer of Rose City Phi Delta Kappa and the SSEPC. Brenda has been a consultant on assessment of English language learners for the past 20 years and has given numerous presentations on this topic, including a CEDS-CEC featured session. She is an advocate for assessment professionals and the CEDS organization in particular.

### Secretary (2009–2011)

**Joan Hofmann**, an associate professor of special education at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut, teaches in a variety of areas, including educational assessment at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She has an extensive background and experience in special education: Since the 1970s, when she was a student at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, she has been a public school special educator and special education administrator. Joan now prepares general educators and special educators, which includes educational assessors/diagnosticians. She has been a member of CEC for more than 30 years and a member of CEDS for 15. Currently in her second term as CEDS Delegate to the Assembly Representative, Joan has also been on the CEDS Board of Directors for the past 7 years and has recently served CEDS in many specific roles, including 3 years as *Communiqué* newsletter editor, committee memberships (e.g., Standards for Educational Diagnosticians), and chair of annual CEDS conferences in Albuquerque and Arlington, Virginia.

licensure. She also works with assessment personnel in local school districts regarding implementation of RTI and its effectiveness. Ellen holds a bachelor's degree in learning disabilities and mental retardation from Mississippi State University; a master's degree from Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) in special education, with a concentration in education diagnosis; and a PhD in curriculum and instruction, with an emphasis in special education and a minor in educational leadership, from Louisiana State University. She served as a special education classroom resource and self-contained teacher for 15 years, teaching students with high- and low-incidence disabilities, ages 6 to 17. She also taught undergraduate assessment courses and supervised student teachers at SLU. Ellen sees the role of the educational diagnostician as changing and believes that CEDS is the perfect organization to provide cutting-edge professional development to meet the current challenges and changing roles of educational diagnosticians. She would like CEDS to identify best assessment practices and offer professional development using online resources.

**Ellen Ratcliff** teaches undergraduate and graduate assessment courses and prepares educational diagnostician candidates for

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**Shirley Steffens**, a tenured associate professor and coordinator of special education programs at Northwest Missouri State University, has been teaching in special education since 1977, with 21 years at the college and university levels. She currently teaches undergraduate and graduate assessment classes (among other classes) and has been referred to by some students as the “assessment guru” (although she denies accepting claim to the title!). Shirley is co-advisor of the Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC). She has been a member of CEC for over 20 years, holding several leadership roles: secretary, associate

chair, and chair of the Small Special Education Program Caucus of the Teacher Education Division of CEC. Shirley was a member of the local arrangements committee for the national CEDS conference in 2006. She has been a board rep, secretary, vice president, and president of Missouri CEDS and currently is immediate past president. As president-elect of Missouri CEC, she is the conference planner for the 2009 Missouri spring conference, and she was the awards chair for the 2008 Missouri spring conference. As secretary of CEDS, she believes she can communicate with the rest of the board to disseminate the latest diagnostic information to current and future service providers.

## Scenes from the 2008 Conference



Cecil Reynolds and Conference Co-chair Becky Davidson



Donna Smith, Linda Hall, Lisa Cavin, and Ed Schultz enjoy the reception sponsored by Pearson



Carol Layton, Member of the Year and Past-President



Connie Nielson, Membership Chair, and Tina Holleman, with the key that opened the lock to win her a gas card



Kathie Good, Conference Co-Chair, and Carol Layton drawing door prizes at the reception sponsored by Pearson

### Remember . . .

Keep your e-mail address up-to-date with CEC and CEDS to be sure you receive all electronic information and election ballots. To update your e-mail address, at <http://www.cec.sped.org> use your membership login information, click on the red “Membership” box, which will take you to a new window, then click on “Renew Now” link at right.

### Start Planning Now! CEDS 2009 Annual Conference

Oct. 29th–31st, 2009

Crown Plaza—  
Center City

Philadelphia,  
Pennsylvania



### Save the Date!

### CEC's 2009 Convention and Expo

April 1st–4th, 2009

Sheraton Seattle  
Hotel

Seattle, Washington

For more information: <http://www.cec.sped.org>

