



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

April 18, 2012

Dear Senator or Representative:

The following members of the CCD Ed Task Force urge you to restore funding for the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) within the Institute of Education Sciences to \$71 million dollars, its FY 2010 level. This modest investment contributes to the development of research-based policies and practices that directly impact America's seven million children and youth with disabilities and the professionals who work on their behalf.

Since its inception in 2004, NCSER has funded over 200 research projects in areas that improve the educational outcomes of children and youth with disabilities. This research – which has focused on projects such as student assessment, autism, literacy, early learning, and family involvement – has produced effective interventions, teaching practices, and strategies for learning that have proven to be an invaluable resource to families, educators and communities. As we move toward an environment of increasing inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, we must have a solid understanding of how to best serve all students.

However, over the last five years NCSER's budget has been reduced by approximately 30%, or \$20.5 million, thereby limiting the scope of research that can be conducted to fully address challenges in the special education field. Moreover, if this funding trend continues, fewer new special education projects will be initiated, leaving families, students, and educators without critical information to best address the academic and developmental needs of children and youth with disabilities. An analysis of the current outcomes of students with disabilities reflects the need for an increased investment in research. The current statistics are alarming:

- The dropout rate for students with disabilities is 23%, more than twice that of students without disabilities (Source: IDEAdata.org);
- Only 11% of students with disabilities scored “proficient” or above in 4th grade reading, and only 16% in 4th grade math. In 8th grade just 6% of students with disabilities scored proficient or above in reading and just 7% in math. (Source: 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)).

To meet the challenges our nation currently faces, children must achieve at their highest possible level and enter the workforce ready to succeed. The research activities funded by NCSER are one essential way the field of special education and research work to meet these goals.

Therefore, the undersigned organizations urge you to restore funding for NCSER to the FY 2010 amount of \$71 million. Now more than ever the federal government must ensure that students, families, and

educators continue to have access to research-based interventions and information that impacts student achievement in the classroom and lead to lifetime successes. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

American Dance Therapy Association

American Music Therapy Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf

Council for Exceptional Children

Council for Learning Disabilities

Easter Seals

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education

Institute for Educational Leadership

Learning Disabilities Association of America

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association for State Directors of Special Education

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Society

The Arc

The National Center for Learning Disabilities

School Social Work Association of America

Teacher Education Division – Council for Exceptional Children

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of nearly 100 national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society.

For additional information, please contact:

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