



Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children



Newsletter

Vol. 16, No. 1

OCTOBER 2004

Call for Nominations:

- ◆ Yes, I Can! Special Student Award
- ◆ Special Teacher Award
- ◆ Special Person Award

Awards will be presented at the 2005 Special Educators Conference in Duluth, February 23-25.

See Nomination Form
on Page 11

Deadline is December 29



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Supply and Demand

by Char Ryan, Ph.D.
St. Cloud State University



My career in special education began many years ago before the passage of PL94-142, now known as IDEA. I was a psychology major and after graduation I had the good fortune to work with children with disabilities and to begin the professional commitment of a lifetime. You could say I was twice blessed because at the time I wanted to get a teaching license, there was a shortage of special education teachers. The implications of that "supply and demand" scenario meant that I was able to pursue my master's degree with a complete tuition waiver and a fellowship for living expenses. Those were good times. But, what about now? Let's look at this issue and see what it means for new teachers.

Supply and demand, recruitment and retention, teacher preparation. What do these words have in common? They are all implicated in the prediction of how special education teachers fare in the job market. If you are an administrator, your concerns focus on the availability of a pool of qualified special education teachers to meet your demand.

If supply is high and the demand is low, that is, many teachers and few jobs, it's not so good for new teachers, but may be very good for school districts because they have a large pool of teachers from which to choose. Combine this situation with financial troubles and you find teacher layoffs, transfers or bumping. Often this includes teachers from other licensure areas returning to school and seeking special education licensure.

Reverse this scenario and the picture brightens for teachers. High demand and low supply creates a situation where more teachers are needed than are available. Often, in times of low supply, districts compete for teachers. Some may offer incentives such as signing bonuses, moving expenses, step increases, etc. High demand and low supply and school funding problems can lead to other challenges and scenarios as well. For example, teacher shortages can lead to significant problems for districts in finding appropriately licensed personnel. Temporary measures allow schools to meet their needs with professionals who may not yet be fully licensed. Several options exist in Minnesota.

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Letter from the President

by Melissa Schaller

The day after Labor Day (or earlier for some as the case may be) should be celebrated by education professionals as the New Year. It is this time of year that we are starting fresh, updating classrooms and curriculum and welcoming new students. We have new goals and resolutions for the year.

In September MN CEC will hold the first board meeting for 2004-2005. As part of our work that day we will spend time reviewing our mission, beliefs and goals and planning our work for this year. We will review where we've been, decide where we want to go and then develop an action plan to get there. While I don't anticipate our mission and beliefs to change dramatically from the past, I am excited about the action we took in 2003-2004 and what 2004-2005 holds for us.

In 2004 we had a successful, independent conference. Plans are underway to implement what promises to be an amazing conference in 2005. As an organization we were politically involved in 2003-2004. We voiced our opinions regarding state leadership in education and we were heard. I anticipate greater political involvement in 2004-2005. We collaborated with other organizations, particularly MN CCBD. I expect that this collaboration will continue and grow and will include other organizations in 2004-2005.

Review the mission and goals below and feel free to contact any of the MN CEC board members with your contributions. A complete list of board members and contact information can be found at our web site at www.mncec.org.

While most calendars don't reflect the holiday, I'd like to wish you all a Happy New Year!

Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children's Mission

To improve practices and resources for persons working on behalf of individuals with exceptionality in the state of Minnesota.

Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children's Goals

- To promote and utilize systems for timely communication with our membership.
- To promote quality professional development opportunities including a quality conference.
- To support the professional development of pre-service teachers.
- To increase our involvement in political issues impacting our membership and the individuals they serve.

2004 – 05 MN CEC Board of Directors

President:	Melissa Schaller
President Elect:	Larry Iwen
Past President:	Claudine Knoblauch
Secretary:	Mark Krug
Treasurer:	LaVonne See
CANCoordinator:	Bryce Fornes-Bates
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Student Advisor:	Dan Gregory Marilyn Hukriede
Publications:	Carol Long
Newsletter Layout:	Lynne Olson

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 Gary Lewis
 Nancy Recibe
 Jim Smith
 Mary Ellen Wade

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Manuel Barrera, CCBD
 Jane Roundtree, DEC
 Darryl Miller, CASE/MASE

Student Advisors:

Mary Voss/ Manuel Berrera,
 UM-Duluth
 Steven Kaatz, Bethel
 David Rogers, St. Cloud State
 Linda Svobodny, MN State
 Moorhead

Website: www.mncec.org

**Congratulations to
 PACER for
 25 years of service
 to families
 with children with
 disabilities!!**

Mark Your Calendars Now for the 2005 Special Educators Conference!

By Larry Iwen, MNCEC President Elect
and 2005 Conference Chair


Planning for the 2005 conference continues at a rapid pace. The Duluth Entertainment and Conference Center will again be the site for the MNCEC/MNCCBD conference February 23-25. After reviewing hundreds of suggestions from MN CEC members who attended the 2004 conference, the planning committee is striving to make the next conference even better than last year's.

Several strands and topics will be featured in both the keynote and breakout sessions including: Best practice strategies & techniques, Current Research trends and practices in special education, Assessment and accountability, Inclusive practices, NCLB updates, Brain based learning & research, and much much more!

Three unique and dynamic individuals have been invited to speak at the February conference. Our Wednesday Pre-conference session will be hosted by MNCCBD and will feature **Larry Brendtro** speaking on the topic of reclaiming youth at risk. You won't want to miss the uplifting and motivational keynote address by **Frosty [Forest] Troy** on Thursday to hear about what is being done RIGHT in the field of education today. And plan to stick around for Friday's keynote address by **Marilee Springer** speaking on current trends, research, and applications of brain based learning and how it relates to the field of special education.

The exhibit hall will have many more vendors and exhibitors than last year with plenty of space available for the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and network with new ones.

A call for presentations will be available in October for interested parties who would like to present during our breakout sessions. Why not consider sharing your ideas, practices, and research based topics with your colleagues?

The 2005 conference will be one you won't want to miss and promises to be amazing. Mark your calendars now and plan to head to Duluth February 23-25 for the 2005 MNCEC/MNCCBD Special Education Conference! 

Call for Presentations

Do you have something you want to present at the February conference? If so, check out the MNCEC website at www.mncec.org for more information.

CEC SmartBrief: A New Way to Stay Informed


The Council for Exceptional Children has recently launched an e-mail news briefing called CEC SmartBrief. It brings you up-to-date information from a large variety of reliable news sources- all in one convenient news-letter that will be in your inbox every weekday.

This e-news briefing has been designed for special education professionals so that you can stay informed about special education-related news events world wide.

You can sign up for this free and informative e-mail service at www.smartbrief.com/cec/

Editor's Message *continued from page 12*

an advocate for Native American causes and a spokesperson for her people. Her university has not supported her activism and, in fact, her advancement through the tenure and promotion process has been delayed.

After dinner, I was numb with the realization that I had been in the company of greatness. It all seemed so natural, four women getting to know each other over dinner. Yet, I came away with a deep sense of privilege. I felt their strength and compassion, their wisdom and depth of character. They were women who had lived through uncommon circumstances, who had made great contributions to their families, their students, their cultures, their profession. You never know when you will be in the presence of greatness. 

*"What we need are more people who specialize in the impossible."
- Theodore Roethke*

Book Reviews



Making a Difference: Advocacy Competencies for Special Education Professionals

By Craig R. Fiedler

Reviewed by: Jeanne E. Danneker,
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

The mission of the MN CEC is “to improve the practices and resources of persons working on behalf of individuals with exceptionality in the State of Minnesota.” Last spring the Board of Directors of the MN CEC acted on that mission by advocating for state level educational leadership that would be supportive of all students including those with exceptional educational needs.

This was not a comfortable decision for any of the Board members, yet we recognized that it was our responsibility to speak up. In fact, the field of special education would not exist without advocacy, yet few professional educators are comfortable with their role as advocates.

In this book, Fiedler reminds special educators of the importance of advocating for our students with special needs and provides sound guidance for increasing our knowledge, skills and dispositions related to advocacy. The book is well organized and flows from a review of the historical legacy of advocacy through the ethical

disposition required of advocates and essential knowledge of legal, professional and personal issues we must consider in our role as advocates.

Fiedler provides clear, concise explanations of communication, collaboration and conflict resolution skills that will help us be effective in our role as advocates. The text is enhanced by figures and tables that clarify key points and “advocacy anecdotes” throughout the book highlight the author’s personal and professional experiences with advocacy as a parent, teacher, and attorney.

A great deal of practical, useful information is provided in just over 200 pages of easy to read text. Fiedler’s instruction for providing appropriate advocacy combined with his explanation of the “zone of acceptable action” should increase our comfort level with taking action and may also increase our discomfort with not taking action on behalf of the students we serve. After all, as he contends, it is highly likely that we chose this profession because we wanted to make a difference. Perhaps reading this book will give us the courage to do just that. 🍀

Making a Difference: Advocacy Competencies for Special Education Professionals by Craig Fiedler was recently published by ProEd, Austin TX.



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time

By Mark Haddon

Reviewed by: Mary Ellen Wade, Teacher, Proctor Schools

“It was 7 minutes after midnight. The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs. Shears’ house. Its eyes were closed. It looked as if it was running on its side, the way dogs run when they think they are chasing a cat in a dream. But the dog was not running or asleep. The dog was dead. There was a garden fork sticking out of the dog. The points of the fork must have gone all the way through the dog and into the ground because the fork had not fallen over. I decided that the dog was probably killed with the fork because I could not see any other wounds in the dog and I do not think you would stick a garden fork into a dog after it had died for some other reason, like cancer, for example, or a road accident. But I could not be certain about this.”

Thus, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time begins a story told by Christopher John Francis Boone who is shocked and dismayed by his gruesome discovery. He feels a special affinity for dogs because “You always know what a dog is thinking”, he says. “They are faithful and they do not tell lies because they cannot talk.”

Christopher knows all the countries of the world, their capital cities, every prime number up to 7,057, and, as you may have surmised, sees the world through the eyes of a person with autism. His saga of the “curious incident” and his determination to solve the mystery gives us a window through which to view that world. We are privy to his

True or False? CEC Membership Benefits Quiz

From CEC, submitted by Mary Z. McGrath, Membership Chair

Please write T or F in front of each item.

- __1. Membership includes 3 issues per year of TEACHING Exceptional Children magazine.
- __2. CEC's resource catalog is crammed full of resources and materials specifically for general educators.
- __3. CEC's continuing education programs, including the CEC Annual Convention and Expo, provide groundbreaking information, state-of-the-art resources, and new ways of reaching students. CEC also provides you with essential training programs, materials, planning, and continuing education opportunities.
- __4. CEC's advocacy efforts only include the Congress of the United States.
- __5. CEC includes 13 specialty divisions. Each division publishes journals and newsletters, sponsors conferences and other professional development activities, facilitates political action on issues that directly affect your practice and interests, and provides unique networking opportunities to bring you closer with experts and your professional peers.
- __6. Members enjoy savings of up to 35% on all CEC publications and professional development events including the CEC Annual Convention & Expo.
- __7. CEC offers the opportunity to register your resume, view special education job postings, and access a list of recruiters - all on Career Connections, the only job bank on the Internet devoted exclusively to special education professionals.
- __8. CEC offers protection from the high costs of lawsuits due to your activities as an education professional. The Educators Professional Liability Plan is available in limits of \$1 million and \$2 million. Full-time and part-time professional employees in the education field are eligible for this plan as well as paraprofessionals and related services personnel.
- __9. CEC membership offers you a wide range of personal and professional benefits you can't afford to be without.
- __10. You have friends who could benefit from joining CEC.

ANSWERS: http://www.cec.sped.org/mb/new_members.html#benefits



Book Review

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thoughts, the structure of his world, his rationale for the rules that govern his actions and his struggle to understand the people and events by whom he is challenged every day.

The story is a fascinating account written by Mark Haddon who has worked with children who have autism and has written and illustrated numerous children's books and screenplays. It is eye-opening, mesmerizing, thought provoking, humorous and wise. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, should be a "must read" on everyone's fall book list. ♣

Publishers Info

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon, is published by Doubleday, copyright 2003.

State resolves "Highly Qualified" Special Education Teacher Requirements

In the document *Minnesota State Plan for "Highly Qualified" Teacher Requirements: Information for Teachers and School Districts*, Education Commissioner Alice Seagren answered the question of whether licensed special education teachers in Minnesota meet the "highly qualified" requirement to teach core academic content. *The answer is yes, if they follow licensure limits for the scope of their instruction for each student, according to the student's IEP, in consultation with other teachers.*

Federal guidance states that special education teachers who provide instruction in core academic subjects must meet the "highly qualified"

Supply and Demand *(continued from page 1)*

Here are the options. The Board of Teaching (BOT) permits a district to hire persons who are not licensed in the area needed, when the district is unable to find and hire a fully licensed teacher. The various options follow. First, there is a variance. The variance is given to a district (not a teacher) when the district has looked, but cannot find a fully licensed teacher. The responsibility lies with the district to document its efforts to find, hire and retain teachers. When unsuccessful in recruiting a fully licensed teacher, the district is granted a one year variance which allows it to reassign a teacher or hire one without a license. Under current rule, no more than three variances may be granted to a district for a teacher, and the teacher on a variance is expected to promptly enroll in a preparation program and continue the coursework needed for full licensure.

A second option for districts is to hire a “non-licensed community expert.” This “community expert” may include new special education teachers who have completed their coursework and are finalizing paperwork and will be fully licensed. It may include persons with special expertise that is relevant to the population of students he or she will teach. The third option is a “limited license.” The limited license is granted to persons who have a bachelor’s degree and a minor (20 semester credits) in the licensure area sought. There are no provision licenses.

So what does the current workforce look like with these options? Personnel Licensing at the Minnesota Department of Education annually summarizes these options. As seen below, the number of exceptions has increased each year.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS NOT FULLY LICENSED — TEACHING FIELDS ONLY				
Year	<u>99-00</u>	<u>00-01</u>	<u>01-02</u>	<u>02-03</u>
# of individuals -Variance	518	659	922	997
# of individuals –Comm. Expert	43	110	128	103
# of individuals <u>Limit license</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>87</u>
Totals	629	852	1096	1187

When this analysis is applied to specific licensure areas, greater impact is observed for some disability areas. For example, variances granted to districts for teachers licensed in EBD rose from 146 in the 1998-99 school year to 461 in the 2002-03 school year. In Minnesota and across the nation, there is a critical shortage of teachers in this license area. This supply and demand scenario leads to national and statewide incentives to increase the number of people seeking an EBD license. Minnesota has offered an annual Summer Institute for potential teachers of students with EBD. The MDE also offers stipends for teachers completing licensure in this area.

Trends in supply and demand are important to everyone; teachers, school districts, teacher preparation programs and the state. The Minnesota Department of Education has identified workforce issues as a major focus. The following information was provided by the Special Education Policy Office, which has identified workforce issues as a priority for state efforts. The following goals have been established.

Self-Improvement Priority 2 in Minnesota’s Continuous Improvement Focused Monitoring Process (MCIFMP)

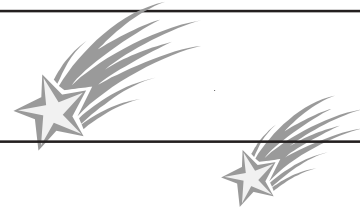
targets the state’s need to have a sufficient number of qualified special education professionals and paraprofessionals. The four goals of this Workforce Self-Improvement Plan address

- recruitment,
- preparation,
- retention, and
- the understanding and predicting of special education personnel supply and demand issues and trends in Minnesota.

Work is underway to develop a process whereby currently collected data –mostly from existing sources—can be used separately and in combination to show trends in different components that affect the demand for and supply of special educators. The process will allow the data to be analyzed geographically (statewide, regionally, size of district, etc.) and by staff characteristics (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, gender and teaching assignments).

The compatibilities of such a supply and demand process will also play important roles in the MCIFMP’s Self-improvement plans for reducing system bias and geographical differences in the provision of special education in Minnesota.

Positive Behavioral Supports: More than Just Responding to Behavior



By Mark Krug

Using positive behavioral supports means not telling a student to be on task, but developing interventions and strategies that reinforce desired behavior. A basic principle for sound interventions to address behavioral concerns is *consistency*. All students must receive consistent messages regarding acceptable behaviors and social interactions. A classroom that is orderly with clearly defined procedures is important for all students. However, order and process do not preclude a warm and inviting atmosphere that is respectful and accepting of all individuals. Order without warmth is just as ineffective as warm and fuzzy chaos. The earlier a student experiences an orderly and consistent classroom, the less likely behavioral issues will appear in the future.

A corollary of consistency is *matching*. The rate of any given behavior matches the rate of reinforcement for the behavior. For example, if a teacher responds to a student's tantrum by giving in a third of the time and only issuing a pro social request every 15th time, the student is five times more likely to tantrum than to politely request.

Behavioral intervention, also, include practices as simple as sincere praise. Too many times, students are expected to behave in a certain fashion when their life experiences and backgrounds have not prepared them. If students are expected to use phrases such as "please" and "thank you," or to take turns, they should be praised for doing so.

Sensory strategies may appear to be an unusual consideration for behavioral issues but can be simple and effective. Not all students are able to tune out the tremendous sensory stimuli experienced on a daily basis. Dimming the lights, using buffered paper, providing rocking chairs or gliders are all ways to informally modify the sensory input a student receives. A more formal strategy is progressive muscle relaxation for anger management.

The reality of development of positive, behavioral strategies is that time and creativity are required. While time is needed to determine why the behavior occurs and to develop a plan, the time is wisely spent. Consider the time that may be spent in responding to problematic behavior.



Representative Assembly: A Report from New Orleans

April 16-17, 2004

By Carol A. Long



Steven Kaatz and Carol Long represented MN CEC at the Representative Assembly at the CEC National Convention last spring. Attendance at the annual convention was over 6,300, the highest since 1999. The Representative Assembly agenda included officer reports, information, discussion, and action items, emerging professional issues, and member needs and concerns.

Day One began with the Call to Order and Parliamentary Items followed by reports from the president, treasurer, and executive director. The treasurer reported that although CEC has adequate funds to continue operation, shortfalls in publications, conventions, exhibits, and membership have resulted in a deficit. Discontinuation of federal grants resulted in a cost reduction plan with program reductions, a freeze on staff salary increases, and elimination of staff positions.

After the reports, the assembly broke into five discussion groups:

- Unit Restructuring and Effectiveness,
- Interest Group Continuum: Caucus to Division,
- Disproportionality,
- No Child Left Behind Implementation Issues, and
- CEC Dues-Supported Programs/Activities: Priorities for the Future

Member Needs and Concerns included:

- Dues payment through payroll deduction,
- A balanced budget policy, and
- Proposed membership categories and services.

A great deal of discussion addressed the elimination of the retired members category. Concern was stressed that retired members should have the same rights and privileges as professional members.

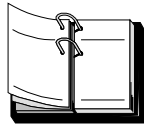
Discussion Topics

Formal presentations were given on:

- Well Prepared Special Educators-a draft paper was presented on CEC definition and CASE position statement.
- Scientifically Based Instruction-a work group is examining what is appropriate evidence and developing process for approving research based interventions.

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Calendar of Events



CEDS 2004 Annual Topical Conference

October 21-24, San Antonio, Texas, www.unr.edu/educ/ceds/

Region 3 Paraprofessional Conference

October 29-30, Northeast Service Cooperative

Contact Pat Brandstatter, 218-748-7606 or pbrand@nesc.k12.mn.us

Early Childhood Leadership Conference

November 3-5, 2004

Oak Ridge Conference Center, Chaska, 952-368-3100

CEC Division of Learning Disabilities 5th Annual Conference “Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice”

November 4-5, Orlando, Florida

Cahl4@psu.edu or www.teachingld.org/conferences/orlando_04.htm

CEC Teacher Education Division (TED) Annual Conference

November 10-13, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Contact Tom Sileo, sileo@hawaii.edu or tsileo@gallup.unm.edu

Minnesota CEC Board Meeting (Open to Public)

November 11, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

New Brighton Family Service Center

15th Annual CASE Conference

November 12-13, Scottsdale, Arizona

Contact Luann Purcell, 478-825-7667 or lpurcell@bellsouth.net

2004 Annual International DEC Conference

December 4-8, Chicago, Illinois

410-269-6801 or phaff@gomeeting.com

Minnesota CEC Board Meeting (Open to Public)

January 8, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

New Brighton Family Service Center

CASE Winter Institute

January 19-21, Clearwater Beach, Florida

Contact Luann Purcell, 478-825-7667 or lpurcell@bellsouth.net

Minnesota CEC Board Meeting (Open to Public)

January 8, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

New Brighton Family Service Center

2005 MNCEC/MNCCBD Conference

February 23-25, Duluth

Check Winter MNCEC newsletter or go to www.mncec.org

Minnesota CEC Board Meeting (Open to Public)

February 24 at MNCEC/MNCCBD Conference-Time TBA

Duluth Entertainment and Conference Center, Duluth

CEC Annual Convention and Expo

April 6-9, Baltimore, Maryland

888-232-7733, conteduc@cec.sped.org, or www.cec.sped.org

Representative Assembly

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- Research Related to Practice-a report was given on task force focusing on quality indicators for research methodologies.
- Proposed Membership Categories and Services-Treasurer reviewed organizational work leading to proposed categories.

Day Two began with reports from the discussion groups and recommendations were adopted to:

- Improve communication between the Board of Directors and units,
- Form a work group to further study interest group, caucus, and division structures,
- Refer disproportionality strategies and suggestions to the Diversity Committee,
- Develop a NCLB policy statement on accommodations for assessing students and alternative assessments for use with students with severe cognitive disabilities.

The 2004 Representative Assembly adjourned after a courtesy resolution for Past CEC President Jo Thomason, the reading of the resolution of the 2004 Annual Convention, and a final opportunity for members to express their needs and concerns. ♣

Highly Qualified Teachers

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requirements for those core academics subjects that they teach. The 2004 Minnesota Omnibus Education Bill defines “highly qualified” according to licensure standards. Board of Teaching licensing rules authorize special education teachers who hold a full special education licensure to deliver the student’s individual education plan, in consultation with other licensed teachers who are themselves highly qualified in the core academic subject.

Teachers of core academic subjects are required to collaborate with special education teachers through participation on each student’s IEP team to ensure access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities. This collaboration is essential to the special education process. ♣

The CAN Report

by Bryce Fornes-Bates, CAN Coordinator

Public Testimony: My First Adventure in Policy and the Political Process

This past spring, I was a part of the highly controversial public testimony in the confirmation hearings for then public education commissioner Cheri Pierson Yecke. I am not an experienced lobbyist and I had no clear idea on exactly how the process worked, but I was allowed to assist in presenting the position of the MNCEC and our greater membership to the MN Senate Education Committee.

When I told others in my life about what I was going to do, all of them were impressed. It was like I was going to participate in some kind of unknown, elite ritual. When, in actuality, if you know how to get onto the public testimony roster, anyone with a stake in the issue at hand can testify in front of a senate committee.

I was quite nervous about testifying. I learned very quickly that there are specific rules and etiquette to follow when you are addressing the committee and I was terrified of making a disrespectful mistake. I believed that if I was not respectful enough, the committee would mentally disregard what I thought it was important to say. Another very intimidating thing that I did not realize is that Dr. Cheri Pierson Yecke would be sitting directly behind me as my fellow board members and I, Claudine Knoblauch and Carol Long, testified on behalf of MN CEC, presenting concerns expressed by our membership against her.

After what seemed like an eternity of waiting for our turn to testify, it was finally our turn. I was feeling calm and collected, but when I got to the front table in front of the committee I suddenly felt as if I couldn't breathe. My face became flushed and warm. I suddenly became keenly aware that there were C-SPAN news cameras pointed at us, hot, bright lights blazing down, and there were many intelligent and critical ears listening to every word we said. I had thought to myself, Who on this committee will take me, a third year teacher, with only a bachelor's degree, and very little experience, seriously?

I was grateful to be flanked by Claudine (a special education director) and Carol (a professor at a univer-

sity); they both have the esteemed clout and experience I wished that I possessed at that very moment in time. Carol introduced all three of us, and I thought that would suffice. We had divided our collective MNCEC statement in three pieces and Carol had gone through the points of the first portion.

When it was my turn to speak, I began speaking. I assumed that since Carol had introduced me to the committee- that I did not have to introduce myself. No. Wrong. My worst fear had come to pass. I too, was one of those inexperienced persons to make an etiquette error in front of the committee. I quickly apologized and introduced myself and to my relief, realized that no one was offended.

I know that I mostly read off of the printed statement in front of me. At times I felt I was incoherently babbling, but I am told that I more or less appeared confident in front of the committee. When I was finished speaking and Claudine continued on with our testimony I felt a great sense of relief. My skin went back to its normal pale shade, and I could finally breathe deeply again.

I watched the remainder of the testimony against the proposed education commissioner on C-SPAN that day. What I was waiting for was to listen to Dr. Yecke present her rebuttal to the claims made against her and the MN education department. What surprised me is that she was able to

briefly dismiss what we said and then, explain her side. The committee members asked us questions, but they asked her very few questions about our issues. It appeared they just accepted Dr. Yecke's explanations. Immediately I felt defeated. As I yelled at the television possible questions the committee could have asked, I was convinced the education committee was not very knowledgeable in special education and its subtleties. I began to think that we didn't have that great of an impact on the process.

In the end, the education committee voted not to recommend the confirmation of Dr. Yecke and the rest is history. I now realize that the testimony we presented last spring was not in the make-or-break category. Special education just wasn't an issue at the top of the list for those committee members. Being a special education teacher, the issue is much dearer to me and I intend to continue to encourage my legislators to keep special education in mind in the future.

In all, this experience has been memorable. What was important was that we let our voices be heard and we made a stand. I will never forget how it felt to testify and I will take every opportunity to go back and do it again. ♣

“What was important was that we let our voices be heard and we made a stand. ...I will take every opportunity to go back and do it again.”

MASE Receives Two National Awards

The Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) has once again been recognized by national CASE with two awards: *the 2004 Outstanding Achievement in the Area of Awards, and the 2004 Exemplary Unit Award.*

The awards were presented on April 14 at the 2004 CASE Annual Membership and Board of Directors' Meeting at the CEC Convention in New Orleans.



Minnesota Delegation receives Exemplary Unit Award. From left: Gary Lewis, Nan Records, Kim Gibbons, Mary Ruprecht, Lori Fildes and Jeanne Collins, CASE.

This is the second time MASE has received both of these awards. MASE also received the "Exemplary Unit Award," a recognition of overall excellence, in 2002, and the "Outstanding Achievement in the Area of Awards," in appreciation of our member recognition program, in 2003.

Both of these awards reflect the work, commitment, and active participation of the many MASE members who give their time, skill, and talent to build a strong and growing association. MASE members exemplify what is at the heart of an association—colleagues who offer their leadership and service in the interest of a shared mission. Our members are the reason that colleagues across the country are saying that we are doing great work in Minnesota! ♣



Nan Records receives "Outstanding Achievement in Area of Awards" from Jeanne Collins, CASE (right)

Minigrants for Special Educators!

If you are a teacher or related service provider and you have a great idea for teaching children with special learning needs, the Yes I Can! Teacher Minigrant program is for you!

The Yes I Can! Foundation provides up to ten awards of up to \$500 each to teachers or related service providers who have a great idea for teaching children with special learning needs. Projects should provide direct services to children & youth with disabilities and/or gifted children or youth; parents of disabled children; or unemployed disabled youth. Project period cannot begin prior to 12/1/04 & should be completed by 12/1/05. Eligibility is limited to individuals employed by public or non-profit institutions.

Download application form and guidelines at:

<http://yesican.sped.org/minigrants/index.html>

Application Close Date: 11/15/04

Phone: 800/224-6830, program staff (ext. 462)

Email: yesican@cec.sped.org

Address:

Minigrant Committee
Yes I CAN! Foundation for Exceptional Children
1110 N. Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-5704

Supply and Demand

(continued from page ?)

When reflecting on the trends, I observe that supply and demand varies over time and interacts in a complex way with a variety of factors. What should I tell my students? I would say that despite the challenges districts and teachers face daily, the opportunities for this chosen profession remain good for new teachers to find jobs. Some teacher shortages will be greater than others. I tell them to think about what they are looking for in a school community, what values, what principles and what practices with students. It is always an issue of choice and knowing what is important in that first position. The schools will be replenished with the enthusiasm of those who follow us.

Char Ryan is an assistant professor of special education at St. Cloud State University. She has been a teacher, administrator and state consultant. She recently retired from the Minnesota CEC Board of Directors after many years of distinguished service. ♣



**Call for Nominations:
Student / Teacher / Person Awards
Due: December 29, 2004**

Any MNCEC member can submit a nomination. *Send the nomination and a short narrative describing why you are nominating this person to:*

Larry Iwen
MNCEC Conference Chair
12941 Point Douglas Dr.
Hastings, MN 55033

Phone: 651-487-7329
email: iwenl@comcast.net

**Awards will be
presented at the
MNCEC / CCBD
Special Education
Conference,
February 23-25, 2005**

Yes, I Can! Special Student Award



The nominee must:

1. be student age 21 or under and currently receiving special education services in the state of Minnesota
2. demonstrate any or all of the following: academic excellence, community involvement, and/or participation in special activities.

Special Student's Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____ School _____
 Your Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____ CEC member ___ Yes ___ No

Special Teacher Award



The nominee must:

1. hold a current teacher's license in Minnesota
2. be currently active in serving children with special education needs in Minnesota
3. exhibit outstanding teaching skills

The nominee does not need to be a CEC member.

Special Teacher's Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____ School _____
 Your Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____ CEC member ___ Yes ___ No

Special Person Award



The nominee must:

1. be a resident or work in Minnesota
2. have contributed in some way to disabled or gifted persons and/or to CEC

Special Person's Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____
 Your Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____ CEC member ___ Yes ___ No



Letter from the Editor

by Carol Long



You never know when you will be in the presence of greatness. I was so blessed a few years ago when I met three extraordinary women. I was at CEC headquarters to serve on a team reviewing teacher preparation programs for NCATE/CEC accreditation. Before the team officially convened, four of us, all strangers, had dinner together.

The first woman, tall in stature and gentle in demeanor, was originally from Canada and now lived in the East. She laughed and said she was semi-retired but working full time for a well-known figure in special education. As a research assistant, she handled the paperwork for a major federal grant. Later that evening, we were assigned to work together and over the next few days I learned to appreciate her attention to detail.

But that night what she shared on a personal level will remain with me always. Her only child, a son, had died of cancer when he was in his early twenties. A bright boy with great promise, he graduated from college with honors after long, anguished periods of treatment that repeatedly interrupted his education. She spoke with admiration for her son and of appreciation for his professors who provided support and flexibility. Her voice had no evidence of self-pity. There was sorrow but more

evident was acceptance and gratitude at how his illness had brought them closer together.

The second woman was striking in appearance with long salt and pepper hair. She was a veteran professor at a small university in the Midwest. She had started her teaching career in the 1960s as the only white person in an all black high school in a city renowned for its poverty,

crime, and hopelessness. She said, "I was young, naïve, and determined to change the world. Looking back I realize I had no idea what it would be like. I don't regret it. It was a profound experience that changed my life." She explained that her students were very protective of her and after the first few days she had not felt afraid.

"The work of the individual still remains the spark that moves mankind forward."

-Igor Sikorsky

The third woman was Native American and from the Northwest. Someone asked if she grew up on a reservation and she explained she was born on "the rez" but grew up at a boarding school she was required to attend. The main purpose of the curriculum was to rid students of their Indian ways, their language, their dress, their culture. They were treated inhumanely, and poorly educated. She is the only one of numerous brothers and sisters to graduate from high school. Many of them have problems with alcohol and criminal records. Our dinner companion was

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