

## CEC Calls on Congress to Preserve Special Education Funding: Survey Finds *Across the Board Education Cuts* Will be Devastating to Children and Youth with Disabilities

A recent survey of over 300 special education directors from across the nation, reveals the pending *across the board cut* to federal education funding of approximately 8% (known as “sequestration”) will likely devastate local school districts’ ability to serve students with disabilities as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and will mean more layoffs and less hiring.

### **If sequestration occurs, 2012 survey results indicate:**

- There will be increased strain on the availability of services for students with disabilities. **81% Agree**
- Their district will cut funding for purchase of resources including needed technology. **85% Agree**
- Their district will increase caseload. **77% Agree**
- Their district will reduce professional development. **79% Agree**
- **There will be a hiring freeze and/or layoffs. Over 95% Agree**

### **Local School Districts Are Already Hurting**

Nationally, about 7 million students with disabilities receive legally mandated services under IDEA. 20 U.S.C §1400. Districts must provide IDEA services even when states and local communities face economic hardships, as they have over the last few years. In May, 2012, CEC and its division the Council for Administrators of Special Education (CASE) updated a 2011 survey they conducted examining the impact of the fiscal crisis and asking about the potential impact of sequestration. The May 2012 survey confirmed local school districts are weakened and sequestration will further erode their ability to educate.

### **Survey Indicates Services Already Deeply Cut**

In CEC/CASE’s 2012 survey we again asked respondents how the economy impacted their ability to serve students with disabilities. The results demonstrate districts continue to work under very strained conditions. **86% said funding cuts increased their caseload, 77 % said cuts increased the strain on availability of services for students with disabilities, and 74% said their district reduced professional development.** The ongoing economic crisis has already meant deep cuts to services and staff. Cutting another 8% from already weakened districts will likely be devastating to students with disabilities.

### National Impact of *Across the Board Cuts*:

- IDEA Part B Grants to States CUT by **\$903 Million**
- IDEA Part B Section 619 Program CUT by **\$29 Million**
- IDEA Part C Infants & Toddlers CUT by **\$35 Million**
- IDEA Part D National Programs CUT by **\$19 Million**
- Special Education Research CUT by **\$4 Million**

### **Sequestration Will Reduce IDEA’s Full Funding Percentage to Approximately 14.5%: Lowest Level Since 2001**

According to recent estimates, sequestration will reduce the IDEA Full Funding amount to its 2001 level, 14.5%. More than 35 years ago, Congress pledged to assist states and local school districts with the education of students with disabilities by paying an additional 40% of the average per-pupil expenditure for these services, called the IDEA Full Funding amount. As the survey responses illustrate, sequestration – in addition to the repeated cuts districts have endured recently – will make it extremely difficult for local education agencies to continue to provide legally required services to students with disabilities.

*CEC calls on Congress to consider the potential impact of these across-the-board cuts on children and youth, families, professionals and communities before allowing these cuts to deny resources and supports to those who need them most. **Avoid sequester: Pass a balanced deficit reduction measure.***

