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April 2, 2014

The Honorable John Kline
2439 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Rokita
236 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Carolyn McCarthy
2346 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kline, Miller, Rokita and McCarthy,

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) commends your leadership in developing the ***Strengthening Education Through Research Act (SETRA)***, legislation that values the critical role of research in developing effective practices to support positive outcomes for children and youth with disabilities.

Improvements outlined in SETRA that would benefit children and youth with disabilities, their families and the educators who work on their behalf include:

- Prioritizing special education research funding within the Institute of Education Sciences.
- Emphasizing the elimination of the achievement gap between students with and without disabilities.
- Increasing dissemination and collaboration with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).
- Increasing the pipeline of early career special education researchers.
- Ensuring peer reviewers have expertise in areas relevant to grant applications.

CEC commends the *Strengthening Education Through Research Act* prioritization of funding for special education research. As you know the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) – one of four centers authorized by SETRA – suffered a 30 percent cut to its budget in 2011. However, CEC has significant concerns that the actual funding amounts listed in the legislation remain inadequate to sufficiently address the nation’s special education research needs. This limited investment, coming as the result of rules adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives intended to rein in spending, is not enough to restore funding and may prohibit NCSER from fully achieving its mission.

NCSER will only be able to meet its noble goals if it receives an investment that allows special education research to thrive and grow. CEC looks forward to working with leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to build upon the improvements proposed by SETRA and ensure adequate funding levels to answer the needs of children, their families and the professionals who work on their behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah A. Ziegler".

Deborah A. Ziegler
Associate Executive Director
Policy and Advocacy Services
Council for Exceptional Children