Have You Seen the New Issue of *TEACHING Exceptional Children*?

The Jan.-Feb. 2020 issue of our research-to-practice journal, *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, is hot off the press and the perfect resource for your next great idea!

As the first issue with a focus on arts education, our latest installment is all about creating inclusive classrooms that incorporate the visual and performing arts.

Read the latest issue!

Why We Joined Others in Opposition of Vouchers: *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*

On Wednesday, the U.S. Supreme Court began hearing oral arguments in a landmark school choice case, *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*. The case focuses on the constitutionality of private school vouchers for use at religious schools, and the outcome will have a national impact.
In November, CEC signed onto a brief in support of the plaintiff in the case, arguing that vouchers strip students with exceptionalities of their rights and legal recourse under federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The brief notes that private schools often fail to ensure these rights and, "while limited services may be available to students in some private schools, they are at best incomplete and thinly funded."

View the amicus brief!

5 Ways to Prepare for #CEC2020

We are less than two weeks away from the CEC 2020 Convention & Expo in Portland, OR, on Feb. 5-8, and the countdown has officially begun. With 450+ sessions on the latest topics and trends, CEC 2020 is essential for anyone working to advance the success of children and youth with exceptionalities.

As we gear up for Portland, here are some things you can do to get ready and make the most of your convention experience.

1. Download the app.
CEC’s Mobile App is your convention planner. Use it to find and rate any session and stay up-to-date on meet-ups, socials, networking events, and more. To download, search “CEC Convention & Expo” in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

2. Check out the session browser.
With more than 400 professional sessions, 25 Teacher2Teacher sessions, and three General Sessions, the CEC 2020 program has something for everyone. Our Session Browser allows you to browse strands and find the sessions that interest you most based on keywords, topic area, and session type.

3. Follow #CEC2020.
Join the conversation and use #CEC2020 to connect with your fellow attendees, post photos, and share key takeaways and learnings. Don’t forget to follow us on Facebook,
Twitter, and Instagram, as we’ll also be posting important updates, quotes, videos, and more throughout the event.

New this year is the CEC/ISET Technology Playground, a dedicated area to discuss, discover, and explore the latest assistive and instructional technologies supporting students with exceptionalities. Make sure to schedule some time at the Tech Playground and see for yourself – you do NOT want to miss it!

5. Keep Portland weird.
The city’s reputation as a quirky food hub is well-known thanks to its many restaurants and food carts featuring a wide range of cuisines. Thirsty? Portland has more craft breweries than any other city in the world and is home to a myriad of microdistilleries, coffee roasters, and urban wineries. Once you’re done perusing the CEC Bookstore, head over to Powell’s City of Books (CEC staff’s #1 pick!), check out the Portland Winter Lights Festival, or go on a city hike. When it comes to exploring the city, the opportunities are endless.

If you haven't already, register today!

Policy Highlights

Senate Business Halts During Impeachment Trial

Last Thursday, all Senators were officially sworn in for the impeachment trial of President Trump, significantly hampering regular business. Read more.

House Votes to “Disapprove” the Borrowers Defense Rule

The House voted last week to void the Administration’s final rule on student loan forgiveness. Read more.
1st Annual Florida CEC Legislative Summit
Tallahassee, FL | January 26-28

CEC 2020 Convention & Expo
Portland, OR | February 5-7

Alaska CEC 2020 Statewide Special Education Conference
Anchorage, AK | February 15-19

NovaChat® 5 by Saltillo

The next generation of NovaChat® 5 is small but mighty for confident communication. Stop by booth #206 at CEC 2020 to check out the cool new features!

Teacher Prep Needs More Focus on Students With Disabilities, Report Says: To their detriment, teacher preparation programs 'do not center students with disabilities in their curriculum,' a new report from the Center for American Progress concludes.

School Districts Struggle With Special Education Costs: For decades, special education advocates have urged the federal government to fully fund IDEA. Here are some examples 'ripped from the headlines' of how the funding gap is affecting school districts.

Religious School Choice Case May Yield Landmark Supreme Court Decision: The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments Wednesday in one of the most significant K-12 education cases in years, Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue.
Special Report: Quality Counts 2020: Chance for Success: The first of three Quality Counts 2020 installments evaluates the U.S. on 13 family, school, and socioeconomic markers from the early years into adulthood that make up the EdWeek Research Center's Chance-for-Success Index.

Study: SEL program's impact on state test scores mixed: Researchers say student performance doesn't suffer when instructional time is spent on social-emotional learning, but academic gains might not be as significant as other large-scale studies suggest.

Teachers Are Divided on Whether Phonics Is Getting Too Much Attention, Survey Says: Literacy educators support a "balanced approach" to teaching early literacy and are divided when it comes to the importance of foundational skills like phonics instruction, according to a new survey from the International Literacy Association.

Study: Preschool expansion leads to gains for Massachusetts children: A study released Wednesday shows how the state used federal funds for early-childhood programs that led to positive impacts on early academic performance, especially among children whose home language was not English.

Preservice Teachers Are Getting Mixed Messages on How to Teach Reading: Research shows the benefits of phonics lessons in early-literacy instruction, but an Education Week survey found that teacher training programs may be offering mixed messages about best practices.
Researchers have identified 102 genes tied to autism spectrum disorder, 49 of which also are associated with other developmental delays: In what's being called the largest study of its kind, researchers say they've identified more than 100 genes associated with autism.

Report: Climate change literacy, early childhood focus shaping STEM in 2020: The 100Kin10’s 2019 Trends Report identifies increasing STEM teacher diversity, applying greater focus on STEM subjects in early childhood education, and a rise in environmental literacy in response to student activism and interest as trends that will shape STEM education in 2020; but, a persistent shortage of teachers remains a hindrance.

Education Department Launches New Civil Rights Outreach Initiative: While the U.S. Department of Education has largely focused on investigating complaints that schools have violated civil rights laws, a new center will focus on "proactive compliance" by providing technical assistance to schools and guidance to the public.