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| A unified voice promoting excellence in leaders of programs for students with disabilities |
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| Promotes professional membership |
| Provides professional learning |
| Practices professional leadership |

**Legislative Priorities 2014-2015**

The Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (GCASE) is a community of special education leaders who are the voice and vision of special education. Our vision is to provide a unified voice promoting excellence in leaders of programs for students with disabilities.

The members of GCASE respectfully request your consideration of the legislative priorities of special education leaders across the state of Georgia.

* We advocates for all children to have access to high quality mental health access at the level of care required to address their needs. Specifically, we would like Georgia to ensure collaboration among mental health agencies, education agencies and insurance carriers to utilize school-based mental health providers, community providers, and designated agencies are to establish and ensure quality programs. Medicaid as well as private insurance carriers should be required to provide coverage at a level commensurate with a child’s clinical need. This is true for any child with a mental health diagnosis but is particularly important for students who are reaching a severity where special education eligibility is present due to emotional and behavioral disabilities.
* We support full funding of the IDEA. Increased resources are needed in order for local districts to meet the required performance standards and outcomes for students with disabilities.
* We support the alignment of the IDEA and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).  Despite the many positive effects of ESEA, we have enduring concerns about the misalignment of the ESEA and IDEA and its impact on students with disabilities.

Specifically we support:

* Authorizing ESEA funding for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, to deliver tiered instructional interventions to students along with universal design for learning and school-wide positive behavioral supports systems; this applies to all general education students, including English learners;
* Assessing all students with disabilities utilizing appropriate assessments instruments;
* Revising standardized assessment provision to ensure access to a full range of access features, accommodations and assistive technology for assessments;
* Revising “highly qualified provisions to recognize the expertise of certified special education teachers without requiring extra burdensome certifications in core content areas;
* College and Career Readiness ensuring the inclusion all students with disabilities in lifelong planning;
* Students with Disabilities Served equally within Charter Schools.
* We oppose legislation that mandates/permits public school programs, facilities, or funding to be allocated to non-public school students through any form of vouchers, scholarships, or tuition tax credits for students with disabilities. If public funds are reallocated to private programs, we advocate for the accountable expenditure of these funds to be consistent with current federal and state mandates that apply to students with disabilities attending public schools.
* G-CASE supports the concept of MOE to ensure accountability for providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities but recommends that changes be made to ensure that appropriate services are provided versus the amount of dollars spent on special education.