Administrative and Fiscal Identity

**CEC Policy Manual, 1997  
Section Three, Professional Policies, Part 1 Chapter 4**

**Administrative and Fiscal Identity**

* Responsibility Defined
* Leadership
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**Responsibility Defined**

Responsibility for administering special education programs should be clearly defined so that accountability for service effectiveness can be maintained.

In the administration of the special education system, it must be clarified (a) who is to be responsible for various functions and decisions and (b) what procedures can be developed to provide adequate protection of the individual child's rights. When services essential to the improvement of a child's condition are rendered under several administrative auspices, as is so often the case with children and youth with exceptionalities, which agent or agency is to be responsible for providing which aspects of treatment needs to be clearly defined at every level to produce the most effective outcomes for the child.

The major functions commonly assigned to administrators of special education programs include the following:

a.Establishing and maintaining effective ways of identifying children with special education needs.  
b.Assessing the special needs of children to determine what kinds of special programs and services should be provided for them.  
c.Planning and organizing an appropriate variety of interventions or program alternatives for children with exceptionalities.  
d.Marshalling the resources needed to conduct a comprehensive program of special education.  
e.Using direction, coordination, and consultation as required to guide the efforts of all those who are engaged in the special education enterprise.  
f.Conducting evaluation and research activities to reflect new emphases and to incorporate new knowledge and constantly improve special instruction and the quality of special services.  
g.Involving community representatives in planning programs to ensure their understanding and support.  
h.Conducting programs for staff development, such as inservice or continuing education.

**Leadership**  
The Council urges state/provincial and local education agencies to develop administrative structures on a policy-making level and to staff such programs with professionally qualified personnel who can provide dynamic leadership. Creative leadership at all levels of government is imperative for the development and improvement of programs for children and youth with exceptionalities. For this reason, The Council supports efforts to improve the quality of leadership and administrative operations in all phases of educational endeavor.

**Administrative Hierarchy**  
Every school system should contain a visible central administrative unit for special education programs and services which is at the same administrative hierarchical level as other major instructional program units.

The parameters of regular and special education should be articulated so that children may be afforded equal educational opportunity through the resources of either or both instructional programs.

Such articulation should be achieved through sensitive negotiations between the responsible agents of both regular and special education who meet in full parity. To protect the rights of all children to equal educational opportunity, the policy-making bodies of school systems should include administrators of both regular and special education.

Programs to meet the needs of children with exceptionalities are no less important than those designed to meet the needs of other children. The importance of programs to meet human needs should not be judged on the basis of the number of clients the programs are expected to serve.

**Special Education and School Budgets**  
Success of all education programs is dependent on the provision of adequate funding. This is essentially true of programs for children and youth with exceptionalities. Often funding for such programs becomes buried in general budgeting procedures. In such cases, children and youth with exceptionalities do not have the opportunity to have their needs directly considered by the decision-making bodies of government. Therefore, The Council urges that efforts be undertaken to assure that budgetary provisions for children and youth with exceptionalities be clearly identified. The Council opposes general funding procedures that would circumvent direct aid to programs for children and youth with exceptionalities.

Since children with exceptionalities have the same rights to education as other children, the educational needs of children with exceptionalities cannot be delayed until the needs and service demands of the majority of children have been satisfied. Educational resources are always likely to be finite. The application of the principle of "the greatest good for the greatest number" to determine which children's needs shall be met first directly contradicts our democratic society's declared commitment to equal educational opportunity for all children. History confirms that the social injustices and ill effects that flow from the application of the majority-first principle to educational budgeting are too serious for this principle to be used in educational financing.

Children with exceptionalities constitute a minority of the school population. The programs serving them represent a comparatively high financial investment in relation to the numbers of children served. In some school systems, money allocated to special education is regarded as an alternative to the improvement of regular school programs. The climate of competitive interests thus produced can jeopardize the stability of special education services.

The interests of the community are ill served if competition for funds is conducted on the basis of special interests. What is needed, rather, is the cooperation of both regular and special educators to educate the public in the desirability of meeting the needs of all children without discrimination or favoritism.

There is every reason to believe that the public interest is best protected when the responsibility for the deployment of public resources is placed in the hands of persons who are qualified by training and experience to make the necessary judgments. Thus, special education should play an active role in determining how resources are to be allocated. However, the community has the ultimate responsibility to determine goals and to evaluate performance.

Resources should be allocated to special education on the basis of programs to be provided, not on the basis of traditional categorical incidence estimates.

The mandate to provide all children with equal educational opportunities requires that all educators, whether regular or special, be equally concerned with the funding of both regular and special education programs. No school system can fulfill the mandate if rivalries for dollars are permitted to supersede the needs of children.

The Council for Exceptional Children.  
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