

**COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Leadership Development Committee
Annual Report for 2020**

Mikki Garcia, Chair

January 15, 2021

1.0 Committee Purpose(s)

Identify, cultivate, recruit, and orient, a well-qualified and diverse pipeline of volunteer leaders for board and committee positions that are responsive to the current and future needs of CEC.

2.0 Committee Members and Terms of Office (The LDC’s operating cycle is Sept. 1 – Aug. 31)

Mikki Garcia, Ed.D. Chair	2022
Anna M. Adl, M.S.	2020
Sheila B. Bailey, Ph.D.	2021
Robin D. Brewer, Ph.D.	2021
William K. Bogdan, Ed.D.	2021
Maureen O’Leary Burness, M.S.	2020
Marilyn Friend, Ph.D.	2020
Kelly J. Grillo, Ph.D.	2022
Gloria Niles, Ph.D.	2022
Zachary Walker, Ph.D.	2021
Mary Lynn Boscardin, Ph.D. (ex officio, non-voting)	2020

* Governance Workgroup Representative

The following committee members were appointed in April 2020 for terms ending Aug. 31, 2023.

Amy Braddock, M.A.
Anne Sloboda, Ph.D.
Jonté (JT) Taylor, Ph.D.

3.0 Objectives (Annual) and Work Plans

- Develop and widely disseminate a revised application for the Board of Directors which, to the greatest extent possible, reflects the need for board applicants who have knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) relevant to CEC’s strategic plan and the mission of the board.
- Update the rating rubric to reflect the revised board application.
- Conduct an anonymous needs assessment of the board of directors conducted by a third party in order to determine the KSAs needed by board applicants.

- Slate up to six candidates for election by the membership to fill positions on the board for terms beginning January 2021.
- Develop a framework for a leadership development curriculum, then begin developing curriculum and assessment components.
- Determine the cycle for the Leadership Development Programs, including recruiting,

4.0 Summary of Achievements Related to Objectives and Work Plans (Chronological)

- CEC 2020 Convention Activities
 - Eight of the 10 LDC members were able to attend CEC 2020.
 - Unfortunately, due to late receipt of the schedule of division and caucus meetings at the convention from the two headquarters hotels, committee members were able to schedule few presentations about leadership opportunities.
 - The LDC held a two-hour meeting. Agenda items including refining the board application candidate statements and discussing LDC interview questions and process.
 - Committee members presented a “Be a CEC Leader” Session on Thursday afternoon. Other volunteer leaders (e.g., board members, past presidents) were invited to attend to participate in/facilitate small group discussions. Intended learner outcomes:
 - learn tips for getting involved;
 - obtain information about CEC’s leadership opportunities at multiple levels;
 - interact with CEC leaders who can answer questions about paths to leadership and help them network;
 - identify next steps in their own leadership journey
 The majority of the session was small group discussion, facilitated by committee and board members, focused on the following questions:
 - What prompted you to join CEC?
 - What motivates you to continue your membership?
 - What are your CEC goals - both personal and professional?
 - What type of engagement are you interested in?
 - Micro-volunteering
 - Local or Student Chapter
 - State/Provincial Unit
 - Special Interest Division or Sub-division
 - International Headquarters
 - What do you need to help further your engagement at any level (e.g., contact info, resources, support, other)?
 - Committee members also hosted two informal networking sessions, one immediately following the “Be a CEC Leader” session on Thursday at the Hyatt, and one in CEC Central during exclusive expo hours on Friday morning.
- 2019 Annual Report
 - The committee submitted its second “Annual Report” to the Representative Assembly, as required by CEC Bylaws.
 - Immediate Past President Mary Lynn Boscardin presented highlights of the committee’s top achievements for calendar year 2019.

- The 2019 Annual Report and 2019 Top Achievements are available on CEC's website at <https://www.cec.sped.org/About-Us/CEC-Leadership/Committees/LDC-Annual-Reports>
- LDC Application for 2020 Terms
 - For the first time, the application required a brief video response (100-word limit) from applicants.
 - A total of 15 completed applications were received.
 - Committee members rated them based on the rubric.
 - A blind compilation of all scores was provided to the committee for its preliminary slating call on March 9, 2020.
 - Seven candidates were unanimously selected to move forward to the interview round.
 - The committee is holding interviews between Mar. 16 and Mar. 30. Interviews are being recorded for committee members not able to participate in person.
 - The second slating call will be held on Apr. 7.
 - Slated candidates will be presented in a motion to the board for appointment during the board's April 18th meeting.
- The LDC developed and deployed an anonymous survey to obtain a self-assessment of board members rating of their knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). This, in addition to the annual board needs assessment, is important in helping the LDC understand what KSAs to look for in potential candidates, as differing strengths lead to a diversity of perspectives.
- Board Member-at-Large Application for 2021
 - Revised the application for Member-at-Large based on revisions to the LDC application, which includes a video response, and a question about how applicants heard about the opportunity.
 - Updated the rating rubric based on new questions.
 - Developed Board of Directors Call for Applications timeline and Marketing and Communications Plan, to include eblasts, webpage with application information, rotator, announcements in Special Education Today and via social media.
 - The deadline for applications was 3:00 p.m., May 13th.
- Revised "Diversity" Question
 - Previous Question: Given CEC's view of diversity, how do you describe your own diversity?
 - Revised Question: Given CEC's view of diversity, what facets from your life provide a context for the various experiences and perspectives you bring to discussions and your work?
- Revised the president elect application and interview questions to try to gain insight into how candidates come up with new approaches and solve problems.
- Given that all president elect candidates have served on the Board, the requirement for letters of recommendation was eliminated.
- Two orientation sessions were developed for new committee members, which were held on June 22 and June 29. Incoming members were assigned required reading (2019-2020 operating year reports and comprehensive list of challenges/solutions) to complete prior to the July LDC meeting.
- Conducted a survey of committee members to identify top priorities for the July meeting. A subgroup of the committee developed the agenda and deliverables.
- 18 applications were received for the Board. The committee reviewed the applications and conducted its initial slating call on June 23 and online (recorded) candidate interviews between July 6 and July 17, 2020.

- A subgroup of the committee was formed to explore ideas for a session for the Leadership Institute.
- July Virtual Meeting

The LDC held its annual meeting virtual July 23-25. Committee members whose terms began Sept. 1 also participated.

The first day was a “getting to know you” session where new members were able to spend time in small groups to “meet” the other members. As for the board, it was felt that this time to socialize and chat was a critical step in their onboarding and understanding the LDC’s culture.

Day two began with a plenary session, including:

- Reviewing LDC purpose, functions, goals, accomplishments, etc.
- Finding common ground (retrospective, current status, looking forward)
- Identifying successes and opportunities
- Informing the work of the small groups

The remainder of the day was spent in small groups designed to advance the work of the LDC in specific areas by prioritizing the work in each area and developing detailed charges to the workgroups (including timelines). A template was provided for each group’s scribe to take notes in the plenary session of impressions and perspectives shared by LDC members as a starting point for their work.

The three workgroups focused on:

1. Developing Volunteer Leadership /Leadership Development Program
Who is the audience? Should a mentoring program/component be included? How do we identify/create opportunities for the range of experiences of our members?
2. Promotion Activities, Strategies, Communications, Outreach
Convention, Leadership Institute, units/divisions, pipeline, “ambassadors,” post COVID-19 realities and implications for LDC work and outcomes, other.
3. Candidate Search/Selection Process for LDC and Board of Directors
Marketing, board needs assessment, application, rubric, rating matrix, interviews/conversations, thought leaders, etc.; eventually will need to identify committee chairs, committee members.

The final day was another plenary session where workgroups presented their decisions and recommendations. The LDC also went through a process of reaching consensus and agreement after each presentation.

- Workgroups have continued their work from the July meeting.
- As of the new committee cycle (9/1), the committee is meeting monthly instead of every three weeks as for the previous two and one-half years.
- The committee met on August 4. Agenda items included identifying overlaps between the “Communication” and “Application” Workgroups.

- For the meeting on August 25, the committee met briefly then split into workgroups in order to have a final “action plan” to report out on workgroup progress.
- The September 4 meeting provided an opportunity for workgroup presentations in order for the full committee to ask questions and further identify any overlaps or assumed responsibilities that might fit better with a different group.
- Leadership Institute
 - Committee members Mikki Garcia and Marilyn Friend recorded a session for the Leadership Institute, Developing and Sustaining Great Leadership.
 - As volunteer-run entities, units and divisions must intentionally plan in order to "build a bench" that will sustain effective leadership over the long term. Successful volunteer management requires many of the same elements as a traditional human resource management system. View the recorded session and learn what that means and what you may not have thought about in order to successfully recruit and retain volunteers.
 - The format for this session included a recorded webinar for unit/division leaders to view at their own convenience, followed live online Town Hall meetings with members of the LDC.
 - During the interactive live sessions, participants identified leadership opportunities within their unit or division; described various pathways to those opportunities; identified real or perceived barriers to entering or advancing in the ranks of leadership; and explored ways to help existing and potential leaders overcome those barriers.
 - The response to the sessions was overwhelmingly positive, with participants indicating they wanted similar opportunities in the future. 1
- The October 12 meeting provided an opportunity for the LDC to discuss potential board motions.
- Following the October 12 meeting, the LDC had online discussions regarding the LDC and Board application questions and made minor revisions. The LDC and Board application rating rubrics were revised accordingly.
- The meeting on November 9, and some follow up discussions, centered around fine-tuning a Reference Form, to be used in place of letters of recommendation; the status of the subcommittee and reviewing and proving input on a Leadership Development Program Plan; and discussion about election engagement. NOTE: The LDC does not have a role in carrying out the election but does have an interest in participation.
- At its meeting on December 7, the committee: reviewed LDC and Board Call for Application timelines; reviewed upcoming board surveys on board competencies and board and president elect application questions; and considered accommodations to facilitate re-applications.
- During it’s January 11 meeting, the committee: reviewed the LDC characteristics grid relative to recruiting members; provided updates on recruitment efforts; reviewed the results of the Board Competencies Survey and discussed how the information can be used by both the LDC and the board; and discussed the LDC criteria that “Candidates must be an active member of CEC for the past three years, with a minimum total of five years membership.”

5.0 Important Observations

Clarification of Slating Processes

The LDC clarified two specific issues in response to an inquiry from the President and Executive Director:

- The role of the LDC in the president elect process
- The assumption that previous service on the board assures a board member will be slated for election for a second term

Background Information on the Board Recruiting and Slating Process

An application was developed and advertised widely. The eighteen applications received by the submission deadline of June 1st were reviewed and scored individually and separately by the 10-member LDC. The initial application included written responses, as well as a video recorded by the candidates in response to a given prompt. Each application was evaluated based on a rubric. A blind compilation of scores was provided to the committee prior to its first slating call.

The LDC met on June 23rd to discuss the candidates and make a recommendation as to who would advance to the interview round. Of the eighteen candidates, ten were selected. There was no percentage determined in advance; the committee deliberated on the scores and decided on a cutoff based on deliberations.

The process used in the second round included providing the candidates with a specific prompt (24 hours in advance) that would begin a dialogue and additional topics that could possibly be addressed during the conversation, each facilitated by the same two committee members.

To start the conversation, interviewees were asked to pick one of CEC's core values and provide an example of how he/she has demonstrated this core value in his/her professional OR personal life and how he/she would carry this value into actions and deliberations on the board. Further clarification was sought in response to the candidate's answers to the questions.

The members of the LDC not facilitating collected qualitative data on a shared document in real time, which was then used in the discussions that led to the final slate. Committee members also rank ordered the interviews.

As a committee, we sought a conversational tone, having learned from the more formal interview process with LDC candidates. The interview process will continue to be conversational, informal, and expansive to the application itself with set starting questions and specific prompts/probes. The interviews were a valuable resource and helped us to recognize candidates' soft skills. What we learned from each candidate enhanced their applications, and in turn, supported our decisions.

The final slate determined by the committee took into consideration board characteristics, application ranking, qualitative and quantitative data from the conversations and the deliberations of the committee. The committee reached 100% agreement.

The Role of the LDC in the PE Process

No special status was given to candidates who applied for the PE position. These individuals met the criteria and self-selected to run. In fact, the LDC had no involvement in the PE process except to develop the application that was used by the candidates and notify eligible candidates of the opportunity. This decision was made in conjunction with the Executive Director in a conference call on April 13, 2020.

Board Member Applications for a Second Term

As per CEC's bylaws, board members may apply for a second term, but an application for a second term does not guarantee slating. The process is extremely competitive; board members are rated against other candidates. This is not the first year that a board member has applied for a second (or third) term and not been slated. One goal of any board should be to have a healthy and consistent turnover so that the experience and expertise of existing board members is infused with novel ideas and fresh energy of new board members. An additional goal should be to actively seek diverse new members whose skills fill a need or complement those of existing Board members. That is not at all to say that any current board member who scores well on the application and the interview is not fully considered for slating.

The LDC has worked very hard to develop a process that will produce the best candidates. The procedures used to develop this slate were fair and defensible. Our committee continually seeks ways to improve, and each time we have gone through this course of action, we believe we have improved it in some way to get closer to a process that will indeed slate individuals who best meet the needs of the board. We are very confident that we have met that goal this year.

6.0 Challenges Encountered and Solutions Identified

Scope of Work

Challenge: The committee is dedicated to meeting its charge to identify, nurture and develop leadership potential and skills in emerging leaders. However, the demands on the time from members is becoming unsustainable when looking at addressing and successfully implementing the broad duties of the committee included in the board-approved recommendations from the Governance Workgroup. A number of them have been fully or partially implemented. Full implementation of others will take several years. And still others may be beyond the bandwidth of the current committee.

The duties of the committee include:

- Conduct an annual needs assessment to determine board leadership needs.
- Assemble a confidential, ongoing list of prospective board and committee members that addresses the needs of the organization as determined by the gap analyses over several years.
- Cultivate and recruit a diverse pipeline of potential board and committee members.
- Provide to the board the names and qualifications of candidates for appointment to the board and as committee chairs.

- Provide to committee chairs, or chair designate where one exists, the names and qualifications of candidates for appointment to committees.
- Ensure orientation of new board and committee members each year.
- Prepare an annual schedule for board, standing and advisory committee member appointments.
- Review the basic responsibilities and “best practices” literature of nonprofit boards in order to identify or create training and assessment tools.

The duties that the committee feels are the most critical have been the most challenging. These are:

- Create a plan for ongoing leadership development for the board, the LDC, and standing and ad hoc committees.
- Produce and periodically update a leadership development curriculum for prospective board and committee members.

Solution: In October 2020, the Board of Directors approved establishment of a Leadership Development Program Subcommittee (LDPS) of the LDC. The LDPS is charged to organize, implement, and evaluate training and orientation programs; create communications plans and marketing/promotional activities and events; and to facilitate collaboration across CEC units and divisions.

Timing of Board and Officer Application and Election/Appointments:

Challenge: In April 2020, the LDC reported that, because of the timing of calls for applications for the board and officers, interested board members in their third year on the board must choose between applying for one or the other.

Solution: Following examination of the timelines for the board call for application and election and the call for applications and appointment of President Elect, with agreement of the President and Executive Director, the appointment of President Elect was moved from the November board meeting to the July board meeting. Final slating of board candidates takes place after the July board meeting, thus allowing qualified President Elect candidates to run for that position, as well as a second term on the board.

Identifying Board Needs Relative to Candidate Recruitment

Challenge: The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) seeks to find the most well-qualified, appropriate candidates for board positions who will bring a diversity of perspectives, characteristics and knowledge to meet the future needs of the board. To that end, the LDC needs information from the board that will help it better identify candidates for election who best meet the needs of the board, and not simply those who might seem the most well-qualified individual board members, without taking the collective board into consideration.

Beyond demographics (age, gender, professional role, location, etc.), the LDC seeks to identify topical knowledge areas related to special education and technical skills or competencies (e.g., finance, business mindset, social media maven, marketing, policy) that potential board members may have.

Solution: The chair requested that the President develop a board workgroup to identify professional knowledge areas and technical competencies or skills of board members and potential board members with the purpose of creating a scale for board members to rank themselves. The results of the board rankings will be used by the LDC to help with its final slating of candidates for election for terms beginning in 2021.

Candidate Interviews

Challenge: The committee felt that the LDC candidate interviews did not provided the insights into the more personal dispositions that they were intended to.

Solution: Board candidates will be engaged in a less structured “conversation” to see if it provides better results.

7.0 Comments, Questions for the Board of Directors

Continuing Challenges Being Addressed:

Unit/Division Input/Communication

Despite postings on their communities and reaching out directly to divisions and units, few recommendations or suggestions for applicants are received. Lack of responsiveness on the part of units and divisions continues to be a frustration, as has been previously reported.

This year, the LDC application included the question “How did you hear about the opportunity to apply for the LDC?” More than half heard about the opportunity from a member of the LDC or CEC’s website. This same question is included in the board application.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Special Education Today	5.41% 2
CEC Social Media	10.81% 4
CEC Website	21.62% 8
CEC Community Posting	5.41% 2
Leadership Development Committee Member	32.43% 12
Another CEC Member	10.81% 4
Unit/Division Communication / Website	5.41% 2
Other	5.41% 2
If you chose other, please specify.	Responses 2.70% 1
TOTAL	37

The committee reminded the board of the importance of its partnership in the identification and recruitment process.

Financial Support

The time commitment for committee members, which included a call every three weeks (from May 2018 through August 2020; now monthly), is roughly 10-15 hours per month

during slower months and 15-20 during heavier months. The latter is mainly during the calls for applications for the LDC and the Board, which fall one after the another (and includes reviewing and rating applications, participating in/viewing interviews and two slating calls), and preparing for and conducting events at the convention.

Members spent between six and eight hours involved in convention-related events this year (including a two-hour committee meeting, a session, and two networking sessions), and even more in 2019. In 2020, due to late receipt of the schedule of division and caucus meetings at the convention from the two hotels, committee members were able to schedule few presentations about leadership opportunities, as opposed to being able to meet with almost every division and caucus last year.

Committee members receive no financial support to attend the convention and take time when they could be attending professional development events to carry out committee responsibilities. This could prevent important leadership development events from being conducted at the convention because well-qualified potential committee members do not have the financial means to attend.

- 7.0 Recommendations for Action by the Board of Directors
None