

**COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN**  
**Representative Assembly**

**FAQs**  
(October 2019)

**What is the Representative Assembly?**

The Representative Assembly (RA) is the membership advisory body of CEC. It brings the voice and perspectives of the members to the work of CEC. It plays a key role in communicating between units, divisions, the student membership, and CEC about issues, policies, priorities, and activities of the Council. The RA meeting still has some formal procedures and time-honored traditions, but CEC truly wants input from all its members about what members need and want to help inform CEC's future direction, programs, products, and services.

(For purposes of this document, the word "unit" will refer to units, divisions, and the student membership.)

**Who are members of the Representative Assembly?**

- Each active unit can have 2 representatives.
- Each unit determines whether Representatives are elected, appointed or serve by virtue of holding a particular office in the unit. Ideally, Representatives should have staggered, two-year terms.
- The CEC President is the presiding officer of the RA. The President and President Elect are voting member; all other board members are non-voting members of the RA.

**What are the primary responsibilities of the Representative Assembly?**

- Act as a forum to examine ideas, strategic directions, activities, and other issues for CEC.
- Identify, discuss, and advise the Board of Directors on positions CEC should take on issues related to the field of special education and related services and special education as a profession.
- Examine key public policy issues and initiatives and advise CEC and the Board of Directors in developing policy and direction setting.
- Inform the Board of Directors, units, and committees/workgroups about membership issues, concerns, needs, and perspectives on initiatives and activities.

**What are my responsibilities as a Representatives?**

- Solicit input from your unit's members in order to represent your unit at the RA meeting at the annual convention and in online discussions.
- Report to your unit's board and membership on activities of the RA and CEC.
- Inform your unit about actions, issues and/or advice forwarded to the Board of Directors.
- Communicate professional, organizational, and policy issues/concerns from your unit to the RA and/or Board of Directors.

**What qualifications should unit Representatives have?**

All representatives must be members in good standing within CEC and their unit. RA reps should possess these general qualifications:

- Effective communication skills.
- Knowledge of current issues unique to their unit.
- Be supportive of the mission and strategic direction of CEC.

- Willingness to get involved and engage with fellow members and other stakeholders in order to inform input on RA discussions.

#### **How much time should I plan to spend each year on RA business?**

You should plan to view an online orientation session (approximately 30 minutes) and attend the RA meeting during the CEC convention (approximately 3.5 hours). Online discussions, communicating with your unit's board, soliciting members' input on discussion items, and related activities will vary depending on the number of discussions in a given year but may require an additional 15 to 20 hours over the course of the year.

#### **How do I get input from my unit for online discussions and the annual meeting?**

- Notify your unit members about RA discussion topics through your unit's typical communications, such as a unit newsletter, list serve, social media accounts, and on your unit's website with a link to send comments
- Solicit input and comments from your board.
- "Advertise" at your annual conference (if the timing is appropriate) that you are seeking member input.
- You could ask your unit for a table where people can come talk to you during the conference.
- Use free online surveys (e.g., [www.zoho.com](http://www.zoho.com)).

#### **How do I get discussion/meeting materials?**

Materials for online discussions and the annual meeting will be sent via the RA's online community ([www.community.cec.sped.org](http://www.community.cec.sped.org)). Use the same user ID and password that you use to login to the CEC website. All materials will be "pushed out" to members via the discussion function but are also stored in the library for easy access. For questions about the RACommunity, contact Sharon Rodriguez ([sharonr@cec.sped.org](mailto:sharonr@cec.sped.org)).

#### **How are online input opportunities or discussions conducted?**

Online input opportunities or discussion are conducted through the RACommunity and may be facilitated by CEC staff, the RA Committee, or another appropriate person (e.g., a committee or workgroup chair). We'll provide as much notice as possible about upcoming discussions, and a limited time period is set for each discussion (typically 30 days).

#### **What happens at the annual meeting?**

- You must be registered for the convention in order to attend the RA meeting. You may register for the full convention or purchase a one-day pass for Friday. In addition to convention registration, you must register for the RA meeting by the Friday of the meeting. Details are provided annually.
- Wear your convention badge and the RA ribbon you receive at RA registration to and for the duration of the RA meeting.
- Once the meeting is called to order, you must wait to be seated if you arrive after that.
- The most important part of the meeting is the small group discussion portion. CEC is YOUR professional association. You can help CEC be a successful advocate and a relevant resource by providing input on behalf of your unit/division/the student membership. The actions that ultimately result from the RA discussion will positively impact not only CEC, but its units and divisions. You are helping all elements of CEC to be successful. You should sit with your unit's other Representative, if there is one in order to most effectively provide the input you have gathered.
- You must be present to vote.
- You can go to any microphone to speak when recognized, but time for comments is limited to allow as many representatives as possible to speak on an issue.
- You can wear normal convention attire.

- You can bring a lunch/snack.
- You can leave the room and return at any time after the meeting is called to order.

**What if I cannot attend the annual meeting at the Convention?**

If you cannot attend, your unit president can appoint an alternate. The unit president (or Chair of the Student and Early Career Committee for Student RA Representatives) must notify the [Executive Services and Governance Coordinator](#) as soon as possible prior to the RA meeting who the alternate will be. Alternates have full voting privileges and all other rights. The Representative who cannot attend is responsible for ensuring the alternate has the meeting materials. The sooner CEC can be notified the better so that the alternate can be granted access to the RA's online community.

**Who do I contact if I have questions or want to bring up an issue from my unit?**

"Technical" or "logistical" questions should be addressed to Sharon Rodriguez, CEC RA Committee Staff Liaison ([sharonr@cec.sped.org](mailto:sharonr@cec.sped.org)). Issues or topics you would like to suggest for discussion by the RA can be sent to Joe DeMarsh, RA Committee Chair (through June 30, 2020; <mailto:jdemarsh.mcec@gmail.com>) and Sharon Rodriguez, CEC RA Committee Staff Liaison ([sharonr@cec.sped.org](mailto:sharonr@cec.sped.org)). We want the RA to be engaged year-round, not just at the annual meeting!