



**SEASON'S GREETINGS FLORIDA CASE
MEMBERS**

**WISHING YOU AN ABUNDANCE OF HAPPINESS, A GLOW
OF HOPE AND A SPARKLING FUTURE FILLED WITH MANY
BLESSINGS!**



PLEASE JOIN ME IN WELCOMING
OUR NEW NATIONAL CASE MEMBER:

Aliya Killon- Sumter County

We are so delighted that you have joined your
professional organization!

Please visit our website at www.flocase.org where you will find a wealth
of information



CELEBRATING OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
(OSERS)

On Nov. 29, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (Public Law 94-142), now known as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. In adopting this landmark civil rights measure, Congress opened public school doors for millions of children with disabilities and laid the foundation of the country's commitment to ensuring that children with disabilities have opportunities to develop their talents, share their gifts, and contribute to their communities.

In the last 40 years, we have advanced our expectations for all students, including students with disabilities. Classrooms have become more inclusive and the future of children with disabilities brighter. Significant progress has been made toward protecting the rights of, meeting the individual needs of, and improving educational results for infants, toddlers, children and youths with disabilities.

Today, according to the 2013 Child Count, over 62 percent of students with disabilities are in general education classrooms 80 percent or more of their school day, and early intervention services are being provided to over 340,000 infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Since 1975, we have gone from excluding nearly 1.8 million youths with disabilities from public schools to

providing over 6.9 million students with disabilities special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs.

In 2015, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the passage of Public Law 94-142. While tremendous progress has been made over the years, we must continue the hard work and address the challenges that still exist. Although we are able to help many individual students to achieve their goals, we must strive to ensure that all children have the support they need and to find ways to meet each student's needs within the context of each school.

As we continue to raise the expectations for our students with disabilities, U.S. Department of Education disseminated a "Dear Colleague Letter: Clarification of FAPE and Alignment with State Academic Standards. It states, the primary vehicle for providing FAPE is through an appropriately developed individualized education program (IEP) that is based on the individual needs of the child. The policy letter titled "OSERS Policy Guidance on Free Appropriate Public Education" clarifies that IEPs for children with disabilities must be aligned with state academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled. Please see attachment for in depth information.



SENATE BILL 672



As you may be aware, our Florida legislative session begins Tuesday, January 12, 2016. There are many educational Bills to be considered (please see a listing of Bills provided to you several weeks ago) but SB 672 referred to as the "Educational Options" Bill remains on the forefront. The Bill is fifty-four (54) pages in length and is quite comprehensive! Please find below a condensed overview. I encourage you to review the Bill in its entirety so that you are well informed.

Summary: SB 672 codifies and modifies educational choice program provisions of the 2015-2016 General Appropriations Act in four policy areas.

1. The bill establishes mechanisms for the approval of unique postsecondary education programs tailored to the needs of students with intellectual disabilities and statewide coordination of information. Specifically, the bill includes two key components:

- A process through which postsecondary institutions in Florida can voluntarily seek approval to offer a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP) for students with intellectual disabilities; and
 - A Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (statewide coordinating center) for statewide coordination of information regarding programs and services for students with disabilities and their parents.
2. The bill awards incentive payments to school districts and charter schools that implement district-wide or school-wide, standard student attire policies applicable to students in kindergarten through grade 8. Each school district or charter school qualifies for a minimum award of \$10 per student if it implements such policy.
 3. The bill codifies and amends a number of provisions of the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Account (PLSA) program. The provisions increase student access, tighten accountability, and streamline administration.
 4. The bill codifies and amends provisions for the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) scholarship program.

Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 672 creates the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP); codifies and amends the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts Program (PLSA); codifies and amends the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (FTC); and codifies and amends standard student attire legislation.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 amended and extended the Higher Education Act of 1965 by adding new provisions including, but not limited to, supporting programs that provide students with disabilities with a quality higher education. The new provisions established:

- Comprehensive transition and postsecondary (CTP) programs for students with intellectual disabilities;
- Transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities (TPSID) grants to fund programs that promote the successful transition of students with intellectual disabilities into higher education; and
- National coordination of CTP programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Program CTP program means a degree, certificate, or non-degree program that meets specific criteria.

To have a CTP program that is eligible to participate in the federal student aid programs, an institution must submit an updated Electronic Application for Approval to Participate.

Federal Student Aid for Students in Federally-Approved CTP Programs

A student with an intellectual disability is authorized to receive federal financial aid from Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and Federal Work-Study programs if the student meets specific criteria and the student must provide documentation establishing that he or she has an intellectual disability.

Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts Program (PLSA)

Presently, the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts Program (PLSA) was established by the 2014 Legislature. The PLSA program provides the option for a parent to better meet the individual needs of his or her eligible child. Funds are distributed to an eligible Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO) to establish PLSA scholarship accounts for eligible students. Parents may use funds in the account to choose from a variety of approved items for the student, such as instructional materials, curriculum, specialized services by approved providers, enrollment in private school, assessment fees, and Florida Prepaid College Program contributions.

Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill also clarifies that 3 and 4 year olds who are high-risk are eligible for PLSA, and that a high-risk child who reaches six years of age must re-qualify under a different disability to continue program participation. The bill also reorganizes student requirements and responsibilities.

Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program

SB 672 modifies provisions of the Florida Tax Credit scholarship program (FTC). The purpose of the FTC program is to enable taxpayers to make private, voluntary contributions to SFOs for children of families that have limited financial resources so the parents can choose to send their child to an eligible private school.



FLORIDA CASE AWARD NOMINATIONS ARE IN!

On behalf of the CASE Executive Board, I am proud to announce that we have received nominations for the **three new awards** now available for ESE administrators in our state. They are as follows:

Rookie ESE Administrator of the year: This individual should be an administrator of special education programs that has worked in this position for three years or less. This person should demonstrate vision and leadership skills that have supported children with disabilities and their families. The winner of this award will receive a plaque, paid registration for our 2016 CASE Summer Institute (Florida CEC registration would be an alternative option) in June as well as the recognition of their peers at the Florida CASE Summer Institute and our Administrators Management Meeting (AMM) in the fall. Individuals nominated for this award does not need to be a member of CASE but must be a member of CEC.

Outstanding ESE Administrator of the year: This individual should be an administrator of special education programs that has worked in this position for five to 20 years, demonstrate consistent and outstanding vision and leadership for children with disabilities and their families and be recognized for the contributions they have made not only to their district but to their community and state. Individuals nominated for this award must be a current member of National CASE. Winner of this award will also receive a plaque, paid registration for the 2016 CASE Summer Institute, a beautiful gift basket and recognition at our 2016 CASE Summer Institute in June and our Administrators Management Meeting (AMM) in the fall. This individual may also be submitted as a nominee for the National CASE award.

Life Time Achievement Award: This individual should be an administrator of special education programs for twenty years or more and has demonstrated consistent and outstanding vision and leadership for children with disabilities and their families and be recognized for the contributions they have made not only to their district but to their community and state. The nominee for this award must be a current and longtime member of CASE. Winner of this award will receive a plaque, paid registration to the Florida CASE Summer Institute, National CASE or National CEC Conference in 2016, a beautiful gift basket and recognition at our 2016 Florida CASE Summer Institute in June and our Administrators Management Meeting (AMM) in the fall. This individual may also be submitted as a nominee for the National CASE award.

Stay Tuned! The Winners will be announced in our January Newsletter!



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“The quality of a leader is reflected in the standards they set for themselves.” ~ *Ray Kroc*



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM YOUR CASE BOARD:

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