

CAN NEWS

CEC's Children and Youth Action Network (CAN) is an organized group of volunteers who are dedicated to helping advance policy affecting students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. CAN seeks to (1) effect the necessary governmental changes at the local, state and federal levels which will make possible the implementation of CEC policies relating to the education of exceptional children; and (2) to further vitalize CEC units by providing meaningful vehicles for membership and CEC public visibility.

On December 26, President Bush signed the **Education Budget Bill** which provided \$13.9 billion to Title I programs for disadvantaged students, an 8.6 percent increase over fiscal 2007 appropriations. However, the amount is about 2 percent less than what was proposed for the program in a bill vetoed by the President earlier. The **Reading First** program was cut significantly under the legislation, paying the price on Capitol Hill for a series of highly critical reports over the past 15 months by the Education Department's inspector general that found favoritism for certain textbook publishers and other management problems in the program's early years.

Education advocates expressed disappointment over the modest increase for K-12 programs included in the bill. The measure will appropriate:

- **\$10.9 billion for state grants under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, a nearly 1 percent increase over the fiscal 2007 level of \$10.8 billion;**
- \$2.93 billion to help states improve the **quality of their teachers**, a 1.7 percent increase; and
- \$1.2 billion for **career and vocational education** programs, a 0.5 percent decrease.

Although discussions have been held during the past year to reauthorize the *No Child Left Behind Act*, there is no clear date as to when this law will actually be reauthorized by Congress. The intense debate persists with differing opinions and data. The National CEC continues to have dialogue with key players to advocate for students with disabilities. Look for more information on the CEC website, <http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PolicyAdvocacy/CAN/AboutCAN/default.htm>, regarding the recommendations made by CEC to Congress.

You can also sign up for CEC's Weekly Policy Updates at pubpol@cec.sped.org to stay informed about national trends and issues. Don't forget to share your success stories with the National CEC to help provide real ways IDEA funding has touched lives and has made a difference.

As the New Year begins, the presidential race becomes more active, soon the State Legislature will be in session, and the new *Policies and Procedures in Oklahoma for Special Education* will go into effect on January 31, 2008. Let us recommit ourselves to face the new challenges and seize opportunities for the improvement of the education for students with disabilities by being informed and active.

Remember that **Andrea Kunkel** will present current legal and legislative information at the annual spring conference during the last general session, **Wednesday – Feb. 6**.