

Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA)

Review Materials

Prepared for CEC's Children and Youth Action Network

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Introduction

The developmental, academic, and lifelong success of the nation's 7 million children and youth with disabilities relies on innovative research and development. Educators and parents alike depend on the availability of research-based strategies to support the early intervention and special educational needs of children and youth with disabilities.

"The developmental, academic, and lifelong success of the nation's 7 million children and youth with disabilities relies on innovative research and development."

In the four decades since the enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its right-to-education mandate, the experiences, expectations and accomplishments of children and youth with disabilities have improved dramatically. Despite these gains, extensive achievement and opportunity gaps remain. Continued access to timely and relevant research is critical to addressing these persistent challenges; arming special educators with research-based practices is necessary to supporting the achievement of children and youth with disabilities.

Examining the Federal Role in Education Research

CEC believes in a strong federal role for education research, especially research in special education. The federal government has a unique responsibility and opportunity to foster innovative research in topic areas of national importance while also identifying gaps in existing research and focusing on populations who are typically underrepresented in research agendas.

For too long, research focusing on children and youth with— has remained on the periphery of the education research agenda, though parents, educators and policymakers continue to seek answers to support the development and education of all children. Historically, the federal government sought to fill this void by supporting research and development, a critical and necessary contribution to the special education field. This federal support for special education research has led directly to the development of best practices that foster academic, developmental, and behavioral growth for children and youth with disabilities. Without direct federal leadership and investments, the momentum and support for special education research cannot be sustained.

Congress reaffirmed the important role of research in the education and development of our nation's children and youth when it required the use of scientifically-based interventions and strategies in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind. The National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) within

the Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, provides the nation’s over 400,000 special educators with tools to meet these requirements and improve outcomes for children and youth with disabilities.

Investing in Research that Improves Outcomes for Children and Youth with Disabilities

Since its inception in 2004, NCSER, within the U.S. Department of Education Institute for Education Sciences, has supported over 280 research projects totaling over \$450 million, thereby providing the special education community with a better understanding of how children with disabilities learn, the effectiveness of strategies and interventions, and how to assess their knowledge and skills.

NCSER funded grants have supported improved outcomes for children and youth with disabilities and have built a solid knowledge base in many areas including:

- Early intervention and early childhood special education;
- Mathematics, reading, writing, and language development;
- Behavioral interventions;
- Teacher quality;
- Transition to post-secondary education and career, independent living, and community inclusion; and
- Technology.

The reauthorization of the Education Sciences Reform Act represents the first opportunity to reflect on the implementation of the Institute for Education Sciences, and specifically review the National Center for Special Education Research which became a Center within IES after the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Prior to IDEA 2004, the Office of Special Education Programs, within the U.S. Department of Education, had the responsibility for overseeing the special education research agenda. While the move to IES has been largely positive, it has not come without challenges which must be addressed through statutory changes.

CEC’s ESRA Guiding Principles

ESRA must support high standards for special education research to lead to the identification of research-based practices that address the developmental, academic, and behavioral needs of children and youth with disabilities through:

- STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH
- PROVIDING RELEVANT RESEARCH TO BRIDGE THE RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE GAP
- EXPLICITLY RECOGNIZING SPECIAL EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION SCIENCES
- SUPPORTING THE VITALITY OF THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION SCIENCES BY FOSTERING STRONG , CONSISTENT LEADERSHIP

STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH

The National Center for Special Education Research has the primary responsibility for implementing a comprehensive, federal special education research agenda which addresses the needs of children and youth from birth through young adulthood who have varying disabilities and/or developmental delays. Special educators and parents of children with disabilities alike rely on high-quality research to inform implementation of interventions and practices. It is, therefore, vital that the National Center for Special Education Research have high expectations for quality of scientific inquiry and a peer review process that ensures grant applications are reviewed by individuals with relevant special education expertise. Therefore, the following changes must be made to ESRA:

CEC Recommends that Congress strengthen the mission of the National Center for Special Education Research by emphasizing the importance of promoting quality and integrity of scientific inquiry and supporting findings that provide the basis for improving academic and lifelong learning, similar to that which is outlined in the mission of the National Center for Education Research.

CEC Recommends that Congress require the Director of the Institute for Education Sciences to receive input from the Commissioners of the National Center for Special Education Research and the National Center for Education Research in the development and revision of peer-review standards and standards for conduct and evaluation of all research supported by IES.

CEC Recommends that Congress require the Commissioner of the National Center for Special Education Research (in addition to the Commissioner of the National Center for Education Research, as currently required), to develop procedures to be used in evaluating grant applications as part of the peer review process. These procedures must require that evaluations of special education grant applications are conducted by peer reviewers who have relevant expertise in special education.

PROVIDING RELEVANT RESEARCH TO BRIDGE THE RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE GAP

Over 400,000 special educators provide academic, developmental, behavioral, and functional support to over seven million children and youth with disabilities in our nation. From birth through young adulthood, special educators work with families, teachers, related service personnel, and school leaders to address the individual needs of children and youth with disabilities. Special educators rely on relevant and timely research to address the challenges they confront daily. To ensure that the special education research agenda is targeting current and emerging needs for knowledge across age levels and disability, routine public stakeholder input must be sought and collaboration between the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services must take place. Furthermore, IES must play a leadership role in efforts to ensure an adequate supply of future special education researchers who are committed to building and carrying out the special education research agenda. Therefore, the following changes must be made to ESRA:

CEC Recommends that Congress ensure adequate public opportunities for stakeholder input into the development of the research plan proposed by the Commissioner of the National Center for Special Education Research.

CEC Recommends that Congress require greater collaboration between the National Center for Special Education Research and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), particularly to identify gaps in the research and knowledge base that support effective special education practice; to develop a research agenda that is reflective of the needs of the field; and to disseminate research through OSER's established networks.

CEC Recommends that Congress recognize the important role of stakeholders in creating a responsive and relevant research agenda by requiring members of the public with relevant expertise to serve on the standing committees of the National Board for Education Sciences.

CEC Recommends that Congress direct NCSER to examine the special education researcher pipeline, with special attention to whether resources or other opportunities may be needed to ensure that the nation will have an adequate supply of highly trained scientists committed to continuing the research advances achieved to date in the education of children with youth with disabilities well into the mid-century and beyond.

EXPLICITLY RECOGNIZING SPECIAL EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION SCIENCES

In 2002, when the Education Sciences Reform Act was signed into law establishing the Institute of Education Sciences, it did not include authority for research related to the education of children and youth with disabilities. At that time, the federal special education research program was authorized by a different law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and administered by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education. When IDEA was reauthorized in 2004, it moved the special education research authority to ESRA, created a new administrative unit within IES, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), and transferred responsibility for the special education research program to NCSER. Many of the core provisions within ESRA must be updated to recognize special education and children and youth with disabilities, particularly in the IES mission, definitions, priorities, membership of the National Board for Education Sciences, and explanation of achievement gaps. In order for NCSER to be an equal partner within the IES structure, the following changes must be made to ESRA:

CEC Recommends that Congress revise the mission, definitions, functions, and priorities of the Institute for Education Sciences to strengthen the inclusion of special education, thereby recognizing the discipline's focus on developmental, academic, behavioral, and functional/transition outcomes of children and youth with disabilities from birth through adulthood.

CEC Recommends that Congress ensure that high-quality research methodologies utilized in special education, such as single-subject design, are permitted within research standards and requirements within IES.

CEC Recommends that Congress include disability in its list of populations that should not be discriminated against throughout the statute, including in its mission and duties.

CEC Recommends that Congress increase the number of voting members of the National Board for Education Sciences who have expertise in special education to reflect the addition of the National Center for Special Education in 2004.

CEC Recommends that Congress expand the limited focus of ‘achievement gaps’ to include gaps in academic performance between ESEA subgroups – such as students with disabilities – and others; and gaps at the top levels of achievement, to gain a fuller picture of the educational needs throughout the country.

SUPPORTING THE VITALITY OF IES BY FOSTERING STRONG, CONSISTENT LEADERSHIP

A robust and fully operational Institute for Education Sciences is necessary to adequately address the many research questions which exist in the education community. Its effectiveness depends in part on its ability to attract experienced, knowledgeable researchers to fill the roles of Director, Commissioner, and members of the National Board for Education Sciences. For five of the eight years since its creation, the National Center for Special Education operated with only a temporary Commissioner which resulted in leadership challenges. Some provisions in ESRA related to IES administration have presented barriers that have deterred many qualified candidates from taking on leadership roles; and the National Board for Education Sciences has operated without full representation in recent years, due to delays in Senate confirmation and statutory requirements as to when a member’s term commences. Therefore, the following changes must be made to ESRA:

CEC Recommends that Congress increase the pay scale for the IES Director and Commissioners to adequately compete with similar public/private sector opportunities to enable IES to attract top talent within the education research field.

CEC Recommends that Congress strengthen the authority of the IES research centers to secure methodological and substantive expertise on a permanent, temporary, or contractual basis as needed to most effectively carry out their mission.

CEC Recommends that Congress clarify that the term of members of the National Board for Education Sciences commences from the time of confirmation by the Senate, rather than from the time they are nominated, to avoid abbreviated terms of Board members.

Guiding Thoughts & Discussion Questions

CEC will put forth a series of recommendations to Congress to strengthen the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) next spring.

In preparation for ESRA reauthorization, CEC is soliciting feedback from its Children and Youth Action Network and its broader membership on changes and improvements that should be made to the law to better address the needs of children and youth with exceptionalities, the professionals who serve them and the research that supports implementation of best special/gifted education practices.

The following questions are meant to guide your thinking and conversation with your networks. Certainly, CEC encourages the CAN Network to consider, address, and raise additional issues relevant to ESRA reauthorization.

1. Do the proposed CEC ESRA Reauthorization Recommendations encompass the major issues confronting the special education research field? Please explain.
2. Do the proposed CEC ESRA Reauthorization Recommendations adequately address the inclusion of students with exceptionalities throughout all of IES? Please explain.
3. Do the proposed CEC ESRA Reauthorization Recommendations strengthen the National Center for Special Education? Please explain.

Education Sciences Reform Act: Brief History

The creation of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA) was prompted by decades of studies commissioned by the Federal government which showed that educational practices relied on an uncertain research base.

When Congress passed ESRA it created the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), thereby replacing its predecessor, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). According to the IES Director's Biennial Report to Congress in 2008, "IES was given a greater degree of independence from ED's political leadership than had been offered to OERI and was shorn of the many non-research functions that had accreted in OERI over the years. Further, it was given a clear statutory mission to conduct, support, disseminate, and promote the use of scientifically valid research."¹

Since its creation, IES has been viewed as increasing the quality of education research funded by the Federal government. In 2007, the Office of Management and Budget deemed IES "effective" stating, "since its creation by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, IES has transformed the quality and rigor of education research within the Department of Education and increased the demand for scientifically based evidence of effectiveness in the education field as a whole."²

The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act amended ESRA to officially establish the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), moving the special education research function away from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and into the Institute for Education Sciences.

This controversial shift of responsibility was met with resistance from the special education community as many – including CEC – feared that inclusion in IES might mean a dwindling of resources, uncertainty regarding the future of field-initiated research, lack of emphasis on small sub-populations, and a possible disconnect between implementation of IDEA programs and the research that would reinforce implementation. While some of these issues have not come to bear, CEC continues to be vigilant to ensure that special education research maintains its unique identity while integrating it into to the larger research agenda of the U.S. Department of Education.

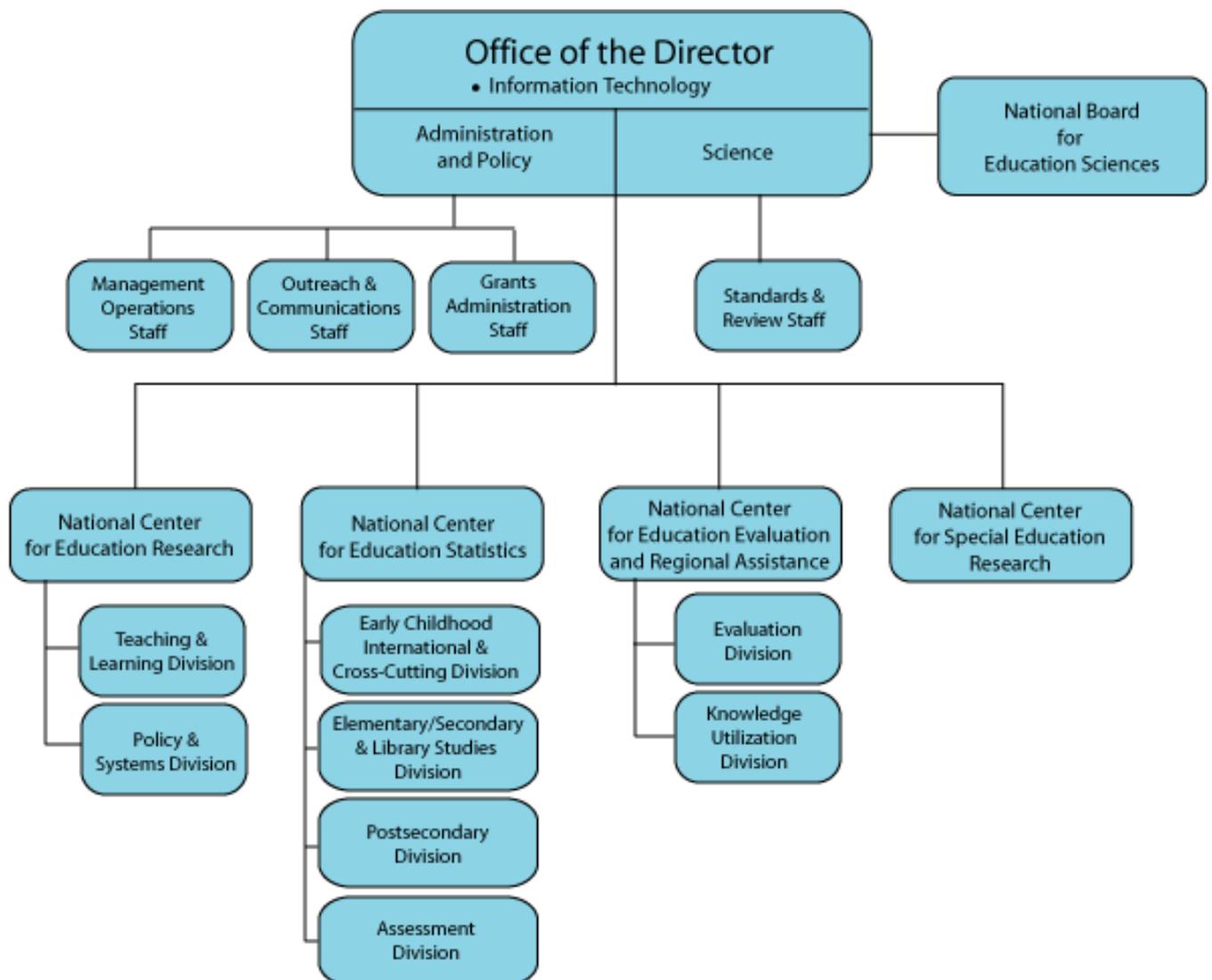
The mission of NCSER, under the direction of a Commissioner, is:

¹ Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2008). *Rigor and Relevance Redux: Director's Biennial Report to Congress* (IES 2009-6010). Washington, DC.

² Program Assessment, Institute of Education Sciences Research. (2007). Office of Management and Budget. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary/10009008.2007.html>.

- To sponsor research to expand knowledge and understanding of the needs of infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities in order to improve their developmental, educational and transitional outcomes;
- To sponsor research to improve services provided under IDEA;
- To evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of IDEA.

Institute of Education Sciences: Organizational Chart



Summary of Key ESRA Provisions

The following summary serves as a brief overview to key provisions of the Education Sciences Reform Act. While the full text of the legislation should be read for a complete understanding, CEC is providing the following outline of excerpts of the law for a basic understanding of the statute. Access the full text [here](#).

ESRA consists of four Titles which are outlined and briefly described below:

- I. Title I – Education Sciences Reform
- II. Title II – Educational Technical Assistance
- III. Title III – National Assessment of Educational Progress
- IV. Title IV – Amendatory Provisions

Title I: Education Sciences Reform : *Title I establishes the mission, overall structure and function of the Institute of Education Sciences including the creation of four National Education Centers which have specific focus areas, role and duties of the Director of IES, establishment of IES priorities, and role of the National Board for Education Sciences which are explained below:*

- a.) **Definitions:** CEC selected the following definitions as being applicable to our conversation. Please see the statute for full list of definitions:
 - (1) *Applied Research* means research (a) to gain knowledge or understanding necessary for determining the means by which a recognized and specific need may be met; and 2) that is specifically directed to the advancement of practice in the field of education.
 - (2) *Basic Research* means research a) to gain fundamental knowledge or understanding of phenomena and overservable facts, without specific application toward processes or products; and b) for the advancement of knowledge in the field of education.
 - (3) *Early Childhood Educator* means a person providing, or employed by a provider of, nonresidential child care services (including center-based, family-based, and in-home child care services) this is legally operating under State law, and that complies with applicable State and local requirements for the provision of child care services to children at any age from birth through the age at which a child may state kindergarten in that State.
 - (4) *Field-Initiated Research* means basic research or applied research in which specific questions and methods of students are generated by investigators (including teachers and other practitioners) and that conforms to standards if scientifically valid research.

- (5) *Scientifically Based Research Standards* means research standards that standards that—
- (A) apply rigorous, systematic, and objective methodology to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and present findings and make claims that are appropriate to and supported by the methods that have been employed;
 - (B) the term includes, appropriate to the research being conducted—
 - (i) employing systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
 - (ii) involving data analyses that are adequate to support the general findings;
 - (iii) relying on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable data;
 - (iv) making claims of causal relationships only in random assignment experiments or other designs (to the extent such designs substantially eliminate plausible competing explanations for the obtained results);
 - (v) ensuring that studies and methods are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, to offer the opportunity to build systematically on the findings of the research;
 - (vi) obtaining acceptance by a peer-reviewed journal or approval by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review; and
 - (vii) using research designs and methods appropriate to the research question posed.
- (6) *Scientifically Valid Education Evaluation* means an evaluation that—
- (A) adheres to the highest possible standards of quality with respect to research design and statistical analysis;
 - (B) provides an adequate description of the programs evaluated and, to the extent possible, examines the relationship between program implementation and program impacts;
 - (C) provides an analysis of the results achieved by the program with respect to its projected effects;
 - (D) employs experimental designs using random assignment, when feasible, and other research methodologies that allow for the strongest possible causal inferences when random assignment is not feasible; and
 - (E) may study program implementation through a combination of scientifically valid and reliable methods.
- (7) *Scientifically Valid Research* includes applied research, basic research, and field-initiated research in which the rationale, design, and interpretation are soundly developed in accordance with scientifically based research standards.

b.) Title I - Parts A through F:

- a. Part A – The Institute of Education Sciences: This Part details the overall mission, structure, and function of IES. Selected provisions have been included below.*
- i. Mission: Provide national leadership in expanding fundamental knowledge and understanding of education from early childhood through postsecondary study,

in order to provide parents, educators, students, researchers, policymakers, and the general public with reliable information about—

1. the condition and progress of education in the United States, including early childhood education and special education;
 2. educational practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to educational opportunities for all students;
 3. the effectiveness of Federal and other education programs.
- ii. **Functions:**
1. Conduct and support scientifically valid research activities;
 2. Widely disseminate findings;
 3. Promote the use, development, and application of knowledge gained from research activities;
 4. Strengthen national capacity to conduct, develop and disseminate research;
 5. Coordinate research within Department and Federal Government;
 6. Promote research to improve practice in classroom.
- iii. **Director of Institute of Education Sciences**
1. Appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate
 2. Serve a 6-year term
 3. Selected duties: Proposes priorities for the Institute to the Board; ensure methodology in research, development, evaluation and statistical analysis in consistent with standards; establishes procedures for technical and scientific peer review. (See full list in statute)
 4. May establish technical and scientific peer-review groups and scientific program advisory committees for research and evaluations.
 5. Director proposes priorities to Board, which are subject to a 60-day public commenting period -- which address education problems and issues such as --
 - a. Focusing on closing the achievement gap between high-performing and low-performing children, especially between minority and nonminority children and disadvantaged and more advantaged peers;
 - b. Ensuring that all children have the ability to obtain high-quality education (early childhood through postsecondary)
- iv. **National Board for Education Sciences**
1. 15 voting members appointed by the President with advice and consent of the Senate who shall serve a term of 4 years
 - a. Board shall have the following nonvoting ex-officio members: Director of the Institute of Education Sciences; Each of the Commissioners of the National Education Centers; the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Director of the Census; Commissioner of Labor Statistics; Director of the National Science Foundation

- b. Board shall consist of not fewer than 8 researchers in the field of statistics, evaluation, social sciences, or physical and biological sciences
 2. Advise and consult with the Director on policies of the Institute
 3. Consider and approve priorities proposed by Director
 4. Review and approve procedures for technical and scientific peer review
 5. Recommend to the Director individuals to serve as Commissioners of the National Education Centers
 6. May establish standing committees that will serve one of the National Education Centers to advise, consult with, and make recommendations to the Director and the Commissioner of the National Education Centers
 7. Board submits to the Director, Secretary of Education and appropriate congressional committees an annual report no later than July 1st each year that assesses the effectiveness of the Institute in carrying out its priorities and mission.
- v. ***Commissioners of the National Education Centers***
 1. Appointed by the Director
 2. Serve a period of not more than 6 years
 3. Specific requirements for each Commissioner of the four National Education Centers. For National Center on Special Education Research requirements are:
 - a. Shall have substantial knowledge of the Special Education Research Centers' activities including expertise in field of research, research management, and the education of children with disabilities
 - b. Duties include:
 - i. Improve services provided under IDEA to improve academic achievement, functional outcomes, and educational results for children with disabilities and developmental outcomes for infants or toddlers with disabilities
 - ii. Identify scientifically based educational practices that support learning and improve academic achievement, functional outcomes, and educational results for all students with disabilities
 - iii. Examine special needs of preschool aged children, infants, and toddlers with disabilities, including factors that may result in developmental delays
 - iv. Identify scientifically based related services and interventions that promote participation and progress in the general education curriculum
 - v. Examine State content standards and alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive impairment in terms of academic achievement,

individualized instructional need, appropriate education settings, and improved post-school results

- b. **Part B – [National Center for Education Research](#):** *This Part details the mission and structure of the National Center for Educational Research. For a full description, please read the statute.*
- i. **Mission:** To sponsor sustained research that will lead to knowledge and understanding of education to ensure access to a high-quality education; improve academic achievement; close the achievement gap; improve access to postsecondary education; support integration of education research; promote scientifically valid research findings to improve instruction and lifelong learning.
 - ii. **Commissioner for Education Research:** The Commissioner will maintain published peer-reviewed standards and standards for evaluation of all research; and will propose to the Director of IES a research plan
 - iii. **National Research and Development Centers:** The Commissioner shall support at least 8 research and development centers which address areas of national need. Topics for the research and development centers shall include not less than 1 of the following topics, and may include other topics if aligned to the mission of the Center:
 1. Adult Literacy
 2. Assessment, standards, and accountability research
 3. Early childhood development and education
 4. English language learners research
 5. Improving low achieving schools
 6. Innovation in education reform
 7. State and local policy
 8. Postsecondary education and training
 9. Rural education
 10. Teacher quality
 11. Reading and literacy
- **Please note: Currently, NCER supports 18 National Research and Development Centers including the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (as authorized under the Javits Act). A full list of the 18 Centers can be found [here](#).
- iv. **Standards for Conduct and Evaluation of Research:** The Commissioner shall:
 1. ensure that all research follows scientifically based research standards, develops other standards as may be necessary, reviews procedures utilized by NIH, NSF and other Federal departments and actively solicit recommendations from research organizations and members for the public in the development of standards;
 2. Establish a peer review system for all grants and cooperative agreements that exceed \$100,000
 3. Ensure that at least 50% of all funds appropriated per year are made available to fund long-term research programs of not less than 5 years.

- c. **Part C – [National Center for Education Statistics](#)** *This Part details the mission and structure of the National Center for Education Statistics. For a full description, please read the statute.*
- i. **Mission:** To collect, analyze and report on education information and statistics that is relevant and useful to practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and the public.
 - ii. **Commissioner for Education Statistics:** The Commissioner shall collect, report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data related to education at the preschool, elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and adult levels on a variety of activities including state and local reforms; early childhood school readiness; student achievement; secondary school completions, dropout; statistics related to teaching (i.e. professional development, highly qualified status, conditions for the workplace, supply/demand for teachers); violence/school safety. See the statute for a full list of activities.
- The Commissioner will also conduct and publish reports on the above activities; collect, analyze, cross-tabulate, and report population characteristics (such as gender, race, ethnicity ... but list does not include disability status); determine voluntary standards and guidelines to assist State educational agencies in developing statewide longitudinal data systems; conduct longitudinal and special data collections necessary to report on the condition and progress of education.
- d. **Part D – [National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance](#)** *This Part details the mission and structure of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. For a full description, please read the statute.*
- i. **Mission:** To provide technical assistance; conduct evaluations of Federal education programs; support synthesis and wide dissemination of results of evaluation, research, and products developed; and to encourage the use of scientifically valid education research throughout the country.
 - ii. **Commissioner for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance:** The Commissioner shall
 1. conduct evaluations
 2. widely disseminate information on scientifically valid research, statistics and evaluation on information relating to, at a minimum: core academic areas of reading, math, science; closing the achievement gap; educational practices that improve academic achievement; education technology; topics covered by the ERIC clearinghouse
 3. support the regional educational laboratories
 - iii. **Establishes the [National Library of Education](#):** Collects and archives information about education and serves as a reference to Federal employees and members of the public.
 - iv. **[Establishes Regional Educational Laboratories for Research, Development, Dissemination, and Technical Assistance](#):**

1. 10 Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) that will serve the needs of each region of the country and are led by a governing board
2. Funding for RELs based on number of LEAs served, number of students served, cost of providing services in geographical area
3. Mission of the RELs is to support applied research, development, wide dissemination and technical assistance by:
 - a. Providing training and technical assistance to SEAs, LEAs, school boards, and State boards of education about the implementation of ESEA/NCLB ; scientifically valid research in education on teaching methods, assessment tools, and curriculum
 - b. Develop and disseminate scientifically valid research focused on academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, and school improvement
 - c. Develop a plan for identifying and serving the needs of the region
 - d. Carry out applied research projects that are designed to serve the needs of the region
- e. **Part E – [National Center for Special Education Research](#)** (Note: IDEA 2004 amended ESRA to add this Center and re-designated subsequent Parts in this Title)
 - i. **Please read the statutory language authorizing the National Center for Special Education Research (attachment 1 or can be found [here](#) on pages 2799-2803).**
- f. **Part F – General Provisions** *This Part includes information regarding prohibitions, confidentiality, availability of data to the public, vacancies on the Board, fellowships, authorization of appropriations (\$400 million for FY 2003 and “such sums” for the subsequent 5 years).*

Frequently Used Acronyms: ESRA Reauthorization

Department: U.S. Department of Education

Director: Director of the Institute of Education Sciences

ESRA: Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (commonly referred to as No Child Left Behind)

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004

IES: Institute of Education Sciences

NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

NCSE: National Center for Special Education Research

NCEE: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance

NCES: National Center for Education Statistics

NCER: National Center for Education Research

OSEP: Office of Special Education Program, U.S. Department of Education

OSERS: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education

REL: Regional Educational Laboratories