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CEC Calls for Significant Steps to Reduce Racial, Ethnic Disparities in Special Education

Today, [CEC](#) called on the U.S. Department of Education to make sweeping changes to confront and remedy racial and ethnic disparities in special education by taking four actions:

1. Establish national criteria that states can adopt to better identify racial/ethnic disparities;
2. Expand resources to support states and school districts in identifying & addressing root causes;
3. Create an information hub for evidence-based resources in key areas: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, social-emotional learning, culturally responsive pedagogy and classroom management strategies (see sample resources below);
4. Increase the Federal IDEA investment to better allow for school-wide initiatives that benefit both students with and without disabilities.



Here's what we know: Students from certain racial and ethnic groups continue to be over-identified for special education, receive more discipline infractions, and are educated in more restrictive settings.

While a 2013 report by the [Government Accountability Office](#) found that African-American students continue to be over-identified as needing special education services, it noted that while complex this trend has persisted over time.

And, once in special education, students of color are suspended and expelled from school at far higher rates than their peers. In fact, 36% of African American male secondary students with disabilities were suspended at least once in 2009-10 as compared to 17% of their Caucasian peers, according to [The Center for Civil Rights Remedies](#). (More data on discipline & students with disabilities can be found [here](#).)

While Congress tried to address this issue in the 2004 rewrite of IDEA, states and schools continue to struggle and need guidance, support and resources to systemically address disparities. With the U.S. Department of Education now considering next steps, CEC urges for an honest reflection of the issue met with practical resources to help confront and remedy this critical challenge.

Check Out These CEC Journal Articles:

- [CEC Book: Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports](#)
- [TEACHING Exceptional Children: Special Issue on PBIS](#)
- [A Progressive Plan for Building Collaborative Relationships With Parents from Diverse Backgrounds](#)
- [Changing Behaviors by Changing the Classroom Environment](#)
- [A Practitioner's Guide to Implementing a Differential Reinforcement of other Behaviors Procedure](#)
- [Exceptional Children: Special Issue on Equity/Cultural Diversity](#)
- [Disparate Access: The Disproportionality of African American Students With Disabilities Across Educational Environments](#)