



Researching Learning Challenges Competition

Overview

Approximately 7.1 million students in American public schools received special education services in 2018-2019 (Citation: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp). Understanding how to support students with special needs is central to success as an educator. This competition offers high school students the opportunity to explore deeply and to develop recommendations regarding effective educational supports for students with special needs.

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) groups students into fourteen disability categories:

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| 8. Autism | 1. Orthopedic impairment |
| 9. Deaf-blindness | 2. Other health impairments |
| 10. Developmental delay | 3. Preschool disabled |
| 11. Emotional disturbance | 4. Specific learning disability (e.g., dyslexia) |
| 12. Hearing impairment | 5. Speech or language impairment |
| 13. Intellectual disability | 6. Traumatic brain injury |
| 14. Multiple disabilities | 7. Visual impairment |

This year's competition focuses on Autism. According to IDEA, Autism is defined as "a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences" (Citation: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.8/c/1/i>). Due to their desire for consistency, structure, and routine, individuals with autism experience unique challenges when schools are required to implement distance learning. This disruption to the normal school day, along with the potential loss of extra support and specially designed instruction, can cause immense learning challenges and increase symptoms of anxiety and depression.

The purpose of this competition is to work collaboratively to learn more about Autism and to produce a research-supported presentation to explain and to advocate for positive practices in schools to support the education of students with Autism.

This is a chapter competition. Students are encouraged to embark on the research using traditional sources as well as primary sources (ex. conducting interviews with individuals impacted by this disability or professionals who support individuals with this disability, etc.). Then team members should discuss the research in order to determine recommendations for their presentation. The chapter must work as a team to develop an 8-10-minute, research-supported presentation and then select at least two and no more than four students from the chapter to present the research and best practices. The presentations will be delivered live via Zoom on the day of the virtual event.

Each chapter must submit only one entry for this competition. Five (5) entries total will be accepted. Entries will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and will be limited to the number of participants.



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Competition Guidelines

- A. The sponsoring teacher must submit the Online Competition Entry Form **by 5:00 pm on Friday, October 30, 2020.**
- B. Chapter members will use the information collected in the research phase to collaborate in creating a slide-deck presentation (ex. PowerPoint, Prezi).
- C. The presentation should engagingly complement and deliver the team's research findings and recommendations.
- D. The slide deck presentation must include the following:
 - a. A title slide with the title of your project and school/chapter name,
 - b. A credit slide with the names of the student creators, sponsoring teacher(s), and the source of any non-original, multimedia elements (images and sounds), and
- c. Cited references and works cited slide (MLA, APA, or Chicago style are acceptable).
- E. The chapter will select two to four members to deliver the presentation live during a Zoom video session on the day of the virtual conference. The contestants must be prepared to share their slide deck presentation in Zoom.
- F. The presentation must not exceed 10 minutes. Students should be prepared to answer questions from and have a discussion with the judges.

Judging and Scoring

- A. The judges' decision is final.
- B. Contestants agree to be bound by the FEA General Competition Rules and Code of Ethics for Virtual Events and the decisions of the judges.
- C. The entry will be scored using the Researching Learning Challenges Competition rubric.

How to Enter

- A. The sponsoring teacher must complete and submit the Online Competition Entry Form.
- B. A link to access the form will be emailed to the sponsoring teacher after a group has been created on the Eventbrite registration site and the chapter sponsoring teacher has registered to attend the event.
- C. Entries submitted by email will not be accepted.



Researching Learning Challenges Competition

Presentation and Q&A

Points Available	Accomplished 8 – 7	Commendable 6 – 5	Developing 4 – 3	Needs Improvement 2 – 1
Content of Slide Deck	The content of the slides reflects professional-caliber thoughtfulness and thoroughness. They expertly leverage the visual medium to bring out key insights and recommendations with clarity.	The commendable, student-level quality of the content of the slides reflects a commitment to sharing key facts and details of the contestants' insight and recommendations.	The content of the slides reflects compliance but minimal insight. The images employed may be basic or not entirely effective for sharing facts and recommendations.	The content of the slides reflects inconsistent focus and quality. The images or text may distract the audience from the facts and recommendations.
Depth & Insight	The content of the presentation reflects professional caliber, in-depth understanding, and striking insight into all elements of the issue. The depth of research and preparation is clearly apparent throughout the presentation.	The content of the presentation offers useful, well-detailed ideas that warrant further exploration beyond this session. The presentation may explore many but not all key facets of the issue.	The presentation offers basic, intuitive ideas that would have benefited from further research. The presentation does not explore many key elements of the issue.	The presentation may offer ideas that are flawed or partially developed and feel incomplete.
Research	The presentation makes informed, evidence-based recommendations by referencing at least three well-chosen sources of information.	The presentation makes informed, evidence-based recommendations by referencing two well-chosen sources of information.	The presentation makes informed, evidence-based recommendations by referencing two well-chosen sources of information.	The presentation makes limited or no connection to relevant research.



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Presentation and Q&A

Points Available	Accomplished 8 – 7	Commendable 6 – 5	Developing 4 – 3	Needs Improvement 2 – 1
Q & A Discussion	<p>The students' responses in the Q&A session demonstrated consistent thoughtfulness and professional-caliber insight, rooted in the deep experience of the material.</p> <p>The students display impressive, professional-level depth of knowledge and understanding given his/her experience and research.</p>	<p>The students' responses in the Q&A session demonstrated thoughtfulness and reflected successful attempts to address most of the material posed to him/her.</p> <p>The student displays some substantive knowledge and understanding of the selected topic based on his/her experience and research.</p>	<p>The students' responses in the Q&A session reflected a broad spectrum of levels of quality, depth, or insight from answer to answer.</p>	<p>The students' responses in the Q&A session may reflect evident effort and passion, but are inconsistent in the depth, accuracy, understanding, or insight offered in responses.</p>
Overall Impact	<p>The presentation reflects professional-caliber and highly persuasive recommendations via a deep exploration of the issue and context.</p> <p>The presentation content & delivery effectively complement each other to craft a highly impactful, professional-caliber experience.</p>	<p>The content and delivery work together to offer a largely persuasive presentation.</p> <p>With deeper research, more realistic proposals or revisions to delivery, the project could be considered professional-caliber.</p>	<p>The minimally persuasive presentation does demonstrate effort.</p> <p>At multiple moments, the depth or strategy related to content or delivery may reflect a partial lack of understanding of key facets of the issue.</p>	<p>The unpersuasive presentation demonstrates inconsistent, unprofessional, or superficial aspects in content or delivery.</p> <p>The audience is frequently distracted from the intended impact by aspects of the content or delivery.</p>