

**COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN**  
**Representative Assembly**

**FAQs**  
(January 2024)

**What is the Representative Assembly?**

The Representative Assembly (RA) is the membership advisory body of CEC. It brings the voice and perspectives of the members to the work of CEC. It plays a key role in communicating between units, divisions, the student membership, and CEC about issues, policies, priorities, and initiatives of the Council. CEC truly wants input from all its members about what members need and want to help inform CEC's future direction, programs, products, and services.

(For purposes of this document, the word "unit" will refer to units, divisions, and the student membership.)

**What are the primary responsibilities of the Representative Assembly?**

- Discuss and provide input/recommendations to the Board of Directors on initiatives/actions CEC should take on the topic(s) identified for the meeting by the board.
- Informs the Board of Directors about unit, division, or membership issues, concerns, needs, and perspectives related to the meeting discussion topic(s).

**Who are members of the Representative Assembly?**

- Each active unit can have 2 representatives.
- Each unit determines whether Representatives are elected, appointed, or serve by virtue of holding a particular office in the unit. Ideally, Representatives should have staggered two-year terms.
- The CEC President is the presiding officer of the RA. The President and President Elect are voting member; all other board members are non-voting members of the RA.

**What are my responsibilities as a Representative?**

- If the meeting topic is presented in advance, solicit input from your unit's members in order to represent your unit at the RA meeting at the annual convention and in any online discussions.
- Report to your unit's board and membership on activities of the RA and CEC.
- Inform your unit about actions, issues and/or advice provided to the Board of Directors.
- Communicate professional, organizational, and policy issues/concerns from your unit to the Board of Directors.

**What qualifications should unit Representatives have?**

All representatives must be members in good standing within CEC and their unit. RA reps should possess these general qualifications:

- Effective communication skills.
- Knowledge of current issues unique to their unit.
- Be supportive of the mission and strategic direction of CEC.
- Willingness to get involved and engage with fellow members and other stakeholders in order to inform input on RA discussions.

**How much time should I plan to spend each year on RA business?**

You should plan to attend the RA meeting during the CEC convention (approximately 2.5 hours). Online discussions, communicating with your unit's board, soliciting members' input on discussion items, and related activities will vary depending on the number of discussions in a given year but may require an additional 5 to 10 hours over the course of the year.

**How do I get input from my unit for online discussions and the annual meeting?**

- Notify your unit members about RA discussion topics through your unit's typical communications, such as a unit newsletter, list serve, social media accounts, and on your unit's website with a link to send comments.
- Solicit input and comments from your board.
- Use free online surveys (e.g., [www.zoho.com](http://www.zoho.com)).

**How do I get discussion/meeting materials?**

Materials for online discussions and the annual meeting will be sent via the RA's online community ([www.community.cec.sped.org](http://www.community.cec.sped.org)). Use the same user ID and password that you use to login to the CEC website. All materials will be "pushed out" to members via the discussion function but are also stored in the library for easy access.

**What happens at the annual meeting?**

- You must be registered for the convention to attend the RA meeting.
- Representatives sign in when they arrive at the meeting in order to have a record of units represented. Tent cards and holders will be provided at sign-in.
- Wear your convention badge and the RA ribbon you receive at RA registration to and for the duration of the RA meeting.
- Once the meeting is called to order, you must wait to be seated if you arrive after that.
- The most important part of the meeting is the small group discussion portion. CEC is YOUR professional association. You can help CEC be a successful advocate and a relevant resource by providing input on behalf of your unit/division/the student membership. The actions that ultimately result from the RA discussion will impact not only CEC, but its units, divisions, and the field.
- You should sit with your unit's other Representative, if there is one, in order to most effectively provide the input you have gathered.
- You must be present to vote, if there is voting.
- You can go to any microphone to speak when recognized, but time for comments is limited to allow as many representatives as possible to speak on an issue.
- You can wear normal convention attire.
- You can bring a lunch/snack.
- You can leave the room and return at any time after the meeting is called to order.

**What if I cannot attend the annual meeting at the Convention?**

If you cannot attend, your unit president can appoint an alternate. The unit president (or Chair of the Student and Early Career Committee for Student RA Representatives) must notify the Director of Governance and Executive Services as soon as possible prior to the RA meeting who the alternate will be. Alternates have full voting privileges and all other rights. The Representative who cannot attend is responsible for ensuring the alternate has the meeting materials. The sooner CEC can be notified the better so that the alternate can be granted access to the RA's online community.

**How are online input opportunities or discussions conducted?**

Online input opportunities or discussion, which are rare, are conducted through the RACommunity and may be facilitated by the CEC President, CEC staff, or another appropriate person (e.g., a committee or workgroup chair). We will provide as much notice as possible about upcoming discussions, and a limited time period is set for each discussion (typically 30 days).

Please contact the [Director of Governance and Executive Services](#) with any questions.

