

Invitation to the 62nd Conference on Exceptional Children
Mary N. Watson, Director
Exceptional Children Division, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
"We build too many walls and not enough bridges." -- Sir Isaac Newton

The Exceptional Children Division of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction invites you to attend our 62nd Conference on Exceptional Children this November 14-16 at the Koury Convention Center/Sheraton Greensboro Hotel at Four Seasons in beautiful Greensboro. This event is the singular opportunity each year for more than three thousand special education and regular education teachers, administrators, parents, related service providers, university personnel and more to convene, collaborate and explore issues and promising practices for educating children with disabilities in North Carolina Public Schools.

The theme for the 62nd Conference is 'Building Bridges for Success.' As the above quote references, true progress is made when we work together to create connections and cross chasms. Children with disabilities know this all too well, as their success in school usually depends on making those connections with their regular classroom teachers, special educators, related service providers, peers, parents and more. Our special education profession also only succeeds when it reaches out and bridges to other important fields; staying separate and focusing solely on uniqueness is simply a recipe for irrelevance. This year the 62nd Conference begins with optional one-day institutes, which highlight state and national leaders and 'bridge-builders' in several important fields. The regular conference program, with an exciting keynote presentation and 95 instructional sessions, many in response to our 'Call for Proposals', will showcase how local school systems, university programs and others are collaborating to bridge gaps and improve instruction for exceptional children. Finally, our annual Teachers of Excellence reception will shine a light on North Carolina champions who tear down walls and make a difference for children every day. With reduced budgets and the need to connect and collaborate even more a reality, the 62nd Conference on Exceptional Children could not come at a better time and offers a unique opportunity for both learning and renewal.

Please accept our warm invitation and join us in Greensboro this November. The Exceptional Children Division and I look forward to meeting and greeting you for this grand event. Together, we can all 'build bridges for success' and make a positive difference in the lives of children throughout North Carolina.