



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

April 2026

President's Message



Dear CLD Colleagues,

Spring has arrived, and with it comes an exciting season for CLD! From award nominations and leadership opportunities to conference planning and member recognitions, there is much to look forward to in the months ahead. I am excited to share some updates and highlights with you, and I hope this season brings you renewed energy and inspiration in your important work.

To start, I would like to congratulate our newest elected Executive Committee member, Dr. Nancy Nelson, who will serve as our vice president next year. Dr. Nelson is an assistant professor of special education at Boston University. She also serves as associate director of translational research for the Wheelock Institute for the Science of Education (WISE) and the deputy director of the National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL). As a CLD member, she previously served as the Local Arrangements Committee co-chair in 2018 and a Leadership Academy mentor from 2018 to 2020. We welcome Dr. Nelson to the Executive Committee and look forward to the leadership she will bring to the organization over the coming years! Moreover, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Alex Smith on his interest in the presidential line and his continued service to CLD.

In the coming months, we will also welcome several new members to the Board of Trustees (BOT) as many committee chair and co-chair terms come to an end. In our next issue, I will be acknowledging the many years of service these BOT members have given to our organization. For now, if you are interested in becoming more involved with CLD, I encourage you to explore our committees and consider joining one. Our committee chairs are always looking for new members to support the organization's mission in the field of learning disabilities. Our website includes information about each committee and lists the co-chairs' contact information. If you would like to volunteer but are unsure of how or where to begin, please feel free to email our president-elect, Dr. Alyson Collins, at alysonacollins@txstate.edu.

This spring, we will begin our annual award nominations for the Early Career Researcher Award, Outstanding Educator and Teacher of the Year, and the Floyd G. Hudson Outstanding Service Award. Our Membership Committee will also introduce two new student awards that will be presented at our fall conference. Please watch for the call for nominations. We encourage you to nominate individuals who remain dedicated to improving the lives of people with learning disabilities and who embody the CLD mission in their professional research and practice.

Our current vice president and Conference Program chair, Dr. Nathan Stevenson, and our Conference Planning Committee are actively recruiting proposal reviewers and volunteers for our upcoming fall conference on October 22–23, 2026, in Fort Worth, Texas. We encourage you to get involved and help make our fall conference a success! Please email clد.intl.conference@gmail.com if you would like to learn more about ways to get involved in planning for our fall conference.

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Additionally, if you are a doctoral student or early career faculty member, I encourage you to consider applying to the CLD Leadership Institute. Our Leadership Development Committee is already planning an engaging day before the fall conference. The institute is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about CLD's history, network with other members, and grow as a leader within the organization. Applications are due May 31, 2026.

Together, we continue to make a difference in the lives of individuals with learning disabilities. Thank you for your continued commitment to CLD.

Sincerely,
Apryl L. Poch
2025–2026 CLD President

Meet Our 2026–2027 CLD Vice President



Nancy J. Nelson, PhD, NCSP
Assistant Professor, Boston University;
Associate Director of Translational Research,
Wheelock Institute for the Science of Education;
Deputy Director, National Center on
Improving Literacy

Hello CLD! I'm thrilled to have been elected your new vice-president and excited about the future of our organization. A little about me, if you don't know me well: As an undergraduate, I majored in psychology and Spanish and wanted to pursue a career in school psychology—but not without having experience in the classroom first. Thus, I started my career as a special education middle and high school mathematics teacher in Oakland and Berkeley, California, teaching pre-algebra and algebra to students predominantly identified with specific learning disabilities. I earned an MA in special education from San Francisco State University and went on to the University of Oregon (UO), where I earned my PhD in School Psychology.

As a doctoral student, I gravitated toward work in academic interventions and assessment, driven by my special education experience. When I graduated, I was hired as research faculty at UO, where I was engaged in grant-funded work to develop and evaluate reading and mathematics in-

terventions in multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). The collection of these experiences has led to where I find myself now—working at the intersection of instruction and intervention, assessment and data-based decision-making, in reading and mathematics, in prevention-oriented systems across grade levels.

In the mid- to late 2010s, I was heavily involved with CLD—attending conferences every year, supporting the Research Committee, as a Leadership Academy mentor, and as a Conference Committee co-chair. I stepped down from my co-chair role to spend time with my young children, who are all now fully school age, and I'm eager to be back and supporting leadership in my professional home. I'm looking forward to engaging more colleagues in our organization, thinking through where we are and where we want to be, and leveraging our strengths, with an aim toward positioning us for the future. Over the next several years, I hope to enhance recognition of CLD as the premier professional organization for educators and researchers focused on supporting individuals with learning disabilities and their communities.

Thank you for putting your trust in me, and I look forward to leading CLD and getting to know all of you better!

Nancy J. Nelson
2026–2027 CLD Vice-President

Diversity Statement

The Council for Learning Disabilities is committed to celebrating and enriching the field of special education through its diversity. As a group, we pursue the best practices, research, and policies that exemplify enhancing the lives of individuals with learning disabilities, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a diverse group of professionals in the field of special education, we believe that this work cannot be completed in a silo, but rather, it must be embedded within every part of what we do. As an organization, we are committed to welcoming, understanding, learning about, and honoring individual diversity.

SAVE THE DATE!

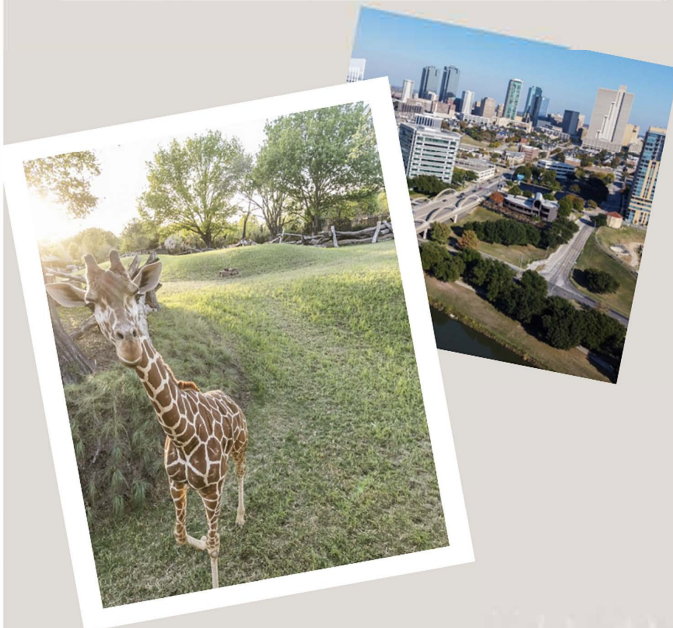
2026 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING DISABILITIES

October 22 - 23, 2026

Sheraton Fort Worth Downtown
Hotel, Fort Worth, TX

COME JOIN US FOR:

- Informative panel presentations
- Meaningful roundtable discussions
- Enlightening keynote address
- Engagement with colleagues from the field
- Insightful research projects
- Exploration of a vibrant city



Applications for the CLD Leadership Institute 2026 Are Open!

On behalf of the CLD Board of Trustees, the CLD Leadership Development Committee (LDC) is pleased to announce the CLD Leadership Institute (LI), to be held on October 21, 2026. The Leadership Institute will be held in Fort Worth, Texas, the day before our 48th International Conference on October 22–23.

Doctoral students and early career faculty are eligible to apply for this free day-long CLD event. Applicants should have an interest in becoming involved in CLD activities such as committee work and serving on the Board of Trustees.

The Institute is available for participants who have not previously attended the Institute to give newly interested people an opportunity to attend. Questions about the CLD Leadership Institute should be directed to the Leadership Development chair, Donna Sacco, at dmsacco60@gmail.com.

Cost: There is no cost to attend the CLD Leadership Institute for eligible participants.

CLD Conference: Participants who attend the LI must also register for the CLD conference (one day or full), which

starts the day after the LI, and are responsible for paying their conference registration fee and hotel expenses. See the CLD website for conference registration and hotel accommodations information.

Individuals who are interested in applying for the Leadership Academy Cohort 16 in 2027 will need to attend the Leadership Institute in 2026.

The application for attendance at the LI is available by following the link below. The deadline is **May 31, 2026**.

Application link: Leadership Institute

The Leadership Institute is partially funded by the Hamill Institute on Disabilities. CLD is thankful for their commitment to this program.

In addition, those who attended last year's Leadership Institute in Salt Lake City, Utah, are eligible to apply for Leadership Academy 15.

Application link: Leadership Academy 15

Dr. Donna Sacco

2026 Early Career Research Award Submissions

To promote and recognize research, the Council for Learning Disabilities annually presents an award for an outstanding journal-manuscript-length paper on learning disabilities based on a doctoral dissertation completed within the last five (5) years. **Submissions for the 2026 Early Career Research Award are due by May 31, 2026.** The award will be presented at the 2026 International Conference on Learning Disabilities in Fort Worth, Texas.

Award: The recipient will receive a \$1,000 honorarium, plaque, and free conference registration. The award winner must be able to attend the CLD 2026 conference to present their research and will be invited to submit their paper to *Learning Disability Quarterly*.

Submissions: To be eligible, the manuscript must be based on a doctoral dissertation completed within the last five years. The manuscript may be submitted for publication (e.g., under review), but manuscripts that have already been accepted or published are not eligible for consideration.

Submissions cannot be made by a second party on behalf of the author. Each submission should include:

1. cover letter clearly indicating author's name and contact information, dissertation title and key words, degree-granting institution, major advisor, and year degree conferred; and
2. anonymized copy of manuscript not to exceed 40 pages, including title page, abstract, tables, figures, and references. Manuscript should be submitted in Word or PDF format.

Incomplete submissions or manuscripts that exceed the page limit will not be reviewed.

The required materials should be submitted by the author to:

Dr. Anna Gibbs, CLD Research Committee Co-Chair
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
agibbs14@utk.edu

Timeline: The deadline for submission of papers is **May 31, 2026**. Submissions received after this date will not be reviewed. The award winner will be notified by July 15, 2026.

Dr. Anna Gibbs

Liaison Committee Update

In alignment with CLD’s strategic goals, the Liaison Committee works to advocate for an educational system that respects, supports, and values individual differences while fostering collaborative networks with and among professionals who serve individuals with learning disabilities and others who experience challenges in learning. Although we participate in opportunities reflective of CLD’s Mission and Vision as they arise, our three primary, consistent collaborative partnerships are with the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD), the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD), and the Educating All Learners Alliance (EALA). Here’s some information about each and an update of our recent work.

CCD

Although you may not be familiar with CCD, it is a real powerhouse “inside the beltway” as politicians say. CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. CCD, headquartered in Washington, DC, has worked tirelessly since 1973 and is often called upon by members of Congress to weigh in on disability issues. CCD’s public policy work is carried out by approximately 16 task forces. CLD has actively participated in CCD for decades. We represent CLD on the Education Task Force.

The mission of the CCD Ed Task Force is to monitor federal legislation and regulations that address the educational needs of children and youth with disabilities, their families, and their educators under key federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. We promote high expectations and protect the civil rights and educational opportunities for children with disabilities under these and other laws.

In 2025, the Ed Task Force:

1. developed recommendations for Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations and advocated for those numbers;
2. responded to actions taken by the Administration at the Department of Education including Reductions in Force and Interagency Agreements which moved offices out of the Department of Education; and
3. advocated for protections for students with disabilities in the new federal voucher program that was included within the Budget Reconciliation bill—with Congress and with the Department of Treasury.

In 2026, we are continuing to:

1. monitor and proactively weigh in on bills related to higher education, career and technical education, workforce, school vouchers, and school climate; ensuring that legislation protects and promotes the civil rights and educational opportunities of students with disabilities;
2. intervene on actions that are harmful to students with disabilities—such as a move of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services out of the Department of Education and to the Department of Health and Human Services or any other agency; and,
3. educate House and Senate staff on the intricacies of IDEA and its importance for students with disabilities, their families, and their educators.

You can access more information about CCD and the Ed Task Force statements via <https://www.c-c-d.org/>.

NJCLD

The NJCLD is a national committee of representatives of 11 organizations committed to the education and welfare of individuals with learning disabilities (LD). Our mission is to provide collaborative multi-organizational leadership and resources to optimize outcomes for individuals with LD. We hope that you are already familiar with NJCLD, as CLD was one of its founding members and has actively participated in NJCLD for decades! As a CLD member, you are entitled to free access to all NJCLD resources. These include infographics that provide great overviews of LD as well as the statements and position papers. Our latest paper, “Learning Disabilities: Reading and the School-to-Prison Pipeline,” is being formatted now and will be released shortly. In addition, CLD members are notified of the free NJCLD symposia. For the past few years, we have had three or four virtual symposia on timely topics. Over the years, we’ve had several CLD members rave about them, including those who use them for professional learning workshops or assignments to college students. If you missed out on seeing them livestream, we encourage you access the recordings and materials by visiting <https://njclld.org/>.

EALA

EALA describes itself as an “uncommon” coalition of organizations committed to resource sharing and community-building that supports the efforts of the education community to meet the needs of students with disabilities. It’s an alliance

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dedicated to support for students with disabilities and learning differences in all learning environments. CLD has actively participated in EALA since 2020, shortly after EALA's inception. Despite its relatively short history, it continues to grow. As of March, EALA has garnered:

- 9.1k Monthly Website Views
- 6k Email Subscribers
- 2.2k Facebook Members
- 4.1k Twitter Followers
- 10.3k Podcast Streams
- 2.5k LinkedIn Followers
- 435 YouTube Subscribers
- 176 Partner Organizations

EALA has curated an impressive practitioner-friendly collection of searchable resources, on-demand podcasts and webinars on a variety of topics, and a technology tool library with accessibility information for the digital educational products educators trust to use in their classrooms. To take advantage of these free resources, visit EALA at <https://educatingalllearners.org/>.

Mark your calendars now to come see us at the fall conference in Texas as we share up-to-date advocacy information and strategies, and watch for additional updates until then through the CLD website and social media!

Roberta Strosnider & Debi Gartland
Liaison Committee Co-Chairs

Diversity Committee Update

Happy April! The Diversity Committee will continue hosting the Journal Article Discussion Club in April, May, and June. Here is the information for the upcoming three sessions:

Date/Time	Article to be Discussed	Facilitators
April 16 1:00–2:30pm ET 12:00–1:30pm CT 10:00–11:30am PT	Quinn, S., De Alwis, M., & Crain, M. (2026). Adjusting variables to enhance reinforcer efficacy. <i>Intervention in School and Clinic</i> , 61(3), 133–141. https://doi.org/10.1177/10534512251388918	Dr. Cynthia Lackey Angelo State University
Registration Link: https://tinyurl.com/CLDAprilJournalClub		
May 20 7:00–8:30pm ET 6:00–7:30pm CT 4:00–5:30pm PT	Kramarczuk Voulgarides, C., Jacobs, J., Lopez, D., & Barrio, B. L. (2024). Moving beyond compliance and toward equity to address racial disproportionality. <i>Intervention in School and Clinic</i> , 60(2), 108–118. https://doi.org/10.1177/10534512241258721	Dr. Benikia Kressler California State University, Fullerton Destiny Robinson Tony Jackson University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Registration Link: https://tinyurl.com/CLDMayJournalClub		
June 11 2:30–4:00pm ET 1:30–3:00pm CT 11:30am–1:00pm PT	Trainor, A.A., & Robertson, P.M. (2022). Culturally and linguistically diverse students with learning disabilities: Building a framework for addressing equity through empirical research. <i>Learning Disability Quarterly</i> , 45(1), 46–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/0731948720929001	Lola Aneke University of North Texas Charles Toussaint Texas Woman's University
Registration Link: https://tinyurl.com/CLDJuneJournalClub		

We look forward to seeing you and the discussions!

Yun-Ju Hsiao
Diversity Committee Chair

Applications Open for LD Forum Editor

CLD is seeking applications for the position of editor of *LD Forum*, its official newsletter. This position is designed for early editors to gain experience in the publication of *LD Forum*, as well as being an active participant on the Affiliated Partners Committee working with veteran editors of *Intervention in School and Clinic* and *Learning Disability Quarterly*. Preference will be given to applicants with some experience, but early in the role of editor.

The role of the editor involves preparing the newsletter content in a timely manner, which should: (a) inform the membership about business of the international organization and state chapters, and (b) offer brief articles related to the LD field.

Applicants must be a member of CLD and maintain membership during the term as editor.

Editor Responsibilities:

1. Commit to finish the 3-year appointment that officially begins July 1, 2026.
2. Annually prepare 5 issues of *LD Forum* (February, April, June, August, and December).
3. Assist with recruiting and selecting an Assistant Editor and serve as a mentor for that person.

4. Based on previous schedules for disseminating CLD business, confer with the CLD Executive Committee and the CLD committee chairs regarding possible content.
5. Coordinate the Review Board, arrange for the peer review of articles submitted for consideration, and work with potential authors through the revision process.
6. Plan, assemble, and edit information to be included in each issue.
7. Send each issue to the Hammill Institute on Disabilities for typesetting on a preset schedule.
8. Participate on the Affiliated Partners Committee and as a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees, providing status reports as requested.
9. Contribute to the mission of CLD by contributing to continuous improvement of *LD Forum* to meet the needs of our membership.

Interested parties should submit a letter of interest that includes your qualifications for the position, a description of your plan for *LD Forum*, and a brief vita to Kathleen Pfannenstiel, Affiliated Partners chair, at kpffannenstiel@air.org by March 1, 2026.

Dr. Kathleen Pfannenstiel

ISC Special Series

Intervention in School and Clinic (ISC) is preparing a special series co-edited by Kyle Higgins. We think CLD readers will be really interested in the concept. See below for a synopsis of the upcoming series.

Opening Doors: Access for Students with Disabilities Who Require Unique Support Structures

Welcome to *Opening Doors*. The term *barrier* has become synonymous with special education, and while it may be true, there are many barriers for students with disabilities in

schools, it presents a narrative of constant struggle (Gargiulo & Bouck, 2021). In *Opening Doors*, rather than continuing that narrative, we consider the barrier and how it can be removed. How can the door be opened?

Dr. Robert Marsh

CLD Mission & Vision

Mission Statement: The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), an international organization composed of professionals who represent diverse disciplines, is committed to enhancing the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities across the life span. CLD accomplishes this by promoting and disseminating evidence-based research and practices related to the education of individuals with learn-

ing disabilities. In addition, CLD fosters (a) collaboration among professionals; (b) development of leaders in the field; and (c) advocacy for policies that support individuals with learning disabilities at local, state, and national levels.

Vision Statement: All individuals with learning disabilities are empowered to achieve their potential.

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— CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA —

We're building something special—and it begins with you!

Connect with us on social media. Follow, Like, Repost, Comment, Tag, and Subscribe **@CLDintl** on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and Bluesky.

