



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

August 2012

President's Message



I don't think it is cheating to look back through each past president's first letter in *LD Forum* to get a sense of what to write in this, my first letter, as I start my year as CLD president. Most of them started out with a nice statement about how honored they were to serve CLD as president. I am definitely honored. In fact, I am daunted by some of the giants

on whose shoulders I stand (to paraphrase Sir Isaac Newton). I am definitely thankful for all those who have come before me, who have led our members through difficult times in our field and difficult times in our national economy.

As I was searching around, I also explored a bit of the history of CLD's fall conference keynote speakers and J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturers. Now, these folks have been some of the giants in our field. Ours is an organization of which we can be proud. If we ever wonder why we work so hard to continue our fall Conference on Learning Disabilities, we should just think about the knowledge that has been shared through the years at this conference. It is very important for us to be able to come together every year to listen, to learn, and to think about what can be the future for learning disabilities.

I believe this year's conference is going to be one of the best, as Monica Lambert hinted in her last president's letter. At over 150, the list of presenters is much too long to begin to share, but there are some of those giants among them. As this edition of LD Forum "goes to press," the program should be available on the CLD website (www.cldinternational.org). For a sneak peek, take a look at the Save the Date elsewhere in this issue. We have two full days of important and interesting panels and interactive cracker barrels; that doesn't even include our 50+ posters, which will be shared on the evening of Wednesday, October 10th, the first night of the conference, just prior to the President's Recognition Reception. We certainly want to see you as a presenter, but we really hope that you will attend many additional sessions to learn what else is happening across the country and the world. Don't just come, present, and leave. As they say at the University of Texas football games, "Come early, yell loud, stay late!" (You can save the yelling for Sixth Street).

I know we will all be very proud of this year's conference, but that is just two days out of our whole year. The rest of the year, your Executive Committee; Committee Chairs, who sit on your Board of Trustees; and their committee members work hard to fulfill the important duties that keep our organization "humming right along." I've had "humming right along" on my mind lately. In my Department of Teaching and Learning this year, we are "going hybrid," and I am anxious about the potential glitches with the technology during our transition! Which brings me to this point: in one respect, CLD has not been really humming right along either.

We have had a little technology glitch in our database, which contributed to a failure to send out electronic renewal notices in a timely manner (we went hybrid—oops!). And, this glitch came at a critical time in our economy; like so many of our colleague organizations across the United States, we have experienced a drop in membership associated with the general economic downturn. A number of organizations have cancelled conferences due to lack of support of their membership. CLD, on the other hand, decided a year or so ago to tighten our belt and make some changes in the format of our conference that would actually improve the quality of services and resources offered to our members, while minding our wallet at the same time. Given this restructuring, last year our conference made a profit for the first time in several

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Research to Practice

Subitizing: A Critical Early Math Skill

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Northern Illinois University

The approximately 7% of the school population with math learning disabilities (MLD; Barbaresi, Katusic, Colligan, Weaver, & Jacobsen, 2005) represent a very heterogeneous group. Children with MLD often experience difficulty retrieving math facts, calculating numbers, counting, interpreting and solving word problems, using algorithms, identifying numbers, discriminating quantity, and using mathematics background knowledge (Lembke & Foegen, 2009; Vukovic & Siegel, 2010).

Subitizing is a precursor to several of these math skills (Benoit, Lehalle, & Jouen, 2004); however, our interactions with special and general educators indicate that very few have heard of subitizing, know how to assess it, or know ways to promote it. This article therefore provides an overview of subitizing and shares ways teachers can assess and promote this important math skill.

What Is Subitizing?

Subitizing is the ability to quickly and accurately recognize, enumerate, or connect small sets of objects or a small visual quantity to a number without counting each item. Young children can subitize up to three or four objects. Older children and adults can quickly subitize groups of three to six items. Subitizing is effortless and faster than counting (Moeller, Neuburger, Kaufmann, Landerl, & Nuerk, 2009).

Sarama and Clements (2009) identified two categories of subitizing: perceptual and conceptual. *Perceptual subitizing* is the quick visual recognition of small quantities (e.g., 1, 2, 3) without counting. It involves no mathematical process because people instantly perceive a quantity (e.g., 2 dots on a die) without any conscious effort.

In contrast, *conceptual subitizing* refers to identifying a whole quantity as the result of recognizing smaller quantities (recognized through perceptual subitizing) that are components of the whole. For example, when most children see 2 dots on a die, they use perceptual subitizing to determine the quantity without counting. However, when they quantify a pair of dice (e.g., 2 dots on one die and 3 dots on the other), children must first identify a quantity on each die (e.g., 2 and 3) and then combine them to determine the total quantity. In the example of dots on a pair of dice, children see a whole as the composite of two parts (i.e., decomposing), then use perceptual subitizing to recognize 2 and 3, and finally put them together (i.e., recomposing) to identify 5 as a whole (i.e., conceptual subitizing). Similarly, children learn differ-

ent ways to represent the same quantity by looking at different arrangements of parts, such as 1 and 4 and 3 and 2.

Why Is Subitizing Important?

Subitizing is important because it serves as a foundational skill for several mathematical skills, such as counting and counting speed (Benoit et al., 2004). In turn, counting speed predicts addition speed and addition accuracy (Penner-Wilger et al., 2007). Subitizing also correlates with number system knowledge (Penner-Wilger et al., 2007), serial recall, base-10 structure, and quantitative skills (Hannula, Räsänen, & Lehtinen, 2007). Further, by regrouping smaller quantities into larger quantities, subitizing allows children to rapidly recognize these larger quantities (Geary, 2003). Understanding quantity helps children determine if (a) an answer to an addition fact is accurate and (b) the answer to a word problem is reasonable.

Children with MLD often have poor subitizing skills, which may explain why they also struggle with number sense, arithmetic skills, and more complex mathematical concepts (Groffman, 2009). Desoete and Gregoire (2006) discovered that 33% of kindergarten and first-grade children with MLD exhibited a severe deficit in subitizing. Similarly, Landerl, Bevan, and Butterworth (2004) found that children with dyscalculia displayed deficits in subitizing and were slower in number comparison than a matched control group. Additionally, Benoit et al. (2004) concluded that subitizing helps children understand the meaning of the first few number words because it allows them to simultaneously grasp separate elements and the whole.

How Can Teachers Assess Subitizing?

Teachers can use standardized and informal instruments to assess subitizing. Standardized instruments such as the *Test of Early Mathematics Ability-3* (Ginsburg & Baroody, 2003) and the *Brigance® Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills–Revised* (Curriculum Associates, 2010) include items that assess subitizing, but they do not report an actual subitizing score. Instead, the student's subitizing performance is included within a larger score on number awareness.

Subitizing can also be assessed informally and quickly using dot cards or poker chips. Dot cards can be purchased commercially, or teachers can develop their own using dot stickers to indicate quantities of 1 through 5 on 8×10 inch cards. They should arrange same-colored dots as they appear on dice, linearly, in a circle, and in other configurations. Each quantity should appear on a minimum of two cards in different configurations, as shown in Figure 1.

To complete the assessment, (a) cover the dot card from the child's view (e.g., using a sheet of paper), (b) tell the child that he or she is to say how many dots there are without

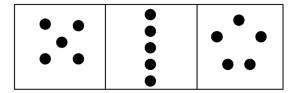


FIGURE 1. Dot card arrangements: Single color sample.

counting, (c) reveal the dot card for no more than 3 seconds, (d) wait for the child's response, and (d) continue with the next card. Assess each quantity randomly, a minimum of three times and until a stable trend is achieved for a reliability measure. Children who respond immediately are probably relying on perceptual subitizing. Children who respond after more than 3 seconds or who appear to be silently counting are not subitizing. Teachers can employ the same procedure using poker chips by quickly revealing chips in the palm of their hand. For assessing subitizing, the child must respond correctly within 3 seconds or less without counting.

Dot cards can also be used to assess conceptual subitizing by using two different colors of dots (one color to represent each part) and different dot arrangements, as shown in Figure 2. Even with small quantities, such as 4 and 5, this assessment helps to determine if children can see a quantity as a composite of different parts (e.g., 5 as 3 and 2). Different colors (e.g., 3 red and 2 yellow) and different arrangements (e.g., 3 on the top and 2 on the bottom) lend themselves to grouping, which makes conceptual subitizing easier. This encourages children to see the whole as a composite of different parts and to combine them to enumerate the total quantity. However, teachers must be cautious not to make the arrangements too complicated. For instance, using too many colors, too many dots in one line (e.g., seven black dots in one line), or irregular patterns that are unfamiliar to children may cause distractions and possibly encourage them to use one-by-one counting.

When using the dot arrangements, show each different dot arrangement for about 3 seconds and ask the total quantity. To ensure that children see each quantity, ask how they arrived at their answer. When assessing conceptual subitizing, start with quantities of 10 or less and, depending on the child's success, continue assessment of quantities through 20 items.

How Can Teachers Promote Subitizing?

Teachers and parents can use various activities and materials to promote subitizing (Jung, Hartman, Smith, & Wallace, in press). Children can practice subitizing through games such as Concentration, War, or Go Fish using dot cards, as well as activities using domino flash cards that require them to quickly look at small quantities of objects or visual arrays (i.e., dots on dominos) and then say the quantity (Post, 2010). Additionally, teachers can place a Unifix cube on each finger of one hand (e.g., 3 yellow and 2 red), show children briefly, and ask what they saw. This encourages children to use con-

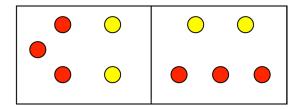


FIGURE 2. Dot card arrangements: color sample.

ceptual subitzing by allowing them to see the parts and combine the parts into a whole.

Similarly, teachers can use the 5- or 10-frame. Five- and 10-frames are 1×5 and 2×5 arrays, respectively, in which counters or dots are placed to represent small quantities. To encourage children to view "4" in various ways, for example, place one counter in each of the first three columns, leave the fourth blank, and add another counter in the fifth column, as shown in Figure 3.

Using this arrangement, children view 4 in various ways, (e.g., 4 as one missing from 5 or 3 and 1 more.) Similarly, a 10-frame helps children visualize quantities in their relationship to 10 (e.g., seeing 8 because two columns are empty or seeing 5 and 3 as 8.)

Teachers can also use technology to promote subitizing. They can display images of dot cards or the 5- and 10-frame briefly on a screen using the overhead projector or a Smart Board and ask children to share their observations, as illustrated in the "Quick Image" activity in Table 1.

Table 1 summarizes additional activities that promote subitizing using counters, dice, and the *rekenrek*, which consists of 20 beads in two rows (each row has a set of 5 red beads and another set of 5 white beads). These activities facilitate both perceptual and conceptual subitizing by helping students make sense of different representations of number and quantity. In addition to these activities, several websites (see Table 2) provide additional examples, activities, and software to promote subitizing.

Concluding Thoughts

Researchers have noted that subitizing is an important early math skill and that students with MLD are weak in subitizing. Existing research also indicates that subitizing ability

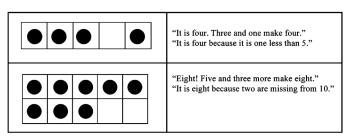


FIGURE 3. Use of 5- and 10-frames.

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(Research to Practice, continued from page 3)

Table I. Subitizing Activities

Activity (Level)	Guidelines
Subitizing with actions (Pre-K–kindergarten)	Hold up each action card (e.g., clap) and name the action. Model actions for students and have them practice actions, if necessary; then tell students, "I will show you cards with dots. The card will tell you how many times you will have to clap." Use other actions cards such as "jump," "wink," and "stamp."
Racing Bears (Pre-K–kindergarten)	Have a pair of students play the activity. By rolling a die, students move their counting bear on the board to finish a track (0–10). If students have difficulty subitizing 4 or more, make different dice with smaller numbers of dots (e.g., 1, 2, and 3 dots only). Ask each player, "How many did you get on the die this time?" and "How many more would you need to win the race?"
Quick Images (Pre-K–early elementary)	After placing a small set of counters on an overhead projector for 3 to 5 seconds, tell students, "Make yours just like mine using your counters!" Place on the overhead 2-color counters in various arrangements so students are challenged to conceptually subitize a whole quantity as a composite of parts (e.g., 2 yellow and 1 red to understand 3 as 2 and 1). Challenge students by asking, "What number would be 1 more than what you saw?" or "What number would be 1 less than the number up here?"
Rekenrek (Pre-K–early elementary)	Show students a certain number of beads (2 on the top row and 2 on the bottom) for 3 to 5 seconds before covering them and ask what they saw. If students provide incorrect answers, ask them to count to check their answers.

Table 2. Subitizing Resources

Apps	Subitizing Flash Cards: http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/subitizing-flash-cards/id515943889?mt=8	
	Friends of Ten: http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/friends-of-ten/id488573871?mt=8	
Rekenrek	http://www.mathlearningcenter.org/media/Rekenrek_0308.pdf http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBEKOb7tWEY	
Software	Clements, D. H., & Sarama, J. (2008). <i>Building blocks</i> [Computer software]. Columbus, OH: SRA/McGraw-Hill.	
Subitizing Activities	http://www.pre-kpages.com/subitizing/ http://www.k-5mathteachingresources.com/ten-frames.html http://love2learn2day.blogspot.com/2012/04/subitizing-making-sense-of-numbers.html	

predicts several subsequent math skills. However, additional research is needed regarding evidence-based instructional subitizing practices for students with MLD and expected student outcomes resulting from such instruction. Therefore, while teachers should continue to promote subitizing through games, activities, centers, stations, technologies, or software programs, they should also remain alert to new research regarding subitizing and allow these findings to guide their mathematics instructional practices.

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(**President's Message**, continued from page 1)

years. We hope to be profitable again this year with your support and our diligent attention to details surrounding the conference. Although our conference seems to be on track, our membership numbers continue to be a concern for all of us who love CLD. This spring a number of our members who heard about this problem stood up and made personal calls to colleagues whose CLD membership had lapsed. We thank (celebrate! applaud!) those members who made a phone call, sent an email, or wrote a letter, sharing what CLD meant to them. If you are reading this, I know you are already a paying member of CLD. My daddy used to call this next part "preachin' to the choir," but you are the ones who can help the most. If you know a colleague whose membership has lapsed for whatever reason, please contact them today and personally ask them to renew. If you are a faculty member at a university, I'm asking you to recruit a colleague or, better yet, recruit a student, whether he or she is an undergrad, master's student, or one of your doc students. They are our future. If you are a public or private school teacher or administrator, recruit a colleague. Think about what our organization has done for you and about what you have done for CLD and share it with someone you'd like to see become a member of this organization. Become one of those giants upon whose shoulders the future of CLD is going to stand. Now, open your songbook and raise your voice—you are a member of the CLD choir!

Finally, your Executive Committee has been hard at work on your behalf this summer. At our Transition Meeting, we welcomed two "new" members, Steve Chamberlain and Dave Majsterek. You can't hear me laughing as I say "new," but neither of these fellows is really new to CLD. Steve has been serving as your treasurer and Dave—well, Dave has been hanging around our Board of Trustees doing lots of duties since before I became involved with CLD back in

2001. Just in case some of you don't know Dave and Steve, I'll introduce them. You elected Steve Chamberlain Vice-President of CLD last spring. Steve is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies and the Program Coordinator for the graduate and undergraduate special education programs at the University of Texas at Brownsville. Steve has lived in Brownsville for over 10 years, and his research interests over that time have gravitated toward examining different ways culture influences teacher/student and teacher/parent interactions in schools, ways to disseminate that knowledge to educators, and culturally responsive pedagogy and assessment for students with disabilities. Originally from Fort Worth, Steve spent 18 years in Austin, where he received his PhD from the University of Texas at Austin in 1999.

David Majsterek is professor emeritus at Central Washington University. His experience with learning disabilities began in 1974 as a resource room teacher in Libby, Montana. In 1986 he taught learning disability courses at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. During that year, he chaperoned CLD's first student group at the 1987 conference in Kansas City. David has served as chair of the Bylaws & Rules and Technology Committees, and as Editor of the CLD website. Now residing in Los Lunas, New Mexico, his volunteer activities in retirement include tutoring in the Albuquerque Reads Program.

So, welcome, Dave and Steve, we are pleased with your continued commitment to CLD, and I am delighted to have your special skills to help guide me on the Executive Committee.

I look forward to seeing you all in person very soon at the 34th Conference on Learning Disabilities, October 10– 11, in Austin, Texas!

Caroline I. Kethley 2012–2013 CLD President

SAVE THE DATE!

34th International Conference on Learning Disabilities

Learning Disabilities: Looking Back and Looking Forward—

Using What We Know to Create a

BLUEPRINT for the Future

Omni Austin Hotel Downtown Austin, Texas

October 10-11, 2012

J. Lee Wiederholdt Distinguished **Lecturer and Speaker**

Dr. Steve Graham, Vanderbilt University (Internationally recognized expert in the area of written language and LD)

Concurrent skill-building sessions on research, interventions, teacher preparation, and policies for students with LD

President's awards reception and interactive poster session on evidence-based practices Networking opportunities with local, state, and national educators in LD

Sessions Sneak Peak

- Assessment: We have panels discussing face validity in assessment and the development of a mathematics screening test for children with learning disabilities.
- Mathematics interventions: We have panels and interactive cracker barrels, including topics such as the effects of a Tier 2 mathematics intervention, content enhancement devices that support math problem solving, and a session in which panelists will discuss learning progressions that help guide instruction in fractions.
- Reading: Sessions on building content area comprehension by scaffolding science instruction and social studies instruction and using graphic organizers with young children
- Current topics: Special sessions on bullying and homelessness and their effects on students who have LDs
- English language learners: Sessions will include instruction and research in early literacy and engaging language-minority pre-service teachers.
- What's going on in Washington: We'll have our annual "Report from DC" session as well as a number of other policy-focused sessions.
- Research: Issues in conducting survey research, using design experiments in literacy
- Much, Much, More!



Follow CLD on Twitter: @CLDIntl

"Like" the Council for Learning Disabilities on Facebook Registration and hotel reservations: www.cldinternational.org

Calling Members to Join the Diversity Committee

The Diversity Committee is calling new and existing CLD members to join this committee, which promotes the use and monitoring of evidence-based interventions for individuals with LD. We are working on fostering collaborative networks with and among professionals who are serving individuals with LD by planning presentations for upcoming conferences and encouraging members to write a journal article. For more information, please contact Jugnu Agrawal, Diversity Committee chair (JPAgrawal@fcps.edu).

Membership Renewal Contest

CLD is continuing to offer an exciting incentive for renewing members. From April 2012 through March 2013, each month's renewing members will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 Amazon.com gift card (one drawing per month). The following recently renewed members won an Amazon gift card:

* January-March Winner: Cindy Ann Smith

* April Winner: Tom E. C. Smith* May Winner: Patricia Hughes

* June Winner: Asha Jitendra



Conference Membership Renewal Incentive!

Members who attend the upcoming conference business meeting in Austin on October 10th will have a chance to *WIN A KINDLE!* One winner will be chosen at that meeting. Be sure and register for the CLD Conference in Austin and come to the business meeting.



A Tribute to Marjorie Montague

Marjorie Montague, a professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning, School of Education and Human Development, at the University of Miami, passed away on May 13, 2012. Dr. Montague made incalculable con-

tributions to the scholarly community as a distinguished researcher and inspiring educator and mentor. She was a vital member of the academic community, as evidenced by her many leadership roles in the field, for example, as president of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Research and the Executive Board of the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities; chair of the Special Interest Group—Special Education Research of the American Educational Research Association and the Division for Learning Disabilities' Research Committee; and service on the editorial boards of Learning Disabilities Quarterly, Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, and Journal of Learning Disabilities.

Dr. Montague's research in the field of special education included investigations of (a) longitudinal trajectories of youth at risk for learning and emotional/behavioral disabilities and (b) cognitive problem-solving in mathematics for youth at risk for or with LD. Her contributions to these lines of inquiry are immense. She received numerous federal research and training grants, including a U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 5-year

research grant, "A Longitudinal Study of Co-Morbidity of Disorders in Children and Adolescents," and an Institute of Education Sciences research grant for her project "Improving Mathematics Performance of At Risk Students and Students with Learning Disabilities in Urban Middle Schools." The latter project tested the efficacy of *Solve It*!, an intervention developed by Dr. Montague to teach effective cognitive problem-solving strategies in mathematics to students at risk for or with LD. In her 29 years of research, she received grant funding in excess of \$10 million and authored or co-authored almost 100 articles, book chapters, books, and curricular materials.

As an educator and mentor, Dr. Montague inspired graduate students and junior faculty with her passion for improving outcomes for youth with disabilities based on her experience teaching in inner city high schools before legislative protections existed. She had been a faculty member in the University of Miami's Dept. of Teaching and Learning since 1987 and co-directed the master's and doctoral programs in learning, behavioral, and attention disorders, along with chairing more than 20 doctoral dissertations. Her selfless support and incredible generosity of spirit in mentoring doctoral students and supporting junior faculty will be remembered. Her contributions to the field of special education are immeasurable, and she will be sorely missed.

Wendy Cavendish, PhD, University of Miami



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: CLD OFFICERS

Vice-President Secretary

Duties and Terms of Office

The CLD **VICE-PRESIDENT** serves a 1-year term and automatically succeeds to become President-Elect, President, and Past President. As President-Elect, the Vice-President serves as Program Chair for the annual Conference on Learning Disabilities. The Vice-President serves in the President's place and with his or her authority in case of absence or disability of the President and President-Elect. The Vice-President assists in the plan of operation and the annual CLD budget.

The CLD **SECRETARY** serves a 2-year term. The Secretary is a member of the Executive Committee and is responsible for the preparation, maintenance, and distribution of records of the Annual Business, Board of Trustees, and Special and Executive Committee meetings, including all reports filed. For more information on CLD Secretary duties and responsibilities, please refer to the CLD Bylaws available at the website (**www.cldinternational.org**).

Nomination Procedures

- Nominations for offices will be conducted by mail petition received by the Nomination-Election Officer prior to the annual CLD Business Meeting. Petitions should be postmarked no later than Monday, October 1, 2012, and mailed to: Monica Lambert LRE Appalachian State University 124 Edwin Duncan Hall Auburn University Boone, NC 28608 (lambertma@appstate.edu). Hand-delivered nomination forms will be accepted at the conference prior to the Annual Business Meeting at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 10.
- 2. All nominees must consent to stand for election.
- 3. All nomination petitions must bear the signatures and membership numbers of at least five (5) current members of CLD. Signatures may come from any CLD member and are not limited to those residing in the candidate's region. Nominees for Vice-President must demonstrate prior service on a CLD committee, as a member of the CLD Board of Trustees, or as a member of the Executive Committee of a recognized CLD chapter. The petitions must be accompanied by biographical sketches that include evidence of the candidate's qualifications for the office sought. Elected board members are expected to

- attend/participate in two Board meetings each year (fall conference and spring meeting). Whenever possible, CLD will help to defray travel costs.
- **4.** Only petitions received by the annual CLD Business Meeting will be considered. Before mailing petitions, be sure that copies are made and retained in your files. If you are collecting signatures for a friend, make a copy for that person and for yourself. Note the mailing date.
- **5.** Persons sending petitions will be notified that the petitions have been received. If someone other than the nominee is mailing the petition, a return address should be provided to permit proper notification.
- **6.** When the petition is verified as meeting the criteria established by CLD and contained in the CLD By-Laws, Articles XVI and XVII, and Standing Rules 3 and 4, each nominated candidate will be notified by mail.
- **7.** All candidates who meet the qualifications shall be included on the ballot.
- **8.** An elected officer may not serve two terms in succession in the same office.

Full descriptions of the qualifications for and responsibilities of offices may be found in the CLD By-Laws. Copies may be obtained by writing Council for Learning Disabilities, 11184 Antioch, #405, Overland Park, KS 66210, or on our website (http://www.cldinternational.org).

(see next page for nomination petition)



Petition of Nomination for CLD Officers

(If more than one petition is submitted for a candidate, at least one of the petitions must be accompanied by the following information.)

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Desired CLD Position			
Name			
Address			
Telephone (Business)	(Home)		(Cell)
E-mail		Fax	
	Brief descriptive inform	mation about the candida	te:
	PETITION R	REQUIREMENTS	
signatures (i.e., those that	check against the current CLD r (the 3- or 4-digit number in the	membership list), the entire	ne may not be valid. Without 5 valid petition will be invalidated. The he CLD mailing label) is required
	•	ut please try to send all petit	ions for one candidate at the same
Signature	Printed Name	Address	Membership#
1			
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	Addition	al Signatures	
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