



CANDIDATE FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Kevin Rubenstein

**Assistant Superintendent of Student
Services; Elmhurst (IL) Community
Unit School District 205**

Gurnee, IL, USA



**REMEMBER TO VOTE!
Sept. 23 – Oct. 21, 2020**

Candidate Statements:

What inspired you to apply to the BOD? (Limit 150 words.)

Every professional organization requires leaders to step up and to inspire the next generation of leaders to take the reins and move the work forward. After having served as a leader of the largest division (CASE), as a member of the inaugural group of Policy Steering Committee, and as a member of Standards Development Workgroup, I have consistently been amazed and inspired by the work of our great organization. As the Council for Exceptional Children faces the unprecedented challenge of a global pandemic, falling conference revenues, and significant policy questions, it is imperative that the Board of Directors has voices from all areas of the field and I believe that the experiences I have had will serve the organization well as it attempts to navigate in the years to come. Leaders will come forward no matter the circumstance, and our organization needs people who are able to inspire the growth and development of others.

Describe how your leadership experiences, professional or volunteer, have had an impact on fostering change. (Limit 250 words.)

During my tenure as the President of the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE), our state was faced with a budget crisis unlike we had ever seen. The legislative leaders and the governor had not agreed on a budget for over two years and, as a result, schools came close to closing. During that time, school administrators needed to work together in order to advocate for students with disabilities and for appropriate changes in the way that things worked in our state capitol. Under my leadership, IAASE leaned in with our members and engaged with them in several ways including the following:

- We held the line on our own budget and membership costs so that we could increase the size of our membership.
- We offered free professional development on topics of interest for people from around the state.
- We sent weekly email updates about our progress to ensure that all members were on the same page about our viewpoints and beliefs.
- Our legislative consultant connected our members at home and in the state capitol on topics that mattered the most.
- We aligned IAASE with a group of progressive school organizations that were able to support the work being done in schools.

We were able to work with our colleagues from across the state to ensure that a new budget was passed and that a new school funding formula was included in that budget. As the state faces a new budget crisis amidst this global pandemic, this new school funding formula will allow the schools most in need of funds to have them. We fostered enduring change for the betterment of students and schools.

People who apply to a Board of Directors usually stress their communication and collaboration skills. What three additional skills would you bring to the board and how do you believe they would be beneficial? (Limit 150 words)

As a member of the Board of Directors, I would bring the following skills to the team:

Policy knowledge: As the Chair of the CASE Policy and Legislative Team and as a member of the CEC Policy and Legislative Team, I have become knowledgeable about the policymaking process and how this impacts the organization overall.

Practitioners Voice: It is imperative that the organization stay grounded in the work of practitioners who are in the field doing the work with an understanding of how individual actions taken by the Board will impact membership numbers and the organization as a whole.

Organization: Administrators with much on their plates must have the tools to stay organized and to organize the work of others. As I have moved into higher levels of work in our organization, I have become acquainted with a variety of organizational tools that will serve the Board well for the tasks we take on together.

What are your three major achievements and/or experiences that will help you be successful on the board and why? (Limit 150 words.)

Earning my doctorate: Earning my doctorate in educational leadership while working full time and engaging with professional organizations was no small task. It required that I prioritized work, family, and school work and took a break from aspects of my social life. The doctorate has opened doors that I never thought were possible.

Serving as Unit President: As the President of a unit, you must learn to engage with members on a variety of levels on a myriad of issues. Our organization has faced a state budget crisis, a global pandemic, and a series of high-profile policy issues. As the leader of the organization, I engaged with elected and appointed leaders from across the state to ensure that the voice of the school administrator is heard so that students with disabilities are supported.

Being a teacher and administrator: There is nothing that has been more rewarding to me in my life than working with students with disabilities.

Other than time, what would the biggest challenges be for serving on the board and how would you address this/these challenge(s)? (Limit 150 words.)

I recognize that some might view administrator members of CEC differently since our views don't always match those of others. I plan to lean in and listen to my colleagues in other divisions to ensure that I understand their concerns and challenges. It is imperative that my voice on the board is one that is reflective of the organization as a whole and that minority viewpoints are reflected in our work. I can do this by connecting with other divisions at convention, by joining other divisions, and by speaking with unit leaders. CEC needs strong leadership more than ever before. As we face the challenges brought on by a global pandemic, combined with tensions following a racially motivated incident of police brutality, CEC must lead the field of special education into this next decade stronger than ever before. Given my strong background as a leader in the field, I am humbled to offer my service and look forward to the opportunity to serve.

Professional Position(s) and Education:

Primary Professional Position:

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Elmhurst Community Unit School District 205
Elmhurst, IL, USA

Highest Degree:

Ed. D., Educational Leadership and Supervision, Loyola University Chicago

CEC Membership Information:

Years of CEC Membership: 7 years

Division Membership(s):

Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)

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