

Special  
Education  
Legislative  
Summit **2020**  
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020



## Town Hall and Summit Kickoff

7/13/2020

## Agenda

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- Welcome
  - Dr. Jennifer Lesh, President, Council for Exceptional Children
  - Erin Maguire, President, Council of Administrators of Special Education
- Live Town Hall, Featuring:
  - Brittany Matthews, Senior Policy Advisor, Education and Workforce, Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH)
  - Peter Mills, Legislative Assistant, Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT)
- Advocacy Overview: The Why and The How
  - Dr. Kevin Rubenstein, CASE Policy Chair
  - Kuna Tavalin, CEC Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor

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## Power of Advocacy

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- Advocacy is:
  - *Organized action in support of an idea or cause; constituents educating elected officials*
- The power of collective voice: When we come together around a single cause, we amplify it
- Can I advocate?
  - Yes! You do not need to be an expert in policy to advocate, you are already an expert at what you do in this field

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## Advocacy Gets Results

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### CEC/CASE Emergency IDEA Funding Request, March 2020

- \$11.3b for IDEA Part B →
- \$500m for IDEA Part C →
- \$400m for Section 619 →
- \$300m for IDEA Part D →

### Supporting Children with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act, June 2020

- \$11b for IDEA Part B
- \$500m for IDEA Part C
- \$400m for Section 619
- \$300m for IDEA Part D

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## Power of Being a Constituent

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- Connect your cause to something the Member cares about
  - They always want information that relates back to the district/state they represent
- Personal connections help you advance your agenda
  - It is very possible that your Member or staff is familiar with your school district/region and may even know you or people you work with
- Members will always be respectful
  - Even if you disagree on policy, your Representatives will be kind (\*with very rare exception)

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## Effective Advocacy is:

- Educating Congress about CEC/CASE priorities
- Connecting policy priorities to a Member's home district or state
- Building relationships with Members and staff
- Establishing oneself as an expert on a specific topic and becoming a trusted resource



### Pro Tips for Virtual Meetings:

- Wear professional attire
- Turn on your camera if you can
  - Avoid outside distractions, i.e. the cat
  - Treat the meeting as if it was in person

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## Building an Effective Case

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- Illustrate a need
- Build a sense of urgency
- Tell a personal story that connects the issue to your district
- Make the “ask”
- Invite questions to further engage with your delegation

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## Working with Your State Team

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- State leaders have all materials for requesting meetings
- State leaders serve as a resource
- Work with your state team to plan for your meeting



### Pro Tips for Securing a Virtual Meeting:

- Defer to the office to use the platform they prefer
- Be sure to follow up—inboxes are overflowing

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## State Leaders Will Help You...

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- Plan ahead of time:
  - Decide which “asks” to emphasize
  - Identify stories that support the “asks”
  - Assign speaking roles
- Review the agenda at the beginning of the meeting
- Introduce your team
- Actively facilitate to avoid awkward silences, people talking over each other, etc.

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## SELS Policy Issues

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- Educator shortages
- Student mental health
- Federal funding
- COVID-19-related issues

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## Learning the Issues

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- The SELS team has developed issue briefs for each topic of focus
  - Issue briefs are available on the SELS website
- This week's online events will provide a deep dive into the issues
  - Expert panelists will present the issues from research, policy, and practice perspectives
  - Each session will also provide an opportunity for questions and answers and a discussion of the SELS policy asks

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## Amplifying the Message

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- Why Social Media?
  - Twitter = news, public debate, decisions
  - Every Member of Congress has a Twitter account
  - Every reporter has a Twitter account
  - Connect to: Listen, learn, ask/answer questions, share info, say thank you
- Social Media Toolkit:
  - Reinforce policy asks
  - Heighten engagement with Member offices
  - Engage in advocacy from afar in the future

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# Questions?

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**Kuna Tavalin**  
Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor,  
Council for Exceptional Children  
[kunat@cec.sped.org](mailto:kunat@cec.sped.org)



**Dr. Kevin Rubenstein,**  
Policy Committee Chair,  
Council for Administrators of Special Education  
[KRubenstein@elmhurst205.org](mailto:KRubenstein@elmhurst205.org)

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