

Fowler, Sheila

**Page: Overview**

While “career and technical education (CTE)” is new to many, those in the field have long understood the power and importance of education that provides students with high-tech, real-world learning infused with career exploration. Not only is CTE at the roots of today’s most relevant education trends such as ‘STEM’ and ‘Maker Spaces,’ it’s a vital component to ensuring America’s economic prosperity and status as a leader for innovation. It is part of ACTE’s mission to ensure the value of CTE continues to grow and gain the recognition it deserves.

ACTE’s Champion for CTE Awards were created to recognize education leaders, business and industry executives, celebrities and thought leaders who support and champion CTE programs as a vital part of developing a prepared, adaptable and competitive workforce. The words and actions of a few dedicated and influential individuals have the power to further best practices, foster supportive policies, and shape a more positive public opinion of CTE. These awards showcase outstanding champions—from local leaders to national figureheads—who have leveraged their influence to expand, improve, and promote CTE.

These examples of model leadership serve to inspire and inform other leaders on creative and meaningful ways to positively impact the field. Highlighting their stories aligns with ACTE’s goal of cultivating a positive image of CTE and recognizing a broad community of supporters, ultimately creating a stronger vision for the future of CTE and empowering its leaders to speak with a unified voice.

If you know of a deserving candidate for this recognition, we urge you to explore ACTE’s preeminent awards program.

These awards are open to education leaders, business and industry executives, celebrities, thought leaders and other individuals who have made a significant impact on the improvement and expansion of CTE programs and/or on positively influencing policymakers and public opinion regarding CTE. *Federal policymakers are not eligible for these awards and should instead be nominated for [ACTE’s Policymaker of the Year Award](#).* Greater consideration will be given to candidates who have repeatedly demonstrated their public support for CTE and who exhibit an understanding of the components of modern, high-quality CTE.

Nominations will be accepted online until May 1 and may be submitted by the candidate or by a third party nominator. All candidates who meet eligibility and criteria requirements will be highlighted on ACTE's website as a 'Champion for CTE Spotlight.' Top nominations may be featured as model leaders in a future issue of *Techniques*, and/or invited to present sessions at ACTE's CareerTech VISION.

An independent panel will review all submissions to select the national recipient(s) of the ACTE Champion for CTE Award, which will then be considered for approval by the ACTE Board of Directors. Winners will be notified in August and recognized at the ACTE Awards Banquet during CareerTech VISION.

*All nominators permit ACTE to use and edit content of the application for promotional activities. ACTE reserves the right to maintain the anonymity of judges and confidentiality of their scores. Non-winning candidates may be re-nominated for the same or another Excellence Award the following year. Winning candidates at the national level may not be nominated for the same or another national ACTE Excellence Award within three years of their win.*

**Page: Basic Information**

**Nominator Information**

Please provide your information as the nominator of this candidate.

**Your Name**

Fowler, Sheila

**Email Address**

srfowler@cps.edu

**Title**

Assistant Principal

**Employer**

Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences

**Phone Number**

773-535-2938

**Relationship to the Candidate**

Candidate serves as co-chair of school's business advisory board

**Candidate Information**

Please provide information on the candidate being nominated.

**Candidate's Name**

Marc Schulman

**Title**

President

**Employer**

Eli's Cheesecake Company

**Work Address**

6701 West Forest Preserve Drive  
Chicago Illinois 60634 US

**Email**

mschulma@elicheesecake.com

**Phone Number**

773-308-7037

**Does the candidate have a background (diploma, certificate, degree) in a career and technical education field?**

No

**If yes, please provide more detail about their background in CTE.**

**Page: Description of Candidate**

## **1. Please describe actions the candidate took to help expand, improve, and/or promote CTE.**

Over the past 20 years, Marc Schulman has been a tireless advocate for Career and Technical Education on local, state, and national levels. Marc is currently serving as co-chair of the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences (CHSAS) Business Advisory Board, a position he has held since 2001. The CTE offerings at CHSAS are all focused on agricultural sciences and agricultural business. In his role Marc has supported the quality and expansion of 21st century learning experiences for over 3,000 students. Marc lead initiatives to place all juniors and seniors (340 students per year) at CHSAS in work-based learning experiences throughout Chicago and the surrounding counties.

Marc also partners with three other Chicago High Schools that have CTE offerings. His initiatives allow for students to participate in entrepreneurial experiences at Eli's and beyond. He provides professionals to engage with students regarding their career development plans.

His work with CHSAS was instrumental in establishing the Eli's/CHSAS/Wright College Sustainable Summer Entrepreneur internship program. For the past 14 years, the summer program has allowed CHSAS students to engage in CTE-based agricultural applied learning. It provides a triangulated partnership between the high school, the 2-year college, and the business world.

Marc regularly reaches out to local media to promote the positive aspects of CTE. For example, he was responsible for media coverage (newspaper and television) CHSAS received regarding its innovative and engaging CTE instruction. Marc has been interviewed at conferences, on the radio, and on TV about the positive impact CTE has on student growth and development.

Marc is working to develop a CTE-based school near Eli's Cheesecake Factory. He regularly meets with local aldermen, civic leaders, and the mayor to detail his vision for such a school.

Marc and his staff routinely come and interview students for their senior exit exam. During this interview, students must defend their 4 year portfolios. He assesses them from an industry perspective which is vital to the final determination of a student's progress through our program and readiness to enter their next endeavor.

Marc regularly tours CHSAS, often bringing colleagues from other agricultural businesses with him. They make suggestions on improving our programs and often donate equipment and supplies necessary to make the improvements. Under Marc's leadership, Eli's Cheesecake Factory sponsors \$10,000 of scholarships to CHSAS CTE graduates. Additionally, he allows CHSAS to use his cheesecake product for CTE fundraisers.

## **2. How did the candidate's actions shape the adoption/expansion of best practices in CTE?**

Marc connected CHSAS with faculty at the University of IL-College of ACES to develop articulation agreements. Now, students attending this university may receive credit for introductory courses in Food Science, Horticulture and Animal Science. This creates increased collaboration between secondary and post-secondary institutions, ensuring that our curriculum is rigorous and relevant. He facilitated a junior college pathway for students by working with Wright Junior College and University of Illinois.

Marc took the initiative to coordinate a professional development day for academic and CTE teachers, hosted by Eli's Cheesecake/Wright College. Teachers learned how to incorporate industry standards into their classrooms, while helping students connect academic skills with hands-on skills. Teachers received small group training from Eli's employees and professors at Wright.

Marc works closely with special education departments to ensure that all students are getting access to innovative CTE instruction. For example, he provides entrepreneurial exposure and practice for CTE students at Vaughn Occupational High School. He also partners with Kendall College to link high school students in culinary classrooms with the culinary program at Kendall.

Marc has helped CHSAS' CTE/Ag program establish partnerships with over 25 business in the past 20 years. He works tirelessly in bringing new partners to advisory meetings and to tour the CTE/Ag program at CHSAS. Marc has been recognized for his dedication by the IL State Board of Ed who awarded him with the prestigious "Business Partnership Award."

Marc connects CHSAS students with agriculture/CTE conferences to deepen students' career development and understand how CTE connects to high-tech careers. He engages professional organizations to offer discounted registration for CTE students. Marc secured the U.S. Secretary of Education to speak to over 50,000 National FFA members at the National Convention in Indianapolis (2010). His support of FFA has been unmatched in the history of CHSAS. He encourages student participation in FFA by offering internships, scholarships, work-based learning experiences, and networking events for students.

Marc was instrumental in developing the job shadow "season" for high quality work-based learning for CHSAS students. He continues to provide a kick-off speaker for a work-based learning assembly with the juniors and seniors. Such notable speakers have included the CEO of McDonald's, an under-secretary from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health. Marc works with the agriculture chair at CHSAS to engage new business partnerships each year.

**3. How did the candidate's actions impact CTE policies or positively influence public opinion of CTE? How did these actions contribute to a broader understanding of modern CTE (not 'vocational education') that is robust, rigorous and relevant?**

Marc Schulman's efforts mentioned in the paragraphs above have positively influenced public opinion of CTE on local, state, and national levels. Marc has leveraged his position as President of Eli's Cheesecake in order to use his influence on behalf of CTE programs. He has spoken to legislators, business leaders, federal cabinet members, and international leaders both in formal and informal contexts, about the significance of CTE for the 21st century. Marc is a champion for a modern definition of CTE, one that focuses on both academic and applied skills. For example, Marc held a meeting with the mayor and deputy mayor of Chicago to inform them about the importance of continuing to grow high-quality CTE in Chicago. He has also met with CTE directors at the district level on several occasions to gain a better understanding of how CTE programs are administered. Marc served on the Illinois Council on Economic Education to promote business education at the secondary level. Marc constantly speaks of CTE as essential and relevant for education in the 21st century. Marc has even introduced CTE programs to the Gates Foundation, bringing one of the directors to visit the agricultural career pathways at CHSAS. Many visitors, ranging from business leaders to governmental officials, are surprised the first time they visit CHSAS. Guests often comment that they didn't realize the power of a strong CTE program for student success. They have a changed viewpoint after visiting CTE at CHSAS. This change in perception can be attributed to Marc's unending advocacy efforts on behalf of CHSAS' CTE. For such endeavors, Marc was awarded with the New American High School Partnership Award. He also received an Honorary State FFA Degree and Illinois Leadership Council for Ag Education Excellence Award. Recently, Marc has been an advocate for legislation that granted extended contracts to CTE agriculture teachers in Illinois. The extended contracts will allow students to access contextualized CTE programs throughout the summer months. Thousands of teachers and students in our state will benefit as a result of this legislation. Marc will continue to push for more quality CTE programs in the city of Chicago and beyond. He will continue to speak out on the importance of CTE. Marc Schulman is most deserving to be named a "Champion for CTE."

**4. What is the scope of the candidate's impact on CTE?**

National

**5. Would the candidate be willing to speak about their supportive efforts on behalf of CTE at an ACTE event?**

Yes