

Don Ringlestein, CETL  
Chief Technology Officer  
Maine Township High School District 207 (IL)

**Professional Background:**

I have been an educational technology leader for more than 13 years. I am the Chief Technology Officer at Maine Township HSD 207 in Park Ridge, Illinois. I oversee the district's technology infrastructure, and am also responsible for data services, including Infinite Campus, Skyward, and a myriad of others. Maine 207 has long been a leader in educational technology and was the first school district that adopted Google services in 2007.

Prior to my role at Maine, I was the Director of Technology at West Aurora SD 129 from 2011 until June 2020. West Aurora had no wireless infrastructure when I was hired, and all the tech staff had been fired. When I left, the district had a state-of-the-art network and server infrastructure, and the tech team had a reputation for being excellent partners in the district's educational mission. Prior to West, I was the director of instructional systems at SD 308 in Oswego, IL.

Prior to my time in educational technology, I was a part of the services organization at Best Buy, both before and after Best Buy's acquisition of the Geek Squad. I was a part of an eleven-member team that assessed Best Buy's services capabilities and sales opportunities prior to the Geek Squad purchase.

I hold the CETL, the ITIL V.4 and CAPM (Certified Associate in Project Management) certifications. I recently obtained the Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) certification, and am currently working on the CISSP certification.

Throughout my career, my goal has been to develop staff and students. Some of my proudest achievements have been seeing student interns achieve rewarding careers in IT, and staff members develop into directors of technology.

**What are the two most important priorities for CoSN to focus on in the next three years?**

1. Cybersecurity and the security of student information have been a priority for CoSN, and for EdTech leaders, for some time now. They will continue to be a priority, and I believe that CoSN should continue its advocacy for cybersecurity and continue to provide districts with tools like the Trusted Learning Environment Seal. While CoSn has done an admirable job of expanding its education efforts for CTO's on the nuts and bolts of cybersecurity, I think that it would be useful for CoSN to assist its members in achieving relevant IT security certifications.

2. CoSN's advocacy efforts have been incredibly helpful for the organization and its state chapters. CoSN should continue its work in monitoring state and Federal legislation that directly impacts educational technologists. What CoSN could do more is to advocate for educational technology leaders within educational institutions. All too often ed tech leaders can be faced with understaffed, under supported tech organizations that have a very hard time getting done all that needs to be done to support their educational institutions. I've long been an advocate of educating school leadership on the true cost of implementing and maintaining the cutting-edge technology that our staff and students deserve, including the staff that it takes in IT to maintain that environment. We need to work hard to ensure that school leaders and boards of education understand that technology cannot be under sourced if indeed we are looking to use it as means to change student's lives.

**Describe your relevant experience in providing leadership to nonprofit organizations (e.g. service on boards, events, fundraising), with particular emphasis on any experience working with state or national education and/or ed tech associations**

I have served on the board of directors of OnLight Aurora, a non-profit provider of WAN and Internet access to businesses, and community anchor organizations like school districts and hospitals. At the close of my tenure, I had become the secretary of the board. Serving alongside aldermen, the Mayor of the City of Aurora, and the city's CIO, I had the opportunity to serve the citizens and institutions in Aurora.

I was also a part of the Aurora Area Pathways to Prosperity project, a collaboration between the City of Aurora, the Aurora Area Chamber of Commerce, the State of Illinois and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The goal of the project was to research leading career opportunities in the Chicagoland area, and then work with leaders in business, schools, local and state governments, and state-wide trade organizations to develop pathways for Illinois students to obtain rewarding jobs in the state. The efforts of this group were documented in Bruce Campbell's article in the Quarterly Review of Distance Education (Charlotte Vol. 13, Iss. 4, (Winter 2012): 219-224,269-270).

**CoSN has identified diversity as a priority for both the CTO profession and the CoSN organization. As a CoSN Board nominee, how would you help to broaden diversity and/or what experience have you had in evaluating or managing organizational diversity?**

I am a member of District 207's Diversity Committee and have long believed that diversity is not only needed, but is crucial, in the workplace. Especially in IT departments, where non-diversity has been the rule for too long. Obviously, from a human capital standpoint, we've too long limited ourselves to a small portion of the population, and haven't worked to ensure that the vast majority of us, woman and people of color, have been able to take jobs in IT. I've worked hard to ensure that people of different cultural backgrounds have always been a part of my teams, and I have valued what they have contributed to organizations whose primary constituents, our students, were also of very diverse backgrounds.

This Illinois Educational Technology Leaders are undergoing diversity training as a board, and we will continue to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented in our organization, and in our board of directors. I've also worked to uncover and acknowledge my personal biases. Biases can be, indeed mostly are, unconscious in nature, and I've worked hard to root out mine and ensure that I am acknowledging the way they influence the way that I approach the world. I've studied how to be an Anti-Racist with Ibram Kendi, and avidely read Ta Nehisi Coates' books. I strive to be an anti-racist and consider myself a feminist even though I am male.

**Describe your past involvement in CoSN and/or our state chapters**

I am the Vice-Chair of CoSN's Exam Committee, and I am the Chair CoSN's Certification Governance Committee. I also serve on CoSN's Awards committee. I have also participated in several CoSN peer reviews as a subject matter expert.

I am the Past President of CoSN's Chapter in Illinois, the Illinois Educational Technology Leaders (IETL). I have served on the board of directors of the chapter since the chapter was founded.

Finally, I had the honor of being recognized as CoSN's Volunteer of the Year in 2021. I would be honored to be elected to CoSN's board of directors as well.