

CORPORATE CANDIDATES

Name: Rod Houpe
Organization: ENA
Title: Director of Business Development

Briefly describe your professional background and experience in education technology

I am an IT industry leader with more than 30 years of experience leveraging innovative technology to meet the unique needs of public organizations. Much of my career has been dedicated to education, making me knowledgeable and passionate about providing advanced technology solutions in support of learning initiatives. I have served as CIO for several education and library organizations, including Columbus City Schools, Cleveland Public Library, and Cleveland Metropolitan School District, where I led a district-wide initiatives to utilize educational technologies to enrich curriculum and enhance learning environments. These experiences also afforded me the ability to work alongside many of my peer CIOs at school districts across the country. Today, as ENA's director of business development, I have built on a rich history of service to educational enterprises to connect K-12 schools and libraries to transformative technology solutions as a trusted solutions partner.

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

Cybersecurity and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives are the two most important priorities CoSN needs to focus on in the next three-plus years. A great amount of time and resources have already been dedicated by the CoSN organization to both areas, but there is still much more work to be done.

Cybersecurity is impacting districts of all sizes across the nation, wreaking financial havoc and severely disrupting learning environments. Considerable progress has been made regarding awareness of the threat, but steps still need to be taken to achieve the systematic adoption of a proactive versus reactive methodology. CoSN is helping address this problem through its funding advocacy efforts and its professional development and thought leadership initiatives. Continuing to focus on these key areas will equip schools with the funding, resources, and information they need to effectively mitigate and defend detrimental cyberattacks.

Promoting and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in K-12 learning environments is also a critical priority. Technology has the potential to enhance student learning and produce tremendous outcomes, but if not leveraged correctly, it can do the opposite by creating divides and inequitable access to underrepresented students. The delivery of digital resources and online learning platforms is essential to the work of equity and inclusion. If awarded this board seat, I am committed to working with the CoSN board, vendor partners, and my fellow CoSN members to create resources, sessions, and professional learning group(s) that advocate for and promote equity and inclusion for all students and staff.

Please explain how your diverse background, personal and professional, will help impact the CoSN Board.

As an African American industry leader and member of the Central Ohio African American Senior IT Leaders Group (SAALT), I am especially committed to inclusion and diversity in both technology and education. I understand the critical importance of recruiting candidates from diverse backgrounds to cultivate diverse, multi-cultural collaboration and representation. I am a steadfast advocate for equal opportunity across all industries, and I am eager to continue the work of the CoSN Diversity, Equity and Inclusion subcommittee promoting and broadening CoSN efforts to broaden diversity and develop leadership programs for the next generation of diverse innovators.

Additionally, in my position as the director of business development at ENA I have been fortunate to work with the CoSN organization. CoSN initiatives are woven into the fabric of ENA's work with school districts, and our employees are involved with various committees.

I am proud of what CoSN has achieved during my tenure as both a board member and chapter member, especially given the challenges presented by the pandemic. I look forward to continuing to support and promote the mission of the CoSN organization should I be elected again.

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 devoted my career to nonprofit organizations and public education, and I am proud to be an active member of several education and industry associations, including: the Columbus Board of Education's Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center Information Technology Advisory Board; GroundWork group, where I serve as a board member; the State of Ohio Multi-Agency CIO Advisory Council; and the Council of the Great City Schools, where I have served on numerous peer review boards.

I also serve the State of Ohio as the Technology Standards Chair, and I advise in the development of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services' Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

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?

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

For the past two years, I have had the privilege of serving as a CoSN board member and co-chair of the CoSN Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee. It has been an honor to advocate for and serve the education technology community in this role. I have learned so much from our members, and I continue to be impressed by their dedication and innovation.

Before serving as a board member, I was an active member of the Ohio CoSN chapter. I attended numerous CoSN conferences, participated in a variety of CoSN activities, and presented on best practices nationwide. I have also had the privilege to serve as a CoSN K12 Early Career Academy CTO mentor and Ohio CoSN CTO mentor. I have also been a speaker at CoSN CTO Forums.