

# Opening Doors to the Future



**2025 Annual Report**

**EQUAL**  
OPPORTUNITY  
SCHOOLS

# Letter from the CEO

## Dear EOS community and friends,

My journey to become EOS' new CEO is deeply rooted in a lifelong passion for accelerating educational equity. Yes, I said it—equity—a word that has recently become controversial.

At its core, the American Dream is fundamentally about the belief that if you work hard, you can succeed. The idea of educational equity simply acknowledges that not everyone begins the race toward the American Dream from the same starting line.

When we intentionally create genuine equality of opportunity, it's more than just a moral imperative; it's smart business, and it's how we move America forward as we face an unprecedented historical shift driven by new technology and tools.

This idea builds on themes I recently explored in a [Fast Company op-ed](#), highlighting how overlooking talented students limits our national innovation potential, especially within STEM.

## Accelerating access drives student readiness and opportunity

As the co-founder of Saga Education, I spent over a decade working to remove systemic barriers to student success. That experience shaped my conviction that every student deserves access to rigorous academic opportunities and support to realize their full potential.

## A year of positive impact

EOS has built a remarkable legacy of bridging opportunity gaps, especially for historically-underserved students. In this year's report we'll explore highlights from the 2024-25 school year, including:

- **Expanding access & opportunity:** We identified 131,000 historically-underrepresented students who were ready for advanced courses. Of these, 67,000 enrolled, and we project an additional 4,800 will enroll next year—a 4% year-over-year increase.
- **Accelerating connections between students and trusted adults:** 87% of our surveyed students who enrolled in advanced courses named a trusted adult in their school, a critical access enabler.
- **Demonstrating our impact with Mathematica data:** A Mathematica research study showed stable or improved academic performance in advanced courses at EOS partner schools, debunking myths that increased access compromises rigor or outcomes.



## Innovating for the future

As I step into this role, I see clearly that the K-12 education ecosystem stands at a critical inflection point. As the landscape changes, an increasing vacuum of essential data and insights is making it hard for states and districts to keep pace with a rapidly evolving technological environment.

States and districts invest heavily in programs and systems but lack a coherent way to parse all their data to determine what's working, for whom, and at what cost.

This reality prompts us to ask: **How can we at EOS step up to better support schools and districts where they are?**

This question has led us to explore how we can leverage our existing data infrastructure and partnerships to provide schools with agile insights that go beyond advanced coursework.

Amidst mounting pressure, districts, schools and partners need actionable data to make more informed decisions. EOS is uniquely positioned to provide this at a time when educators want more effective solutions and ROI.

As I look to the future, my goal is to build on EOS' history, by not only expanding our direct impact, but also helping to shape policy, practice, and lasting systems change. By deepening our work and our partnerships, we can ensure that opportunity is not just an ideal, but a reality for every student.

Onward with purpose,

AJ Gutierrez

Chief Executive Officer  
Equal Opportunity Schools

# The Problem We're Solving for School Leaders

## Closing the ambition–access gap

There's a nationwide ambition–access gap in our schools.

In our 2024/25 survey of over 270,000 students,<sup>1</sup> we found that while **89% of high school students aspire to earn a college degree**, only **38% are enrolled in the advanced courses** that set them up for college and career success.

As a nation, we're under-identifying talent—this is important, because our nation's future workforce needs require a significant talent pipeline, particularly in the STEM fields.

✗ LACK OF ADULT ENCOURAGEMENT

✗ LACK OF INFORMATION

✗ LACK OF BELONGING

Three common barriers that exist for students—particularly from communities with historically fewer resources—are a lack of adult encouragement, a lack of information and a lack of belonging.

We don't have a national ambition problem; we've got a system design problem. To meet these challenges, districts and educators need stronger data, insights and tools to shift from a culture of gatekeeping to one of gate-opening for all students.

EOS helps schools close the ambition–access gap by combining data, insights and tools with year-round support to uncover hidden talent and expand access to advanced academic opportunities like dual enrollment, AP, and IB.

We've remained committed to this mission against the backdrop of a challenging, evolving education landscape. We're proud to have worked hard with partners and key collaborators to broaden reach, innovate our approaches and deepen our impact.

### Key Highlights:

- Supported record enrollment in [dual enrollment/credit classes](#) in our partner schools
- Increased access to postsecondary [pathways for middle school students](#) for the first time
- Empowered young leaders through our national, [student-led RISE program](#)
- Delivered [professional growth for AP teachers](#) through a national community of practice
- Invested in enhancing our products, delivering a redesigned [Student Insight Card](#) and a [reimagined EOS Portal](#) to offer more student insight and understanding than ever before

## Impact at a Glance:

★ 58

school districts partnered with EOS

★ 275K

students surveyed (172K of which are historically-underrepresented)

★ 167K

course requests submitted for 2025–26 (including 131K for historically underrepresented 10th and 11th grade students)

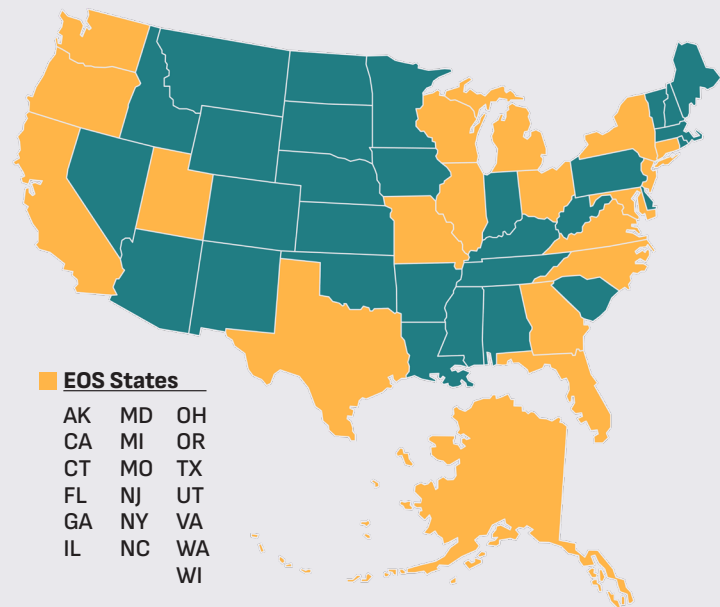
★ 114K

students registered for at least one advanced course (including 67K underrepresented 10th and 11th graders)

★ 4.8K+

more students enrolled in advanced courses at EOS partner schools in 2025–26 than last year—a 4% increase!

## Impact Footprint:



<sup>1</sup> Equal Opportunity Schools, June 2025



## New Mathematica research affirms our transformational impact

Mathematica, a leading policy research firm, compared data from EOS partner schools over the past eight years to three national datasets. The results highlight the distinct and measurable impact of EOS.<sup>2</sup>

These findings underscore that when students are given the opportunity to challenge themselves, they rise to the challenge—and that expanded access to academic opportunities for underrepresented students benefits the entire school population.

### EOS increases AP enrollment for all students

**2.5x** more underrepresented students

EOS identifies **2.5x more underrepresented students** who are ready for advanced courses than the College Board AP Potential tool.

**+52** additional students enrolled

Each year, EOS helps our partner schools enroll **an additional 52 students** in AP courses on average—including **34 underrepresented students—not to mention other programs that are supported like IB, AICE, and Dual Enrollment.**

### EOS schools boost exam-taking rates, maintain score averages

**4.1%** increase in participation rates

EOS partner schools with underrepresented and low-income majorities see an increase in the former AP exam **participation rates up to 4.1%.**

These new AP students maintain school average AP exam results.

**80%** AP course pass rate by EOS students

**80% of EOS-identified students** pass their AP courses.

“Teachers were definitely concerned about what would happen to scores once we opened up access, and the perception was that scores would drop significantly once access was opened. The great news is that that was not the case. **Scores have stayed at the same level, if not increased, in almost every single advanced level course that we offer.**”



**Eric Flores**  
Former Assistant Principal  
at William Howard Taft  
High School, Chicago (IL)

<sup>2</sup> Mathematica, “EOS Impact Report,” May 2025

# Student Spotlight: Robert's Story



## The power of trusted adults

In September, Robert Gates stepped foot onto Millikin University's campus in Illinois—confident, prepared and focused on earning a degree in athletic training. But the student his professors and peers will meet is a world apart from the one that entered Glenbard South High School four years ago.

Before transferring from Chicago Public Schools, Robert struggled academically. Frequent moves made it hard to stay grounded.

"In middle school, I was always the new kid," he recalled. "And my mom and dad worked all the time, so I was very independent in that way."

However, Assistant Principal Sean Byrne recognized Robert's potential and encouraged him to take an AP English class.

"I had several meetings with him where I had to explain to him why taking AP English was going to be a really valuable part of his trajectory as a student—to help him be a better writer, be a better speaker, and be a better thinker in whatever career field he wanted to go into," Byrne said.

Robert was hesitant. "I was scared," he said. "I thought it was going to be, like, the hardest thing I've ever done in my life."

And it was hard—at first. But when final exam results came back, Robert had passed with a four out of five. His confidence at an all-time high, he enrolled in another AP course, and then another, and even signed up for dual credit courses through the local college.

His favorite advanced course? Dual credit speech, which helped him conquer his stage fright and develop his speaking skills—while earning college credit.

"Being able to get that college experience before actually stepping on a college campus is an amazing way to not only build my overall skill, but also prepare me for college and knock a few classes out along the way," he said.

**Robert's journey from struggling student to college-bound scholar started with someone believing in him—and pushing him to believe in himself, too.**

"I needed to use some of my political capital a little bit to say, 'hey, I believe in you,' and he needed to trust that I really was going to be there to support him even when things got tough," Byrne said.

Every high school has many students like Robert, who have what it takes to not only take advanced courses, but excel in them—if only given the opportunity.

EOS partners with schools like Glenbard South to identify motivated but often-overlooked students like Robert and connect them with trusted adults like Sean Byrne—who have the power to put them on the path to college and career success.

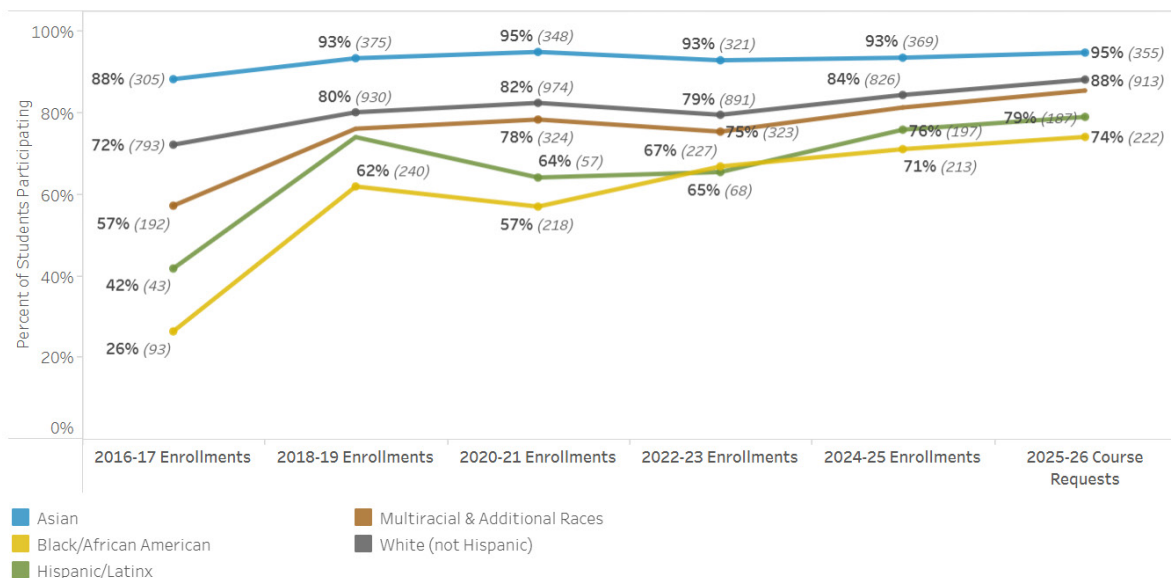
**"I think Robert has more confidence in himself that he didn't realize was inside of him—and I can't wait to see how he takes that into university... he's an amazing success story—all because he took that class."**



**Sean Byrne**  
Principal,  
Glenbard South HS  
Glenbard District 87

# Spotlight on Success: Ann Arbor Public Schools

Ann Arbor Public Schools  
11th-12th Grade AP/IB Participation



**39%**

increase in  
advanced course  
enrollment  
district-wide

This fall, Ann Arbor Public Schools hit a new high in advanced course enrollment, with **83% of 11th and 12th graders registered for at least one class.**<sup>3</sup>

When Ann Arbor launched their EOS partnership in 2016, this number sat at **64%.**

And their progress isn't slowing down anytime soon: **Next school year, they expect 11th and 12th grade AP/IB participation to increase to 86%.**

**This improvement between 2016 and 2025 is especially striking for underrepresented student groups:**

- AP and IB enrollment for Black/African American students rose from **26% to 74%.**
- Enrollment for Hispanic/Latino students increased from **42% to 79%** in that time span.

Huron High School exemplifies this growth:

"At Huron High we've watched our AP and IB Diploma Program become much more diverse over this process of doing an outreach like this," said former Huron High Assistant Principal Michael Sumerton. **"We've seen our AP and IB participation across all the groups go up—groups we were targeting and groups we weren't."**

Not only has access to academic pathways improved, but so has retention and success rates in in them, which Superintendent Jazz Parks attributes to EOS' identification and training of trusted adults.

**"We've seen increased participation, increased engagement and an increased percentage of students telling us they have a trusted adult than we did before our partnership with the EOS."**



**Jazz Parks**  
Superintendent  
Ann Arbor Public Schools



# Partner Spotlight: Porsha Denson, Opportunity Champion

Porsha Denson wears many hats at South Gwinnett High School in Georgia's Gwinnett County Public Schools: Assistant Principal, AP/Gifted Coordinator, 12th Grade Administrator and Math Administrator.

Now, she can add EOS Opportunity Champion to that list.

**Denson was one of 10 EOS partners who were recognized for their work in driving transformational change in their school's advanced academic pathways last year.**

Denson's impressive resume includes:

- Expanding access to advanced courses
- Boosting overall success in these programs
- Improving school culture and staff mindsets
- Empowering students as self-advocates

South Gwinnett's partnership with EOS has been key to these wins, she said.

"EOS has been an essential support to student success by ensuring that all students at South Gwinnett High School—especially those who have been historically underrepresented—have access to the information, encouragement and opportunities they need to make empowered decisions about their academic journey," she said.

Denson adds that EOS' survey data makes her work much easier—and more impactful. With tools like the Student Insight Card and Portal, she can spot promising students and place them on advanced pathways. The impact of this data extends to all classrooms, she added.



**"The ability to use up-to-date insights has allowed me to meet the needs of a broader range of students, ensuring that we are not only supporting AP students but also identifying and addressing gaps in other areas of the school."**

In fact, South Gwinnett's entire culture is transforming thanks to Denson's leadership and collaboration with EOS Partnership Directors Kim Douglas and Stephanie Sherer.

"EOS has been a catalyst for change," she said. "It reshapes staff mindsets and fosters a culture of equity and high expectations."

We're proud to celebrate leaders like Denson who are turning barriers to opportunity into bridges.



# Expanding Our Reach, Deepening Our Impact

## New programs at EOS

### Middle school program reaches students earlier

Most access strategies start in high school, but educators are increasingly identifying middle school as the time where barriers to access need to be addressed to set students up for future success.

Last fall, we launched our [Middle School program](#) to address common barriers early on—by increasing student awareness of postsecondary pathways and helping schools identify students to place into foundational courses like Algebra 1, Pre-AP and honors before they enter high school.

We partnered with **seven middle schools** across **Everett Public Schools (WA)** and **Round Rock ISD (TX)** and surveyed over **4,300 students**, along with their teachers and counselors.

In year 1, our middle school pilot helped:

- **Identify and inform motivated students** about college and career pathways
- **Align student aspirations** with school support systems
- **Equip teachers and counselors** with tools and insight to unlock student potential
- **Build purpose, goals and belonging** in rigorous environments

This year, we're expanding this work to new schools nationwide, **helping more middle school students get a jump start on their postsecondary and career journeys.**

### Dual enrollment jump—starts college readiness

Dual enrollment is the fastest-growing postsecondary pathway in the U.S., with over **2 million more students participating in 2022 than in 1999.**<sup>4</sup>

Today, 89% of high schools offer dual enrollment and credit courses—and [EOS is helping ensure that more students can access them](#) as launchpads to college and career success.

**With support from the Gates Foundation**, EOS first adapted our model in 2023 to support districts like Chicago and New York City Public Schools in expanding equitable access to dual enrollment programs. The focus of this partnership was:

- Increasing participation and success for Black, Hispanic/Latino, and low-income students
- Helping schools create integrated, student-centered pathways that connect AP/IB/AICE and dual enrollment opportunities

Today, **EOS supports over 70% of our partner districts in expanding dual enrollment**—and the progress is clear: Based on 2025–26 course requests, our partners are seeing enrollment rise across the board, including **nearly double the participation of Black students and an 8-point increase for white and multiracial students.**<sup>5</sup>

“Through our new middle school program with EOS, Everett Public Schools is dedicated to empowering students to reach their highest potential by increasing access to challenging coursework. By fostering supportive connections with trusted adults and focusing on each student’s unique educational and postsecondary aspirations, we’re building a foundation for lifelong success and upholding our commitment to high-quality learning for each student.”



**Jeanne Willard**  
Executive Director, College & Career Readiness and Extended Learning Options  
Everett Public Schools



## Grant-funded programs elevate student impact

### Empowering students leaders: the RISE program

Student-centered conversations are at the heart of what EOS does, but what's even more impactful are **student-led conversations**.

That's why EOS launched **RISE (Re-Imagining Student Engagement)**, with funding from the Ichigo Foundation. [RISE is a national network of student leaders](#) working to transform school cultures by expanding access and success in advanced courses.

This year, over 100 students from 12 partner districts formed teams to brainstorm ways to spread awareness and recruit new students to advanced courses.

In four convenings, student leaders shared their strategies and initiatives including:

- Shadows of advanced classes for freshmen
- Social media and poster campaigns
- AP study groups and student-run "office hours"
- AP student chatrooms for peer support

“RISE has helped me become a stronger leader, and I've been able to become more vocal about stuff that I feel passionate about and that I think other students should also be passionate about.”



**Luis Ortiz**  
Pelham Preparatory  
Academy  
New York City



### Helping teachers boost belonging in history and civics classrooms

Last year, EOS launched our [Action for Equity in History and Civics \(A4EHG\)](#) program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. This national community of practice provided professional development for AP U.S. History and Government teachers, with a focus on building classroom environments rooted in belonging and inclusivity.

Participants received a stipend, professional learning credits, and paid travel to workshops centered on implementing culturally-relevant teaching practices and supporting historically-underrepresented students.

To deepen their understanding of U.S. history and ideate ways to incorporate diverse perspectives into their curriculum, they also explored Durham's Black Wall Street and historic civil rights sites in Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma.

### 118 EOS Schools Make 2024 AP Honor Roll

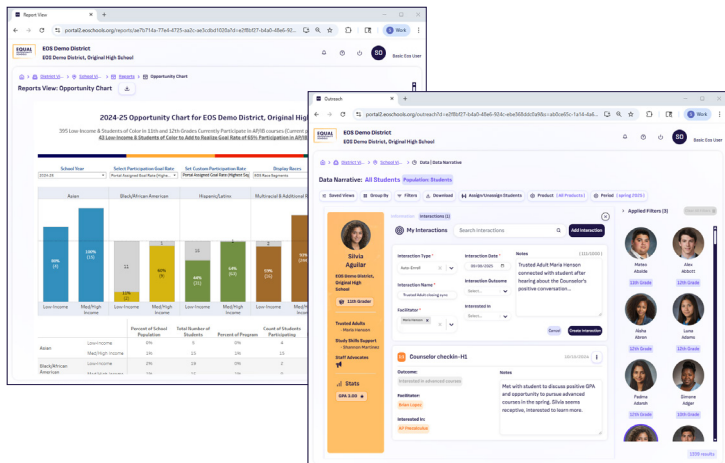
We see the powerful results of our collaboration with schools every day, but we're thrilled when our partners get national recognition for the strides they have made.

**118 schools from 36 EOS partner districts** [made the 2024 AP Honor Roll](#), a distinction reflecting an "outstanding" job of increasing enrollment and success in AP courses.

# Smarter Tools, Stronger Outcomes: Product Enhancements

## EOS Portal: full redesign helps schools identify and support more kids in less time

The EOS Portal relaunched in August 2024 with a new design and features to enhance school partners' ability to identify hidden talent, engage more students about advanced courses and track enrollment and student outcomes in real time.



### Key Enhancements:

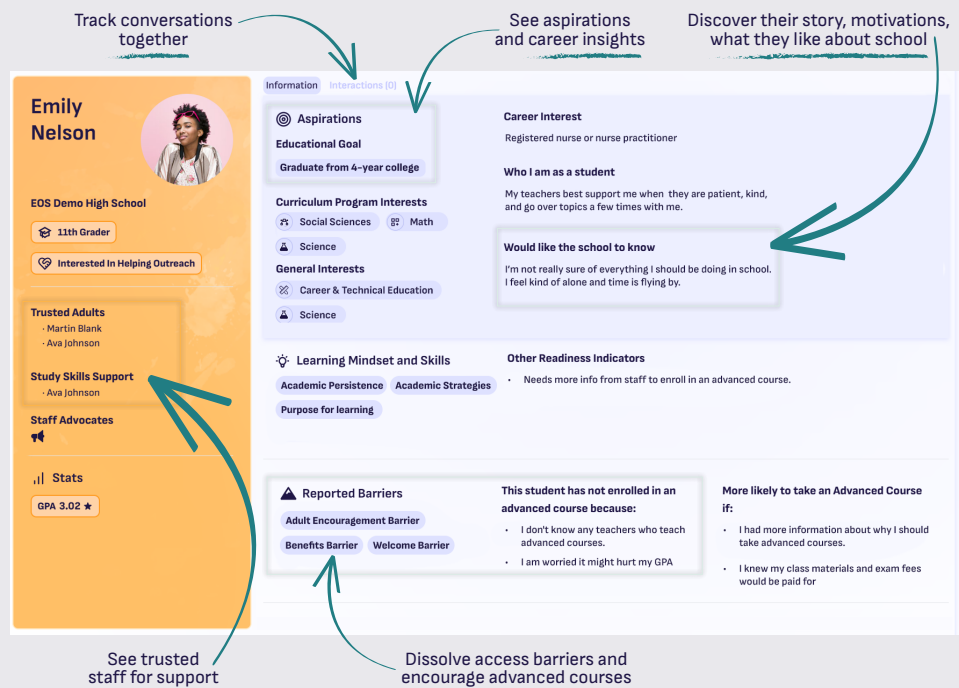
- **Clever integration** enables secure SSO and SIS connection for viewing student data in real-time
- **Improved, modern design** streamlines navigation, tools, and control and visibility of data
- **Collaboration tools:** site leads can assign students to Trusted Adults, who can track outreach interactions and work together to support students; especially helpful for teachers and counselors
- **Student data expanded:** course requests, current enrollment, staff interactions, and more, plus alerts for immediate identification of students at risk
- **New reports** track live progress on student outreach, course requests, class capacity, and enrollment in advanced courses
- **New Help Center and product tours** accelerate onboarding and product utility; provide quick answers to FAQs

This major investment in EOS' data infrastructure reflects our belief that **better data drives better opportunity** for students.

## The expanded EOS student insight card

Our unique **Student Insight Card (SIC)** captures student voice in **40 distinct data points**, showcasing their own story—from CCR aspirations and readiness factors for advanced courses, to perceived barriers, academic records and more. School leaders get an unparalleled 360° view of students in real-time.

Partners can explore each student's unique insight card, track conversations on a dedicated tab, and quickly filter or group students by academic performance, social-emotional learning, readiness and other data points collected in the EOS survey. Tailored versions are available for high schools and middle schools.



# Meet the New Contributed Revenue Team

EOS is thrilled to welcome two new Directors of Fundraising and Donor Engagement, who each bring dynamic energy, deep experience and a personal connection to our mission. Get to know them below!



## Jordan Brophy-Hilton

With over 20 years in K–12 education, Jordan began her career as a first-grade teacher in Chicago before supporting districtwide literacy and math initiatives. There, she saw firsthand how nonprofit partnerships can elevate district efforts and drive meaningful change for students.

For the past 15 years, Jordan has focused on helping national nonprofits expand their impact through philanthropy and fee-for-service strategies. She is passionate about aligning donor interests with mission-driven work, and believes fundraising is a powerful vehicle for change in public education.

**"I've always been drawn to organizations that focus on the intersection between content, student experience, and teacher actions. I am inspired by the work at EOS because this is an organization focused on both depth and breadth—how do we tackle systemic barriers to access advanced coursework for students and ensure we are attending to the whole student and their experience?" she said.**

Jordan holds a B.S. from Syracuse University and an M.Ed. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



## Shaniqua Rudd

For 13 years, Shaniqua has worked in nonprofit development, building sustainable revenue for organizations that are equity-focused, youth-centered and transformational.

Shaniqua's mission is fueled by her own experience as a high school student. While she benefited from programs that supported inner-city youth in advanced coursework, she also faced systemic barriers that kept her from accessing the same resources and tools for post-secondary success as students in private schools and wealthier districts. One of these barriers was teachers who were under-resourced and underprepared for ensuring success in AP courses for students like Shaniqua.

Now, she is key to EOS' efforts to equip educators nationwide with the tools they need to put all their students on pathways to college and career success.

**"When I come to work, I feel aligned in my purpose," she said. "I believe all students across the nation should be supported and set up for their collegiate goals and aspirations."**

Shaniqua holds a B.S. in Business Marketing and an M.S. in Organizational Development from Saint Joseph's University, as well as an M.A. in Nonprofit Development and Philanthropy from the University of Northern Iowa. She is also a Certified Nonprofit Professional (CNP).



# Thank You to Our Valued Funding Partners

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Gates Foundation



We are also deeply grateful to our research and programming partners, whose insights and collaboration fuel our mission and help us open doors of opportunity for students nationwide: Education First Consulting, Leading Educators, National Education Equity Lab, Mathematica, FLP Achieve, Microsoft, Salesforce for Nonprofits, Intentional Futures, Understood, and College Board.

## About Equal Opportunity Schools

Equal Opportunity Schools strengthens educator and system leader capacity to break down barriers to increase student access, belonging and success in rigorous college and career-prep secondary school courses. Our work expands opportunities for all students—particularly those from undeserved and underrepresented backgrounds—to thrive in their post-secondary pursuits.

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