

The EOS Board of Directors Announces that CEO and Founder, Reid Saaris, Will Step Down to Take A New Role Supporting EOS

Seattle, WA., January 11, 2019 – The Board of Directors for Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) announced today that the nonprofit agency’s CEO and Founder, Reid Saaris, has decided to step down as CEO effective February 1, 2019, beginning an orderly leadership transition that will take place over the next six to nine months.

Saaris has led a remarkable career, first as a teacher and administrator, and then as an entrepreneur founding EOS so that students of all backgrounds have equal access to America’s most academically intense high school programs, particularly low-income students and students of color. Under Saaris’ leadership, EOS now partners with more than 540 schools and 180 school districts across 29 states, developing systems to ensure that all capable students are enrolling and succeeding in the high school classes that will best prepare them to achieve their college, career, and life readiness goals.

“Reid has dedicated his professional life to establishing EOS and enabling schools to provide more equal access to rigorous curriculum for all students. The board is grateful for his dedication and exemplary tenure as the organization’s CEO since 2010. We are elated that Reid will continue to support the organization through his ongoing work with our Board and as an external advisor for EOS, ensuring a smooth leadership transition,” said Dr. Deborah Wilds, EOS Board President.

During Reid’s tenure, EOS experienced unprecedented growth, service expansion, and national recognition. Both the New Schools Venture Fund and the Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation recognized his entrepreneurial strength with awards. He was also a recipient of fellowships from the Stanford Center of Social Innovation and Echoing Green.

“I’ve been privileged to lead EOS, an innovative organization recognized for its equity work in schools across the country,” said Reid Saaris. “I have a hard time imagining a more meaningful professional experience than this one has been - to build something profoundly impactful with a team I have learned so much from. Though founders are often credited with the ‘big idea,’ this idea was never mine. This work has been - and will continue to be - about the lived experiences of close to a million students each year who are overlooked and underestimated for no good reason.”

Saaris continued, “Today at EOS, we have a clear strategic vision for the future, passionate professionals on staff, a strong financial foundation, and significant partners dedicated to our mission. Our goal now is to build on this momentum and to scale our impact up to the size of the national need with new leadership. As part of this transition, I will continue to support EOS and its partners as we build for the future.”

The board of directors has formed a search committee and is leading a two-phase selection process to initially choose an interim CEO to start in early 2019, and then a national search for a permanent CEO. The search will be open to a diverse set of internal and external candidates.

History Behind the Creation of EOS

Equal Opportunity Schools' mission was born in a high school hallway that divided two friends. A young Reid Saaris was fast-tracked into advanced courses that would prepare him for college. Yet his equally bright best friend, who came from a lower-income background, was relegated to less challenging courses. Saaris went on to college at Duke, Harvard, and Stanford while his friend spent the next decade-and-a-half working to make up for the lost opportunity of advanced-level courses. The impact of that simple scheduling decision haunted Saaris as he went on to become a high school teacher in South Carolina.

As a young high school teacher, Reid helped one of his students switch into advanced-level courses after recognizing that this student was capable of more rigorous coursework. This intervention had a direct impact on the student's educational trajectory. Inspired by this student, Reid's initiative to find all the "missing students" doubled the size of his school's AP and IB program, and tripled the number of African-American students in advanced classes. The success rate for all students on the exams went up by 20%.

In partnership with the College Board, the International Baccalaureate, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Education Trust, Reid conducted in-depth research. The analysis revealed that while African-American, Latino, and low-income students are about as likely as their white or upper-income peers to attend schools that offer AP and IB courses, roughly three-quarters of a million miss out every year. Nearly twelve years ago, Reid began the work to create the best tools, analysis, and services to find and enroll those students. Today, EOS has solutions that are personalized for each school, addressing the epidemic of missing students from college readiness courses.

About Equal Opportunity Schools

EOS's mission is to ensure students of all backgrounds have equal access to America's most academically intense high school programs, and particularly that low-income students and students of color have opportunities to succeed at the highest levels. The nonprofit organization's partnership model is consultative, collaborative, and requires a commitment to specific and measurable results. Since its incorporation in 2010, EOS has helped more than 540 schools across 29 states identify tens of thousands of low-income students and students of color who qualify for - but are missing from - Advanced Placement or other rigorous levels of coursework. EOS is headquartered in Seattle, Washington. www.eoschools.org

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