

LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT
Superintendent Search: Candidate Presentation
March 16, 2022

Candidate - Dr. Eric Thomas

Dr. Eric Thomas is currently a National Consultant for the University of Virginia's Partnership for Leaders in Education (PLE) program. In that position, he is responsible for providing strategic support to district leaders as they complete a three-year partnership with this nationally recognized school improvement and leadership development program. From 2017-2020, Dr. Thomas served as the Deputy Superintendent/Chief Turnaround Officer in the state of Georgia. In that role, he reported directly to the 14-member Georgia State Board of Education, and he guided superintendents and their teams in implementing the research-driven conditions necessary for district improvement, transformation, and turnaround.

Dr. Thomas led a team of 25 individuals who were responsible for developing and executing a statewide model to improve low-performing schools and to close achievement gaps. His guidance to eight different districts, representing over 100,000 students focused on talent management, proper leadership, instructional infrastructure, differentiated support, and a strong sense of accountability. Accomplishments of those schools included: 70% of them achieving their highest academic outcomes ever, the number of failing schools decreased by 47%, and the improvement of partner school's Georgia Climate Star Ratings by 38% (best indicator for pending and sustained improvement).

Dr. Thomas' background is distinctively aligned to LRSD's needs. He has experience in urban settings, and he has extensive experience in moving campuses and district toward academic improvement. He sees the LRSD's Community Blueprint as having the possibility of being transformative by instilling an equity mindset and striving to eliminate achievement gaps.

Prior to serving in the key leadership roles above, Dr. Thomas served as a social studies teacher, district coordinator, alternative high school administrator, adjunct instructor in educational administration, principal, and turnaround coach. He holds an earned Doctorate degree from Concordia University in Chicago, and the rest of his academic work was done at the University of Cincinnati: Superintendent Certification, Master's degree in educational administration, leadership development academy, and Bachelor's degree in secondary education.

Dr. Thomas served as the Chief Innovation Officer (Assistant Superintendent) for Cincinnati Public Schools from 2004-2012. Notably, under his leadership, Cincinnati became Ohio's highest performing urban school district. He was named the Cincinnati Administrator's Association Administrator of the Year in 2009, and he was selected to serve on the Urban School Licensure Standards Committee for Ohio in 2008.

Dr. Thomas believes that great communities are anchored by great schools. He prides himself in helping to move schools toward greatness through proper resource management, proper change leadership, and proper systems thinking. However, he sees his greatest growth as having come in the area of talent development. He led the development of a coaching framework and became a nationally recognized expert on developing principal supervisors – while providing effective support and accountability.

Dr. Thomas and his wife consider themselves “foodies.” They enjoy: different kinds of restaurants, travel, and their faith.

Others, including his references, state that Dr. Thomas is passionate about kids, passionate about putting things in place that allow students to be successful, and passionate about the need to be very strategic.

One issue was discovered during the vetting process, which was successfully resolved. Therefore, we recommend that Dr. Eric Thomas be considered a candidate for Superintendent and be granted an interview.