

# **Eric Thomas, Ph.D.**

## **Professional Summary**

- Equity-agent that has demonstrated a profound passion to ensure *all* students are prepared for a vibrant future.
- Collaborator that continues to learn the value of collaboration and shared decision-making via 20+ years as a school, district, university, and state leader.
- Strategic thinker that understands and appreciates change and organizational leadership.
- Instructional leader that promotes alignment of rigorous standards, instruction, formative assessment, and intervention practices.
- Talent manager that inspires and honors the pivotal importance of teachers and school leaders.
- Innovator informed by data and research to improve effectiveness to achieve desired outcomes.

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## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**2017 – Present**

**Georgia State Board of Education**

*Chief Turnaround Officer*

Responsible for executing a comprehensive strategic support model for schools identified as the lowest 5% in the state. Presently engaged with eight school districts and 21 schools.

- Reporting directly to 14-member Georgia State Board of Education.
- Created a state-wide model to support schools, and their districts, that have been identified as being in the lowest 5% in the state. The model addresses academic and non-academic needs. Includes focus on student health/wellness, positive behavior intervention supports, and data-driven practices to promote a positive climate and culture. Model is anchored by four overarching components: talent management, leadership, instructional infrastructure, and school-district partnerships.
- Increased annual accountability measure for partner schools by an average of 6.7 percentage points.
- Improved overall outcomes which removed 40% of schools from being in bottom 5%.
- Engaged with state legislature to create and fund a strategic talent management approach to increase recruitment and retention efforts in lowest-performing schools.
- Developing statewide Turnaround Collaborative, which includes state agencies, organizations, higher education community, etc. The purpose of the Collaborative is to increase coordination and cohesiveness of essential partners.

**2012 - 2017**

**University of Virginia Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education (PLE),  
Charlottesville, VA**

*Chief Support Officer*

Led the organization's strategy on supporting schools and districts as they executed a rigorous turnaround initiative. Organization partnered with approximately 20 rural, urban, or suburban school districts across the country each year. Size of districts ranged from 500 students to 350,000 students.

- Provided direct support to senior district leaders; with focus on talent management, leadership, instructional infrastructure, and support & accountability systems.

- Received Tier II evidence-based rating from Rand Corporation for leadership focused school improvement strategies. No other organization that focused on traditional public schools received a higher rating.
- Increased overall reading and math scores by at least 10% over two years in 58% of partner schools.
- Developed and facilitated nationally recognized Summit for principal supervisors. Focus aimed at execution of support strategies for principals, while simultaneously implementing tools and structures to hold principals accountable to high expectations.
- Launched organization's focus on supporting school boards and clarifying the role of school boards during transformation efforts. Strong focus on strategic planning.
- Engaged with State Departments of Education to assist in their support efforts for low-performing schools.
- Received ongoing leadership development and organizational effectiveness training via the Darden Business School.

**2014-2017**

**Ohio Department of Education, Columbus, OH**

*Consultant (Part-Time)*

Team leader of state support team to assess and support low-performing school districts prior to additional state intervention.

**2004-2012**

**Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio (35,000 Students)**

*Chief Innovation Officer (2010-2012)*

Leader of office that was responsible for executing district reform and improvement initiatives.

- Facilitated the district's School Performance Team. Team responsible for categorizing each school and identifying improvement needs. District's overall grade improved from an "F" to a "B" – becoming the highest performing urban school district in Ohio.
- Developed and led Principal Development Academy for assistant principals. 100% of assistant principals became principals.
- Led the *District of Choice* model for the school district. Opened four new schools in two years, including a new Digital Academy, New Tech High School, Gifted Academy, and the first district-sponsored charter school. Innovative choices increased district enrollment by 5,000 students.
- Developed a district-wide initiative to support African-American and other at-risk males (M.O.R.E. – Men, Organized, Respectful, & Educated). Evaluation results showed a decrease in achievement gaps for participating schools. Program has now been launched in 28 of the district's 50 schools since its inception.
- Led the design and implementation of the district's revised teacher evaluation system. System became the model for the entire state.
- Oversaw an annual \$50 million budget.

- Launched the district’s initial efforts to implement blended learning model. Model is now present in nearly all schools.

**Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio**

*Turnaround Principal Coach (2008-10)*

Led team that provided guidance to group of schools that were executing a turnaround initiative. Thirteen of fifteen schools met AYP and/or improved their state accountability rating to at least a “C”.

**Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio**

*Principal (2004-2009)*

Collaborated with school community to implement strategies that led school's rise from *Academic Emergency (F)* to *Effective (B)* on state report card. Effort included a strategic approach to engage the local community as partners.

**2004-2007**

**University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio**

*Adjunct Instructor & Facilitator, Educational Administration Program.*

**2002-2004**

**Middletown City School District, Middletown, Ohio**

*Administrator, Garfield Alternative High School*

**1998-2002**

**Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio**

*District Coordinator, 8+ Program (For Overaged 8<sup>th</sup> graders)*

**1994-1998**

**Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio**

*High School Social Studies Teacher*

**EDUCATION**

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Concordia University of Chicago	Doctor of Philosophy, Educational Leadership	2016
	<i>Dissertation Focus: The Superintendent’s Role in School Turnaround</i>	
University of Cincinnati	Post-Graduate Course Work, Superintendent Program	2012
University of Cincinnati	Master of Education, Educational Administration	2001
University of Cincinnati	Administrator Development Academy (ADA)	2000
University of Cincinnati	Bachelor of Science, Secondary Education	1993

**AWARDS AND HONORS**

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- Recognized at National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) National Conference.
  - Selected to participate in Ohio School Leadership Institute. Buckeye Association of School Administrators. (2012).
  - Received Administrator of the Year Award from the Cincinnati Association, Cincinnati. (2009).
  - Selected to serve on Urban School Licensure Standards Committee for Ohio. (2008).

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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- Member, American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
  - Member, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
  - Member, National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)

## **PRESENTATIONS (Selected)**

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- *Georgia's Turnaround Strategy*. National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) National Conference, Washington, D.C. (2018).
- *Collaboration and Partnership as the Driver of Turnaround*. Georgia School Boards Association, Savannah, Georgia. (2018).
- *Effective Practices for Principal Supervisors*. National Summit for Principal Supervisors, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. (2018).
- *Leading Change and School Transformation*. Ohio State Fisher Business School & Ohio Department of Education SIG Principal's Academy, Columbus, Ohio. (2013)
- *A District Approach to Turning Around Low-Performing Schools*. Race to the Top National Conference, Columbus, Ohio. (2012).
- *Supporting the Needs of African-American and Other at-risk Males*. Council of the Great City Schools National Conference, Boston. (2011).

## **REFERENCES (Present and Former Supervisors)**

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### **LINKS FOR REVIEW**

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssTMeiqFrHo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KU22QO1jj4I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5i2Xmw1oII>