Dr. Eric Thomas, PhD

A native of Georgia, Dr. Thomas was born and spent most of his formative years in Savannah (most of his family still resides there). After moving to Cincinnati, Eric finished school and graduated from the University of Cincinnati. He then began his educational career as a high school social studies teacher in Cincinnati Public Schools. During his 15+ years in the district, Eric was also a Principal, Turnaround Principal Coach, and Chief Innovation Officer. In his last role, as a member of the superintendent's cabinet, he led the redesign of the district's teacher development & evaluation system, launched innovative improvement initiatives, facilitated the development of new schools (including a Digital Academy and a New Tech High School), and created an Aspiring Principal's Academy.

In 2012, Eric joined the University of Virginia's Partnership for Leaders in Education (PLE) School Turnaround Program. As the Chief Support Officer, he led the overarching approach on how to support districts across the country as they worked to transform their lowest performing schools. The model is anchored by four overarching levers: Leadership, Talent Management, Instructional Infrastructure, and Support & Accountability. In 2017, the Rand Corporation identified the PLE (a partnership between the Darden Business School and the Curry School of Education) as the most effective school improvement model in the country.

After nearly six years at the University of Virginia, Dr. Thomas was selected to become Georgia's first Chief Turnaround Officer. Per state legislation, Eric reported directly to the State Board of Education and was responsible for creating and executing an innovative support and accountability model to improve the state's lowest-performing schools. As intended by the legislation, along with improving outcomes for targeted schools and districts, innovations piloted by the Turnaround Office have the potential to impact improvement efforts statewide.

Dr. Thomas is married and has one adult son.