

## Presenter Bios

**Dr. Joseph Jones** is the Superintendent of the New Castle County Vocational-Technical School District in Delaware. Joe is a former high school social studies teacher, assistant principal, and principal. As principal, he was named the Delaware Secondary Principal of the Year and during his tenure, Delcastle Technical High School was the first high school to receive the state's Outstanding Academic Achievement Award. He received his doctorate from the University of Delaware in educational leadership and was awarded the outstanding doctoral student award of his class. Currently, Joe works closely with local and state leaders on student achievement and accountability and has spearheaded an aggressive and successful campaign to ensure student success. Joe is also an adjunct professor, teaching and designing curriculum, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels for various universities. He presents nationally on topics of school leadership and is the co-founder of the leadership development institute, TheSchoolHouse302. Along with T.J. Vari, he co-authored *Candid and Compassionate Feedback: Transforming Everyday Practice in Schools*. And, with Salome Thomas-EL and T.J. Vari, he co-authored *Passionate Leadership: Creating a Culture of Success in Every School, Building a Winning Team: The Power of a Magnetic Reputation and the Need to Recruit Top Talent in Every School, Retention for a Change: Motivate, Inspire, and Energize Your School Culture, and 7 Mindshifts for School Leaders: Finding New Ways to Think About Old Problems*.

**Dr. Salome Thomas-EL** has been a teacher and principal in Philadelphia, PA and Wilmington, DE since 1987. He is currently the Head of School at Thomas Edison Public Charter School in Wilmington, DE. Thomas-EL received national acclaim as a teacher and chess coach at Vaux Middle School, where his students have gone on to win world recognition as Eight-Time National Chess Champions. Principal EL was a regular contributor on "The Dr. Oz Show" and the author of the best-selling books, *I Choose to Stay* and *The Immortality of Influence (Foreword by Will Smith)*. The Walt Disney Company optioned the movie rights to *I Choose to Stay*. Thomas-EL speaks to groups across the country and frequently appears on C-SPAN, CNN, and NPR Radio. He has received the Marcus A. Foster Award as the outstanding School District Administrator in Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania's distinguished Martin Luther King Award. Reader's Digest Magazine recognized Principal EL as an "Inspiring American Icon" and he has appeared on Oprah Radio! And, with Joseph Jones and T.J. Vari, he co-authored *Passionate Leadership: Creating a Culture of Success in Every School, Building a Winning Team: The Power of a Magnetic Reputation and the Need to Recruit Top Talent in Every School, and Retention for a Change: Motivate, Inspire, and Energize Your School Culture*.

**Dr. T.J. Vari** is the Deputy Superintendent of Secondary Schools and District Operations in the Appoquinimink School District in Delaware. He is a former middle school assistant principal and principal and former high school English teacher and department chair. His master's degree is in School Leadership and his doctorate is in Innovation and Leadership where he accepted an Award for Academic Excellence given to one doctoral student per graduating class. He holds several honors and distinctions, including his past appointment as President of the Delaware Association for School Administrators, his work with the Delaware Association for School Principals, and the honor in accepting the Paul Carlson Administrator of the Year Award. His efforts span beyond the K-12 arena into higher education where he holds adjunct appointments, teaching courses at the masters and doctoral level. He is a national presenter on topics of school leadership and the co-founder of TheSchoolHouse302, a leadership development institute. He's the co-author on 6 educational leadership books, including *Candid and Compassionate Feedback: Transforming Everyday Practice in Schools*; *Passionate Leadership: Creating a Culture of Success in Every School*; *Building a Winning Team: The Power of a Magnetic Reputation and the Need to Recruit Top Talent in Every School*; *Retention for a Change: Motivate, Inspire, and Energize Your School Culture*; *7 Mindshifts for School Leaders: Finding New Ways to Think About Old Problems*; and *Invest In Your Best: 9 Strategies to Grow, Support, and Celebrate Your Most Valuable Teachers*.

Dr. Salome Thomas-EL, Dr. Joseph Jones, and Dr. T.J. Vari--the Three Doctors--are district and school administrators in Delaware. Principal-EL leads a K-8 inner city school, Joe is a superintendent in a vocation-technical school district, and T.J. is an assistant superintendent in a comprehensive public system. Collectively, they've written 7 books on educational leadership. Their work focuses on school culture, principal and district leadership, teacher retention, leaders lifting others, unifying communities, and educator excellence. They have been leading schools for a combined 50+ years, and they use their experiences and research to coach school leaders, especially during challenging times. They work with districts from across the country, providing keynote addresses as well as direct leadership development training for leaders who want to lead better and grow faster. They have been featured by District Administration Magazine, NASSP, NAESP, and AASA. But, ultimately, they're still doing

this work with school leaders, teachers, and students in their own schools and districts today.