

Praise for *Passionate Leadership*

“I always say that being positive doesn’t just make you better; it makes everyone around you better. That’s leadership. These guys connect positivity with hard work and a willingness to grow in an effective way. Teachers, principals, business leaders, coaches, and anyone who leads a team can benefit from their message.”

—**Jon Gordon**

Best-selling author of *The Energy Bus* and *The Power of Positive Leadership*

“Move over excuses, there is no room for you here. *Passionate Leadership* will have you looking inward and asking yourself the tough questions to upgrade your impact. This book supports what top performers have understood for ages—all leadership begins with self-leadership.”

—**Daniel Bauer**

Author of *The Better Leaders Better Schools Roadmap*

“If you are a school leader looking to reignite your passion for the work you do each and every day for your students and staff, then get ready for *Passionate Leadership: Creating a Culture of Success in Every School*. Authors Salome Thomas-EL, Joseph Jones, and T.J. Vari have teamed up to share their formula for cultivating a vibrant culture by helping you uncover what they call ‘Trip Traps’ and developed an actionable blueprint to help you find your passion again. Each chapter contains practical tips from leaders in the field along with reflective questions to help you focus on the important work you do.”

—**Jimmy Casas**

Educator, speaker, leadership coach, and author of *Culturize*

“In my travels to schools around the world, there is no doubt in my mind that the most successful teachers and principals succeed *because* they are passionate about their students and communities. In *Passionate Leadership*, the authors empower readers with fresh ways to recapture their passion, build strong school cultures, and embrace the power of positive celebrations. This is a must read for every educator.”

—**Manny Scott**

Best-selling author, speaker, and servant leader

“*Passionate Leadership* shows us how classroom, school, and district leaders can tap into their passions and evolve as educators, all in the name of promoting the success of students. The blueprint to success in the educational world can be found in this inspirational book.”

—**Brad Currie**

NASSP National Assistant Principal of the Year and #Satchat co-creator

“*Passionate Leadership* is the book every school leader should be sure to get their hands on to spread the hunger for learning throughout their school communities. This book is full of ideas from experienced leaders who share how they support their school cultures and help even the most struggling educators thrive and succeed.”

—**Shelly Sanchez Terrell**

Digital innovator, author, and teacher

“*Passionate Leadership* is the spark that will ignite your flame for the work you do and turn it into a fire! Salome, Joseph and T.J. provide practical resources, examples and actionable steps you can use tomorrow. Wherever you are in the journey, *Passionate Leadership* will provide a light to lead the way.”

—**Jessica Cabeen**

Nationally Distinguished Principal, author, and speaker

“*Passionate Leadership: Creating a Culture of Success in Every School* is a book that will inspire, energize, and rejuvenate educators serving in any teaching and leadership role. It will both challenge you to become even better while also validating all the good you are currently doing. It is a book written by practitioners with documented track records of success. The stories, ideas, tips, and strategies contained within this book serve as a road map for continuous improvement and creating a culture in which all stakeholders invest in each other—most importantly, the students they serve. I wholeheartedly recommend this book for passionate educators everywhere who truly wish to make a difference in our profession.”

—**Jeffrey Zoul, EdD**

Author, speaker, leadership coach, and President of ConnectEDD

“This is an uplifting, practical, and inspirational guide for leaders, regardless your title! It gives insights and guidance for new leaders and new fuel for the experienced educators. The real vignettes from current leaders remind us of the importance of our work and gives us all something to build upon! Great messages all around, from the heart of leaders, to the heart of leaders.”

—**Derek McCoy**

Middle school principal, author, and 2014

National Digital Principal of the Year

“Masterfully written and destined to ignite systemic change. *Passionate Leadership* includes some of the best vignettes from the field I’ve ever read. This book is a blueprint for creating the conditions required to learn. The authors thoughtfully address all the moving parts of passionate leadership

using technical tips and clear take-aways to inspire change. *Passionate Leadership* is the perfect blend of research and inspiration.”

—**Brad Gustafson**

Award-winning principal, author, and speaker

“*Passionate Leadership: Creating a Culture of Success in Every School* is a call-to-action that will inspire every leader to rekindle, grow, and sustain their passion for education. Jones, Thomas-EL, and Vari share stories, research, and examples that will compel you to act in powerful ways to serve your school community and to overcome obstacles. Schools are meant to be environments that spark abundant passion; fueling a culture that ignites the desire to be a lifelong learner, resulting in growth. We want our schools to foster a learning culture where every individual is wholeheartedly committed to advancing, and this book will support you in your journey. Filled with actionable ideas, *Passionate Leadership* is one you’ll return to in your pursuit to continuously improve, while simultaneously transforming lives.”

—**Elisabeth Bostwick**

Instructional coach, speaker, and Author of
Take the L.E.A.P.: Ignite a Culture of Innovation

“As I visit hundreds of schools and districts across the U.S. and Canada every year, I share my passion for kids and respect anyone who has that same passion! This book is a great manual for those who want to reignite their passion for this work!”

—**Robert Jackson**

National education consultant, author, and former NFL player

“If you’re looking to make meaningful and lasting changes in your classroom, school building or district, *Passionate Leadership* is the right book for you. The authors Jones, Thomas-EL, and Vari address possible pitfalls and how to avoid them. With all the great leadership books available, leaders should choose *Passionate Leadership* because it will inspire action from reflection to make real change.”

—**Starr Sackstein**

Author, speaker, and humanities lead learner
West Hempstead Union Free Schools

“Education is the engine of a great society and effective leadership is the fuel! This book conceptualizes leadership passion in a way that is accessible to anyone with the desire to lead a school to greatness. The framework provided in this book is sound, practical, and relevant to school leaders at

all levels. This book is a must read for those genuinely concerned about improving school effectiveness.”

—**Anthony Muhammad, PhD**

Author and educational consultant

“As a district leader, principal, and instructional coach, I have always been passionate about my work with and for educators and students. The work for children and the battles that administrators and educators face at the frontline are so important that we need to continue to ignite our passion for building positive school cultures. In *Passionate Leadership*, the authors do a great job of inspiring us all to reflect on the impact we make on our students and schools each day. If you want to become a better educator or leader for your students, you must read this book!”

—**Dr. Rosa Isiah**

Director of Elementary and Instructional Supports,
Norwalk La Mirada USD

“Through research, real examples, and powerful reflection Salome Thomas-EL, Joseph Jones, and T.J. Vari have created an invaluable road map for leaders to better serve the children that are entrusted in our care each day. The authors help us to recognize the common obstacles that get in the way of high levels of learning and instead build bridges to success for ALL students. Through the pages of *Passionate Leadership: Creating a Culture of Success in Every School* you will find inspiration, motivation, and a drive to be the best leader that you can be. It is a resource I wish I had as I started my leadership journey and I highly recommend it to all educators.”

—**Beth Houf**

Principal, Fulton Middle School, Co-author of *Lead Like a PIRATE: Make School Amazing for Students and Staff*

“Education leaders, listen up! Whatever book you’re reading right now, put it down, and pick this book up right away. This book is not just for principals or administrators—it’s for any passionate person who works with and leads students. We are ALL leaders. As the 2019 North Dakota Teacher of the Year and advocate for kids everywhere, I cannot give *Passionate Leadership: Creating a Culture of Success in Every School* high enough praise. This book will hook you from the very first page, as it includes passionate real-life scenarios from leaders still in schools, immediate takeaways to use in your schools tomorrow, and tools to reshape your thinking. It’s one of those books you will highlight, underline, fill with sticky-notes, and come back to time and time again.

Teaching and leading are far from easy, and this book is just the positive pick-me-up you need to reignite or reaffirm the passion burning within you.”

—**Kayla Delzer**

2019 North Dakota Teacher of the Year, Globally
awarded educator, author, CEO: Top Dog Teaching, Inc.

“*Passionate Leadership* provides a road map for educators and leaders who want to build positive and caring cultures in their schools! My entire career as a teacher and principal has been fueled by my passion for kids and our staff! The authors have put into words not only a pathway for a mindset shift, they light the fire to help you get it DONE! This book will give every reader the inspiration to reignite their passion for years to come!”

—**Amber Teamann**

Award-winning principal, Whitt Elementary, Wylie ISD, Texas

“Passion is about vision and the guiding principles that fuel our work with teachers, students, and families. It is also about the energy, excitement, and enthusiasm that we demonstrate in our daily work, which inspires others to join and identify with our vision. Rarely is someone inspired by a leader who lacks passion for their work. School improvement is not easy, but when we bring our passion for change and growth, we can overcome even the most difficult circumstances. If we are going to build the capacity to do the work that needs to be done in every school, we must ignite a coalition to support students and families in new and different ways. *Passionate Leadership* provides the formula for all of us to create the commitment we need to work together, collectively, for the success that we all know is possible within our current educational systems around the world.”

—**Dr. Jacquelyn O. Wilson**

Director of the Delaware Academy for School
Leadership at the University of Delaware

“Student learning is a relationship between teachers and learners. In order to foster and grow such learning environments, strong leadership is required. We can no longer operate in transactional spaces that promote silos. Schools are dynamic ecosystems that require transformational, visionary leadership, that is student centered. *Passionate Leadership* unpacks the complexity of school leadership in an effort to build communities where students, educators, families, and other stakeholders experience success!”

—**Dorrell Green**

Superintendent, Red Clay Consolidated School District

“My entire career as a teacher, school and district leader has been fueled by my passion for our students and schools. My goal has always been to build positive classroom and school cultures that inspire others to care about our profession. Culture is built and cultivated by gaining trust of and building relationships with stakeholders. While positive culture is a feeling you get when walking into a school or classroom, it is intentionally built and grown. In *Passionate Leadership*, Thomas-EL, Jones, and Vari have written the manual on how we can commit to serving our students and communities in a powerful way. After you read this book, you will feel a spark igniting you to be even more passionate about our kids and their success.”

—**Jenny Nauman**

National Distinguished Principal and Assistant
Superintendent, Cape Henlopen School District

“In an era of high stakes testing and accountability as the key measures of school and student success, the authors provide a powerful blueprint for leaders to rethink what’s important in our schools. *Passionate Leadership* offers practical strategies, real stories and “how to” guidance that will inspire every educator to do great things for all students.

After more than forty-five years in education, I know firsthand about the power of creating a positive and supportive culture with passionate educators and engaged students. The authors have found a solutions-oriented formula that makes schools inviting learning environments students and teachers deserve. *Passionate Leadership* is a must read!”

—**Steven H. Godowsky, EdD**

Retired superintendent and former Delaware Secretary of Education

“All school communities need passionate leaders who are committed to meeting the needs of ALL students! Such leaders must be committed, inquisitive, and reflection and action oriented. They must desire to grow and improve. This book takes that into account as it pushes the reader to consider how they think about their leadership, their ability to motivate themselves and others, and the steps and actions needed to be the leader others desire to follow and support. The takeaways and tips are invaluable as they provide direct instruction through the stories of other strong and successful leaders. If one wishes to be a relationship-builder who moves the needle through passion and influence rather than title and authority, this is indeed a worthwhile read!”

—**Mark Holodick, EdD**

Superintendent, Brandywine School District

“Three exceptional administrators shed new light on why passion is so important in education. The vivid stories in this timely book go beyond exhortations to show in detail how inspired leaders transform schools, empower teachers, and enrich students.”

—**Robert L. Hampel**

School of Education, University of Delaware,
Author of *Fast and Curious: A History of Shortcuts in
American Education* (2017)

“As the Delaware State Teacher of the Year, I traveled around to a number of schools and heard from teachers and leaders from across the country. It was evident to me at the time that the real difference maker for what distinguishes a great teacher or a great school can be summed up in one word: *passion*. In reading *Passionate Leadership*, I was simply reminded that we must come together with a growth mindset, more will than ever, and the celebratory attitude that our schools need for us to be our best every single day. Don’t read this book once or twice, read it once or twice every year.”

—**Dr. Lea Wainwright**

French Teacher and 2014 Delaware State Teacher of the Year

“Education is the most critical aspect of our society. Principals and schools have the responsibility to educate children to be thoughtful and enterprising citizens for the greater good of the world in which we live. All students can learn in an environment that is caring with adults who nurture the “whole” student, including mind, body, and spirit. A principal’s task is to create that environment by developing a vision and strategically cultivating other leaders in the school to stand behind it. Great principals recognize that everyone in the school must be held accountable for real success to become a reality. Leadership is a shared responsibility, and it’s only passionate leaders who inspire others to greatness by *being* the change that we wish to see in the world. As the principal of the Early College High School at Delaware State University, my mission is to prepare students to do college-level work by the time they are 15 years old. That simply cannot happen without passion. This book, *Passionate Leadership*, offers a how-to manual on having passion in whatever area you’re leading. Read it, and you’ll be ready to take your school to the next level.”

—**Dr. Evelyn Edney**

Principal, Early College High School at Delaware State University