

## ***NJASECD Update – May 2025***

### **We're Going Virtual!**

Unfortunately, we have had to cancel our in-person conference on May 29 at Rider University. Too many of our honored schools were unable to attend. In lieu of the conference, we will be holding a virtual Recognition Ceremony for our 2025 New Jersey Schools of Character, Honorable Mention Schools, and Emerging Schools on Thursday, May 29, 2025 starting at 10 AM on Zoom. The event will begin with a keynote address on “Growing Goodness With Character” given by Tom Santo, a former school principal who led his school to become a State and National School of Character more than once. This keynote will be followed by a ceremony recognizing our 2025 State Schools of Character culminating with the announcement of the 2025 National Schools of Character from New Jersey. We regret having to cancel our in-person conference, but we are no less proud of the accomplishments of our honored schools and this virtual ceremony is designed to showcase the work that these schools have done to achieve this recognition. We hope you will join us to celebrate our honored schools.



### **Thomas Santo – Teacher, Principal, and Character Education Champion**



Thomas Santo is a dedicated educator and mentor with over 40 years of teaching and leadership experience. He spent more than 20 years as a special education teacher and 21 years as an elementary principal, guiding his school to national honors as a National School of Character and a PTA National School of Excellence. A leader in social-emotional learning (SEL), he was named World Leader on SEL Day 2021, serves as a National Evaluator for Character.org, and is the TEFL Kuwait SIG Special Education Chairperson. Santo has also served as an adjunct professor at Rutgers University. He has received numerous grants, including those from NAESP, Sustainable Jersey, and the Inclusive Schools Network, to support his innovative educational initiatives. His international work spans five continents—from school exchanges in England, Turkey, and Singapore to mentoring educators in India and Pakistan. Connect with him on LinkedIn, where his insights and leadership have built a network of over 13K followers.

Click [HERE](#) to Join Zoom Meeting!

