THRIVE THROUGH THE FIVE

Texas Assessment Conference
November 16, 2020

Dr. Jill Siler
Gunter ISD Superintendent
First Day of School
IF YOU LOVE WHAT YOU DO
YOU’LL NEVER WORK A DAY IN YOUR LIFE.

- MARC ANTHONY
I absolutely love what I do and I have never worked harder.
I. LOVE. MY. JOB.

★ What do you LOVE about your job?
THE 5%...

• the tragedy
• the poor choice
• the negative viral social media post
• the unavailability of funds
• the weight...

THE 55%?!?
THE 5%...

- the STAAR
- the ratings
- the work
- the gaps

THRIVE THROUGH THE FIVE
5 TIPS TO THRIVE
TIP #1

RECOGNIZE THAT FAILURE IS PART OF IT
OUR GREATEST GLORY IS NOT IN NEVER FALLING, BUT IN RISING EVERY TIME WE FALL.

- CONFUCIUS
Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.

- Thomas Edison
THE FIELD TEST...

THE LARGE-PRINT TEST...
Whether you are elevating or broadening your role, you can’t bypass seasons of growth.

-Jill M Siler
FAILURE IS NOT SOMETHING WE JUST ENDURE. IT IS THE THING THAT CAN MAKE US GREAT.

- Jill M Siler
Embrace The Suck
verb, military slang

To conciously accept or appreciate something that is extremely unpleasant but unavoidable for forward progression.
“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best, if he wins, knows the thrills of high achievement, and if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

- Theodore Roosevelt
what people think it looks like

what it really looks like

Success

Success

EXPECTATION

REALITY
SUCCESS IS MADE IN THE JOURNEY

Sketchnote by Amelia Buchanan @edtech_amelia
JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT MOVING IN A SEAMLESS, STRAIGHT TRAJECTORY YOU HAD ANTICIPATED OR HOPED FOR, IT DOESN’T MEAN THAT YOU ARE NOT READY OR EQUIPPED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR NEXT STEPS.

- Jill M. Siler
WE ARE DEFINED BY OUR FAILURES
ONLY IF WE LET OURSELVES BE.
FAIL. LEARN FROM IT.
BE BETTER.

- Jill M Siler
TIP #2

RECLAIM ACTION IN THE MIDST OF FEAR
There is a major difference between failure and fear. Failure happens but it is finite.

Fear can be ever-present. It can be paralyzing.
Our mission sometimes walks us through the “valley of the shadow of doubt.”
WE DOUBT AND DON’T ACT UNTIL OUR GREATEST HOPES AND DREAMS MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD.

THIS IS FEAR AND WE CANNOT LET IT TAKE HOLD IN OUR LIVES.

- jill M siler
EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, FOR YOU ARE WITH ME.
“How Do I Get Rid of the Fear?”

Alas, this is the wrong question.

The only way to get rid of the fear is to stop doing things that might not work, to stop putting yourself out there, to stop doing work that matters.

No, the right question is,

"How do I dance with the fear?"

Fear is not the enemy.
Paralysis is the enemy.
COURAGE ISN’T THE ABSENCE OF FEAR. IT IS THE ABILITY TO ACT IN THE PRESENCE OF FEAR.

- BRUCE LEE
THE GOAL ISN’T TO ERADICATE FEAR. THE GOAL IS TO LEAD THROUGH IT ANYWAY.

- Jill M Siler
EXPECT IT

UNDERSTAND THAT FEAR MAKES YOU STRONGER

ACT IN THE MIDST OF FEAR
I didn’t feel like I was **ready**

I didn’t want to **move** out of the Austin area

I didn’t think I would **like** the job

I didn’t think I could **balance** being a mom and a superintendent
Expect it

Understand that fear makes you stronger

Act in the midst of fear

Decide how much weight to give it
UNDERSTAND WHERE THE ISSUE FALLS IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF LIFE. THEN ADJUST THE WEIGHT YOU GIVE IT ACCORDINGLY.

-Jill M Siler
Expect It
Understand that fear makes you stronger
Act in the midst of fear
Decide how much weight to give it
Take the next best step
Big things don’t always happen with a leap. Big things happen when we take the next best step... over and over and over again.

- Jill M Siler
WHEN WE ARE BOLD, WHEN WE CHOOSE ACTION IN THE MIDST OF FEAR, WHEN WE LEAD ANYWAY, THAT COURAGE IS THE BIRTH OF GREATNESS.

- Jill M Siler
TIP #3

Reconceptualize Balance & Re-Prioritize Self-Care
OUR REAL LIFE
• Warmed Up Lunch
• Flipped the Laundry
• Did a Load of Dishes
• Picked up the House
• Prepared Bills
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7am - Mtg w/Board Pres</td>
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<td>7am - Ed Foundation</td>
<td>7am - Elem Carline</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 - Mtg w/MS Tchrs</td>
<td>NO EVENING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>NO EVENING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>4pm - District Advisory</td>
<td>4:30 - HS Volleyball</td>
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<td>5pm - Chamber Mtg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5pm - MS Volleyball</td>
<td>5pm - Jr Class Dinner</td>
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<td>6pm - Fall Choir Concert</td>
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<td>6pm - Board Meeting</td>
<td>6pm - Varsity Football</td>
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PERSONAL CARE

* DIVERT DAILY
* WITHDRAW WEEKLY
* MAINTAIN MONTHLY
* ABANDON ANNUALLY

- TOM NEBEL
SOMETIMES WE NEED TO STEP AWAY TO BETTER SEE HOW TO MOVE OURSELVES AND OUR ORGANIZATIONS FORWARD
Balance does not happen in a day. The goal is not for Monday to be perfectly balanced. The goal is for your life to have a sense of balance.

- Jill M Siler
Balance isn’t about physical location as much as it is emotional preoccupation. Sometimes balance is less about the hours your work and more about the hours you dwell.

— Jill M Siler
I'm doing too much and not enough.
You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage - pleasantly, smilingly, nonapologetically, to say “no” to other things. And the way you do that is by having a bigger “yes” burning inside. The enemy of the “best” is often the “good.”

- Stephen Covey
WHEN YOU SAY NO, YOU ARE ONLY SAYING
NO TO ONE OPTION.
WHEN YOU SAY YES, YOU ARE SAYING
NO TO EVERY OTHER OPTION.
NO IS A DECISION.
YES IS A RESPONSIBILITY.

- JAMES CLEAR
PART OF SELF-CARE IS ALSO PRIORITIZING OUR OWN GROWTH AND MENTORSHIP
FINDING THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM SHOULDN’T BE THE GOAL. THE GOAL IS TO LEARN AND GROW AND BECOME A BETTER LEADER, TEACHER AND HUMAN BEING.

- Jill M Siler
420 Miles Roundtrip
We can’t ask someone to mentor us and then vaguely hope it will happen. We must create opportunities and put in the effort to make it happen.
Balance doesn’t happen in a day

It’s about emotional preoccupation just as much as it is physical location

Make your yeses count

Reprioritize your own growth & mentorship

Give yourself grace
UNDERSTAND THAT THE FEELING OF BEING OVERWHELMED, AND EVEN INADEQUATE, IS PART OF THE GROWING PROCESS AND NOT A SIGN THAT YOU’RE NOT THE PERSON FOR THE JOB.

- Jill M Siler
REALIZE THAT THE REASON YOU ARE PLAGUED WITH DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER YOU ARE BALANCING WELL IS BECAUSE YOU CARE SO DEEPLY ABOUT THOSE YOU SERVE AND LOVE.

- Jill M Siler
TIP #4

REALIZE THAT OUR ACTIONS MATTER
“I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration, I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or dehumanized.”

- Haim Ginott
“If the decision was easy, it would have been made long before ending up on my desk.”
- Dr. James Smith
WHEN CONFRONTED WITH SOMETHING MESSY, DON’T GO FOR THE QUICK SOLUTION; INSTEAD, SEEK EVERY PIECE OF INFORMATION, TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION FROM EVERY ANGLE, AND LEAD TOWARD THE BEST SOLUTION.

-Jill M Siler
Sometimes we’re called to step into the furnace to do what really needs to be done for kids.
Timing Is Everything
A Conversation with Daniel Pink

In your latest book, Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us, you focus on "purpos, autonomy and mastery" as a frame for what motivates or drives people. This concept has become a mantra in our work as school leaders. One of the biggest challenges I've seen as a superintendent leading through COVID-19 is coming to ask teachers to transition their eyes of teaching and learning to entire remote instruction. Many felt they had lost the foundation of mastery and the frustration level was too high. What are your thoughts about when people are faced with a steep curve of learning situations where their mastery is lost?

Daniel Pink: That's a great question. I don't think there's a singular answer. One way to think about it is to challenge the very premise - have they truly lost their mastery? Or are they simply taking something they've mastered and doing it in a slightly different way? I do think there's a deep structure of effective teaching that transcends the medium in which it's delivered. Great teaching is about taking a student on his or her own terms. Great teaching is about having high standards. And you can do those things remotely as well as in person. That's our approach.

Another would be the ancient philosophy of nomism, which is to lead into it and say, "This is not so much a learning problem, but rather a meaningful challenge." I'm being intentionally provocative here, but necessarily I say, "Thank you. Now we've got hours of doing something." The third way is where superintendents come in as guides and coaches as people are struggling — for small wins. Rebuilding people's expectations. Imagine you've been a great 2nd-grade teacher for 15 or 20 years. Suddenly, your 7-year-olds are doing on a (Zoom) screen rather than in a classroom. That's not anything you're going to be great at immediately. It's hard. As the leadership level, I would try to give people as much feedback as possible. Find small wins and bright spots to help them along.

In my journey as a leader, I find that the pandemic has swung from being primarily focused on the what to more recently the why. So to lead this entire book on when is enlightening. You write in When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing that we simply can't take the focus of when as seriously as we take the question of what. What makes the idea of when so compelling to you?

Pink: For years, I have come to this office to do work. I have had to decide when to do the stuff. It hit me as a certain point that my decisions about when were pretty indifferent. I was making decisions based on intuition and guess work. That frustrated me because I'm pretty intentional about what I do and how I do it. In your point, I think I'm more intentional about why I do certain things, but I was making these when decisions in a competency supply way.

I looked for galaxies. I don't see the surprise, that galaxy didn't exist, which got me curious. There was a huge amount of research, but it was unsmoothed and too many different disciplines. So I said, "This is a book I'd like to read, and since nobody's written it, I've got to write it in order to read it."

You shared that "human beings don't all experience a day in precisely the same way" — that we all have our own circadian rhythms that impact when we should do certain tasks, including analytic vs. intuitive tasks or even when 1/2 hour to make a decision. Tell us a little about that.

Pink: Most of us move through the day in three stages. There's a peak, a trough and a recovery. About 70% of us move through the day in the order: peak early in the day, trough in the middle of the day, recovery later in the day. However, about 30% of us have an evening chronotype. We rise early and traumatically wake up late and go to sleep late. Most educators are night owls. There's actually evidence of self-selection out of education for people who are night owls because school starts so early. During my peak, which is so early in the day and we're most efficient, we are away distractions. That makes the peak the best time for analytic work — work that requires heads-down, focused attention, such as writing a report, reviewing a spreadsheet, or doing math. Most of us do that type of work better in the early morning.

The trough, early to mid-afternoon, is a terrible time of day. That's not just folklore; there are piles of evidence backing that up. So, the trough is when we should be doing more of our administrative work. When we have to do important work during that period, which our conversation now is an example of, there are things that we can do. First, let's my cup of coffee. Second, even with a little degree heat index outside, I took a walk around the block before this conversation because I didn't want to have this conversation at a terrible time of day.

Finally, during the recovery period, which for
We must put a premium on the **care** of our people.

2. We ought to lead with **transparency** and **humility**.

3. We should lead in a way that when we look back in 10 years we will be **proud** of the **decisions we made** and the **values we clung to** at this time.
For Your Immediate Attention
Action Required

JILL SILER
SUPERINTENDENT
GÜNTER ISD
P O BOX 109
GÜNTER, TX 75056-0109

Dear DR SILER:

Subject: Financial Solvency Review

As communicated in the May 16, 2012, To The Administrator Addressed letter published online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FinancialSolvencyTTAA.aspx, the Texas Education Agency (TEA or agency) developed a new review process to alert local educational agencies (LEAs), school districts and open-enrollment charter schools, to circumstances that could lead to financial insolvency.

Based on a review of financial indicators for fiscal year 2011, your LEA has been identified as having circumstances that could lead to financial insolvency. This letter serves as a preliminary identification and notification of that status and describes the process for your LEA to provide TEA with supporting documents before a final determination is made.
We gave educators almost no notice. We asked them to completely redesign what school looks like and in about 24 hours local administrators and teachers “Apollo 13’ed” the problem and fixed it. Kids learning, children being fed, needs being met in the midst of a global crisis.

No state agency did this, no so-called national experts on curriculum. The local educators fixed it in hours. HOURS.

In fact, existing state and federal policies actually created multiple roadblocks. Local schools figured out how to do it around those, too. No complaining and no hand-wringing—just solutions and amazingly clever plans.

Remember that the next time someone tries to convince you that schools are better run by mandates from non-educators. Remember that the next time someone tells you that teachers have it easy or try to persuade you that educators are not among the smartest, most ingenious people in society. And please never say to me again, “Those who can’t do anything else just go into teaching.” Get out of the way of a teacher and watch with amazement at what really happens.

Ken Buck - Lancaster County School Board
@KenBuckforschoolboard - Community
THE TWELVE MOST IMPORTANT INCHES IN LEADERSHIP ARE THOSE BETWEEN YOUR HEAD AND YOUR HEART.

- Jill M Siler
WE GET TO DECIDE HOW TO DO THIS
LEADERSHIP
IS NOT A SCIENTIFIC, STEP-BY-STEP ACT.
IT IS AN ART THAT EBBS AND FLOWS,
WHERE WE MUST SHOW
STRENGTH AND STABILITY IN ONE MOMENT &
COMPASSION AND GRACE IN THE NEXT.

- Jill M Siler
LEADERSHIP
IS AN INCREDIBLE PRIVILEGE.
BUT IT IS NOT WITHOUT COST.

- Jill M Siler
1. Recognize that **Failure** is Part of It
2. Reclaim Action in the Midst of **Fear**
3. Reconceptualize **Balance** & Re-Prioritize **Self-Care**
4. Realize that Our **Actions** Matter
5. Reveal Your **Heart** — Lead with **Love**
IT’S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST SURVIVE
WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES AND EVERYONE AROUND US TO THRIVE

- Jill M Siler
Jill M Siler

LEADER

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Resources

• Chris Dessi article about Jason Van Camp – How to Get Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable

• The Adley Show – What We Should ALL Be Doing Right Now

• Liv McNeil Film - Numb