

RISD Podcast

The RISD Podcast intro: Connect with us and listen in; it's The RISD Podcast. Hello, Richardson ISD and welcome to 2023! We are here with The RISD Podcast, the first one of the '23 calendar year. Yeah. Happy New Year. Happy New Year. How was your holiday break? It was great. We really didn't do much of anything, which was awesome. We didn't either, like our family chose to like stay home. We didn't want to pack, we didn't want to have a vacation schedule. Don't have to worry about planes or none of it. We just like delays or anything else. Yes. Like we went to like, watch movies and we played putt putt and we went bowling. Like it was so Great. Did you go see Avatar? We did go see Avatar. Okay. That was a long movie. It's a very long movie. Was worth it, but it was a long movie. Very good. It was a long movie. Well, I am so excited to be back and I can already tell you the energy, um, across the district and in our buildings. Teachers came back, they were refreshed, they were rejuvenated. Mm-hmm. Um, it just, it felt really good to be back. Did you feel the same way? Absolutely. Absolutely. People energized and ready to finish the '22-'23 school year in a positive way because honestly, that's how things started. Yes. Such a really, it's a renewed energy at the beginning of the year and they're just ready to get back after it. Now I can tell you my eight year old was not quite as excited. maybe as his parents were to send him back to school. He could have, he, he asked if I could give him another couple days off. I'll be honest. I'll go ahead and tell you that my senior and my sophomore were kind of the same. Yeah. They could have Stayed out. It doesn't matter how long of a break they had, they always wish it could be longer.

Well, we are here, um, in this first segment of The RISD Podcast, um, and I have someone special I want to introduce to our school. It's so exciting, I know. To our school community. And so, um, I have invited Mr. Mike Jasso to join our podcast today. Hello everyone. Happy New Year. Glad to be back in Richardson -- place that I love. Mike Jasso will be serving as the Chief of Staff in Richardson ISD. And we are so glad to have him because he is gonna be a big part of our leadership team and our community, especially our parents are gonna need to know his name, um, because when maybe they're upset about something, he's someone they can call. Uh, so Mr. Jasso, tell us a little bit about yourself and a little bit about your background. Yeah, sure. Well, again, thank you, uh, Mrs. Branum for having me, uh, come back and give me this opportunity. A little bit about my background in real brief fashion. This is the start of my 30th year in education all here in the DFW area. I taught and coached in Dallas ISD and I have worked since then in administrative roles in Tarrant County and Birdville ISD, Coppell ISD twice. I was the high school principal there. Uh, of course I worked in Richardson previously as the Executive Director over the Berkner Learning Community. And then I'm coming back from Mesquite where I was an assistant superintendent of two different departments. Alright. We had an opportunity for Dr. Goodson and I to share what we did for the new year. Mr. Jasso, why don't you share a little bit about how, a little share a little bit about your family and maybe how you all spent the winter break. Sure. Well, we are a small nuclear family, meaning myself, uh, my wife Susan, uh, who has been a teacher, she is looking to possibly transition to the district at some point. Uh, in that role she's hired I'll let Dr. Goodson can make that happen. Yeah. I'll let

her know that tonight. And then our son, Ethan, uh, who is a senior at Texas Tech makes me be, he's hired He makes me very proud because I am a Tech alum. And so here in about four months, we'll have the second, uh, ha graduate from Texas Tech. Mm-hmm. So if there's any Red Raiders out there, guns up, wreck 'em. As an Aggie, that just hurts my heart, But I love you anyways. I love you and Ethan anyways. That's right. And so, um, the other part of that question is what we did for the holiday. Yeah. So we kind of did the opposite of what you did, Mrs. Branum that we did. Um, rush to the airport and fight traffic and Yes. Make sure our flights, uh, were on time. Thankfully, we didn't have any flight cancellations. No, we're not naming any certain, no airlines or anything. But we, we actually went to St. Lucia for Christmas. Oh. We spent it on the island, which is a once in a lifetime kind of thing. So we had a blast. We were back in town for, uh, New Year's and did all the local kind of stuff. Yes. Um, so just had a a, an incredibly good winter break on top of the fact that I came back to the district, set up my office, all that good stuff. Now what does Ethan hope to do when he Graduates? So Ethan is going to go to grad school, uh, for, to become an athletic trainer. Oh, Fantastic. And so he wants to work in public schools, Dr. Hr. Ah, he's hired. Yeah. So, uh, maybe it some point, if we're lucky enough, there'll be more than one Jasso in the district. Well, we are so ready for that. And, um, how, tell tell us a little bit about how, um, you and your wife met, or like how long you all have been together. Share a little bit about your story. Yeah. So, uh, I outkicked my coverage. First of all, you've met white wife, so you, you know that she's Amazing and a brilliant teacher. She is like a brilliant Teacher. Teacher. She, so we've been together, uh, 27 and a half years roughly. Uh, and so we met before the internet was an actual thing before Google was a thing on, on a blind date. No Way back when. A blind date actually meant there were A blind date. Yes. So I didn't, I had never seen her, the, the person that set us up, uh, I was a teacher and a coach at a local middle school. She refused to show me a picture, but she said, trust me, you guys are perfect for each other. And so we finally went out. Unbelievable. And they wound up working, working out for us about 18 months later. That's, that's so cool. That's so good to have two educators as well. Yeah. Like there's a, there's a understanding maybe Sure. That you have in the house when you know someone is also sharing your same experiences. Yeah. And yeah. Um, uh, has there been any moments in your journey together where maybe you were a principal and she was a teacher, um, of course at different campuses where maybe she gave you advice about like what you could be doing differently or maybe, you know, words of wisdom from that teacher lens about Yeah. Decisions you were making as a principal. Yeah. Always. Uh, always keeping that teacher perspective. The, the teacher lens. Uh, and so, uh, most of the time when I asked for it, some of the time, maybe when I didn't ask for it, she, she had plenty of advice of make sure you're factoring in the teachers when you decide to do this, that, or the other. Yeah. And nine times outta 10, as you know, she was spot on. Yes. And I was lucky to have that, uh, guidance and, and it wound up being a better decision as a result. I love that you have that. Um, I, that's, that's amazing. I love getting to know a little bit more about your family and if you were tired, you know, coming back, um, after the break, I don't feel sorry for you cause you were in St. Luke Right. So you did it to yourself. Yeah. So You did it to Fair enough. So tell us what, what is it about Richardson ISD that you attracted you here to begin with? And like, why do you love this district? Yeah. Well, the reputation of the district is stellar, so who wouldn't want to be a part of that? Um, then once you get here and you begin to learn all the systems and the great things going on, but really the

biggest draw for the district is it's people. Yes. And if you break that down, it's, it's students and it's staff mm-hmm. And so you talked about the energy in the buildings. You, you step foot here in the administration building, you step foot on a campus and you can, it's palpable. You can really feel how excited and how committed people are. And, and I want to be a part of That. I love that. I know Dr. HR, you're probably said that he didn't, he came back for you. So just what? That he, the reason he didn't come back was because he wanted to come back. I wasn't the reason he came. Yeah. He didn't say that. But I can look in his eyes and he meant to say it. He did mean he, he really wanted to come back and work with me again. Yeah. It's inferred. Absolutely, when, when you think about all of your experiences, um, up to this point in your 30 years maybe, what was kind of your most impactful role or the role that you think helped shaped you into to who you are as a leader today? Yeah. There's been great value, uh, in every one of my experiences, I'm sure. Same as you. I, I would tell you that my dream once I got into administration was to be a high school principal. And so getting to do that twice, I was actually the principal of Halcomb High School in Tarrant County, in Halcomb City, Texas. And then at Coppell High School, two distinctly different types of campuses mm-hmm. uh, but really a lot of growth, uh, in learning how to, uh, work with students, work with staff, really be the catalyst for that achievement. Yes. Um, and so that really was a springboard towards where I am now. And then of course, really feeling blessed to have been in Richardson and with my Berkner Learning Community. No offense to the other learning communities, that was just my part of the kingdom at the time. But we really forged my team and I of principles, we forged an incredibly close relationship. And so I learned a ton about those subtleties of leading people, the soft skills, if you will. Yes. Uh, that served me well in Mesquite and, uh, I'm sure are gonna serve me well back here. Absolutely. What I, if anyone wants to know, like who, what are you about? Like what, what is it that you value? Um, what, what do you care about most in being a leader? How, kind of, how would you describe your leadership style, your leadership vision In a day-to-day? If you, uh, day-to-day sense, if you worked with me, um, you see a lot of things like systems and processes so that we can be efficient Yes. And effective mm-hmm. Uh, but really that's, that's kind of the operational end of things. I am one of three, there's three kids in my family. All three of us are first generation college graduates. Yes. Mm-hmm. Uh, and so my, my parents, uh, we weren't officially poor, but we might have been able to reach out and touch poor from where we were. Mm-hmm. But my parents always in instilled in us that we're gonna go to college and we're gonna do something, whatever it is we choose, we're gonna be successful at mm-hmm. And so I didn't know had a choice. And so paying that forward really Mm. Uh, with kids creating the conditions for them to succeed in the future that they create. Yes. Uh, and so that gets me up in the morning and that sometimes keeps me up at night. Yes. Right. But it's really exciting. I love that. Um, in your new role as the chief of staff, you are going to be leading, for example, um, our area superintendents and helping supervise and support our four learning communities. You'll be supporting our, uh, improvement efforts, whether it's our campus or district improvement plans. Um, you are going to be supporting me, um, with kind of the, that outreach and that parent outreach of focus groups and stakeholder groups, climate surveys, all of those kinds of things. What was it about this role that intrigued you? And I know you, mesquite loved you, you were absolutely thriving in that environment, but what was it that kind of had you interested in this position that you said Yes. I want to come back for that. Yeah. Well, really not

to, uh, give you a default answer, but it's a, it's a literal answer all of the above. Um, I'm that special brand of crazy. I like a lot of different things, Uh, and there's sometimes I'm not so happy that that many things are happening at once in my life. But for the most part, I like, uh, having my hand in several different and distinct different types of things, the area superintendents and the work with being connected back to the campuses mm-hmm. with the staff, the principals, and especially the students. That's hugely appealing to me because of all the ripples that we talked about. Right. Creating those conditions for, for students to be successful in the future, they create. Yeah. That's kind of my credo, if you will. Yeah. And then, um, just the outreach. I know from my previous experience, the community support and the commitment by, uh, local businesses, city governments, uh, police agencies, first responders to, uh, help us create those conditions. Yep. And so to be a part of that, to reconnect with campuses and to help you and your vision realize that vision, I just couldn't turn that down. Uh, yeah. And I'm so thankful, um, that you said Yes. Um, I, I do think it's important to note Dr. Goodson, that one of the opportunities that Mr. Jasso gets to lead moving forward is the development of future academic calendars. Did we, did he know that yet? He, He Or is he hearing it now for the First time? He might be hearing it now for the first No, He, it's too late though. You can't leave. So Got can now. He's already signed on the dotted line. But yes. Um, we, we, um, at an upcoming board meeting, we will be adopting, um, a, a calendar for next year mm-hmm. but moving forward, Mr. Jasso will have that opportunity because we all know that there isn't what, there is no perfect. Perfect. Calendar. Calendar. That's right. Um, so Mr. Jasso, what else, um, would you just want the audience to know about you? And, um, you know, I hope that, and, and I feel like our, our district is in a phenomenal place. Um, but if a parent or a staff member or someone needed to reach out to you, like just help them know or understand, if they do try to connect with you, what is that gonna look like and sound like? Yeah, so, you know, several of my mentors across the years, and I come from a teaching and coaching background. And so if you can imagine a, an older coach talking to, uh, to a young coach about what's the best ability out there. And so I learned a long time ago that accessibility mm-hmm. is, is the best. And so, uh, whenever, and whatever, um, method that you want to use to reach out, email is a huge, uh, player in all of our lives. Of course, we have phones here at the office and, and, uh, I'm pretty active on social media as you are in the district, is however you need to reach out for whatever you need to reach out. I want you to feel that I'm accessible to you. And so I'm going to try and be that person that supports whatever your need is. It may be that I'm the conduit to get you in contact with the right person in the right department. Maybe sometimes it's me that can take care of it. Yep. But I'm happy to play that role because it's just one vital, this is a, I don't consider myself, uh, an important person, but this is a hugely important position that I hold mm-hmm. And so I take that very seriously. Part of that is being the conduit of supporting others and getting them what they need. I love that. And one of the things that I really appreciate about you and your leadership is that visibility and that accessibility already just, you know, being back a part of the team in just a short few days already, you reconnecting with staff and principals and, um, you know, kind of reforging those, those relationships, again, it, it's, it's so much fun to see that. Um, I will share with you, not that your head needs to get any bigger than it already is, but, um, I will share with you, when I had the opportunity to announce this with the staff, it was an immediate kind of thunderous celebration that you were returning. And I heard from so many principals and

teachers, um, just how excited they were to have you back. And while, you know, you were here for, you know, just a few years, the impact that you had was very real. Um, and there's just a trust that you bring and there is, um, you don't get easily rattled. You, you kind of have a steadfast, really, that's why like I'm surrounded by two phenomenal leaders in that way, is that you both are just really calm, cool, and collected. You are individuals that maybe when we're in a crisis situation or maybe there's some escalated emotions you all can see through that and just, you know, keep kids first and, and keep that as, as the focus. And so, I, I just see that as a real asset to our team. And we are so lucky to have you and, um, cannot wait to see what's ahead. I have no doubt you'll be on for further segments as we move forward and as we highlight some great things going on. But definitely wanted to introduce you as part of our first podcast for 2023 to the, the Richardson ISD family. So thank you for being here. Absolutely excited to be here. And thanks for having me.

Dr. Goodson. You know, one of the things I think is most special about our district is how often I hear of stories where we have employees mm-hmm. who may leave, uh, maybe it's for an opportunity, or maybe they have to relocate, but how often they come back to Richardson ISD Right. Because of the experience, not only for themselves, but for their children too. Yeah, absolutely. I, I remember when I came to interview for my very first position as the assistant superintendent for secondary, and I was actually talking to Judy, who helps everyone here from at the admin building. And when I heard from her how many years she has been in this district Right. And her connections with so many people on the campuses in the community, it was like Richardson ISD was so much bigger from the district I was in mm-hmm. but yet it still felt so small and so connected mm-hmm. and I knew I had to be here. Like it's a, it's a special place. And I think Mr. Jasso returning just kind of absolutely reminded me of how special that is. Well, as we move into the second segment of our RISD Podcast today, um, we have some special guests that have joined us. And I want to introduce the community, uh, two of these individuals we've had on a previous segment, but we have someone new to introduce to our RISD family. Um, first up, I'd like to, to, uh, welcome Dr. Gibbins who leads our Administrative Services department. Hello everybody. Glad to be here. Thanks for having me on. And we previously also had on Joe Miniscalco who helps leads our student services team. Thanks for having me again. I appreciate it. Made the second Cut. You made this. Yes. You must have done well the first time around. We're having You back the heck again. Yeah. Um, and then also I would like to introduce to our community and who recently had an opportunity to showcase the work of her team to our board of trustees, but Dr. Summer Martin, who leads our counseling services team. Yes. Thank you. Thank you for having me here. And I'm the rookie and we're, we're glad to have all of you here. Well, really today I want to have an open and honest conversation with you all, um, to really help communicate to our community some of the work that we're doing in Richardson ISD. And I'll tell you, you, in the past couple of years, it's been interesting to watch how things that maybe we had been doing as a district for a pretty long time really become identified and, and, and maybe, uh, examined in different ways maybe than it hadn't been before. And, and one of those programs that we've actually had in Richardson ISD for a while, is our social emotional learning supports. And I want to first, as we, we really open up this segment,

and again, I I hope this is a really safe space where we can really talk about our why and some of the work that we're doing to support our kids. Um, one of the things I want to kind of anchor our conversation around today is we have our RISD graduate profile, and one of the components in our graduate profile is an area where, again, we had 3000 staff and community members come together and say, when a student walks across the stage, not only we absolutely have to have a priority on those academic content knowledge, but also we know our students need some soft skills mm-hmm. that are gonna help them navigate this future that they're going to have to create and, and be able to apply the content that they have learned. So one of those areas in our graduate profile is the emotional intelligence area. And it really kind of is, um, epitomized by, you know, three indicators. And one is we want all students to develop a positive self-worth and increase belief in one's self and one's capacity to thrive in different situations, advocate effectively for self and form resiliency in the face of adversity. And then we also want kids to value others and have cultural awareness in being open-minded. Um, so I just want, I want us to keep coming back to that graduate profile. So, Dr. Gibbins, I'm gonna open up with you. Um, I remember sitting in my office, um, it's probably been almost five, six years ago, um, in which you were seeing leading campuses and, and supervising principals. You were seeing more and more instances of student behaviors, um, in which you could identify that kids simply didn't have the tools and strategies that when they were feeling angry or when they were feeling sadness or, or disappointment or, uh, confusion, they didn't always have the strategies to know how to deal with those emotions. And you knew we had to do something about that. So can you tell us a little bit about kind of where you were that five years ago and what you brought forward and, and kind of how that launched some of this Work? Yes, ma'am. I'd love to just the opportunity to really share from a historical perspective where kind of the SEL department or supports, or whatever you want to call it, um, began here in RISD. So you're right about five and a half years ago, maybe six now, um, coming out of a role where I was supervising, I think 13 elementary schools mm-hmm. and of course having experience in special education where I was helping to supervise, or not supervise, but support, uh, high schools and junior highs. You're right. I increasingly saw kids who were just making really bad decisions that were affecting the, the rest of their life, honestly. Right. Based on some of the, the level of those decisions that they made or, you know, didn't make. And so I know you and I started having discussions around what can we give kids as far as tools to help them process through things. I mean, it's a lot different. I'm, I'm old now, you know, so it's a lot different than when I was growing up. I mean, there's a lot of similar pressures, but I would say they're even more substantial now with the access to things that, um, all of our kids have now. You know, there are a lot of peer pressure, a lot of things that can cause students to feel depressed, can have them feel inadequate. I, I mean, and those are the things that don't reflect, uh, your zip code don't reflect, you know, the income that your parents Right. And your caregivers bring it, it doesn't reflect any of that. And so what we started doing, you know, almost six years ago now, is to look at how can we provide some resources? That's it. Yeah. Not only for our kids, but also for our teachers to be able to build relationships with students. Yes. So that when they are in a space where things could go south, so to speak very quickly, what kind of relationship have they built? And then what kind of tools do they have to be able to, um, keep them going on the right, in the right direction? So if Matthew comes into the classroom and, um, Ms. Braham says, good morning, Matthew. And Matthew throws his, uh,

backpack across the, the room. The room. Yep. Um, Ms. Branum should have, first of all, background knowledge to where Matthew's coming from, what's going on in Matthew's life, and then also the skills Ms. Branum should have the skills and, you know, the aptitude to say, okay, this just happened and here's how I'm gonna handle it. So we don't make this situation worse. Right. But we, we, we get a better understanding of what's happening. That was the premise of it all. Right. You know, building relationships with the classroom and helping students make better decisions when things are coming across their, their life, their desk, whatever, and helping them to do a better job. I think something you said that is, is really, really important is that when we're talking about, uh, student needs and how do we better equip students, we are not talking about a demographic of students. We're not talking about an age of students. We're not talking about a zip code of students. The behaviors and the experiences that they have may be different based upon their individual, um, environment or their circumstances. But these types of, of skills are needed by all kids. And so, uh, Dr. Martin, could you maybe speak a little bit to, um, as a counselor, I can imagine that you as a, as a high school counselor and, and how you support our current counselors, that you probably do see this a lot, uh, I'm sure kids absolutely have an outreach to you. Um, can you just share some of, of course, without ever ever being specific, but what are some of those common things that you hear from our kids or our parents that, that relate to what Dr. Gibbins said? Like, what are they going through where, you know, like, man, they really just need some strategies Absolutely. To know how to deal with what they're processing. We see, I mean, it runs the gamut from students who are brand new to this country who are trying to figure out what it's like to be in an American school. Plus they need the support of getting food and clothing and shelter and all kinds of things, all the way to our students who are applying to college mm-hmm. And they are stressed out with the amount of extracurriculars they have along with their on-ramps and AP courses and trying to fit everything in and make sure they're the right well-rounded candidate for the university they want to go to. Yeah. And so, trying to figure out how to manage that or manage their life because they're having to help out around the house. They're having to babysit little brothers and sisters, or go to work right after school. All of those things add into the need for building resiliency. And I mean, it goes right back to our graduate profile. Yes. That, that's what all of our students are seeing, but in different ways, just depending on their life story. One of the things I know in, um, the last two years that I think I've heard a lot of from some of our community members is, you know, the, the role of, of the parent may be to provide those supports and those skillsets mm-hmm. and is that really the role and the responsibility of the district? Is that really something that the district should take on? Um, and so, you know, one of the things that I have shared is, you know, even as an educator, um, and my husband is an education, and we have four kids. And I feel like we've done a really good job of providing that foundation and that background for our kids. Um, even I know my own kids sometimes to have, um, and, and to share experiences with others to know, sometimes I know for a fact, you know, my daughter, she knows that sometimes my job can be stressful. She knows I'm caring a lot, so she'll want to protect me. She doesn't want to add one more thing to something that's gonna worry mom. Um, and so to, to know that she's going to have an opportunity, um, to, to have those supports, I think is really important. But I know that that is a question we have to answer. So how would you respond to that? Is that really something that the district, you know, school district should be tackling? Or is that something that we should be

leaving to parents? I really think that, you know, one of the things that I think is a strength of the district is this like desire to partner with parents. Right. Right. You know, we want that to happen. Mm-hmm. we want to walk the deck with them. Uh, we would never try to use Cerp, the role of the parent. We know what our, you know, what our fit is. And, and I think when, when parents send their kids to school, really what we want to do is make sure that our teachers, that our administrators, you know, have all the, the skills necessary to support them in a way Yes. That a parent would want. Right. When I, right. You know, I've got two lovely girls who went through school and, you know, I've been in education 37 years, and I, that's what I think all of us want. And so we want to partner with parents. You know, we are not the pa we're, it's really clear we are not the parents, but we want to make sure that we have the skills that, that allow us to support them when they're with us as every parent I think wants. Yeah. I think that's a great point. I, I, I think that, um, and, and I think this is an opportunity for us to be really overt with that message. Mm-hmm. um, you know, we know and we believe that we cannot be as successful as we want to be without that partnership and that engagement of our parents. Um, and one of the things that we also know is that for, for some, some reasons, and sometimes parents can't fully engage at the same level that other parents can for a variety of reasons. And our, um, I think Angie Lee and her team have done a great job of a focus on parent engagement this year. And how do we, how do we help support families and how do we help? If I'm a, if I'm a parent, and if I'm a refugee from Afghan who's been in this country for eight months and I'm trying to navigate the American mm-hmm. Education system, how do we provide those supports not just to the student, but to the parents, to the families, so that, that, that those families can help engage as well. One of the things that our community may not be aware of that this team is responsible for, um, in addition to kind of supporting all the things that we've talked about today, but, um, almost out of every legislative session, um, there are some additional requirements that districts are, are asked to provide either training or supports or resources for students, um, on that are really kind of, again, fostering that non-academic side of, of ex the experience and the behaviors of being a student. Um, things like healthy relationships and healthy substance choices and that kind of thing. So, can y'all talk a little bit about, um, I think we have a program here in RISD called Live Wise, Live Healthy, and maybe you could share a little bit about that program and what it's designed to do, and how is it different than all of these other things we've been talking about? Um, in, in, in terms of supporting students with their emotional wellness, Live Wise, Live Healthy was an opportunity to, um, a few years back to organize and really get more efficient around all the subjects that you were mentioned. Um, plus other, other areas that a student or a community member or a parent might be, um, exposed to that aren't necessarily the most, I don't know what you would say. Not, not fun, but they're difficult. They're difficult subjects. So, you know, we talk about suicide prevention and awareness in September. We do drug and violence prevention and education in October, mental health awareness, November, December. So these are tough, tough subjects, but the stigma around a lot of them need to be, need to be broken and people need to be talking about them, and people need to be educated around them. So, yes, I think live wise of healthy does fall under what many people would consider, uh, social emotional learning, emotional intelligence, because it's the goal of each one of those, uh, months and those focus areas is to provide training and exposure to, um, those subjects. So for the community, community, there may be a community session, um, uh, zooms

session around, you know, um, the dangers of vaping, for example. Right. Um, there is a student, their student opportunities for learning to where a counselor might come in and do a certain lesson mm-hmm. or there's an assembly offered. We've done that in the past. We've done different, um, movies where yes, they can come in and, and hear about like, angst. We did angst one year. So there's a lot of opportunities, but the main point around it is to keep things organized. There's so many needs, so many resources out there. And in a, for a district our size, we, we needed something that kept it all organized, honestly. Right. And, and gave us the ability to fully share and communicate out subjects that aren't necessarily the, the easiest to talk about. Absolutely. So that's where we've landed with that. And I feel like, you know, I think we're in our fifth year right now, and I think we're really hitting our stride, you know, COVID, again, that kind of slowed some things down, but I feel like this is a really good tool for us to use. And on a side note, I was able to present Live Wise, Live Healthy at a conference for educators mm-hmm. That was outside the state, uh, last semester. And to hear and see the excitement that a lot of districts had around this is a great way to keep things organized. This is a great way to organize and plan out all these different things that we're both required to do. And that we see a need in our district specifically in, um, is a really good way to do that. So that's kind of in a nutshell what Live Wise, Live Healthy is. And several years ago, we took the Live Wise Live Healthy layout of what we cover each month. Yes. And we tailored our guidance lessons to go along with that. So the guidance lessons that your students receive during that month will coincide with our live wise, live healthy topic. So, like, for example, September is suicide prevention awareness, and that is a very difficult topic, but it's also National Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. Yes. So we tailored that at that time. And during that time, we do provide, uh, like for our community, we provide resources. So parents have some resources they can use with their students at home. And we provide the teachers with some of those resources and statistics and what they can do and what do they see in the classroom, you know, signs that they can then send somebody to the counselor. But what we teach our students is time to act, act as an acronym we use for all of our grade levels, not just for our upper class suicide prevention, but to be aware of friendships and to be, uh, protect from bullying. And ACT stands for Acknowledge, Care, and Tell. And we're really teaching our students to be aware of their friends who may be going through something and to care enough to tell a safe adult mm-hmm. And so we do that in the month of September. And that's just one example of how we, uh, put all of it together to include our community and our teachers, but teach something very important to our students. That is a skill that they can use all the time. And what we see is our students really take that to heart, and they make sure that their, their friends are safe. Yes. I, I think that that is it, it is really important. And again, I, I think it's so, it's so important to remind everyone that we do have to start at elementary school. Um, because the, the more opportunity we have to build those inherent skills with our students, as they face tougher and tougher experiences in junior high and high school, they're able to use those strategies with, like, they don't have to think about it anymore. Like, it's just inherent, it's built into the fabric of who they are. Um, and, and it does provide them with that grit or that resiliency mm-hmm. uh, to be able to know what to do in that, that tough situation. So, again, I know we have a website around live wise, live healthy Yes ma'am. That has all kinds of information for our parents so they can see, you know, what's going to be talked about that month, what that parent, um, or community experience is going to look like, as well as, um, how

we are going to have that conversation with, um, with their child as well. So I am very, very proud of live wise, live healthy, and again, that overt communication and explicit, like, here's our expectation. Here's why we're doing it, here's what it looks like. Um, and, and again, partner with us in that conversation. So thank you all for your, your work in that. And again, I, I encourage everyone who's listening, you know, to check out that website and to dig into that. And oftentimes we've had parents who have some expertise or some resources in these areas mm-hmm. that have said, Hey, um, have you thought about partnering with this organization or bringing in this guest speaker because they have an expertise in that area. Yes. It, this really goes out to the group. Um, if I'm an elementary student, give me some examples of some of the strategies or, or some of the ways that we help our elementary students understand their emotions and how to process their emotions. And then maybe what does that look like for a high school student? Well, I would say, I know our elementary counselors do an amazing job of providing guidance lessons that talk about big emotions and multiple emotions. Cause a lot of it is teaching them, you know, how to name their feelings and what that looks like, and then how to react to it appropriately and how to reach out for help when they need it to, when they need to. So it could be understanding what it looks like when I'm angry and how did I get there? Yes. And, um, what do I do about that? And what words can I use appropriately? Who do I talk to about it? I can tell my teacher, I can go talk to my counselor. I want to go home and tell my parents about it so that I can figure out how to work through that situation without just sitting there and it stewing in class. Or like Dr. Gibbins said, throwing my backpack across the room. Another thing I think that we, uh, that I found very valuable, even when we started this, this kind of journey was the huddle up. Mm-hmm. Yes. At the beginning of the day, or at some point where a teacher, uh, and I know this has mixed, you know, opinions and emotions that bring out bring, are brought up out by it. But, uh, opportunity, 15 minutes, 20 minutes for a teacher to sit down with their class, especially at the elementary level and just connect mm-hmm. just ask some questions around how they're doing, what's happening. You know, finding out things about their life in an appropriate way, of course. But to build those relationships and to have those connections through a huddle up. I, I just found that and will continue to see and feel that that's very, very powerful because just like the example I shared earlier about the kid who throws his backpack you know, what about the kid who never says a word when they come in? You know, everybody talks about, for example, I don't want go be all about me, but just for a second, um, how calm I am, you know? Yes. He's so calm. You have no idea. You know, the outside. That's a great point. The outside mm-hmm. Yeah. I look pretty calm. Right. But I'm the one that goes down the roller coaster, you know, the first big, uh, dip in a roller coaster and my face is calm. I'm not the one that's yelling and screaming, but I'm feeling the same thing as that person that yelling and screaming, but on the inside. So how do we have that community time, that meetup time for all of our kids to get together in a group, to be with the teacher and to explore some of those things and those different personalities. That's what I find really valuable. And I think if you were to talk to some teachers, they would say the same. I, I've had a chance to watch, um, and be a part of a couple of our morning huddles at our elementary school. And I think one of the things that's really profound for me is to watch how the students support one another. Mm-hmm. Um, and how we, there was a situation where I got to watch a huddle and where one of the students was moving mm-hmm. and how as the students went around, um, each of the students gave such an affirmation to that

student who was leaving and how, what an impact that student had on their class and how they were better because that student was in their class. But also reminded that student of all the reasons he was special and why his new school is going to love him and support him and embrace him as much as they did mm-hmm. And it was the most beautiful thing to watch. I ha I watched another one where a student was about to have, um, a baby sister. I think it was a baby sister. I, I'm pretty sure it was a baby sister. Not that that's relevant, but I'm just trying to remember the exact Yeah. Um, a baby sister Anne, what was the name of the Yeah. Right. You don't remember. And, and, um, and this, and, and this, this little kindergartner was struggling. Like he didn't want a baby sister. Like he he was just fine with having his whole world, um, you know, be about him. And, um, the, all the, of the other kids thought it was the coolest thing that he was about to be a big brother. And by the end of that huddle, he left thinking it was the coolest thing ever that he was going, you know, to be a big brother. Um, and so I think even that, that community that it builds mm-hmm. between the kids and, and between the, the teacher and the students, I think it's really powerful. Um, what does that look like at a high school, um, when, you know, I'm, I'm switching class periods all day. Um, I, you know, I might have eight teachers in a class, or I might have 30 kids in my classroom. How does that kind of, what does that sound like and look like? It is secondary campus, Even though, you know, the age is a little bit different. They're every classroom's a community. Yeah. You know, and I think one of the things that we think about is, you know, everyone's sitting on the carpet crisscross applesauce. Right. Elementary students. And that is truly, uh, you know, kind of a deliberate thing that elementary teachers do. But high school teachers, I taught high school and one of the thing I knew I wanted, you know, I wanted my students to come together because they, that dialogue that we all want to have happen in class. Right. High school students, by then, they've got real, they've got fully formed personalities. Yes. You know, everybody. And we've got some individuals that come into class, never say a word. You don't even know they're there. They sit in the back of the class, they come and they leave. And so being overt about drawing out conversation not only brings that collaboration out, but the thing that I think at a high school campus, um, you sometimes feel, um, alone. Yeah. Right. You may not have, you know, you may not be friends with everybody just like you are at elementary, you know? And so hearing those experience through conversation and being deliberate about having that kind, and it doesn't have to be 15 minutes. It, it can be a welcome. And we, it's a Two Minute check in. Yeah. We jump into a conversation. It can provide someone in that classroom and understanding that, Hey, listen, I'm feeling that same thing too. Yeah. So I'm really not alone. And they may not come out and, you know, go and hug just like elementary. But there's that connection. It, it may be just that cerebral connection based on the age, but, And I think that helps because, you know, high school is subject based, so Right. It helps the students see that their teacher cares about them as a person, not just about the subject that they're teaching. And they're, they're going to be more engaged with the subject matter. Because I have this great engaging teacher who cares about me as a person. We, uh, when we did the graduate profile, we had several student panels. And then, um, we've been in a strategic planning process in which we've been listening to students. And one of the things that, um, students said this 30 years ago, and I think they will probably say it 30 years from now, that one of the most important things that they want from a teacher is to know that that teacher cares about them. Mm-hmm. um, and, and knows them and sees them as, as a person and not just a

grade or a, you know. And I, I think you can only do that with intentionality and, and providing that, that space. Um, can y'all gimme some examples? So, you know, let's say that, you know, um, we're trying to help equip kids for, I'm feeling anxious. I have a big test coming up and I'm feeling anxious about that test. And, um, you know, I I I, I've had an opportunity to see a lot of, whether it's breathing exercises mm-hmm. I think our pre-K teachers are brilliant mm-hmm. at providing those strategies. But can you maybe give some really specific tangible ways, um, so that our parents and our community members can really hear when we're talking about equipping kids with strategies to deal with how they're feeling, give us some, you know, maybe one or two really explicit ways that we help our kids understand their emotions and regulate their emotions. Do you want to start summer? And I can, I'll say Something. Sure. Uh, breathing exercises are, are huge. Just being able to regulate your heart rate to begin with helps you minimize your feelings of anxiety. That's just basic physiology. So breathing in for four counts, holding it, breathing out for four counts, that's what we call foursquare breathing. Mm-hmm. And that is one of the best strategies that, that you can, that you can use is just to stop and breathe. And then we go through, I, you know, I came from a high school background, right. So I'm thinking about my older students who are maybe getting anxious about an ACT or SAT. Yes. We're gonna talk through the preparations for the night before. Yes. What, how are you gonna prepare yourself the night before? What? Make sure you get a good night's sleep, get up and get breakfast, eat breakfast. Yeah. And be prepared for it as best you can. And then we're gonna talk about the results of it. How are we gonna handle the results? And what are we gonna do if the results are what we want, we're gonna celebrate and what's our next step? But what if they're not what we want? Right. And how can we make it through? It's building the resilience through coming up with a plan of action with the little kids. It's very similar, but it's gonna be on a much smaller scale of, we're talking about the star test. And so what could happen if we do really well, we're gonna be really, we're gonna be really excited, but we're gonna do our very best. And that's what, that's what is gonna show us is, you are doing your very best, but what's, what could happen if you don't do very well? What, what's the next step? We can walk through that with them and how are we gonna be on that first date? What is it gonna look like? Right. Just helping them understand, because a lot of anxiety has a lot to do with not knowing. It's the not knowing. Yes. Yeah. So if I know a little bit more about what to expect, then I'm not gonna walk in being so anxious about it. And one of the things that I know that has worked well, and I think the, some of the things that we have done within the high school and even at the elementary and junior high, is the positive self-talk. Mm-hmm. Um, I think all of us, no matter our age, um, have fallen into believing a lie that we're not good enough for whatever situation may be coming our way, you know, That. Hey, man, I think I just, I want to dig into that just a moment. And I know you're gonna, you're gonna talk about a specific strategy, but I think especially now in light of social media mm-hmm. and the volume of images, um, and perceptions that our kids are facing of whether it's, I think that that is the definition of beautiful, or that's the definition of smart or perfection. You know, if you're doing that, that's perfection or that's, um, that's what it means to be popular, whatever. Mm-hmm. And so they fill themselves with a lot of that, and then they look in the mirror and they say, but I'm not that mm-hmm. Um, and so that, that's self-talk. So, so keep going on, on it, on kind of how do we help with that? Oh, sure. Um, you know, uh, what was it, Stuart Smiley or Stuart Smiley. I'm good enough. I'm smart enough and gush darn people

like me. Like me. You know, it, it's, that's funny. But it's true. It's true that we, um, all of us have to have that, have to have an ability to have positive self-talk in our lives. And so I know that some of the things that our counselors at all levels have helped, uh, students understand is that to understand how they can self-talk in a positive way that gives them the confidence that they need to be successful in whatever's coming up. Right. If, if it's athletics, if it's academics, um, fine arts, what whatever it may be, um, talking your talking to yourself in a positive way is not weird. You know, it's something that can really help. And so I've seen some of that, I've seen examples of that with some of our kids, even at the, the younger grades who were nervous about, um, an upcoming exam or the star or whatever. But hearing examples from teachers about how they, they wrote it down. They wrote what their goal was gonna be because they could do it, or they spoke it, you know, out, um, to kind of minimize those lies that they might hear that aren't just simply not true about them. Yeah. I love That. And I kind of like to go back to what you were talking about the morning huddles about the, the, the young student who was moving. Yes. And hearing those positive affirmations from other students. Man, when he goes to his new school, yes. He's gonna have all those great things. So the transition will be so much easier. And so those specific things that students hear from other students where, you know, on social media, they're hearing the exact opposite. Right. That, no, these are my classmates and they're telling me all these great, very specific things about myself that maybe I was not aware of, but now I am helps build that internal confidence and then we have more positive self-talk. Yeah. I love, well, I, I know I was, um, uh, in a classroom the other day, and then, believe it or not, our facilitator for our strategic plan with these were adults except for, uh, you know, um, eight high school students were in there. Um, they both used the same strategy and it just struck me. So I was in an elementary classroom in which the students were working on a pretty rigorous, um, you know, kindergarten, um, assignment. And at the end when, when all the students showed mastery, the teacher said, okay, it's time for us to kiss our brain. Um, y'all, y'all did it well. And literally they, you know, they, they kiss and they, they put it on on top of their head. And then we were in the strategic plan and we were really wrestling with some pretty difficult concepts and, and kind of dreams for what we want for the district. And we had kind of a breakthrough. And the facilitator was like, kiss your brain. Like you all deserve it. Right. Kiss your brain. Right. And, and, and why we, we kind of giggle at that like, like kiss your brain, you know, it, it really was this like moment to, I think what it did for the room in both circumstances. Mm-hmm. was pause and say, Hey, that was really hard. We made it through and look at what we accomplished. Mm-hmm. Um, and I think that, that, that is really meaningful cause sometimes we're just quick to move on and, and not really stop and pause and reflect. Yeah. Mr. Menka, that's, Would you add to this? I, I just think all of the things that, you know, that have been mentioned, you know, really, you know, it takes some deliberate function, practice, you know? Yes. Time. It doesn't have to take a lot of time. One, I golf, I'm not a very good golfer, but I love to golf. You know, it's my way to unwind. I won't ask you what you're handicapped. Well, you know, I'd lie anyways. I'm sorry I tell you some story, but one of the thing, one of my favorite golfers is Jason Day. Mm-hmm. And, and what, what he does is really deliberate before every shot. He's got this routine, he closes his eyes and he visualizes where he wants the ball to go, where he wants it, where it's gonna start, where it's gonna be in the middle of flight and where it's gonna land. Right? Right. Then he thinks about the stroke, cuz I've heard him talk about this visualization. So if you think

about a high school student and really them coming into class right before they start, and there's a lot of, you know, there's a lot of rigor at the high school level, you know, and so having that student close their eyes, right. Visualize exactly what they want that classroom to be like, how they want to behave, how they want to interact with other students, what their role is. Then the other thing that I think adding to that is that I think one of the most difficult things we can ask a student to do is pick up a pen and have their thinking come out the end of a pen. So journaling about that thought process, that doesn't take long. And so those are two things where you're visualizing success in your behaviors and you're actually capturing that in writing. Then you can go back, teachers can have conversation about what you think, did it end up the way that you wanted it to? And then you can also have that dialogue shift of the partner next to you and have that dialogue about what you wrote down. And I really think those are real quick things, but very deliberate and cerebral. Right? I mean it's, it, it elicits a lot of emotion because you're having to think about, you know, what it looks like, feels like, sounds like and what it can be. And, and you know, in the, in the other podcast, and I can't remember which it is because I want to refer people back to that we talked about, um, you know, Maslow before Blooms. Blooms Yep. And really allowing kids to reach that, that level of self-actualization really reaching full potential. All of these strategies that we're talking about is really about that. Yeah. Giving them those skills to get there so that they can reach full Potential. And I think it's interesting that you bring up a pro golfer and, and you know, and an adult, I think there's not really anyone that you don't talk to, um, that has reached a high level of success where they, they are very clear around those strategies that they use, use to either bring them in the moment or to help them, you know, process maybe when something didn't go as well as they that, that they thought they did. So again, this is, these are, that's why I'm so proud of the graduate profile cuz these really are life skills. Like they really are On paper About how to equip our students to handle like a future that maybe they can't quite predict yet. Mm-hmm. one of the things I know some parents have had a concern with, um, is what if through some of our social emotional learning, um, strategy sharing and that type of thing, students reveal information maybe of trauma or maybe of things that, um, you know, might, might be at a higher level of concern. Um, what happens at that point? And so Dr. Martin kind of, what kind of, um, training have we provided to teachers and to counselors, um, that, that when something like that comes up, how do we handle that? What does that look like? We started with doing some trauma-informed classroom strategies at the beginning of the year just for what to do in the classroom to help students. Like he said, Maslow before Bloom, which I think I taught you by The way. I think you did. So You definitely Get credit for that. Okay. Thank you. Um, so we started with all classroom teachers receiving that instruction. So they would know simple things that they can do, but when something is revealed of that nature, we have trained them to bring that to their counselor, take the student to their counselor, get somebody to come get the, the, the student from the class. Right. So that way they can get right in front of their counselor immediately so we can start talking to them to find out, you know, what happened? How can we help you? What, what services do you, do you need? What resources can we provide? Because we do want students to have, uh, support at school, outside of school with their families, and we're gonna ensure we talk to the families and connect them with whatever resources they may need in the area so that way they are getting support from everywhere. Yeah. I, I think that, that, that's really important. And when we serve, we serve

37,000 students. Um, and our students sometimes do experience that trauma and, um, we have a responsibility, um, you know, absolutely a moral imperative that when we know that that has incurred, um, you know, depending upon what that trauma is, there are certain protocols that we must follow, whether it's legal protocols or, um, other things. But, you know, we are, we are very tight around absolutely. How we, how we handle and respond to That. And, and regardless, you know, we're gonna talk to parents, yes, we're gonna bring them in the loop. And then if there are outside people that a student is working with, we're gonna work together so that whatever care they're receiving, it's gonna be seamless from home to outside resource to school, so that they are, they are getting the highest level of care and then they can be successful in life and in their academics. That's, I I, I just, I, I really do think that's an important part. Going back to the question about, you know, who's the parent, you know, making sure that, you know, there's clear communication about the support being provided so that, you know, a parent can make proper decisions. You know, there are certain things we have to do. Right. But then making sure that, you know, parents then have choice mm-hmm. right? Yep. You know, there are things that they can do beyond what the school provides. Okay. I'm gonna, I'm gonna flip this conversation a little bit now. I'm gonna be the parent. Um, and, you know, uh, I, I had a conversation one time with, with with You Summer around, you know, my eight year old is probably the most competitive human being I know in the world. Um, he wants to win and he wants to win at all things. And he turns everything into a competition. Um, you know, we might be just all walking out to the car and he's gonna turn it into the first one there wins. Mm-hmm. um, you know, the last one, you know, that that's there has to, you know, put up the dishes that night or whatever. Like everything is a competition. And when he doesn't win, um, it's like he devastating, it's devastating for him, his sense of justice. You know, if a ref gets a call wrong, it's not just about how that influenced the game. It's like, that wasn't right. Mm-hmm. like, someone deserved to be called on something and needed to be held accountable for that foul or whatever. And that didn't happen. And so that sense of justice. And so there have been times when I've asked you like, help me give me tools as a parent cuz I don't know what to do with him. Mm-hmm. like, I don't know what to do and I know this is gonna be a strength for him, but it's also gonna be his Achilles heel. Mm-hmm. if he can't figure out how to regulate that. So as a parent, um, and I, I maybe I'm the only one, but we may have some other parents that are listening to this where they're seeing different behaviors with their kids at home. Um, and maybe they don't know what to do. Like, how do I, want to support, what's happening at school and I want my child to, to be healthy and to be equipped. So as a parent, how do I, what are some resources maybe that I can turn to that would, would help me support this same kind of work at Home? Oh man. Well, the number one thing I would do is reach out to your school counselor. Yeah. Because they are working in the classrooms with a lot of these skills to build, um, empathy and perspective. A lot of, like what you were talking about with your son is perspective on somebody else's experience. So the counselors teach a lot of that, but then if you want extra resources at home, reach out to your school counselor because they have lots of great websites. Or they'll share them in their newsletters. Yes. So that way you can, um, look at something, find out if you like it as a parent, you want to review it and show it to your kid, work with them on that same topic and reach out because your counselor might have a group that is going on at school that they could be a part of to learn some of those skills or just some individual time where they can work on learning about

what perspective looks like and what can we say to the person who does win in this situation. So if mom wins the race to the car and she doesn't have to do the dishes, what can we say kindly to mom so that we're learning how to be a good sport? Because if that was me, I would be winning so that somebody else would be doing the dishes. Right? Yeah. Ultimately, we should be held accountable for every student achieving that year's worth of growth and having that high level of academic success. Fundamentally, foundationally, that is what we are here to do as an educational organization. I want students to ensure that they have, you know, automaticity with numeracy, that they have high levels of fluency and reading comprehension that they can, they can, uh, you know, develop ideas and articulate them both orally in written. Like absolutely. That has to be our be you know, who foundational to what we do. But I also know that for them to do that well and to do that at high levels, we have to address the human component of that mm-hmm. Because in the end, we are not developing widgets. We're not in a manufacturing plant where we are developing a product that doesn't have emotions and doesn't experience things and doesn't have real world, uh, you know, uh, experiences. And, and I think that's really what at the heart we've been having this conversation about is we're just trying to help them to be great humans who have to develop, um, and, and to, and to be able to be resilient when life sometimes doesn't go exactly the way that you had planned or the way that you think it should be. And I think that we have built a system that if you choose for your child not to experience some of the content that we provided, uh, With fully respect that Yeah, absolutely. And like, you get to make that choice. And so we have built a system, um, that allows a parent to opt out, right? Yes. And really respecting a parent's choice. Um, the other thing is we've tried to be as fully transparent as we can. Yes. I mean, I, knowing the charge from Dr. Gibbins mm-hmm. knowing your charge, you know, you have made it very clear that, you know, information that we provide needs to be viewable accessible. And there's nothing that, that we are trying to like keep from someone so that they can make an informed choice. And I really do think that those things are very important and we try to communicate clearly and try to communicate as much information that is accurate. Yes. You know, to a parent so that they're fully informed. I would say I love going back to the graduate profile and right above emotional intelligence is effective communication. Yes. And so what I think, um, with SEL and with the programs that we have, we are teaching kids, um, effective communication about themselves and Yes. And with each other because we live in a much different world than when we were kids. And so now the cell phone that we all have, you know, they're, we have kids who've never answered a phone that did not ring for themselves. Right. And that's kind of like eye-opening. I'm like, wow, I didn't think about that. Cause I had this fancy do hickey called a, a pager at one time and I had a landline. And so the communication with students is different. And then we had the pandemic that isolated everybody. And so our levels of communication, not be just regular communication, but our self-talk and our Yes, empathy with each other has changed. And with what's on social media for kids, it is just that much more important that we are able to work with them and help them build these skills. And I want to back to apparently my favorite word resilience. Yep. Uh, because that's what we need. And we know that school will last them throughout their lives so that they can be a success both in life and academically. And we want to partner with parents on that. Well, I want to thank, um, all of you today for just being willing to have this kind of courageous conversation to just kind of share this is, this is what we're doing and this is all we're trying to do, and here are, here are our

intentions and here's the ways that we're trying to go about that. And I continue to encourage our community that if you have questions and if you have, I wonders to please come and sit and talk with us. Um, all, all of us around this table, um, that you're listening to on this podcast, we are all an open door. And, um, there is nothing that replaces the in-person conversation around this kind of topic. I, I'm happy to answer emails and I'm very timely and in answering an email or a let's talk, but really getting down to the root, um, you know, of how you're feeling or how what you're processing and, and you allowing to hear our voice and, and what we're trying to do. There's nothing that replaces that. So I hope our community hears first of all what tremendous leaders you are and how incredibly blessed we are as an organization to have you, um, making a difference in the lives of our kids. So thank you for your, your hard work. Thank you for our, your commitment to all of our students. Um, and just remember, you know, RISD community, we are ultimately here to serve and support our 37,000 kids, every child, every day. Dr. Goodson, what are kind of you, you've been listening to this segment today and thinking about, you know, you have three kids of your own in the district, kind of what are some of your kind of reflections as you've heard, either what we're doing with live wise, live healthy, or you know, kind of our, our commitment to emotional intelligence through our graduate profile. The focus of an educator is to do anything and everything we can to have that child come into the room on that first day of school and walk out that last day of school and that they are better and that they're ready for whatever happens next. And I think we know that growing up is hard. We know that, um, when life comes at you with a lot of different things, it's incumbent upon everybody to just get prepared. And that is hard to do. So there are things that you have to learn. We're all about learning and education. You have to learn how to, um, access the academics. You have to learn how to be a better student. But I think one thing that again, drives us is we also have to know that we have to teach students and adults that they have to learn how to handle the difficulties that can and that will always present, that will present themselves, uh, on a day-to-day basis. Whether that is, um, a tragedy of some kind or whether it is waking up and just being hungry because you haven't had anything to eat since yesterday. Um, that is, that is a reality for all of our students. And, and I can't remember who said it earlier, but that knows no zip code. Yeah. Mm-hmm. it knows no particular high school, it knows no elementary school or junior high. If you are a student or a family in Richardson, ISD, you're dealing with challenges. Yep. And so our job, our goal is to, to teach and to educate and to practice and to help families and students get ready for whatever that looks like mm-hmm. And so you, you have to train to be a good golfer. You have to train to be, um, a good student. Right. You have to train to be ready to handle the emotional aspect of what growing up and going to school and just dealing with life in general. You, you have to train for it. Yeah. And, and the way to train is by getting the tools that you can use if and when these things happen. And so what I love so much about the things that y'all have shared today is that, um, it resonates not only with me as a parent, but as an educator who's been in the business for 30 years and when I taught pre-K, those, those are my babies, those are my kids. And there were days where I was not going to get a lesson covered because what was most important for that child or that group of children at the time was for them to know that I cared about 'em, right? Mm-hmm. Yeah. And to find out what's going on and who do I connect with and how do I support them. And that always involved connecting with parents. Yeah. Making sure that they were aware because it is a partnership. N we, we cannot do this and

will not do, we will not do this alone. Mm-hmm. we will do this hand in hand with the parents who are in this community because that is the right way to do it. And so I just, I'm, I'm encouraged, I'm, I'm, I'm energized just with not only what we, what we provide for our kids, but how we are making sure that our parents are closely connected, that they are well informed, and if there's a, a need for them to reach out, to ask questions. We are always here. Whether that is the campus principal, the campus counselor, or any of the folks that are on the, the podcast today, we are right here ready to do that because it is absolutely a joint effort. I echo everything you just said. Thank you for that. Yeah, that's, yeah. Couldn't have said it better. Thank you all. And until next time, that is The RISD podcast.