

THSADA NEWSLETTER

Presented by Home Team Marketing



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Executive Directors Report *Rusty Dowling - THSADA*



I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to the 47th annual THSADA State Conference and Professional Development Program. This promises to be another great conference as the professional development programs are a direct result of Athletic Administrator input and this is the first year implementing the Texas Athletic Administrator Certification program. The Texas Athletic Administrator Certification program (TAAC) was developed to create a certification program for Athletic Administrators specifically for and within the State of Texas. A group of retired and former Hall of Honor Athletic Directors developed the core concepts of the program and then it was expanded on by collective groups including but not limited to: UIL Staff, THSADA Professional Development Committee, selected Superintendents, Texas State Athletic Trainers Association and TAPPS Staff.

The current school year got off to a great start in Houston in July where we held our annual PBK Sports-THSADA Hall of Honor Banquet and continued recognizing our original

THSADA founders when we inducted into the THSADA Hall of Honor: Tom Pruett-Victoria ISD along with Mark Ball-Lubbock ISD and Bob DeJonge-Keller ISD.

The Joe Bill Fox DSA Award was presented to:

long-time THSADA sponsor PBK Sports & Trey Schneider

The PBK Sports-THSADA Athletic Director of the Year was presented to:

John Crawford-Midlothian ISD.

The Region Athletic Administrators of the Year were:

Dr. Justin Hefley-Amarillo ISD-Region 1

Nancy Surber-Ector County ISD-Region 2

Russ Reeves-Rockwall ISD-Region 3

Maria Barros-San Elizarde ISD-Region 4

Vince Sebo-Tomball ISD-Region 5

Lynn Pool-Austin ISD-Region 6

Oscar Riojas-Weslaco ISD-Region 7

Rudy De Los Santos-Harlandale ISD-Region 8

The Kelly Reeves State Award of Merit was presented to:

David Kuykendall-Frisco ISD

The NIAAA DSA was presented to:

Sandra Howell-Little Elm ISD

The NFHS Citation Award was presented to:

Traci Neely-formerly of the UIL

The Frank Kovaleski PD Award was

presented to:

Annette Scogin-Dallas ISD.

The Monday morning THSADA general session saw the installation of the new THSADA Board of Directors and the newly elected President-Debbie Decker-Katy ISD. A new Board orientation was held Tuesday morning and included the THSADA Committee Chairs.

Another important part of those three months is the annual THSADA sponsorship drive and renewal process. The THSADA is very fortunate to have those companies and businesses that support and contribute to the efforts of Athletic Administrators and the athletic programs in the State of Texas. Currently our sponsor total is at 36 contributors. Sponsorships and the involvement of all our supporters is the main revenue generating component of the THSADA and allow us to keep our membership and registration fees to a minimum along with supporting the business of the THSADA such as travel, Board meetings and maintaining the THSADA office and staff. Currently the THSADA is over 900 members with the majority of those representing UIL schools and about 75 representing TAPPS schools. October saw the THSADA actively involved in the annual meetings of the UIL Legislative Council and meetings with UIL staff, TAPPS staff and other coaching associations discussing those issues and concerns significant to high school athletics in Texas.

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The THSADA was able to attend the annual NIAAA-National Executive Directors Council meeting in Milwaukee and interact with all other State Executive Directors. It was a very good professional development opportunity for all Executive Directors.

November brought State Conference registration along with Exhibitor and Hotel registration. This will be our second year in Waco and we are continuing to develop a good working relationship with the Hilton/Courtyard and Waco Convention Center.

December saw our annual THSADA Board of Directors/Committee Chairs meeting held also in Waco at the Hilton. Wednesday was the THSADA Officers meeting followed by a social/dinner and Thursday the Board met in full session. Having the

Committee Chairs at the meeting allowed the Board to expand on the work of our Committee's and have great interactions with the Chairs. It was also the first meeting of our Board Committee's which consisted of our Financial Committee, Policy Committee and By Laws Committee. A complete financial review was done by the Financial Committee while the Policy and By Laws Committee's also made recommendations to the Board. Significant in the proposals that were approved by the Board was the TAAC program and a Group Membership plan to be instituted starting May 1st. This will allow schools to register more members at a reduced rate.

The UIL attended the Board meeting and the Waco Sports Commission did a presentation for the Board.

In closing, I appreciate all of you

who are attending the 47 th annual THSADA State Conference. You are making the effort to network, be involved with your colleagues and pursue Professional Development that can help you in what you do each day. Your presence shows that you support the mission of your professional association and what THSADA does for Athletic Administrators. Thank you for all you do and what you do for the THSADA.



Texas High School Athletic Directors Association - President's Remarks

Debbie Decker, President -- THSADA

Welcome to the 47th annual THSADA Convention; one of the greatest conferences in the nation, hosted by the city of Waco and the Waco Convention Center! Attendees will have the opportunity to be part of the first ever Texas Certification program for athletic directors called the Texas Athletic Administrator's Certification Program. This new, exciting program was written and developed by some of the most knowledgeable athletic directors, athletic trainers and superintendents in the State of Texas. We applaud them for their hard work and commitment to create another tool for athletic administrators to sharpen their knowledge and skills.

In addition to the beginning of the TAAC program, we will have several outstanding sessions led by the UIL staff, the TAPPS' staff, athletic directors, attorneys, Industry professionals and individuals who are leaders in their fields. I would like to thank our Professional Development committee for all of their ideas to help make this Conference the best ever! What a great opportunity we have to grow our profession and strengthen our association by our presence here, from the networking with peers across the state to attending many worthwhile sessions and by having a little fun along the way!

The conference will help to elevate athletic programs and will provide you with resources that will foster this year's theme, "Growing Leaders.... Inspiring Leadership". As leaders in our schools and communities, it is up to us to continue to develop leaders in our departments, coaching staffs and with our student/athletes in our programs.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank our Executive Director and staff, our Officers, Regional Directors and Committee Chairs. Rusty, Kathy, Ellissa, Keith, Larry and Bill have worked extremely hard to put together a great conference. To the Board of Directors; Shawn Pratt – President-elect, Rodney Chant – Vice President, John Crawford – Past President, Regional Directors Brad Thiessen – Region 1, Brent McCallie – Region 2, David Kuykendall – Region 3, Rene Aguilar – Region 4, Debbie Fuchs – Region 5, Johanna Denson – Region 6, Oscar Rojas – Region 7, Melanie Hinson – Region 8, Sandra Howell – Secretary and Bob DeJonge – Committee Coordinator, I cannot thank each of you enough for your leadership and service to the association. Last but certainly not least, a big thank you to our committee chairs for their contributions to the Board and the association. If you would like to be more involved in the THSADA, volunteering on one of our committees is a great way to start!

Back in December I was able to attend the NIAAA Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. It was great meeting and networking with athletic directors from around the country to talk about hot button issues. I am always amazed at some of the stories and I have to admit, it makes me very appreciative for what we have in the great State of Texas. Dr. Lisa Langston was elected to the NIAAA Board of Directors in the At-Large section. Congratulations Lisa!

Again, welcome to the THSADA State Conference!

Debbie Decker

THSADA President





Educating Young Coaches *By Armando Jacinto - Assistant Athletic Director - Spring ISD*

Coach Expectations

When a young coach joins your staff, there are certain expectations placed upon them by the head coach, the other assistants, and the athletes that he coaches. Let's not forget that the coach is also a teacher in the classroom with expectations from the principal, the teachers in their department, and the students he serves.

For a young coach, especially fresh out of college, this can overwhelm them quickly. Very few coaches arrive on their campus and excel in their position immediately. It takes years to master and develop the skills required to coach their position, breakdown opponents, and build rapport with the athletes. Many times a coach may start their careers with skills in one area, but lacking in the rest. What are your expectations for them and how patient are you with them?

I believe that we are doing a disservice to our young coaches. In this day and age of expecting immediate results, those same expectations are trickling down to coaches who have less than three years of professional experience. If they must perform and achieve at a high level of success now, how are we supporting them? What resources are provided to them and how do these young coaches know these sources are available to them?

These questions are crucial in developing the next generation of coaches that are beginning their careers now and will be tasked with carrying on the values and traditions of the coaches before them. As a veteran coach, we must be able to answer these questions in a way that helps the new/next generation of coaches understand the importance of the duty they are inheriting. We must answer these questions in a language and a style that the current generation understands and is able to apply to their professional development.

Communication

From polling coaches that are in their first years of coaching and head coaches, what I have found is communication is key. Consistent, frequent, pointed communication makes a huge difference in helping young coaches understand the job in front of them. James Kowalewski (Coach

Kovo), the head coach of Aldine High School in Texas sends daily texts to all of his coaches containing what is expected of each coach to accomplish, athlete injury updates, and the focus for that day.

I love this because this is how the current generation communicates. People respond to their phones and are more likely to engage with a text message. The text gives them a reference point to return to and think about what they need to accomplish that day. A simple text reaches the young coach and lets them know that what they are doing today is important to you and the program. If we expect our new coaches to embrace the standards we have for ourselves and our program, we must be able to communicate our expectations effectively.

This means that coaches must start to evolve. Evolution begins with adaptation, in this case, by embracing technology and how young coaches communicate. Coaches are some of the best at adapting to and using technology when it comes to teaching and reaching their players, yet we still incorporate old habits when communicating with our staff. We can still use staff meetings to relay the expectations of the program, but follow it up with an individual meeting to answer questions and further explain responsibilities.

The daily text used by Coach Kovo can provide reminders to the entire staff of these expectations. We use our video editing system to "flip" the practice field with our players and we can do the same with our meetings. Provide access to resources that they can study using their phones, laptops, and tablets. Give them a breakdown of what the coach needs to know, so as not to overwhelm. Treat them as adults, but use the teaching methods and technology you incorporate in your classroom.

What Young Coaches Need

Coach Jerry Edwards of Killeen Harker Heights HS believes in modeling the practices and behaviors you want the young coach to perform. Young coaches need to see that you actually exhibit the tenets that you teach. Providing a mentor coach is a great resource for the young coach. Someone they may be more comfortable talking to, and someone they can learn from by talking to and mimicking. Every coach has their own way and style

of doing things, but we all need that older coach to lay the groundwork and can act as an immediate source of knowledge and wisdom.

Scouting live football games is a great way of establishing this relationship. This is an old school practice that is, and in some places has disappeared from the usual football week. I am a believer in it because it gives the opportunity for the young coach to learn the offensive and defensive system and language you use in your program.

Divide up your freshmen and junior high staffs with a JV coach and send them out to watch games and complete a scouting report. The time together is great for learning football and establishing camaraderie between new coaches and older coaches. Have them follow up the scout by inputting the information into the video editor together. We are quick to divide up video editing into a solo job because of the way technology has evolved. In order for learning to occur we need help to ensure the job is being done correctly.

Advice for Young Coaches

The onus is not completely on the older, more experienced coaches. Young coaches have responsibilities as well. I read an article on How to Think Like a Millennial that has many great insights and ends with some great advice for young people entering their profession.

- Step Up. Rise to the challenge in front of you when you don't want to, don't have to, and even when you don't know how. Accept this challenge and show what you are capable of doing.

- Step Out. Get out of your comfort zone. We learn when we try things we have never done.

- Step Forward. Embrace your role. Set goals and go!

Coaching is an amazing profession that impacts many lives, young and old. In order to pass down the lessons and traditions of the past, we must embrace our future. So be patient with the new guy and communicate consistently your expectations. We can all take the advice to Step Out of our comfort zones and be amazed at what we learn.

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Great Leaders Do This One Thing Exceptionally Well

Part of being a great leader is being able to communicate effectively, and that includes being a good listener. Here are 3 ways to strengthen your listening muscles.

By Brenda Barbosa

Of all the communication skills, listening is by far the most underrated. There are countless books and courses on how to be a better public speaker, much less on being a better listener. If you want to be a top-notch leader, you have to be an effective communicator and that includes being a good listener.

Here are three simple, yet effective ways, to train your listening muscles.

1. Practice mindfulness

While it may sound a bit fuzzy, research shows that being mindful can lead to being more creative, productive and effective both in life and business. Simply put, mindfulness is the act of being present to what's happening in the moment both externally (your surroundings and the people around you) and internally (the thoughts cropping up in your mind about what you're experiencing).

As this blog writer points out, "(Mindfulness) might seem trivial, except for the annoying fact that we so often veer from the matter at hand. Our mind takes flight, we lose touch with our body, and pretty soon we're engrossed in obsessive thoughts about something that just happened or fretting about the future."

Our thoughts take us away from what's happening in the here and now, which is disastrous for clear communication because you can miss key pieces of information you need for an appropriate response. Just being aware of your surroundings and the words that are being spoken (without the need to inject your own personal commentary to it), helps create clear communication which is valuable in any personal or professional exchange.

2. Avoid mental commentary

Most of us hear what others are saying, but how often do we actually listen? In today's fast-paced, highly-distracted world, rarely do we listen to understand. We listen to respond.

In conversations, instead of listening to what the other person is saying, we tend to get absorbed in our own mental chatter - we're thinking up snappy replies or dissecting what the other person's saying. We may not be responding with our mouths. But we're certainly responding in our heads, and that's the opposite of listening.

Next time you're in a conversation, see if you can suspend your internal narrative of what's happening and just listen to the content of the conversation. Resist from diagnosing the other person's words. Instead, try to get beneath the words to gain a deeper understanding of what the other person needs or wants.

3. Ask and Repeat

One way to make sure you've heard what's being said is simply to check. Was message received, message sent?

If there is any doubt, just ask: "Did I understand that correctly?" or "What did you mean by that? I want to make sure got it right."

It's always better to double check that you heard the right things than assume you did. -- It's Your Turn

Do you consider yourself a good listener? How do you strengthen your listening skills? Share your thoughts on Twitter or in the comments.

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Coaching & Cursing

Valerie Little, Director of Athletics, Prosper ISD

*The Importance of Modeling Appropriate Language
with your Student Athletes*

According to the latest NFHS statistics, there are an estimated 1 million coaches in the US that teach and coach over 7.5 million student athletes. Do you know the core values of all of your Coaches? Do they buy in to your Athletics philosophy? Are they the role models you expect them to be for your student athletes on a daily basis - in their professional AND personal lives? Since athletics is part of the total high school experience and has educational value and significance, we have NO CHOICE but to be role models. By the very fact that Coaches are part of this educational process we are and have to be role models. Sadly though, it does not take much time or effort to find hundreds of articles and stories written about coaches using inappropriate language in athletics: "EMU fired coach regrets inappropriate language", "When Coaches cross the line with language", "Adolescents and Bullying Coaches". Why is this the case? Why has it been accepted and allowed for so long by the Coaches & role models our student athletes look up to? In the 70's, I would surmise that profanity was a mainstay of High school coaching. The callous language of the 70's and 80's gave way in the 90's to a more positive approach. In today's times, many would say "coaching is different". I tend to disagree. Kids are still kids and parents are still parents. However, the issues they deal with may be a bit different in today's times. I also think parents expect more from their coaches in regards to the relationship they have with their student athletes. Student athletes still and always will need good, positive role models in their lives to help guide them through their adolescence. Our student athletes deserve the right to walk into a positive environment in which they are held accountable and pushed to achieve their maximum potential. Coaches and Athletics can still provide this for them, regardless of the decade.

The expectation of Coach's behavior must come from the top. Here in Prosper ISD, we continually educate anyone who will listen about our Educational Athletics philosophy. We explain to teachers, administrators and parents about the importance of educational athletics. I have spoken to the Rotary Club and we have published articles about the Educational Athletics philosophy and the standard of behavior we have for both student athletes and Coaches alike. We are helping to mold better athletes as well as better people. We are working tirelessly to instill the character traits in our student athletes, which we all desire: teamwork, servant leadership, self-discipline, cooperation, the list goes on. With the educational athletics philosophy, you must address Coach's behavior as well if it does not align with the values you expect. What is their real mission as a professional? Do your coaches believe the win-loss outcome of their season is far more important than the process of character development? It is vital for you as a leader to instill your philosophy into your Coaching staff and ensure they live it and follow it daily in their programs. They must buy into a unified vision to ensure we are meeting the expectations we have in PISD Athletics for both Coaches and Student Athletes. One example of this is with a daily character curriculum lesson.

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We expect every athlete in Prosper ISD to have the chance to hear a character lesson each day they are in our presence. It does not need to be long; 2-5 minutes can even suffice. Our student athletes need to hear repeatedly who we are as the values we hold most important. When Coaches do slip up, it is important you address it and reiterate to them the expectations. They must be held accountable for their actions and be reminded what acceptable behavior looks like in your school district. As we tell our student athletes, same goes for the adults - Coaches are a reflection of the school, the athletic department and the school district in everything they do. It is imperative we arm them with the tools necessary to meet our expectations. Each Head Coach needs to ensure their Assistants understand the expectations as well. Our Head Football coach told his entire staff that if any cursing happened on the field, they ALL would do push-ups as a staff to hold themselves accountable to the kids. This is very profound

coming from a Football Coach as we are all aware of the perception of a football practice and the language involved. It says a lot about their character and their core values as a Coach. Any other Coach we hire in PISD must possess the same beliefs and values when it comes to their coaching philosophy.

We are not naïve enough to think there are ZERO curse words on our practice fields and during games. With the nature of competition, I am sure it happens. Competition is fierce, intense and full of emotion. However, it is vital we teach our Coaches and student athletes how to handle this emotion with class and maintain their personal dignity in the face of competition. They will all be better people when we hold them accountable for the words coming out of their mouths. While it is not always easy to maintain the expectation of excellence in the classroom and on the field, it is WORTH IT and our student athletes deserve it. ★

Making Difficult Conversations Not So Difficult

By Dena Scott, Assistant Athletic Director, Fort Bend ISD

There are times in our profession when we will have difficult conversations. Whether those conversations are with other administrators, our coaches, or athletes' parents, it is always good to have a plan of action. Here are some tips on dealing with difficult conversations that were discussed in a professional development session at the NIAAA Conference this past December.

Tip 1: Develop your conflict resolution skills. Be fair, be consistent and be clear with your conflict resolution format. Be open minded to suggestions from the other party, but do not waiver on the integrity of your conflict resolution plan.

Tip 2: Become comfortable with silence. For most, this can be difficult especially if you are trying to communicate your talking points to the other party. Develop the fine art of wait time, listen twice as much as you speak, and be aware of your facial expressions and body language during the conversation.

Tip 3: How is your attitude influencing the conversation? It is important to remember to respond rather than react, preserve the relationship when at all possible, and be respectful and develop a rapport.

Tip 4: Manage the emotions of the conversation. It is important when having difficult conversations that you set the parameters for the conversation at the beginning. Sometimes, you may need to address how the meeting will be conducted so that all parties involved know the expectations. Be firm and make sure the parameters are followed. If the conversations becomes disorderly or out of control, it is time to end the conversation and adjourn the meeting. Remember to place yourself near an exit so that if you need leave the room, you have a clear path.

Tip 5: Decide on a proper location for the conversation. Be aware if it needs to be a confidential meeting and try to make the location comfortable for all parties. Be sure that the room is

equipped with everything you might need to conduct the meeting.

Tip 6: Clarify the Issue. If parent or student is presenting an issue, have them present the issue first. Then, repeat what you heard the issue to be to all present. Finally, make adjustments to be certain the issue has been understood.

Tip 7: Determine those needing to be present for the conversation. Depending on the issue, you may want to have a third party in the meeting to observe and document what happens during the meeting. Depending on the conversation, those needing to be included may be student athletes, coaches, parents, and/or administration.

As Athletic Administrators, one can plan on having a few difficult conversations. I hope that these tips will help to make them less difficult. Special thanks to Leslie Farmer, CMAA and Wendy Malich, CAA for providing these helpful tips. ★



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(Educating Young Coaches)

4 Body Language Tricks That Will Help You Succeed in Life, According to a Communications Expert

Donna Van Natten, known to the world as 'The Body Language Dr.', shares some simple nonverbal-communication techniques to help build up your confidence.

By Marcel Schwantes

In an effort to better understand the business of body language for this piece, I reached out to a bona fide expert in the field, Donna Van Natten, known as the "Body Language Dr." She is the author of a provocative new book, *Image Scrimmage*--a research-packed, how-to manual on the dos and don'ts of nonverbal communication.

In my original interview with her about her book, I gathered several nuggets of information for improving our body image, first impressions, and the way others perceive us.

Communicate with your eyes

Most of us aren't even aware of how much our eyes communicate, and the messages it sends off. Van Natten explains that even our pupils can give away our feelings. I asked her what we should be looking for in others' eyes to gain an edge, and how we should "respond" to others with our own eyes. Here's Van Natten:

Pupils change under certain conditions--especially when they are triggered by our emotions. When we're attracted to or like something, they grow; when we don't, they shrink. Think about this during a meeting. Your colleague is excited about the new project. You even notice that her eyes light up as she grins excessively. In reality, her genuine emotions are being immediately expressed through her eye language and pupil size. Most people lean towards a big-eyed person. It's easier to "read" them when you can see them. Be on the lookout and you'll begin to notice how others' pupils align with their feelings. Also, take note that your own pupils will call you out if your inner feelings and your outward behaviors don't match. We are looking at the eyes as we "look inside or into the soul" of the person to validate their message. I think it is a competitive edge, and

we know that people with strong presence have strong eye contact and firm handshakes that support or validate their message.

Van Natten says that truth and deception definitely can show up in the eyes (and face) in many different ways, including blink rate change, looking away or staring, movement around the mouth, and skin color changes.

Stand like Wonder Woman or Superman.

Being aware of your stance, whether speaking in front of an audience or even in a group of casual acquaintances, is really important. In her book, Van Natten says that "intentionally positioning our bodies to look like Wonder Woman/Superman, when necessary, shifts others' perceptions, as well as our own inner thoughts, in terms of power."

Interesting. I asked her to unpack that further. Here's Van Natten: We do pick up on the entire person standing before us, including leg and foot positions. Someone who is authentically engaged and present in the situation involves their whole body in the conversation. They get closer, they face you, and they bring their bodies and feet towards you to demonstrate "I'm fully here." By taking on the wider stance of Wonder Woman/Superman, we clearly are telling others, without using our words, that "I'm present and commanding space and attention." It's like saying, "I'm willing to take on the world--starting with all of me!"

Studies often examine body positioning, size, and status, and, for the most part, the results are consistent that it pays off to intentionally position our bodies this way.

Position yourself tall (even if you're not).

Van Natten says that we strongly communicate our inner thoughts and feelings with the outward display of how we position our bodies. Since most of us tend to associate taller as better, it would make sense to stand tall. In the animal world, says Van Natten, dominant animals make themselves larger to let others around them know they are worth watching.

When we see people slouching or slumping, we infer "slouch" and "slump." Both are negative impressions. "Think of it

this way," she says. "If you saw someone smiling and looking around investigating their surroundings--but then saw them slumping, it would look odd. A smile and a slouch don't go together."

"Pride and confidence are shown via 'heads held high' (but not too high, or that's arrogance), chest out (think of our armies and how they stand to demonstrate power and dominance), and tall/erect bodies which indicate control of self, health, and being present," says Van Natten.

Be aware of your voice pitch.

Van Natten gives evidence of how the pitch of our voice is tied to emotion, and, often, elevates when emotions kick in. For that reason, she says, "we'd be wise to gather our emotions and check how our inner feelings emerge through our voice, even though no words are uttered."

She states that there's a definite connection between our tone of voice and how we engage with others who evoke emotion from us. "Without thinking," she says, "your tone may give way to your true feelings if left unchecked. It impacts both our communication and perceptions by others."

The 5 Things Mediocre Managers Forget (But Inspirational Leaders Never Do)

Whatever you do, if you want to be an inspirational leader, don't forget these things.

By Chad Perry

Most of my career has been in leadership roles -- and I've made a lot of mistakes. I mean, a lot of mistakes. More than I can count.

I've learned about leadership the hard way. I've learned the most about leading by doing it the wrong way. I can still remember when I first hit the management track. My very first thought? "Finally, I don't have to be 'on' all day!" I couldn't have been more wrong.

So with that in mind, here are some things I once forgot, and I'm sure others have too at some point in their careers.

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...Story continued from page 6 (*Educating Young Coaches*)

1. Some leaders forget what it's like to follow.

Like me, once some managers hit the leadership ranks they think they've made it. That all they have to do is give orders and watch others work.

True leaders remember the difficulties of being in the passenger seat. The frustration of receiving next to impossible assignments. And the disappointment when you don't complete that impossible assignment. Inspirational leaders exhibit understanding when committing to, and asking their teams to do things.

2. Some leaders forget they can be wrong.

It's easy to think you're always right when you're responsible for calling the shots. But being responsible isn't the same thing as being right.

Inspirational leaders know that those closest to the situation usually have the best answers. They tap into this. They appreciate this.

3. Some leaders forget that it's hard to work.

I once worked for a leader that you had no idea what they did all day. This leader was the first to show you the newest viral video or to talk for hours about anything other than work.

Ironically, this same leader was first to point out the slothfulness of their team.

Motivational leaders know that their title isn't a get out of work free card. That increased responsibility equals increased work. That they should be one of the hardest workers on the team.

4. Some leaders forget to take responsibility.

Once my team failed and I took responsibility - along with my team - for the failure. In doing so, my senior leader told me I'd never amount to any type of "executive leader" because of it.

I can still hear the parting words: "True leaders hold their teams accountable for failure; they don't claim equal credit for it." Respectfully, I disagree.

Emulation-worthy leaders should engage in the fight. They may not have their oar in the water, but they are at the helm of the boat. Inspirational leaders are equally responsible for the success or failure of their team.

5. Some leaders forget to stay grounded.

This is the easiest of all to forget, and the hardest to keep remembering. That's because even the slightest bit of authority goes to people's heads. Inspirational leaders keep their heads out of the clouds.

They know when they distance themselves from their team and their customers, they lose their grasp of reality. And when you lose grasp of reality, you lose your ability to inspire and lead.

The same for any of these points. They're easy to forget, but critical to remember. That is, if you want to be known as an inspirational leader.

7 Ways Outstanding Leaders Do Things Differently

Leadership is not a position or title; it is action and example.

By Lolly Daskal

It may feel as though we're in a crisis of leadership, but if you stop to look around it's not hard to find examples of CEOs, middle managers, elected officials, public servants, neighborhood watch organizers, team captains and coaches, teachers and countless others who are doing a good job as leaders. Most of us are either in that group or working toward it.

Much rarer are the exceptional leaders whose qualities truly shine, the ones who practice the kind of leadership we all aspire to.

In my years of leadership consulting, I've learned that most of what makes outstanding leaders outstanding lies not in the things they do but who they are when they take action.

Here are seven of the most important:

1. Outstanding leaders lead with consistency of character.

At the center of all great leadership are two interconnected qualities: consistency and character. Those who lead with character do the right thing 100 percent of the time, even if no one is watching and the benefits of cheating are great. They understand that their actions set the standard for their entire team, and that their influence reaches far beyond themselves.

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Dynamite Takes a Match

By Beck Brydon, CMAA, Director of Athletics, Regents School of Austin, February 2018

We are in crazy times... I have yet to talk to anyone who disagrees with that. In the sporting world, we seem to have lost our (players, fans, officials) minds as well. Most people would agree that sportsmanship and how we handle adversity, and even celebration, is at an all-time low.

Dynamite can't explode without a match. And dynamite, in a traditional sense, has a long fuse. What's the point? Before dynamite explodes, there are plenty of opportunities to ensure it doesn't. Being proactive (match) can often times help prevent things from getting out of hand. Being quick to address issues once they've started (fuse) can oftentimes avoid an explosion as well.

We are in NBA season right now. Technical fouls, ejections and players in the face of officials all seem to be common place each night. The NBA just announced a five-pronged plan to address these issues. While good (fuse), could more have been done last year, or in the off-season (match) between the players association and officials?

Staying in basketball, fans storming the court immediately following a game has not yielded positive results this year. In high school, this can explode fast. Why is high school different? Because the kids who are storming the court likely could have played the kids from the opponent's school in football or volleyball a few months earlier.

While being proactive in defining and following through on sportsmanship expectations might be a little more

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...Story continued from page 7 (*Educating Your Coaches*)

2. Outstanding leaders are intentional about being accessible.

Generally speaking, the more successful you become, the less accessible you will be. Competing demands, busy schedules, and other factors make it tempting to fire off a few emails to your team and call it a day. Outstanding leaders make a concentrated effort to be accessible and available to those who need them.

3. Outstanding leaders are meticulous in their communication.

They know to be careful in every word they write, say, email, text, and tweet. Like all of us, they communicate across different levels of formality, but in every situation they make sure their communication is clear and appropriate. The art of communication is the language of leadership and essential to success, and it works for those who work at it.

4. Outstanding leaders make others feel valued.

They never forget that the greatest emotional need we have is to feel valued and appreciated. And they make sure they do their part so that everyone they encounter, from their CEO to the temps and interns, understands that his or her contribution is important and appreciated.

5. Outstanding leaders thirst for wisdom.

There's a saying that knowledge comes to those who are thirsty for wisdom. The best leaders make a continual effort to expand their mind and increase their understanding--of their field, of leadership, of those around them, of the issues of the day, and of the world in general. Wisdom is a byproduct of our life experiences, and the best leaders take their experiences and turn them into wisdom.

6. Outstanding leaders are decisive.

The ability to make even difficult decisions calmly and authoritatively is critically important to leaders, their organizations, and their people. Part of it is knowing how to focus, part of it is trusting your own instincts (and the knowledge and experience that underlie them), and part of it is being ahead of the game enough that you've already done any studying and discussion that might be helpful.

7. Outstanding leaders set an example for others to follow.

They show those they lead respect, trust, and integrity--the three central traits of leadership. Quietly and without preaching, they model the behavior they'd like to see in others.

Bringing it all together.

Whatever level of leadership you're working to reach, there's no reason you can't begin understanding that outstanding leadership begins with you. Start today to act like an outstanding leader and see how far it takes you. ★

NIAAA Certification Program

The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association Certification Program is an opportunity for athletic administrators to participate in continuing education and professional development. These educational opportunities help athletic administrators better serve their student-athletes and their schools. There are several different certifications available to athletic administrators.

- Registered Athletic Administrator (RAA)
- Registered Middle School Athletic Administrator (RMSAA)
- Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA)
- Provisional Certified Athletic Administrator
- Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA)

Each of these certifications have certain requirements including, but not limited to, completion of Leadership Training Courses provided by the NIAAA. The NIAAA Leadership Training Courses cover a wide range of topics that are relevant to athletic administrators. Courses at the 500 level range from program philosophies and organization to a wide range of legal issues that face athletic departments. 600 level courses cover such topics as technology, facilities, sports medicine, and event organization. Advanced 700 level courses include administration of middle school programs, mentoring programs, assessment of programs and personnel, etc. These courses provide a great opportunity for athletic administrators to keep in touch with current issues facing athletic departments.

For more information about NIAAA Certifications, go to: www.niaaa.org ★





...Story continued from page 7 (Dynamite)

difficult for professional sports and to some degree, even college sports, it absolutely possible in a high school setting.

Proactive sportsmanship starts with expectations. Does your athletic department have a clearly defined set of expectations for your student and parent population? Have those expectations been communicated multiple times in multiple ways? Has the “why” been addressed in those communications? Does your school community know why they are being asked to play their sportsmanship role the way you are expecting them to? Are all of the coaches in your department on the same page? Sometimes, coaches do not want to be perceived as “not cool” with students and as such, minimize what is expected.

Being above reproach is not popular and not easy, but it is right.

Are there accountability measures in place to follow through when someone acts out of line? If there is no follow through, your expectations are empty words. Equally important, do you recognize those in your community who act in a positive manner? Are you rewarding the values you espouse?

One proactive measure that seems to be working is when rival schools within a district get together and establish common sets of district-wide expectations and accountability measures. This communicates that the expectations just don’t fall on one school when that school goes across town to an opponent’s gym or field. The same is expected everywhere, or at least, within that district. The other thing this does is help reduce the temptation of fans to ask the question “since they did that, why can’t we?”

Closing out with a basketball example... we don’t allow our kids to turn their backs when opponent starting line-ups are being announced. But that doesn’t hold serve in some opponent’s gyms. When our kids see that, they come out of there wanting to do the same because our team was “dis-respected”. It doesn’t matter. We hold firm to what we believe to be true about what good sportsmanship looks like. To us, turning backs before a game is the match that doesn’t need to contribute to a fuse that can get worse throughout the game. We believe there are too many positive things that our fan base can do to support our teams while still respecting our opponents. ★

Experiences and Lessons from Hurricane Harvey

Rodney Chant, Paige Hershey, Brenda Marshall, Marmion Dambrino and Debbie Decker

Last month parts of south and south-eastern Texas endured several days of wind, rain and flooding. Thousands of people and homes as well as countless school districts were affected. All of us learned some very valuable lessons during this trying time.

When the National Weather Service began sending out notices about where the storm was predicted to make land-fall, what steps did your athletic department begin taking to prepare for the storm?

Marmion Dambrino, Houston ISD: We began to secure the stadiums after seeing the amount of rainfall expected in the Houston area. Pumps on turf fields were checked, emergency generators checked, all trash cans were stored inside and the facility essentially was picked up, then locked down. The athletics department is responsible for

securing the facility and seeing any item that could become a flying projectile put away. All Assistant Athletic Directors maintain a folder of schedules and coaches contact information with them at all times in the event of any emergency. We also have a designated conference call line for the department that we use when it is necessary to communicate before, during and after the event. We also have a phone tree, this helps in communication throughout the department as well.

Paige Hershey, Spring Branch ISD: Because we are now in Region II, though located in the Houston area, we had two volleyball teams that were at an out-of-town volleyball tournament in Leander. We ended up having them leave the tournament early and come home as we were concerned not only about the weather but about the

possibility of traffic being impacted as possible contraflow lanes were created, etc. As it turned out, it did take them a while to get home and we were glad that we made the decision to bring them home though it was very early in the tournament for them.

Our district took steps to prepare all buildings for possible water penetration, particularly those known to flood.



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They weather sealed doors and sandbagged certain sites which required us to leave facilities early than we might have otherwise. Our grounds teams cleared all drains and trimmed around them to be sure that these were clear to handle all the water we anticipated receiving. We had all of our campus leaders walk their facilities outside and secure everything that we anticipated could be a projectile—hurdles were secured, trash cans were put away, soccer goals were chained up, pitching screens, batting cages, benches etc., were all secured so that they would not blow away. We did the same thing at all of our central facilities. We also had a very large pump brought in that was manned to assist with draining the water that we believed we might take on at Tully Stadium.

Brenda Marshall, Corpus Christi ISD: Prior to NWS sending out notices we started watching the storm to see possible land dates, then we looked at all our schedules to see what teams are traveling. Depending on the location, we were coming up with plan B's as to whether cancel or send to another tournament/game. The other factor is do we send the teams as their vb tournaments were starting before the storm was coming but then they would be stuck in the tournament town and couldn't get back into Corpus as the town was closed. We ended up cancelling all trips as we couldn't wait till last minute to make decisions as some parents were leaving town.

What were your experiences during the storm? Was there any communication set up between you and the district's administration team?

Debbie Decker, Katy ISD: Our office set up a group text so we could all be in communication with each other throughout the storm. In addition, our Chief Operations Officer set up a daily conference call with our Emergency Management Department. We were given the most up to date information including the water levels of the different bayous and which areas of town were flooding. We were also notified that the Texas National Guard, FEMA, DPS, and Rescue Teams from 24 states were occupying Katy High School and our two stadiums after they were flooded out of the Merrell Center. The Emergency Management Department let us know what the needs of the groups were. Several school and community groups all stepped up to provide meals for the First Responders and provide laundry service for the National Guard. It was also good to have the daily conference calls so when the district opened up shelters in three of our schools, we were all able to pitch in volunteering and also with coordinating donations of clothes, bedding and food for the people who had to evacuate. It was so neat to see the support from our entire community in a time of need. There were Board members, central office administrators, principals, teachers, coaches, students and community members who volunteered countless hours and donated much needed items. I witnessed the positive side of social media: each time the district would Tweet out a need at the shelters, hundreds of community members would show up within minutes with that need filled.

Paige Hershey, Spring Branch ISD: Several of our staff stayed at Don Coleman Coliseum to assist our district with the support of First Responders who were housed or operated out of our facilities during the two weeks that we were

out of school. We were in direct communication with our Assistant Superintendent over Operations as well as our Superintendent. We were on site on Friday preparing for the arrival of Harris County Sheriff Officers and later, Urban Rescue Teams from all over the country. We were on site on Saturday and spent the night at our site but were sent home on Sunday when it was determined that First Responders would be moved from Don Coleman Coliseum due to the release of water from both reservoirs. During our time at our facility, we made sure that our facility was available for them to sleep on cots on the floor, take showers and have meals provided. The following week, Don Coleman Coliseum reopened and meals were provided. I was able to coordinate the acquisition of meals for those on site through a website that was created by local restaurants and chefs. We were only a part of a larger group of our Operations team that provided support throughout the storm.

After the storm, what steps did you take to begin recovering from the storm? Was there anything unique that your district did to help the community recover? What steps did you take as the athletic director to begin the process of returning to practices, scrimmages and/or games? What did you learn about your community through this experience?

Brenda Marshall: My position was in the Hurricane district meetings. I didn't have to stay here but did. As soon as storm was over, I travelled to our stadiums and schools and started taking pictures and writing down damage.

Even though we delayed school for a week, our Supt. still wanted to have athletic activities. Since we had no school and students normally would buy their tickets at school, we made the decision that any student no matter what school could get into the 4 games we had that Friday. Once storm was over, we figured out which gyms were ok then starting rescheduling anything that had been cancelled. This whole town was helping everyone.

Rodney Chant, Fort Bend ISD: We started the process of evaluating facilities and the extent of damage. We also had our coaches' check on our athletes. Also, once we were informed of the when the start date of school was set, I began the process of working to see if we could somehow give our kids the opportunity to begin practices. First and foremost was getting approval from our Superintendent to be able to give kids the opportunity to get back to some type of normalcy by implementing voluntary practices. Then we wanted to make sure that our facilities were safe to be able to have practices. There were some obstacles since some of our facilities were shelters but we learned that our community, students, athletes were ready to step up and everyone worked together in providing assistance to those who were flooded by assisting in clean up, working at shelters, collecting items, etc.

Paige Hershey, Spring Branch ISD: On Tuesday after the storm, I was part of the Operations team that walked facilities to assess any damage specific to our athletic facilities. Beyond flooding at Grob Stadium, we were very fortunate in how our district was impacted by the storm.

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One of the things that our district is currently coordinating is a Halloween night for those students who have been impacted by the flooding. We will host this at Don Coleman Coliseum in coordination with our Operations team and a number of outside partners. We are in the planning stages now. Our district has also established a fund to provide assistance for our families and teachers who have been impacted by the storm. In addition, we also decided as a district to lower ticket prices at our schools for contests at our high schools and at our stadium for varsity football as a means of assisting our families financially. This has been well-received.

I worked very closely with our superintendent on the practice and scrimmage schedule that he wanted to see initiated for our students. We allowed our students and coaches to come back for practice but asked them to take time to do a "wellness check" where they visited as a program to see how our student-athletes and their families were doing. Many of our coaches and their teams went out in the community to assist in the clean-up after the flood.

On the whole, I think that our community was very glad to get back to a practice and contest schedule to provide some normalcy to their lives. We will continue to find ways to assist our families as the school year goes on as we are not out of the woods yet.

Marmion Dambrino, Houston ISD: After the storm there was an athletic facilities assessment conducted first by the athletic department and then by the district. Our media relations department handled most of the communications aspect. Delmar Fieldhouse was opened as a district collection site for donations to present. Donations have come from all around the US and items distributed to not only our student athletes but to the student body at 280 campuses. We called a head coaches meeting and expressed the need to reach out to all their student athletes and encourage them to return to school as soon as the campuses were open. We made every effort to recapture any athletes possible since so many homes and families were impacted in some way. In meeting with the coaches we were still in a holding pattern with practices due to the damage which occurred to the campuses. Once assessed, and the coaches were able to access the campuses the kids began to come back. The student athletes who had their paperwork completed began to practice. No scrimmages were allowed, we began football in week three and volleyball will only play the second half of the schedule to count as district play. The main obstacles faced were trying to rearrange the schedule with limited facility availability and running a "warehouse" of donations in an arena at the same time. Not being able to help coaches more than what we were able was frustrating. We needed about 5 more hours added to each day, the 16 hour days began the day after the storm for my department. They came in, rolled their sleeves up, and hit the ground running. Many had never been through this type of ordeal, none of us with this size school district. Overwhelming is the only word I can find. Overwhelming of the loss and devastation, but most of the all overwhelming outpour of generosity, thoughts and prayers OF thousands of people FOR thousands of people. When you are so tired, your legs are killing you, and another 18 wheeler pulls up a part of you just has to stop and be grateful, humbled, and blessed. Houston is a Great City, Houston has GREAT PEOPLE, and we ARE #Houston Strong

thanks to the many who have reached out help us.

Debbie Decker, Katy ISD: Once the worst had passed, we worked with our administration to develop a plan. We surveyed our coordinators to see which staff members and/or students were affected by the floods. We, like other districts had teams of kids and coaches going out into the community to clean out houses. Co-workers, friends, and neighbors all pitched in to help others. Please understand that as bad as we wanted to return to normalcy, we wanted to help others in a desperate time of need even more. After a few days passed, we called a meeting with our coordinators and principals and came up with a plan to get our athletes involved in voluntary practices 5 days prior to the start of school.

There are so many stories of goodwill that come to mind when I think about everything our community went through. I met so many kind and caring people who were so appreciative for all of the support through the most trying of times. In addition, I was thankful for all of the athletic directors from around the state and from around the United States who reached out to make sure we were ok and also to lend support. I feel so blessed to be part of such a great group of people and belong to a great organization in the Texas High School Athletic Directors Association.

A special thank you goes out to the athletic directors that contributed to this article. ★





The Power of Educators, The Power of Purple

By Jim Zaszauskas – Superintendent – Mansfield ISD

As a young coach, I vividly remember our athletic director, Toby Wood, standing in front of the BISD coaches leading staff development, and I noticed he had a blue dot on his Texas High School Coaches Association watch. Curious, I thought, “Why blue?” None of our schools had that shade of blue as school colors.

After the meeting, I asked my head coach about the blue dot, and his exact words were, “We are voting Governor Mark White out of office, and the blue dot is a reminder to all educators that we will vote.”

Earlier the year before, I joined every educator in the state of Texas as we were all required to take the TECAT test. The Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers was a competency test that all educators were required to pass in order to maintain their teaching certificates, and it made us angry. We all had college degrees and lifetime certificates, and we were all in good standing in our districts.

In 1987, Mark White lost the governor’s election to Bill Clements, and educators often get credit for turning out in high numbers to vote against Mark White.

The blue dot worked!

Kent Grusendorf was a powerful state representative for District 94, primarily in Arlington. He eventually rose to the ranks of Chair of the House Education Committee, where he strongly supported vouchers for private schools. Closely aligned with powerful lobbyists and the Speaker of the House (Tom Craddick), Mr. Grusendorf’s immense campaign fund made him almost invincible in the District 94 primary election.

Diane Patrick, a public-school advocate, challenged Mr. Grusendorf in the primary. Heavily out financed, Ms. Patrick ran an anti-voucher, grass-

roots campaign that relied heavily on teachers and PTA moms.

Since the election was on Saint Patrick’s Day, the call to arms was voting for Patrick on Saint Patrick, and green became her color. Diane’s supporters worn green ribbons, green t-shirts, green nametags, and committed to voting in the primary election.

In the 2006 District 94 Republican primary election, Arlington educators voted in record numbers, and Diane Patrick won a stunning victory, defeating the chairman of the House Education Committee.

The color of green worked!

Public education is under attack again and this year’s primary elections are critical to our profession. We have an obligation to vote, not just for ourselves, but for our students and children. We believe in public education, and history shows we can make a difference.

I challenge all educators who believe in public education to wear purple ribbons on their clothes or purple dots on their ID cards, just wear purple.

Purple indicates you are making the following commitments:

- Regardless of party affiliation, we are voting for candidates who will support public education
- We will register to vote
- We will vote in the primary election
- We will vote again in the general election

For more information, please go to teachthevote.org or to texaseducators-vote.com and take the pledge.

We must advocate for our profession, and we have tremendous power to influence elections.

The purple color will work!

The True Meaning of Vertical Alignment in Athletic Programs

By Paula Gonzalez, Athletic Director,
McAllen Independent School District

The first thought that comes to mind when speaking about vertical alignment in Athletics is Middle School athletes being taught the same techniques and systems as those taught in the feeder High School athletic program. McAllen ISD is striving not only to align the athletic programs, but to also have coaches and Administration work together to ensure that the goals and objectives are defined and understood by everyone involved. McAllen ISD is working on strengthening vertical alignment in Athletics from the Elementary level to the High School level.

The alignment of Middle School athletic periods with those of the High School athletic periods is crucial. We want the High School Boys Athletic Coordinator, Girls Athletic Coordinator, and Head Coaches to have the opportunity to be at their Middle Schools and work with their athletes. Coaching Middle School athletes allows High School coaches the opportunity to develop the basic foundation skills. It also allows the Middle School athlete to transition smoothly into the High School program of their sport. More important than X’s and O’s is the establishment of relationships. Middle School athletes know who their High School coaches will be and develop a sense of belonging and loyalty to their future High School. High School coaches and Athletic Coordinators also develop relationships with their Middle School Administration and parents. Middle School Principals and High School Athletic Coordinators must communicate with each other before the master schedule is set up so that athletic periods are scheduled in the most efficient manner.

The priority in the Middle School athletic periods is to have 100% of all athletes enrolled.

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Athletic periods should consist of pure 7th grade or pure 8th grade athletes by gender for safety purposes and for skill level. Only those athletes with scheduling conflicts due to academic courses may be scheduled differently.

The curriculum of the Middle School athletic period is three days of the week set up for strength and conditioning and two days for skills of the sport in season. Once track season is over, all five days are dedicated to a strength and conditioning program which is set up by the High School Boys and Girls Athletic Coordinators of each vertical team. McAllen ISD has also implemented the UIL three-day allowable evaluation period in the month of May when High School and Middle School coaches work with their 6th grade athletes in volleyball and football. These two sports were chosen due to the fact that they are the two first sports at the beginning of the school year.

Staffing during the Middle School athletic periods is just as important as staffing at the High School athletic periods. There is to be a minimum of two coaches at each boy's and girl's athletic period. With regards to scheduling of staff, it is standard procedure to schedule the Physical Education staff to teach during the athletic periods. One key point we are striving for is to allow regular classroom teachers the opportunity to also be included in the teaching of athletic periods. A district goal is to have 100% of all Middle School Physical Education teachers coach at least three sports.

The hiring of Middle School coaches and Middle School Athletic Coordinators also allows the High School Athletic Coordinators the opportunity to be on hiring committees and develop relationships with the Middle School coaches and the Middle School Administration. Hiring coaches from within the verti-

cal team is a must – High School and Elementary teachers who coach at the Middle School must be from a school within their vertical team to avoid any type of recruiting concerns. Posting of Middle School Athletic Coordinator and coaching positions allow interested applicants the opportunity to be informed about of all teaching vacancies and coaching opportunities. Communication between the High School Athletic Coordinator and Middle School Principal in regards to teaching vacancies is also important. High School Athletic Coordinators and Middle School Coordinators work together to set up coaching assignments for all sports at the Middle School.

High School Head Coaches who coach a sport that is offered at the Middle School host a coach's clinic for their Middle School coaches every year. This gives Head Coaches the opportunity to mentor their Middle School coaches in regards to what skill techniques, offensive and defensive strategies, and key points they want their coaches to teach and concentrate on. Once again, this allows an opportunity to develop relationships and for Middle School coaches to understand that their programs are of great importance to High School Coaches – after all, most High School athletes were athletes at the Middle School. Our High School coaches invite coaches to assist at the High School games and invite the Middle School athletes to attend High School games and sometimes even schedule Middle School games at the High School.

The City of McAllen Boys and Girls Club developed an "Elevate Program" which sets up programs for different sports for 6th graders. Our 6th graders enjoy the opportunity to participate in organized athletics, especially since UIL Athletics do not begin until 7th grade. This has also allowed the City to use school district facilities

which helps them since use of gyms is always limited. This has definitely strengthened the relationship between McAllen ISD and the City of McAllen as we work together to provide student athletes with opportunities to grow.

Involving Elementary Schools in the Athletic vertical alignment is also a priority to McAllen ISD. For the past 2 years, an Elementary School pep rally has been scheduled at each of our Elementary Schools where the entire High School band, cheerleaders, mascots, drill teams, and athletes participate. It creates excitement for the entire community and Elementary School students are reminded that they are future Bulldogs, Mustangs, or Warriors. Our School Head Coaches and cheerleading teams offer camps and clinics for Elementary students and then invite them to attend High School games. This year, our Football Booster Clubs introduced the "Little Bulldogs, Little Mustangs, and Little Warriors" fundraiser which allowed our Elementary students the opportunity to run through the mascot tunnel and run across the football field during half time. It was definitely a "hit" with all students, parents, and the community.

After discussing all above mentioned items which we are addressing in regards to vertical alignment at all levels, we must stress that the most important reward is the strengthening of relationships for all involved and the positive impact that it has on school culture and the community. It is a way to involve all present and future athletes with a structured program which will benefit all aspects of Athletics. McAllen ISD Board of Trustees, Superintendent of Schools, Administration, faculty, coaches, and athletic trainers do an incredible job of working together to provide student athletes with opportunities that will develop students of great character. ★



TODAY'S TURF: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

By Katrina Suits, Communications Specialist Hellas Construction

Hellas Construction is working to keep athletes safer, because to Hellas, more than the game matters. The turf systems installed today are more complex and safer than ever before. Turf fields are not just installed over concrete or asphalt like in the 70s and 80s anymore. The turf resembles and performs more like natural grass, while conserving resources. The blades of the synthetic turf are longer, allowing more room to brush-in infill material, which from a distance appears to be dirt like in a natural grass field, but is very important in today's turf systems. Concerns about safety have brought about innovations that are helping to keep athletes safer, enhance play, and make the field more resilient and durable.

Hellas' most widely known turf innovation is the Matrix® Turf with Helix Technology. Helix has shape memory technology, a unique feature, which creates a twist in the fiber during manufacturing. The fibers are two different colors and bounces back quickly after use instead of lying flat, which helps prevent "splash out" of the infill material and enhances playability. The unique shape and design of the Matrix Turf with Helix makes it the most aesthetically pleasing, resilient, and durable monofilament fiber in the market.

Hellas offers a variety of infill options to add to their impressive turf systems, which add softness and traction, while preventing injuries and enhancing performance. Infills should provide durability, playability, and traction to the turf field, while allowing for quicker shoe release. Hellas Realfill™ Infill combines black crumb rubber with silica pea gravel and is the most economical and easiest of the infills to maintain and because the pea gravel doesn't compact like sand, it is considered safer. When placed within the turf fibers, the black crumb rubber with pea gravel provides extra support for the turf fibers and a softer feel, while providing a more consistent playing surface for players and allowing for rapid drainage in severe weather situations. However, black crumb rubber gets hot in the heat of the summer and in early fall when temperatures reach 100 degrees, player's feet may feel like they are burning through their cleats. Hellas offers other alternatives to help combat this problem and provide additional advantages.

The Geo Plus™ Infill, exclusive to Hellas Construction is the premium organic alternative to black crumb rubber. This organic combination of cork and coconut fibers, when combined with silica pea gravel, makes for an in-



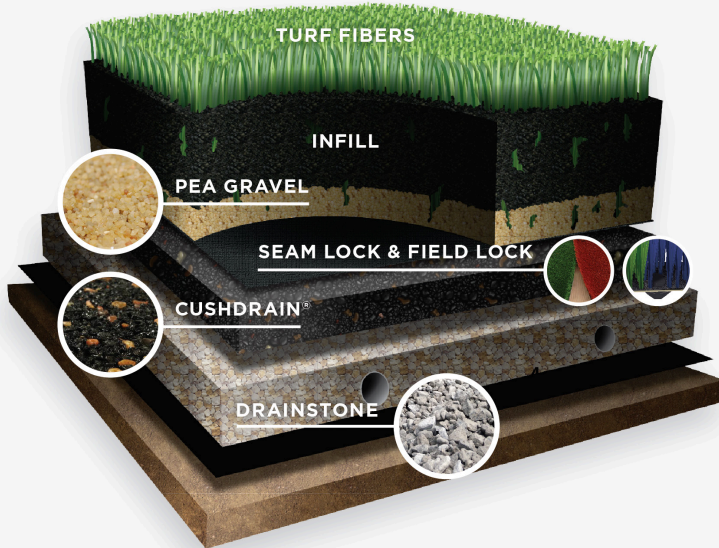
fill that will stay put, with less "splash out." It has optimal shock absorption and excellent traction in all weather conditions. It is 100% organic, recyclable, and UV resistant, resisting break down and deterioration even at high temperatures. This odorless infill doesn't retain heat, but instead retains moisture, using it to cool the surface temperature of the field, similar to how sweat cools the skin. Surface temperatures on a synthetic turf field with Geo Plus Infill will be up to 40 degrees cooler than a regular synthetic turf field with the black crumb rubber. In order to retain moisture, the Geo Plus Infill may require a small amount of rain or moisture from time to time. Irrigation is normally installed or portable sprinklers are used on the fields with the Geo Plus Infill, especially in climates prone to drought or areas that don't get regular rain. However, the Geo Plus infill does not have to be watered as much as natural grass fields do. The water usage of a field with Geo Plus Infill is still 90 percent less than a natural grass field, saving thousands of gallons of water every year. Geo Plus can be used for indoor facilities as well. A few of the Texas schools/districts/cities that currently using Geo Plus Infill are Jourdanton ISD, El Paso ISD, Manor ISD, Flour Bluff ISD, El Campo ISD, Woodville ISD, City of Portland Sports Complex and Municipal Park, International School of Texas, Gregory-Portland ISD, and Midland Christian, which is still under construction.

The newest infill option from Hellas is the Ecotherm™ Infill. This infill is made from recycled vinyl TPU and cellulose fibers that has a unique shape and color. Ecotherm uses the ambient moisture from the air to keep the field up to 20 degrees cooler than a synthetic turf field with black crumb rubber infill.

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No irrigation is required with the Ecotherm Infill and it is 100% recyclable. The Ecotherm Infill when combined with the silica pea gravel, makes for an infill that will stay put, while assisting in shock absorption and drainage. Plainview High School is our first school to select the Ecotherm Infill for its football field renovation, which is currently under construction.

Hellas has developed more innovations like its patented Cushdrain® Pad that can be placed under its synthetic turf systems. The Cushdrain Pad is a monolithic, paved into place, shock attenuation pad that is installed over the laser-graded drain stone foundation of an artificial turf system. When the Cushdrain Pad is combined with the proper infill and high-quality turf, there is less tendency for lower extremity injuries, such as ACL, MCL, high ankle injury, and "turf toe."

In addition, the Cushdrain Pad will result in a lower GMAX by increasing shock absorption, and providing a consistently safer playing surface that will reduce concussions. It also allows for rapid drainage while providing planarity that holds its position through three to four lifecycles of turf, allowing for easy turf replacement with no sub-base construction or re-grading. It's simply a better way to build a field and provide a safer, more efficient long-term investment.

No matter which turf, infill, or pad you choose, make sure the turf system selected provides a consistent GMAX. GMAX testing has been developed to test the hardness of the turf systems, so that schools and universities can be more aware of the condition of their fields, and let them know when their field needs to be replaced or infill needs to be added. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences states that GMAX is "a numerical value representing the hard-

ness of the surface, with higher values indicating a harder surface." It is recommended fields be tested once a year and more often if heavily used. The testing is commonly performed with an ASTM F355 device. The special flat-front missile is linked to a computer that measures the speed the missile decelerates or stops, three drops in one place. The higher the bounce, the higher number on the GMAX scale.

A preliminary test that can be done regularly to check the infill levels between GMAX testing is simply placing your hand flat on the turf. Normally with the correct amount of infill there would be only ½ an inch of the grass fiber raised above your hand. However, if infill is needed, you may have 1- 1 ½ inches of fiber above your hand.

Proper maintenance of your turf field will help it last longer, perform better and be safer. A field sweeper should be used once per week to keep the infill brushed into the fibers evenly throughout the field. Depending on the amount of usage a field gets and if regular grooming is performed, will determine how often, if at all, infill will have to be added.

Scheduling a deep clean of the field by a professional cleaner once per year is also recommended to remove dirt, broken helmet hardware, jewelry, spikes, and other metal debris. Deep cleaning will redistribute the infill and help you get the longest life out of your field. Hellas Construction offers their Clean Sweep® Service, a cleaning, grooming, and maintenance service that quickly cleans, revitalizes, and clears debris off the field, so it looks and plays great and lasts much longer.

Keeping your athletes safe and in the game is easier than ever before with these innovations. Help your team win on and off the field by providing them a safe, reliable surface to reach for success, follow their dreams, and learn life's lessons. Hellas is raising performance to another level, while keeping your athletes safety in mind. ★

THSADA Committee Members

Bernie Mulvaney

Leal Anderson

Dena Scott David

Kilpatrick

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- ▶ Limit fan access to school



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- ▶ Detailed reports



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- ▶ Convenient purchase options
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“Going with TicketRoar has diversified how our fans can purchase tickets, shortened ticket lines and streamlined our ticket sales reports. Their customer service personnel are immediately accessible, quick to respond and are genuinely interested in making us look good for our customers. From introduction of the process with our personnel to post-season evaluation, they're with us all the way.”

KEVIN GREENE

Executive Director of Athletics, Forth Worth ISD, TX

CONTACT TICKETROAR TODAY TO LEARN MORE:

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