

# TEXAS

## Athletic Administrator

### Fall 2023 Newsletter



# Executive Director's Report — Rusty Dowling



As the Fall season runs its course towards the end of the regular seasons and state playoffs begin, I hope all is well with you and your family. The October UIL calendar is always full and among all the sports that take place during this time a featured event is the UIL Legislative Council sessions. One of the more interesting parts of attending the UIL Legislative Council sessions at any time over the course of my 12 years serving as Executive Director and previous years as the Director of Athletics-Katy ISD - is to hear all of the new sport proposals that take place during the public forum. The speakers that usually bring these proposals up are very well schooled in their particular sport and speak with great passion and conviction regarding why this sport or that sport should be considered for UIL acceptance. Two things are inevitable during their presentations and that is their respective sport is the fastest growing sport in the country or they site statistics on how their particular sport has grown in other areas of the country. No doubt this is all true but the most compelling of all presentations is when a speaker says that this particular sport should/could be held during the Spring. As any Athletic Director knows who has spent any time on the job the Spring can best be described as controlled chaos during a week of 6 days of constant athletic activity with Sunday being the one-day an Athletic Director can sit and plan, sometimes quietly, for the controlled chaos that will start all over again on Monday.

I think that most of the time a sport advocate does not understand all of the considerations that must take place before a sport can be placed in the UIL. Several, but not all, considerations are staffing, teaching field, practice areas, budget, athletic periods, overlapping sports, extra game workers, athletic trainer availability, are but a few elements that must be configured before a sport can even

be considered.

If one was to look at the UIL calendar for October and November, you might think we were in Spring already as the many different colors of the calendar that reflect all the different athletic activities that take place along with music, and academics make it almost as busy as the Spring. Inserting a new sport in the Spring is close to being impossible and the Fall doesn't fare much better. Needless to say the UIL sport calendar is stretched to the max. I would advise anyone that is bringing a new sport proposal to UIL first sit down with the district Athletic Director to discuss what that may look like in practical application.

We are also best served to keep all THSADA members alert as there have been a series of House Bills filed that do not represent all the best interests of Texas Student-Athletes, Coaches and Parents. Texas has always been the model for secondary athletics and how to organize and administer these programs. HB's-32,38,39,40 41 are legislations that will severely hamper Texas secondary athletics and make us just "another state" that dilutes the quality and administration of our athletic programs. Along these lines, the THSADA has our Policy and Athletic committee's that can respond to any negative legislation that comes out of Austin along with the newly created Coaches and Athletic Directors Alliance which is a collaboration between the THSADA and THSCA that can quickly respond to and rally the Texas secondary athletic communities when this negative legislation comes out.

On a little bit of a more positive note, the THSADA has created another professional development program to align with the TAAC and QUAD A programs. This program called JHAMS (Junior High and Middle School) has been established to provide professional development opportunities to JH and MS Athletic Coordinators. This program will be first offered at the 2024 State Conference and the staff administrator for this program is Bill Daws with Kyle Green-Assistant Athletic Director-Katy ISD, sitting as the Chair for the JHAMS committee. The curriculum content for the JHAMS program will be developed by a committee of JH and MS Athletic Coordinators representing all 8 THSADA regions.

The QUAD A program (Aspiring Athletic Administrators Academy) will be offered at Spring Sponsor Showcase and will continue to offer an agenda to help prepare the next generation of Texas Athletic Administrators. QUAD A has been offered to over 350 attendees since it opened up several years ago.

THSADA has been meeting with our TAAC committee and the STAC committee (Superintendents) to continue to update and refresh the TAAC curriculum to ensure that it addresses those topics conducive to athletic admin-



istrators and respond to what ISD Superintendents feel is important in athletic administration.

THSADA is also in the process of preparing for both Spring Sponsor Showcase and the State Conference. Spring Sponsor Showcase pre-registration will open on December 4th and we hope you will have the opportunity to attend.

Membership is currently at a little over 1,200 members and growing every day. Every Region has increased

## Publications Committee

Regions	Members	School District
Region 1	Andrea Fluhman-Chair	Amarillo ISD
Region 2	Scott Campbell	Stephenville ISD
Region 3	Kody Groves	Mesquite ISD
Region 4	Michael Mackeben	Clint ISD
Region 5	Dena Scott	Fort Bend ISD
Region 7	Henry Cantu	Rio Grande City ISD
Region 6	Megan Symank	College Station ISD
Region 8	Sonia Almanza	Northside ISD

## Texas High School Athletic Directors Association Board of Directors/Chairs/THSADA Staff for 2023-2024

### Board of Directors

#### Officers

President: **Philip O'Neal**-Mansfield ISD (Finance Committee)

President-elect: **Leslie Slovak**-Richardson ISD (Finance Committee)

### Region Directors

Region 1: **Toby Tucker**-Canyon ISD (Strategic Planning)

Region 2: **Jerod Womack**-Waxahachie ISD (Strategic Planning)

Region 3: **Valerie Little**-Prosper ISD (Strategic Planning)

Region 4: **David Cervantes**-El Paso ISD (Strategic Planning)

Region 5: **Andre Walker**-Houston ISD (Strategic Planning)

Region 6: **Jason Dean**-Georgetown ISD (Strategic Planning)

Region 7: **Rob Davies**-Harlingen CISD (Strategic Planning)

Region 8: **Melanie Hinson**-Southwest ISD (Strategic Planning)-Chair

their membership and we've challenged our membership committee to increase their Region membership by 12%. Remind everyone that you have to be a member of THSADA to attend any of our 3 events.

In closing a reminder that the THSADA Board of Director/Chairs will meet December 6th-7th in League City, Texas.

## Ex-Officio

Superintendent: **Dr. Roland Hernandez**-Corpus Christi ISD (Resolutions)

Superintendent: **Dr. Joe Young**-Brownwood ISD (Strategic Planning)

## Executive Staff

Executive Director: **Rusty Dowling** (Finance Committee)

Assistant Executive Director: **Bob DeJonge** (Strategic Planning)

## THSADA Committee Chairs

Membership: **Tom Lee**-Sharyland ISD (Resolutions)

Awards: **Russ Reeves**-Rockwall ISD (Resolutions)

Policy: **Silvia Salinas**-Del Valle ISD (Resolutions)

Publications: **Andrea Fluhman**-Amarillo ISD (Resolutions)

Athletic: **Stan Leech**-Boerne ISD (Resolutions)-Chair

Officials: **Mike Bass**-Alvin ISD (Resolutions)

TAAC: **Johanna Denson** -THSADA (Strategic Planning)

NIAAA: **Brenda Marshall**-Corpus Christi ISD (Resolutions)

## THSADA Staff

Director of Administrative Services: **Ellissa Unger** (Resolutions)

Director of Finance: **Diane McKay** (Finance Committee)

Director of JHAMS: **Bill Daws**

Director QUAD A: **David Kuykendall/Debbie Fuchs**

Director of Exhibits/Sponsorships: **Dave Stephenson**

Director of Convention Services: **Lisa Stephenson**

Director of TAAC: **Johanna Denson**

Director of IT and Operations: **Stuart Raty**

Director of Membership: **Mary Cooksley**

Event Technology Coordinator: **Keith Kilgore**

State Conference Golf Coordinator: **Joe Barnett**

Technology Coordinato: **Jeff Lillibridge**

Staff Intern: **Alysia Watts**



# Assistant Executive Director's Update – Bob DeJonge

The 2023 school year is just flying by! I can't believe that my first-year teaching and coaching was in 1980 at College Hill Junior High in Texarkana. I still have some great memories of those early years. It's always a special time when we are able to reconnect with those that we shared the beginnings of our careers.



The THSADA membership year started August 1 and we've already had over 1250 of our members renew their membership. That's well ahead of last year's pace and gives us a great chance to meet or exceed our goal of 2000 by June's State Conference!

Our eight Region Directors continue to provide great leadership in their respective regions and are the main reason for our association's continued growth. These Directors host nearly 50 regional meetings per year, providing exceptional professional development opportunities. These meetings serve as an opportunity to share and discuss the significant issues presented to today's athletic administrators. A quick look at our attendance figures shows us that over the course of a year our attendance totals are over 4000! That points to the incredible importance of these meetings. The topics discussed such as Legislative Council, Texas Legislature initiatives, coaches' in-services, game day safety and security, working effectively with event officials leadership strategies, THSADA business and countless others provide an opportunity to offer significant professional development opportunities to our membership.

## THSADA Signature Events

**THSADA State Conference** – This past June we gathered at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Round Rock. We welcomed

over 600 attendees and 500 exhibitors and sponsors. Additionally, we welcomed several prominent Superintendents, serving as session speakers and special guests. Over the course of the event, we offered 29 sessions which included several TAAC classes, 5

QUAD A (Aspiring Athletic Administrators), a keynote address by Stephen Mackey, updates from the UIL and industry specific presentations from key association sponsors. An added benefit to attendees were the three tradeshows which provided an opportunity for our exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees to interact and enjoyed a great day of golf at the Benny Carter Memorial / Hellas Construction Golf Tournament.

As always, our kick off to the Conference is the Annual PBK Sports Hall of Honor Celebration. This year's honorees included:

### NFHS Citation

**Dr. Susan Elza**

### NFHS Bruce Whitehead DSA

**Sandra Howell**

### Kelly Reeves State Award of Merit

**Ray Zepeda**

### Frank Kovalski Professional

### Development Award

**Pam Lea**

### Regional Athletic Administrators of the Year

Region 1 – **Bryan Gerlich**

Region 2 – **Rodney Chant**

Region 3 – **Leslie Slovak**

Region 4 – **Scott Brooks**

Region 5 – **Mike Bass**

Region 6 – **Jason Dean**

Region 7 – **Luis Solorio**

Region 8 – **Stan Leech**

Outgoing Region Directors

Region 1 – **Max Kattwinkel**

Region 3 – **Leslie Slovak**

Region 6 – **Lynn Pool**

Region 7 – **Rey Ramirez**

### Joe Bill Fox Award

**Jim Walsh**

### PBK Sports Athletic Director of the Year

**Debbie Fuchs**

### Hall of Honor Inductees

**Rodney Chant** – San Angelo IDS

**Shawn Pratt** – McKinney ISD

**David Kuykendall** – Frisco ISD  
Retired

**Dr. Susan Elza** – University of  
Nebraska, formerly UIL Athletic  
Director

Plans are already in the works for next year's conference – mark your calendars for June 2-5 back at the Kalahari! Look for more information on our newest curriculum addition - JHAMS – Junior High and Middle School sessions!

**Fall Forum** – We completed our 4th annual THSADA Fall Forum a few short weeks ago. The event was held at the Estancia del Norte and NEISD. This year's Presenting Sponsor was our friends from HomeTown Ticketing. Day one began with a general session consisting of prominent school superintendents leading a discussion on Leading Through Challenging times. We followed that with a chance to interact with event sponsors and event attendees at our attendees / sponsor reception. Day two was held at the NEISD Blossom Center. We offered six TAAC classes with subject matter such as Event Security, Game Day event Administration, Student/ Parent / fan expectations, Emergency Action Plans, and two outstanding sessions provided by our friends from the UIL. The event was attended by a record number 231 attendees and event sponsors. Next fall we plan on bringing you another valuable professional development experience!

**Spring Sponsor Showcase** – Our



next THSADA event is the Annual Spring Sponsor Showcase on March 5-6, 2024. This year we'll be in San Marcos at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Convention Center. On day one we'll offer an opening general session followed by a sponsor / attendee reception. One day two we'll offer

a full day of TAAC and QUAD A sessions that will be sure to satisfy your professional development needs! Highlighting the mid day will be our Mini Tradeshow luncheon. All 50 of the Association's sponsors will be present as attendees and sponsors have an opportunity to interact in a

unique tradeshow style atmosphere. We will open event registration in early December. Last year we had over 250 attendees and 100 sponsors, Let's get that attendee number up to the 300 mark!

## From the President— Philip O'Neal

THSADA members:

It genuinely is an honor to serve our membership as President. Happy Holiday Season to each of you!

We are in the relationship business! I am fortunate to have developed so many strong relationships during my time as a member of the association. I cannot express my appreciation enough, for the time I spent on the board with the past three presidents in David Kuykendall, Debbie Fuchs and Rodney Chant. It is also a huge honor to serve alongside the current President Elect Leslie Slovak. Leslie and I came up through the ranks together and she is a long-time confidant.

Much of what we do as Athletic Directors centers around leadership. I have been fortunate to learn from and work with so many great leaders. Many of those leaders are currently affiliated with our great association. I encourage each of you to connect with members of the association that can serve as a mentor to you. I draw from the experiences of our membership daily as I navigate my work.

There is so much on the horizon as High School Athletics evolves in Texas. In the near future, Athletic Directors will need to possess the leadership capability to navigate the potential effects of Name, Image and Likeness (NIL), Vouchers and legislation pertaining to athletic eligibility. There will be other issues surface, that will affect the landscape of how we perform our work.

For some of us, leading through COVID may have prepared us for

what lies ahead. For those who have not had the fortune to lead through difficult times, utilizing the association to broaden your network and stay current on issues affecting your district, will be critical to your success. Through my personal experiences, there is no better place than the Texas High School Athletic Directors Association (THSADA) to make the connections needed to allow you to successfully lead. It is vital to your growth to attend Regional Meetings, State Events and State Conferences. I personally have grown exponentially as a leader, by immersing myself in THSADA.

Sometimes you get so busy you don't want to spend time with vendors who may be wanting to share their product(s). I want to encourage you to make connections with our vendors, They are lifeblood of our district. Often times they can provide information involving current issues. Taking time with vendors accomplishes two things. Vendors are a great resource to assist in sharing their experience in providing a solution to a problem you may be dealing with. Vendors are also what funds our association. By making that connection and giving them your time and business, your department will function better and they will continue financially supporting the association. I have made some great friends by spending time with vendors.

In closing, I want to encourage you to lead with love during this holiday



season. Make sure you share your appreciation for those you work with. After all, we are in the relationship business!

Philip O'Neal  
Executive Director of Athletics  
Mansfield ISD



# From President-Elect Leslie Slovak

What an honor it is to serve as the president-elect for THSADA. I am so proud of our organization and the leadership we have in place with Rusty Dowling, Bob DeJonge, Philip O'Neal and the entire THSADA board and staff. On numerous occasions, I have witnessed firsthand the hard work and dedication that goes on behind the scenes from this amazing group! I encourage each of you to look for opportunities to get involved and serve within the THSADA. Let your regional director or any board member know that you are interested in learning more about getting involved with our association. From serving on committees, to serving as a regional director and now president-elect, I am a better leader because of these opportunities. When you get involved in the association, you build quality relationships and

learn from other leaders all over the state.

Our QUAD A program is designed to serve as a pathway for coaches who would like to pursue a career as an athletic administrator in the state of Texas or those who are first time athletic administrators. The topics covered in this program are important and relevant. By participating in this program, you will gain knowledge from experienced athletic directors. Another incredible benefit of QUAD A is the opportunity to network with other AD's from all over the state. Building relationships is a key component in the leadership journey.

Another program that I am extremely excited about is our newly created JHAMS (Junior High and Middle School) program. Our junior high/middle school programs are so

important! This is the foundation for athletics, therefore it is vital to invest in the growth of junior high/middle school leaders. This program will kick off at the 2024 THSADA State Conference on June 2nd-June 5th at the Kalahari Resort. The JAHMS program will consist of professional development opportunities that will enhance the growth and vision for those individuals that lead programs or have a goal to lead programs at the junior high/middle school. Virtual options will also be available for those who sign up for the event.

I hope to see you at our Spring Sponsor Showcase as well as our State Conference. We are better together!

Leslie Slovak  
Executive Director of Athletics  
Richardson ISD

# Meet THSADA Staff Member Ellissa Unger

Hello members! My name is Ellissa Unger, and I am the Director of Administrative Services for THSADA. This is currently my third year in this role. I am happy to be here and to be amongst all you great Athletic Administrators. A little background about me, I was born in San Antonio. My dad (who most of you know as Rusty Dowling or "Coach"), became head coach in Texas City. We spent ten years there, and it was a great childhood. We then moved to McKinney, TX and then to Katy, TX. I was on the Varsity Swim team at Katy High School and graduated from Katy in 2010. Go Tigers! I live in Katy with my husband of six years, Jeremy, and our three-year-old son, Austin. It's been a pleasure to be a part of this association.



# Legislative Council Update

The University Interscholastic League Legislative Council is the legislative body of the UIL and is composed of one member elected for a four-year term from each basketball region within each conference and eight members, two from each of the four UIL regions, appointed for four-year terms by the chair of the Legislative Council. The selection of appointed members shall reflect a sensitivity to ethnicity, gender and student population size of district. The University Interscholastic League Legislative Council

met Sunday 10/15/23 and Monday 10/16/23 to make decisions on proposed rule changes in UIL academics, athletics, music and policy.

In athletics, the Council approved an amendment to increase the number of regional qualifiers from two to three for State Spring Tennis. In policy, the Legislative Council passed an amendment to create varsity eligibility opportunities and extend the timeline for review of UIL Waiver Officer's decision.

## The Standing Committee On Athletics Passed the Following Proposals

- A proposal to amend rebates from state events
- A proposal to increase the number of athletes from regional to state from two to three in spring tennis
- A proposal to extend the December game limitation rule to the November holiday break
- A proposal to allow coaches to coach their athletes in a UIL approved All-Star game
- A proposal to amend the official's flat fee schedule and travel reimbursement
- A proposal to amend the golf electronic equipment rule
- A proposal to extend the TABC showcase pilot program

## The Standing Committee On Athletics Denied, Rejected Or Took No Action On The Following Proposals

- A proposal to add boys' volleyball as a UIL sanctioned activity
- A proposal to move the soccer and volleyball season in the calendar
- A proposal to add lacrosse as a UIL sanctioned activity
- A proposal to split 1A and 2A baseball
- A proposal to add girls flag football as a UIL sanctioned activity
- A proposal to add wheelchair tennis to the UIL state tournament

# Regional News Updates

## Region 1

Region 1 5A and 4A schools in the Amarillo/Panhandle Area now have new leadership with their District Executive Chairman.

After retirement from Amarillo ISD, David Cargill served as the UIL District Chairman for District 3-5A and the north Panhandle 4A schools for many years in order to remain connected to the school system and athletics. Mr. Cargill served with a servant, kind, gracious heart.

## Region 2

Region 2 is a hub of activity come November and December as teams look to secure stadiums in between West Texas and the DFW/Central

Texas Region. With the recent upgrades to Shotwell Stadium (Abilene), it is now back in the rotation for some big-time football playoff matchups. In addition, Tarleton Memorial Stadium (Stephenville), Grande Astound Broadband Stadium (Midland), San Angelo Stadium (San Angelo), Ratliff Stadium (Odessa), ACU Anthony Field at Wildcat Stadium (Abilene) as well as smaller venues including Bob Cervetto Stadium (Dublin) and Clyde Bulldog Stadium (Clyde) make this region the marquee destination for those schools coming out of DFW/Central Texas seeking a matchup with teams from the El Paso, Panhandle and the rest of West Texas.

## Region 3

Richardson ISD has partnered with The Defensive Line group led by Soloman Thomas to talk about suicide prevention with coaches and parents. For more information on how you can get involved, contact Chis Thomas at [chris@thedefensiveline.org](mailto:chris@thedefensiveline.org) Cell 972-955-9434.

Mesquite ISD and Forney ISD have partnered with each other to lead an Assistant Coaches Academy and the first meeting last month was led by our UIL athletic directors.

Eagle Mountain Saginaw ISD will be opening high school #4 in August 2024. It will be named Eagle Mountain High School and will be the

*Regional News Continued on next page*



Knights. EMSISD have also called a \$659.1 million bond proposition for Nov. 7, 2023.

Prosper ISD is going out for a \$2.8 Billion bond in November and is also building HS # 4. In addition, Prosper ISD will have changes in AD Office – as Valerie Little is moving to the Executive Director of Student Engagement and their AD position is posted.

## Region 4

James Nunn, former Socorro ISD Assistant Athletic Director and current Safety Director was named the new Athletic Director replacing JJ Calderon who took over the Fort Worth Executive AD position. Maria Kennedy, former El Paso ISD Athletic Director, has come out of retirement to become the acting AD for Loretto Academy.

El Paso area districts have all been working to complete construction projects to include building a new stadium next the existing one in Socorro ISD. Ysleta ISD has completed adding video scoreboards to all of their football fields & gyms and finishing up on their final baseball field renovation. San Elizario is completing their installation of lights to their ball fields and adding a video board to their stadium. Clint ISD just broke ground on a new fieldhouse and is wrapping up landscaping projects around schools/ fields. El Paso ISD is replacing all of their HVAC systems in their gyms.

## Region 5

At our recent Region 5 meeting, we spoke about the official shortage and how some of our districts like Spring Branch have started teaching the TEA course for officiating. They shared with us how to implement the course, what the course looks like in an average week at a glance, and provided

many resources to help the course be successful. Moving forward, Alvin ISD and Fort Bend ISD among others, plan to offer this course at the start of the 2024-25 school year. Below is more information about the officiating course that is currently being offered at Spring Branch ISD.

Spring Woods HS hosted an after-school sports officiating camp on Wednesday, September 27 from 3:30-5:30pm and had over 40+ students from Spring Branch ISD and Houston ISD in attendance.

This was an interactive clinic to introduce sports officiating to teens. Teens aged 13-20 who have played sports or have an interest in sports and/or officiating were invited to attend. The mission of the clinic was to promote officiating given the shortage of sports officials nationwide. The clinic provides an opportunity to learn about officiating as a potential job opportunity.

Thanks to their 2019 Bond initiative, Brazosport ISD is thankful to their community for supporting two brand new state of the art Athletic Field Houses, as well as updates to our shared stadium, Hopper Field. The Brazoswood HS Field House opened several years ago and then construction began on the Brazosport HS Field House which opened its doors this August. Each field house boasts large weight rooms, team meeting rooms, athletic training rooms, and locker room spaces for both male and female athletes. Thanks, BISD!

Alvin ISD is excited about offering the approved TEA Sports Official Course next year at each of our

high schools. We presented it to the committee to start it at two of our high schools next year, but the two additional principals want to bring it to their campuses!

## Region 6

With Tawni Angel's retirement, Del Valle ISD welcomed Silvia Salinas as the new Athletic Director in August. AD Salinas brings nearly 30 years of experience in education and sports administration to DVISD and most recently served as executive director of athletics at Dallas ISD.

Austin ISD is currently without an athletic director after Leal Anderson was moved to their bond implementation team. AD Anderson previously served as the AD since 2014.

## Region 7

Members from Region 7 will be attending a learning opportunity titled Sport and Special Event Risk Management on November 14-15, 2023 in Weslaco, Tx. The training is being offered by the TEEEX National Emergency Response and Recovery Training Center. The Sport and Special Event Risk Management course is designed to build sport and special event risk management capabilities for community-wide collaboration and mitigation.

## Region 8

Corpus Christi ISD welcomes three new Assistant Athletic Directors Michael Keel, Delma Bernal, and Kevin Hendrickson.

For the 2nd year, SWISD will host the Region IV Water Polo Tournament and NEISD will host the UIL State Water Polo Tournament.

NEISD also hosted the THSADA Fall Forum with over 250 attendees.





# Athletic Director Spotlight:

## Grace McDowell Assistant Athletic Director UIL

Shortly after Ray Zepeda was announced as the new Athletic Director of UIL last May, the UIL also announced the hiring of long time athletic administrator and well-respected Grace McDowell to serve alongside as the Assistant Athletic Director for UIL. Grace brings over 30 years of experience in public education to her new role with UIL. Her career path includes 19 years in coaching, 4 years as Assistant Principal, 7 years as Assistant Athletic Director and the last 2 as Athletic Director for Frisco ISD. Frisco ISD has been one of the fastest growing districts in the nation over the last 20 years and has swelled to 12 high schools and 18 middle schools. Her leadership and oversight has benefitted countless student - athletes and coaches for many years in Frisco ISD. Grace has been a long time member of THSADA, an outstanding mentor to numerous coaches and we are excited to recognize her in our Newsletter Spotlight

**Q: Who were some of your mentors who helped shape you along the way as an administrator ?**

**A:** I was very fortunate to have great mentors throughout my career. As an administrator, Frisco ISD Superintendent, Dr. Mike Waldrip, the FUSD Chief Leadership Officer, Cory McClendon, and Fowler MS Principal, Donnie Wiseman, were all great examples and mentors for me. I grew personally and professionally under their leadership. David Kuykendall, former Frisco ISD AD, influenced me to become an Athletic Administrator. I served as one of his assistant athletic directors from 2014-2021. I am grateful for his mentorship, encouragement, and the opportunities that he gave me.



**Q: As a leader for such a large district how did you instill your vision on a district that is so widespread ?**

**A:** The well-established culture and leadership within the Frisco ISD campus athletic programs and the Athletic Department were already excellent. My goal was to collaborate with leadership within and outside of the athletic department to enhance opportunities and the athletic experience for students, and to support coaches. The vision was collective amongst our athletic coordinators and the athletic office, which had to fit within the overall vision of the district. In my opinion, it can't be about one person's vision.

**Q: What was the pull / challenge for you into your new role with UIL ?**

**A:** I was drawn to the opportunity to serve student athletes and coaches on a bigger scale. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the UIL leadership and the organization as a whole. High school sports in Texas are special because of the standards set by the UIL, along with the support of our phenomenal state coaches' organizations. I hope to help preserve that, while also helping us improve in areas to better support and serve student

athletes, coaches, athletic directors, and district administrators. I am also excited about the opportunity to continue providing exceptional experiences for student athletes and communities at our State Championships.

**Q: What has surprised you about the wide-reaching involvement of UIL or anything in general you are surprised with about the Athletic side of UIL ?**

**A:** It has been eye opening to see the various challenges that different schools, administrators, athletic directors, and coaches face and overcome to provide opportunities for their students. There are so many great people in our profession, and it's an honor to be in a position to serve and support them.

**Q: What advice would you give to young female coaches with an aspiration to advance into athletic administration ?**

**A:** High school athletics are important, and we need strong leaders to continue providing these valuable opportunities for students into the future! Prepare yourself by seeking opportunities for growth, like the THSADA QUAD A program, and take full advantage of learning opportunities from mentors. Follow your passion, focus on your strengths and what you bring to the table, and go for it!

Thank you to Grace McDowell for taking the time to sit down with us. We wish her nothing but continued success in her role as Assistant Athletic Director for UIL as she looks to provide the best experience possible for student athletes across Texas.



# Where Art Thou Victory?

By Kody Groves - Mesquite ISD Athletic Director

On any given night across the great state of Texas, thousands of 7th - 12th graders compete for their schools in a variety of UIL sports. Knowing this brings me great joy as an Athletic Director. What a great profession we get to be a part of!

That said, on each of those occasions, some experience the thrill of victory while others only must feel the agony of defeat. It's a tough profession when you look at it through that lens. On any given night 50% of our kids win and 50% lose. That percentage is probably much worse when you compete in individual sports. When you really think about it, that can potentially be a lot of disappointment for those that come out on the wrong side of the scoreboard. I for one, do not like that feeling and I occasionally struggle to find my value when our teams are not winning on the field. Doesn't take me long to get over it but the feelings in that moment are still very real.

For some, their teams are perennial playoff powerhouses who like clockwork make deep playoff runs every year, while the opposite can be true for teams that have had extreme playoff droughts and sometimes struggle to just win a few games each year. That divide only further highlights the different experiences our student athletes and coaches face each season.

More times than not over a career in this profession, most coaches will experience the full spectrum of both of those scenarios, and that is only magnified as an athletic director when you are now in charge of multiple sports and possibly in charge of multiple schools.

So where do you go from here? Don't get me wrong, our goal is to compete and win. This should be an

expectation of every program and if that is not a big piece to what you want to accomplish in this profession, then a career in sports might not be the exact right path for you. I could argue, why are you doing it if winning is not one of the goals? We want to win and there is no sugar coating that. Personally, when

my teams are not winning, it hurts because I want them to do well as I know the time and effort that they put into it. But I



I've talked about you specifically twice in the last week as an example of what a great teammate looks like and why it's important to pour into kids.

Aug 8, 2021, 2:38 PM

Hope all is well on your end Coach. Feel free to call me whenever you're available. Thank you for investing in my growth and continuing to show it was bigger than sports. Love you coach! And tell the family I said Hey

am often reminded that we do still have a lot of victories and there are a lot of things we do very well at that I am very proud of. I could make the case, that these other victories far outweigh any result on the field. In fact, most of these victories on the field will be forgotten as soon as the season is over and all the other stuff outside of the games is what will really be remembered and celebrated. Here is a small example - In 2013, while I was a head football coach, we had a three-year starter who started on both sides of the ball for us at RB and corner and he played in 8 playoff games for us over his junior and senior year. This kid was a great player and captain, and he could have told stories all day long about how good we were on the field. However, at our football banquet, when asked about his favorite memory in our program, he said it was when we took him and a few other

seniors camping and fishing. He had never been out of the city in his entire life and much less had ever caught a fish. He learned some life lessons that afternoon, got to experience something outside of his day-to-day life. He, for the first time ever, caught and cooked a fish at a camp site and had the time of his life. He still talks about that experience to this day and credits many other experiences like that as to why he loved being in our program. He talks about our standards and the way we ran our program as a big reason why he is successful in life and the man he is today. He is now a police officer around Houston and although he talks about his time in our program, he never once mentions the games or results when he could very easily brag about it. It was about more than the scoreboard to him and it's about more than the scoreboard to all our other student athletes around the state as well.

I once asked this question to one of my coaches; If you are not winning on the court, where are you winning? As he pondered how to respond to me, I wanted to make sure he understood that although some teams will win, and some will lose, there are areas that ALL teams can be successful in. There are areas in this profession that have nothing to do with X's and O's, nothing to do with winning or losing on the court or field, and nothing to do with your team's talent level. These areas have everything to do with how you find value and how you measure success because everything matters. When our number one priority is to take care of kids, we have a strong responsibility to make sure we are preparing them to be successful in life, long after they have left our programs. Those lessons, habits, and characteristics are your victories and every AD, coach, player, and parent need to understand the importance of prioritizing these

*Victory Continued on next page*



over the results on the scoreboard. Coaching is a calling, and we are called for something great. Outside of leading someone to Christ, this is the most important calling in my eyes and because of that, we must take full responsibility of all things in our programs.

Make no mistake, winning does give you a great platform, and it does help but it is not a requirement to take



care of these other essential things. It starts and finishes with controlling what we can control and every program around the state can do that and should. Its one thing to win, but it's another to win the right way. Whether this be by bringing your very best each day, being "Coach Somebody", daily character development, com-

munity service, continuous learning, teaching sportsmanship, leadership development lessons, having unwavering accountability in your programs, and this list could go on and on forever and ever.

The moral of the story is to be great at everything as the little essential details do matter. Treat every day as Gameday and every day in our programs, we should focus on setting the bar high and never lower our standard. Winning in life is bigger than winning any game.

At the end of the day, where do you find your victories?

## The Right Fit: What Athletic Administrators Look for When Hiring in their Department

By: Dena Scott, CMAA, Director of Athletics, Fort Bend ISD

With the current climate of public education in across the state and the nation, teacher/coach shortages are a real concern. Additionally, personnel openings in Athletic Departments are also on the rise as Athletic Administrators are retiring sooner and/or opting to pursue other career opportunities outside of education. Sometimes, these openings are planned, but other times they happen without prior notice. It is important that those who are looking to step into an Athletic Administrator role are prepared when that those openings arise. Several Texas Athletic Administrators have provided advice for those seeking employment in their athletic departments.

**Paige Hershey**, Executive Director of Athletics, Spring Branch ISD

**Chris Gee**, Assistant Athletic Director, Ysleta ISD

**Chivonne Kiser**, Ed.D., Assistant Director of Athletics, Denton ISD

**Rey Ramirez**, Athletic Director, Rio Grande City Grulla ISD



Paige Hershey



Chris Gee



Chivonne Kiser



Rey Ramirez

**What do you look for when hiring an Athletic Administrator? What kind of experience do you want an applicant to have to be qualified for your position?**

**Paige:** We look for an individual who has been successful in the many roles that they have held and believe that experience as a head coach in a sport and as a Campus Athletic Coordinator/Assistant Campus Athletic Coordinator at the middle school are important experiences to have had.

We want someone who was successful in the classroom.

We believe those individuals who have coached multiple sports and/or have coached on multiple levels (MS/HS) also bring great value to our staff.

various types of challenges (high SES, low SES, high ELL learners, AP student-athletes, affluent communities, etc.)

One of our assistant ADs was a middle school assistant principal for five years and a high school assistant principal for a year at schools in our district in addition to being a high school head coach with middle school experience, and we believe those experiences in that role made him attractive as a candidate to us.

When we are determining who we might add to our staff, we are also looking at those candidates that might bring alternative experiences and compliment the skill set and knowl-

*Hiring Practices Continued on next page*



edge base of those already on our team. How can the new team member add value to our team to make us better?

We want someone who is:

- detail-oriented
- technologically adept
- personable and likeable
- respected among their peers
- trustworthy
- hardworking
- a servant leader
- a person who has a history of and is respected for having worked hard at their craft
- a person who has a track record of having said yes when asked to step up and take on additional duties
- a strong communicator both verbally and in written correspondence
- mission-oriented
- aligned with and will live by the core values of Spring Branch ISD:
  - Collective Greatness
  - Collaborative Spirit
  - Limitless Curiosity
  - Every Child
  - Moral Compass
- a self-starter
- dedicated to their craft
- a grower and life-long learner

Have the talent, skill set and temperament to oversee large portions of the athletic program as an able-bodied assistant and possible future head athletic director.

**Chris:** When we can hire a second assistant athletic director, we will look for an individual with both coaching and administrative (athletic or campus) experience. We will look for someone who has coached both boys and girls. Our athletic director, Martin Segovia, strongly advocates character building education. We've implemented 2Words across our 8 high schools and 10 middle schools. Hiring a quality candidate with a history of leading strong successful programs (not always defined by wins/losses) will definitely be something we will look for.

**Chivonne:** We look for individuals who have not only garnered 10+ years of experience in education-based athletics, but have also maintained a positive track record of integrity and leadership in their past and current positions.

**Rey:** Some of things we look for when hiring an Athletic Adm. is experience as a coach, head coach, coordinator. Having experience as an Asst. Principal or Principal is a plus.

### **How do you decide between internal and external candidates?**

**Paige:** We are a smaller district in the Houston area than most, so there have been times when we may hire someone from outside our district if we feel that there isn't a candidate inside that has the necessary skills or experiences we need on our team of athletic directors to make us as solid as we need to be. Our goal is to grow our leaders inside our system and promote from within whenever possible. Sometimes circumstances dictate that that isn't always possible.

**Chris:** For an administrative position, we always look at both internal and external candidates.

**Chivonne:** Most often, internal candidates that meet the minimum criteria of the position are given the chance to interview. Although it is beneficial for the internal candidate to already understand the inner workings of the district, ultimately, choosing the candidate to hire comes down to experience, qualifications, and references.

**Rey:** First and foremost we look from within our staff. If we feel like we need to open the position to outside applicants, we do.

### **How many Athletic Administrators are in your department?**

**Paige:** Executive Director of Athletics (1)

Director of Athletics (1)

Director of District Grounds,  
Integrated Pest Management Coordinator

Coordinator of Athletics (2)

**Chris:** Martin Segovia (Athletic Director) and myself, Chris Gee (Assistant Athletic Director)

**Chivonne:** 15. (1) AD, (2) Asst ADs, (2) Facility Coordinators, (4) Campus ADs (also known as Campus Athletic Coordinators)/Head Football Coaches, (4) Assistant Campus ADs, (1) Strength and Conditioning Coordinator, (1) Aquatics Coordinator

**Rey:** One AD and one Asst. AD. The campus coordinators fall under the campus principal.

### **How do you separate the responsibilities in your department? What are the responsibilities of the staff in your department?**

**Paige:** This has evolved over the years, and we make changes as needed. Sometimes we have assigned responsibilities to an individual based on their prior coaching experiences and interests, but other times, our assistants have worked to become content experts in their areas of responsibilities without prior experience.

**Chris:** For a district our size, the two of us are always on the run. We split responsibilities down the middle. I know I can lean on Martin if I get overwhelmed and he knows he can rely on me as well.

**Chivonne:** Responsibilities are assigned by the athletic director, and for the most part, were determined by prior experience and strengths. For example, I was a former head volleyball coach and a head track coach for many years, so I am the primary point of contact for the volleyball and track and field programs. Also, as a former assistant campus athletic coordinator, I have a sturdy background in UIL compliance and organizing department meetings, so I was able to seamlessly handle those aspects of the position as I transitioned into athletic administration.

**Rey:** I was fortunate to get an Asst. AD three years ago. He takes care of all social media, accountabil-

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*Hiring Practices Continued on next page*



ity for coaches required training, bus requisitions, work orders, supervision of events as needed. I take care of the rest...

**What advice would you give to aspiring athletic administrators to put themselves in the position to be ready to step into an athletic administrative role in your dept.?**

**Paige:** In addition to being involved in the THSADA, THSCA and taking courses with the NIAAA, I would encourage aspiring athletic administrators to:

- Volunteer to take on additional duties whenever their athletic department or Campus AD needs assistance. There is a lot you can learn by serving in various capacities.
- Be a self-starter. Don't wait for someone to tell you what to do. Learn by watching and tagging along and then be willing to help take a responsibility off those above you.
- Be dedicated to learning and getting better at your craft by taking classes, watching videos, listening to podcasts, reading, talking to veteran coaches and ADs, working at camp, serving in an internship (even if it's unpaid), scouting, and even learning by watching good coaches who coach outside of the sport you coach in. What makes them a great coach and great leader? What do they do that you can incorporate into your approach as a leader that will make you better?

- Work hard at whatever you're asked to do.
- Be detail-oriented.
- Work to be the best teacher you can be.
- Work to be the best at whatever you do in whatever capacity you currently fill and be all in and fully present to where you are at that moment.
- Say yes to things when asked to do them and to new opportunities that come to you.
- Move in the direction of those things that stretch you.

**Chris:** Education is key. We take our campus athletic coordinators with us to NIAAA conventions and have them enroll in courses. We've done this for the last two years and will be doing so again this December. We believe it helps them become strong athletic leaders on their campus and will prepare them for district athletic positions in the future.

**Chivonne:** To those interested in becoming an athletic administrator, remember this acronym: W.O.M.E.N. "W" is work hard. No job should be too big or too small for you, and don't feel the need to be compensated for every task you undertake. Experience sometimes is your only compensation. "O" is get outside your comfort zone. To get your foot in the door, you may have to take advantage of an opportunity or take a risk. For me personally, that meant leaving my hometown of Houston to take a job in Denton. "M" is mentor. Find a mentor that will help you and someone you

can ask questions about the field. "E" is education. Oftentimes people may think that playing a sport in college or being a head coach automatically qualifies them to be in a leadership position. Education is one of the strongest tools in acquiring a leadership position. Know the nuances of an athletic department, as well as effective communication techniques, crisis management, leadership styles, and organization. And finally, "N" is network. Join organizations and foundations where you can meet those in your field. The adage, "it's not what you know but who you know" does have some validation to it. Similarly, it's about "who knows you." Connect with those who can help you directly or indirectly gain opportunities for success.

**Rey:** Never turn down an opportunity to learn and grow. From laundry, breaking down film, bus/travel requests etc. Have pride and hold yourself and others to a higher standard.

As we continue to work through some of the most challenging times in public education, it is refreshing to know that we are always providing valuable information to the future generation of athletic administrators. The information provided by our Texas Athletic Administrators is insightful and useful to anyone who may be thinking of pursuing a career in an athletic department. One final piece of advice to remember is that you are always being interviewed each day in your current position so be sure to show up every day with that in mind.



# Athletic Vertical Alignment Within UIL Sports

By Enrique Cantu – Asst. Athletic Director (RGCGISD)

Vertical alignment is a term used within the context of curriculum and instruction in all Texas school districts and throughout a national level. Students are taught concepts that have a continuum within learning objectives and pedagogy from elementary through high school instruction.



This familiarity should translate into relative success in the classroom. According to the Texas Education Agency (T.E.A), understanding the progression across the early childhood continuum allows teachers, administrators, and families to offer the supports needed to foster optimal development and learning.” In other words, when one links concepts from year to year, there is higher probability of mastery.

Now, vertical alignment in the context of school sports also refers to a similar coordinated approach in the development and progression of student athletes. What is being coached and how it is being applied in the middle schools can benefit high school staffs as they build the mental and physical foundation of each athlete. This organized effort to teach and coach athletic skills and strength and conditioning concepts are an underlying reason for consistency and year round program successes.

This is commonly seen when high school head coaches are newly hired and they designate organizational preseason meetings to vertically align their sport specific goals with those of their middle school feeder programs. MS and sub-varsity coaches alike will implement new vocabulary, strategies, and specific mindsets which will be sharpened throughout the offseason and seasons to come. This minimizes

the wait time in bringing in a new perspective in strength and conditioning and maximizes time on task which will attract new athletes to the program.

In Region 7 and throughout the state, vertical alignment has been key the overall growth of athletes in our campuses when there is a linkage

from middle school preparation to high schools application. Head coaches and coaching staff continue to take on the task of scaffolding on what the athletes already know and expand on the new understanding. As JC Maxwell says, “successful people do daily what unsuccessful people do occasionally.”

At Grulla HS, head football Coach Abel Gonzalez III meets with his all his football staff (MS & HS) a week before the 1st day of HS practice to implement practice schedules, game day responsibility and coaching philosophies to the 3 phases of his football program (offense, defense, special teams). All his MS and HS staff analyze a detailed dissection of each cadence, formation, and play call. “I expect my 7th and 8th graders to be coached up just like our freshman, junior varsity and varsity athletes.” For the past 14 years as head coach at GHS, Coach Gonzalez has been able to reap from the organizational and vertical structure, which has paved the way for 12 playoff appearances during the last 14 years including one district championship and two bi-district championships.

Recently we have even seen coaching staffs working side by side with the C & I Department in allowing our coaches to hold Professional Learning Days (PLD) Academies to plan their athletic vertical alignment within the year. Instead of bringing in the coach-

ing staff to meet before school or after school, coaches have begun to use their PLD’s to build on their own growth as coaches and leaders. Inter-district meetings between staffs of different high schools has been vital in skill and technique development and personal growth. In addition, a positive culture and rapport is built between our coaches, which have led to accountability, respect, and loyalty toward one another.

Coach Nicole S. Lopez, head softball coach at Rio Grande City HS has been able to better prepare her staff due to these PLD opportunities. “I break down the season in phases and these type of days allows for a uniform approach of what is expected in the year to come. Pitching, footwork, throwing mechanics, cage work, scenarios and simple drills are the items we focus on when we get together with all my MS and HS staff. I model what I expect our kids to know and how to react based on our scheme. It also allows me to gage the knowledge level of my staff as we are always looking for future coaching leaders.” She has also been able to reap from this approach as her team is coming off a three consecutive district title run.

At Valley View ISD, their respective coaches are also able to visit the feeder elementary schools and plan accordingly as sixth graders are set to begin with UIL sports in the incoming year. According to Genaro Cantu, AD at Valley View ISD “Our six graders are part of our elementary schools so we need to prepare our soon to be athletes on norms of MS and eventually HS athletics. At times when athletic and sports participation is low, we have to get our coaches involved to assist in the growth of all programs. On the other hand, Harlingen ISD head coaches’ conduct Saturday preseason academies with their MS feeder staff to go over non-negotiables for the athletic season.

*Alignment Continued on next page*



It takes a time management and precise planning to make sure all feeder MS coaches are onboard with the HS expectations. Although other sports might overlap during these sessions, it's this imperative approach to meet and plan, that guides programs to be district contenders in multiple sports

year after year.

Although other factors do weigh in to the significance of a season, vertical alignment has been key to the success of any programs throughout Region 7 and the rest of the regions in Texas. The development and progression of an athletic program begins with a solid

vision and with constant positive conversations that will translate to confident student athletes and coaching staffs. As with T.E.A, the exemplary work done by our coaching staff for athletic vertical alignment will continue to “foster optimal development and learning” for years to come.

## Stretching the Dollar with Athletic Facilities

By Megan Sybank-College Station ISD Athletic Director

It's no secret that the state of public education in Texas is in dire need of funding, and the Texas high school athletic world is not immune to this crisis. Now, more than ever, school districts are searching to find creative ways to stretch the dollar to meet the growing needs of their athletic programs. In order to address these needs, school districts across Texas have found more economical solutions to maximize safety while being efficient with escalating construction costs.

### Pavilions

The building of school district pavilions is a new trend growing in popularity. Marshall, Commerce, and Mesquite ISD have all recently built turf pavilions. Hellas Construction promotes these multi-use facilities to provide school districts the ability to protect student-athletes by getting them out of the heat and other weather-related elements at a fraction of the cost of other indoor facilities. While traditional indoor facilities are completely enclosed with HVAC, pavilions remain open with no HVAC to provide for maximum natural airflow. Addi-



Photo provided by Hellas Construction-Mesquite ISD



Photos provided by Hellas Construction-Marshall ISD

tionally, these can be designed with netting systems to divide the area for multiple uses at one time. Marshall ISD was the first in Texas to build a pavilion. Former Athletic Director for Marshall ISD Jake Griedl shared the idea stemmed from addressing the challenges they faced in their community, which included unrelenting heat and unexpected rain all while being centered in East Texas with a number of competing school districts already utilizing state of the art indoor facilities. After having this experience, Griedl, who is now at Bastrop High School, is hopeful to build a pavilion in his new school district. Now, other school districts have jumped on board. Mesquite ISD committed to building 5 pavilions for their 5 comprehensive high school campuses for less than what they could have built one luxury indoor facility. Athletic Director Kody Groves shared that a pavilion “func-



Photo provided by Hellas Construction-Commerce ISD

tionally met every single need we had.” Additionally, they didn't have to pass a bond to raise funds to get the pavilions built. Since the completion of three of the pavilions this summer, AD Groves shared that it has done wonders for the morale of their community.

### Multi-Purpose Practice Fields



Photo provided by Paragon Sports Constructors-North Dallas HS.

Other athletic projects that maximize their turf investment can include true multi-purpose turf practice facilities. According to Paragon Sports Constructors, consolidation of athletic facilities can help school districts maximize space for athletics and reduce maintenance costs for the district while still supporting its students. They have installed a number of multi-purpose practice fields that are assembled to best serve the district's needs. Rockwall High School's turf practice

*Stretching the Dollar Continued on next page*



field includes markings for football practice featuring baseball and softball fields with shot-put and discus area on the parameters. North Dallas High School used their limited space to incorporate a multipurpose field with baseball, softball, football and soccer lines. These multipurpose sports fields will continue to be a viable option as school districts consider student needs with maximum cost efficiency.

## Weight Room Flex Spaces

Traditional weight room facilities are also being rethought. In some cases, the driving force may not be entirely economical, rather a need for maximizing the space available. Small school district Thrall ISD recently installed an updated weight room with instructional space facility completed in September 2023. Thrall Head Football Coach/Athletic Director Aaron Vanecek shared that during his previous coach experience he had the priv-



Photo provided by PowerliftUSA-Thrall ISD

ilege of learning through two previous weight room builds. After each one, he reflected on how to maximize square footage. Thrall's new facility features 18 racks with a 15 foot wide and 32 yard long turf runner. This turfed flex space was designed to incorporate rooms for dynamic warm ups, jumping, sprinting, as well as an area for student athletes to work on rehabilitation using the pulley systems that sit adjacent to it.

Overall, Texas public schools have demonstrated exceptional creativity in addressing their athletic facility needs and have paved the way for future out-

side the box thinking while stretching community dollars. As school districts brace for further economic impacts, communities can rest assured athletic directors across the state will continue to pursue building athletic facilities that address their own unique needs for the best outcomes for our student athletes.

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# Giving Back to the Community

By Sonia Almanza, Northside ISD

As UIL basketball practice begins this month, everyone is excited about the start of the season, the latest shoe designs, and the possibility of becoming the next State Champion. While everyone looks at the excitement for the new season, there are some road bumps for some athletes wanting to play basketball. This caught the eye of one high school student athlete who noticed middle school female athletes starting basketball without the proper shoes to play. Rian Forestier, who is currently a senior at Northside Brandeis High School in San Antonio, TX, established a nonprofit fundraiser called 4WARD. Rian recognized not all athletes have the funds to purchase basketball shoes and created 4WARD with the goal of raising money to provide title 1 middle schools with brand new basketball shoes. Another goal of



**Sul Ross Middle School basketball team receiving new basketball shoes in October 2022.**

4WARD is to help provide female student athletes a sense of inclusion and dignity so they will want to continue to play the game. 4 is Rian's jersey number and forward is a way for Rian to give back to her community. She is giving these middle school athletes the opportunity to play basketball and hopefully one day pay it forward to other title 1 middle schools.

In 2022, 4WARD has donated 120

new basketball shoes to title 1 middle schools. Currently, Rian has sold over 1,000 4WARD t-shirts to raise money for these young student athletes. This year, 4WARD plans on surprising another title 1 middle school with new basketball shoes. Visit [4ward4.com](http://4ward4.com) for videos and pictures showing the excitement of young female athletes receiving new basketball shoes.





# What Culture Looks Like

By Stan Laing, Northside ISD

Any “Coach” of an organization values the importance of culture. In my humble opinion, the long-term goal of any great culture is to change hearts. Otherwise, we are doing humanity a disservice.

Consider the thoughts of Matthew Kelly in this less than 3-minute video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdhFP0EtOHO&list=PLgCGT7nNXGY61n-uDqJpduvOmlVeL0Nn7&index=3>

With 39 years of experience in public education, not that I’m an expert at anything, but experience has taught me you learn the most about one’s culture when things are not going well.

Pay attention to what your culture looks like in the face of adversity. In this 30 second video, it shows an athletic team, but the same can apply to your leadership team or coaching staff. Do others appreciate how you conduct your business in the face of adversity?

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGQPIozhnS6/>

- Make culture a priority.
- Culture eats strategy for breakfast.
- No matter your role, you can impact culture.
- The most influential people in an organization are those that take an interest in people and culture.

*“What we need more of is a video showing a winning culture in action, when they are LOSING. We need more videos to show our teams about how they need to behave when things get tough. And most of all we need videos that might not end in a championship but show us how to be a champion.”*

*–The Daily Coach*



