

Get on the Energy Bus!

By David Truitt, Superintendent

With the new school year upon us, our district leadership team always begins the new year by completing a book study together. This summer, we decided to read and discuss Jon Gordon's "The Energy Bus."

In selecting a book, I was looking for a message that was bigger than just our work in West ISD. I was looking for something to help us define our purpose, help shape our district culture, and champion the great things happening across our district and community. As you may remember, I love Jon Gordon's work. Previously, we read his "One Word that will Change your Life" and selected "serve" as a district's focus.

"The Energy Bus" begins with a scenario we have all probably encountered in our lives. It's a Monday morning and the lead character, George, walks out his front door and finds his car with a flat tire. Unfortunately, this is the least of his problems. His relationships with his wife and kids are in disarray, and his product team at work is in shambles. With a big new product launch coming up in two weeks, he is desperately trying to find a way to pull things together or risk losing his marriage, kids, and job. His family, friends, and coworkers hate to be around him, because negativity and anger have started to consume him. Forced to take the bus to work, George meets a unique kind of bus driver, named Joy, and an interesting set of passengers that over the course of two weeks share the 10 Rules for the ride of his life and attempt to help him turn around his life and career.

Our district team loved the life-application and purposefulness of the 10 Rules. They are easy to understand and follow, and, also, tie directly to our district's vision, mission and goals. We wholeheartedly agree with Gordon's premise that positive people and positive teams produce positive results. We also agree with the book's belief that positive energy and vision must be greater than anyone's and everyone's negativity. Our certainty must be greater than everyone's doubt.

Throughout the book, Joy, the bus driver, shares an overview of each rule. The 10 Rules are:

(1). You're the Driver of the Bus. So many people feel like they don't have a choice, so they give up. We must remember, we do have a choice. We can take the wheel and choose to create the life we want. It takes one thought, one belief, one action, and one choice at a time. It starts with a decision.

(2). Desire, Vision, and Focus Move your Bus in the Right Direction. Joy says the more we focus on something, the more we think about it, the more it shows up in our lives. We must spend our time thinking about what we want, rather than what we don't want. Remember, complaining is focusing on the negative.

(3). Fuel your Ride with Positive Energy. Positive energy will keep the bus moving forward with momentum! As you know, there is a lot of negativity in the world, so choosing positive energy is important to help deal with the negative people and negative situations that can knock you off course. We can't control all the events in our lives, but we can control how we perceive them.

(4). Invite People on your Bus and Share your Vision for the Road Ahead. This one is challenging for me as Superintendent. We must remember that we cannot always do things by ourselves. We need a good

team. We need like-minded people on our bus, and the more positive people we get, the more positive energy will be created. We must share our vision and make it clear what we expect.

(5). Don't Waste your Energy on Those Who Don't Get on your Bus. The enemy is negativity. Joy shares how we can deal with it. She declares that we shouldn't worry about it. Simple enough. She says we shouldn't waste our time or energy on people who aren't on the bus. The more we worry about it, the less positive energy we will have.

(6). Post a Sign that Says: "No Energy Vampires Allowed". Wow, Joy is bold in reminding us that we must surround ourselves with a positive support team. This team will have a big influence on our lives, so we must surround ourselves with people who will increase our energy and not drain it. We have to be strong enough to let people know that negativity is not allowed. Justifiable negativity can be discussed, but bring a solution to the table.

(7). Enthusiasm Attracts More Passengers and Energizes Them during the Ride. Positive energy works! It spreads one person at a time. We need people on our team who are excited, positive, and optimistic. People notice it. People feel it. It's real. A positive culture will outperform a negative culture every time. This is so true for our schools!

(8). Love your Passengers. To tap into the power of our heart and lead with a positive, contagious energy, we must love our passengers. We have to let people know that we care about them... really care about them. When we do this, we will get love back.

(9). Drive with Purpose. Purpose is the ultimate fuel for our journey through life. When we drive with purpose, we don't get tired, bored, or burned out. We must find our purpose and share it.

(10). Have Fun and Enjoy the Ride. Don't focus on the stress! We must remember all the things we are thankful for, because this feeling of gratitude will fuel our performance every day. It leads to optimism and joy! It is uplifting. We must live and work like we have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

We are too blessed in West to be stressed. Let's get on the positive Energy Bus and, together, help ensure this school year is the best in the history of West ISD! It begins with us! This year, let's be **POSITIVE TROJANS!**