

# She Thrives!

San Diego County Office of Education  
Women's Leadership Day

April 21, 2023

Presenters: Carmella Franco, Maria Ott, Darline Robles







# Welcome and Vision for Women in San Diego County

**Dr. Paul Gothold**

*Superintendent of Schools*

*San Diego County Office of Education*

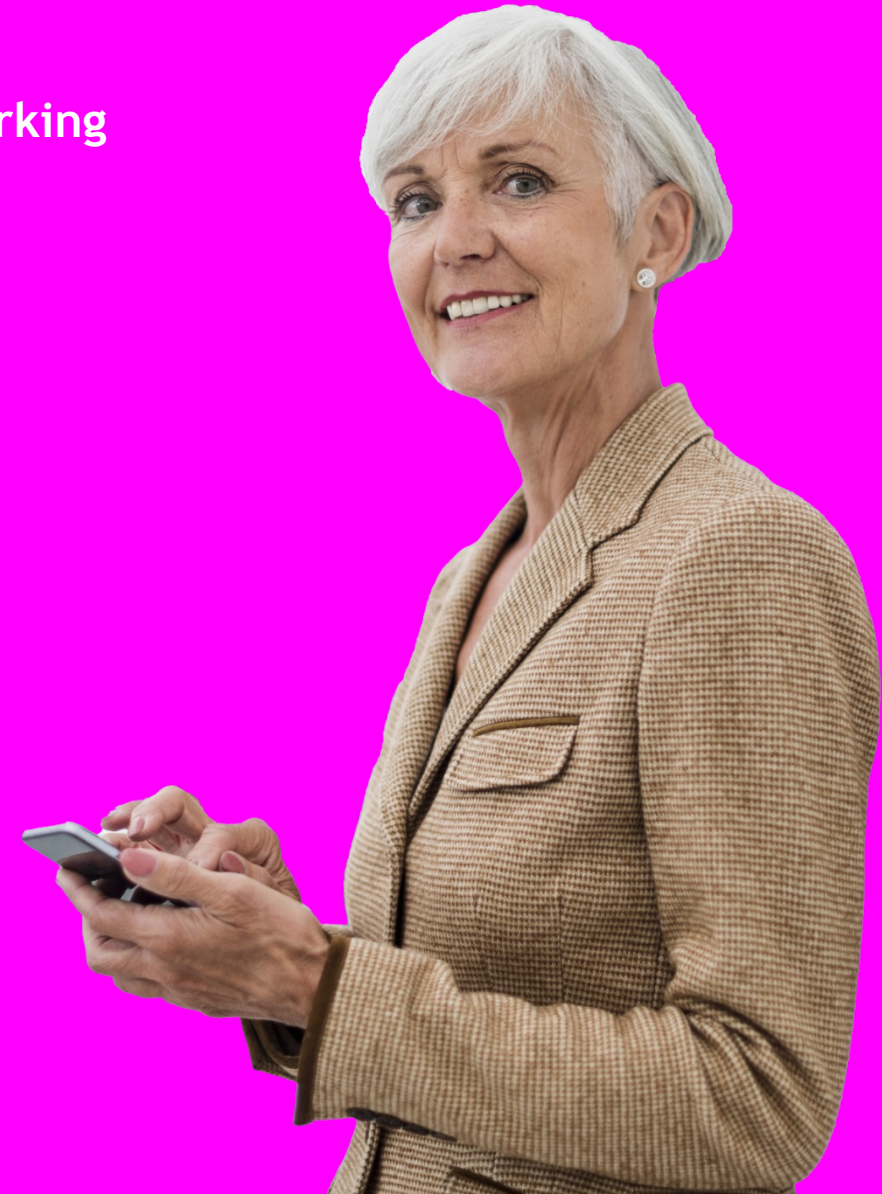
**Dr. Jeanette Rodriguez-Chien**

*Assistant Superintendent, Learning and  
Leadership Services*

*San Diego County Office of Education*

# Overview of Agenda

8:00 - 8:30am	Check-in and Breakfast with Informal Networking
8:30 - 8:45am	Welcome
8:45 - 9:00am	Icebreaker and Frame the Day
9:00 - 9:15am	Data on Women
9:15 - 10:15am	Being Authentic Leaders
10:15am	Break
10:30 - 11:30am	Developing Political Savvy
11:30am - 12:15pm	Lunch, Network and Relax
12:15 - 1:15pm	Dealing with Difficult Conversations
1:15 - 2:15pm	Work-Life Balance and Self-Care
2:15 - 2:30pm	Celebration and Closing





# Ice Breaker





# Data on Women



# Women Leaders Nationally

AASA 2022 Study by Thomas E. Glass,  
nationally:

- 76% Female Teachers
- 40% Female Principals
- 27% Female Superintendents
- 4% Female Superintendents  
of Color







# Interesting Facts – Current Data on Women Leaders

- ...from 2022 K-12 Dive National Study
- 46% Superintendent transitions during Pandemic
- 37% Female Superintendents left positions nationally
- 66% Female Superintendents were fired, released, left ... nationally and were replaced by men

# California Superintendents

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>No Gender</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>White, not Hispanic</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>297</b>		<b>536</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>81</b>		<b>129</b>
<b>African American, not Hispanic</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>Pacific Islander</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>7</b>
<b>Multiple</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>11</b>
<b>Decline to state</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>21</b>
<b>Blank-no choice taken</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>876</b>



# Being Authentic Leaders



# Panelist Introduction

**Dr. Gina Acosta Potter**  
*Superintendent*  
*San Ysidro School District*

How do you develop your personal narrative and share it?

How do you lead, grounded in your personal values,  
even when others have different perspectives?





She Thrives.

She is Authentic.





# Why Is It Important to Be Authentic?

- Kouzes and Posner research identifies four top characteristics of authenticity in a leader:
  - Honesty
  - Inspiring
  - Competent
  - Forward-looking



# Five Practices – Exceptional Results

1. Model the Way
2. Inspire a Shared Vision
3. Challenge the Process
4. Enable Others to Act
5. Encourage the Heart





# Reflections on Leadership

- Do you know your own story?
- Do others know you?





# Why Is Knowing Yourself So Important?

- Being able to focus on your strengths and weaknesses is essential to growing your leadership and expanding your positive impact on those you lead.
- Personal narrative is the gift of self-awareness.





# Ways to Create Your Narrative

- What life experiences have shaped your leadership?
  - Experiences as a child
  - Years in school
  - Talents unique to you
  - Challenges
  - Disappointments
  - Achievements
  - Overcoming obstacles



# Activity: Knowing Yourself

- Select one of the photos at your table that captures something important to you. Share with the women at your table why that visual helps tell your story.
- What do you see as powerful in the process of telling your story?
- What are ways that you use your story to influence others?





**Your Personal  
Narrative Tells  
Your Story  
and  
Serves as a  
Testament to  
Your Legacy.**



**“The power of story is never stronger  
than when it lives on the breath of those  
from whom it came.”**

**- Gayle Ross, Cherokee storyteller**



# “Ten Things Authentic Leaders Do”

by Robin Sharma

1. They speak their truth.
2. They lead from the heart.
3. They have rich moral fiber.
4. They are courageous.
5. They build teams and create communities.
6. They deepen themselves.
7. They are dreamers.
8. They care for themselves.
9. They commit to excellence rather than perfection.
10. They leave a legacy.

# Wellness Break





# Developing Political Savvy



# Panelist Introduction

**Dr. Julie Vitale**

*Superintendent*

*Oceanside Unified School District*

As you have gone through your leadership journey, what have been some barriers you have had to overcome as a woman that your male counterparts do not typically experience?





# Political Savvy – An Essential Skillset

*Resource: How Women Can Get Comfortable "Playing Politics" at Work* by Lisa Zigarmi, Julie Diamond, and Leslie Mones (2022) *Harvard Business Review*

- Women need to embrace politics as an essential skill to succeed in today's organizations.
- Research indicates that women have adverse reactions to organizational politics.
- Politics helps women understand motivations of others and how to use this knowledge to influence the direction of the organization.
- Studies confirm that successful use of political skills is critical to career advancement.
- A mindset shift is needed to help women embrace and develop political skills.



# Five Reasons Women Dislike Office Politics:

1. My work should speak for itself.
2. Building connections is an extracurricular activity.
3. It's inauthentic.
4. I don't like playing hardball.
5. The penalties are too great.

Resource: *How Women Can Get Comfortable "Playing Politics" at Work* by Lisa Zigarmi, Julie Diamond, and Leslie Mones (2022)  
*Harvard Business Review*



# How to Shift Your Mindset:

- Connect your work with the work of others.
- Build connections as a force multiplier.
- Have a point of view and share it.
- Your leadership tactic needs to match the situation.
- Prioritize your growth.

Resource: *How Women Can Get Comfortable "Playing Politics" at Work* by Lisa Zigarmi, Julie Diamond, and Leslie Mones (2022) *Harvard Business Review*





# Activity

Each of your tables has a scenario. Spend time reviewing the specifics and discuss the following.

- Could the incident have been anticipated? Why or why not?
  - If yes, what could have been done to reduce the tension?
  - If no, what steps could you have taken to de-escalate the situation?

# Tips for Being a Politically Savvy Woman Leader

Important to have a **CONFIDANT** to advise you; could be a mentor, colleague, peer, significant partner, family member, or another trusted person.





# Lunch, Network and Relax



# Dealing with Difficult Conversations





# Panelists Introduction

**Dr. Kim Phelps**

*Superintendent*

*Poway Unified School District*

**Dr. Julie Vitale**

*Superintendent*

*Oceanside Unified School District*

As a woman leader how do you manage a politically charged issue?  
What do you have to pay attention to when dealing with a hot topic?



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# Dealing with Difficult Conversations Through Effective Communication

Effective communication requires...

1. Credibility Capital
2. Communication Culture
3. Perception is Reality
4. It's All About the Context

*Adapted from InCredible Communication, Lewis & Weintraub (2022)*





# Building, Maintaining, Retaining Your Reputation

## Creating your narrative

- Your why
- Your responses
- Your creative solutions
- Your relationship
- Your feedback
- Your approach
- Your context



# Credibility – Built Over Time



*Adapted from InCredible Communication  
Lewis & Weintraub (2022)*

# Communication Culture

E. Schein (1992) “...looking at things that are visible, artifacts; things that are promoted, espoused values; and things that are unspoken and unconscious, underlying assumptions.”

## Eight Communication Culture Classifications

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Communication | 5. Committee     |
| 2. Controlling   | 6. Callous       |
| 3. Cautious      | 7. Clinical      |
| 4. Collegial     | 8. Condescending |



# Perception is Reality

IS ABOUT SENSEMAKING - Recognizing that communication goes through multiple layers of interpretation AND LANGUAGE is important and matters.

- Creation of shared meaning remains the ultimate goal of effective communication
- OUR perception are less relevant and need to move into the interpretive world of THEIR perceptions
- What will THEY find persuasive
- Our communication is stakeholder centric, rather than self-centric

# It's All About the Context

PHYSICAL ➤ Physical space | In person meetings | Meetings on Zoom

CULTURAL ➤ Societal norms and values  
➤ Framing what the audience expects  
➤ “*the individual mind can exist only in relation to other minds with shared meaning*” Mead, 1982  
➤ Cultural diversity

SITUATIONAL ➤ The person | Outside events | Stressors | Opportunities

Leaders should be engaged in effective conversations, not debate.





# Leaders should be engaged in effective conversations, not debate.

**DON'T  
MULTITASK**

**DON'T  
PONTIFICATE**

**USE  
OPEN-ENDED  
QUESTIONS**

**GO WITH THE  
FLOW**

**IF YOU DON'T  
KNOW, SAY YOU  
DON'T KNOW**

# Leaders should be engaged in effective conversations, not debate.

DON'T EQUATE YOUR  
EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR  
EXPERIENCE

TRY NOT TO  
REPEAT  
YOURSELF

STAY OUT  
OF THE  
WEEDS

BE  
BRIEF

LISTEN, BE  
PREPARED TO  
BE AMAZED

# Pair Share

**As a school leader, share with your partner your greatest learning and struggle over the past 18 months.**

**Would you engage differently now?**



# Work-Life Balance and Self-Care





# Panelists Introduction

**Dr. Gina Acosta Potter**

*Superintendent*

*San Ysidro School District*

**Dr. Kim Phelps**

*Superintendent*

*Poway Unified School District*

We know that as a leader you are pulled in many different directions and are often involved in emotionally and mentally draining work.

How do you take care of yourself?

How do you balance work and your personal life?







# Wellness

- The Key to Resiliency
- Networking





# Courageous Leadership Requires Resiliency





**“In the face of change and crisis, the resource we need most is our resilience.”**

**- Elle Allison, Author**

# Self-Care vs Burnout

# Radical Self-Care

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

*A Burst of Light  
and Other Essays*  
– Audre Lorde

“Radical self-care is having and integrating a practice of putting yourself in front in a world that doesn’t encourage us to be alive, to stay alive, to take care of ourselves. To feel okay about stepping back or stepping aside so that we can nourish ourselves to be in the world another day.”  
– Alicia Garza



# Radical Self-Care is Individual

- Mindfulness
- Meditation
- Family
- Reflection
- Friends
- Hobbies

# Self-Care

- We know self-care is essential, and we know we are not always good at it.
- We have been socialized to internalize that our worth is based on productivity and busyness.
- This socialization can become a challenge to engaging in radical self-care.



# Activity

Select one question to discuss with a colleague:

- How did your socialization impact your ability to practice radical self-care?
- What are some ways that you have been able to engage in radical self-care in a culturally meaningful way?
- Do you have any personal struggles or conflict around how to practice self-care? Is it culturally appropriated, or is it culturally embracing?



# Burnout

The cure is not self-care!

Why not?

*The Burnout Epidemic, Jennifer Moss (2021)*



# Causes of Burnout


- Workload
- Poor relationships
- Perceived lack of control
- Lack of fairness
- Lack of reward or recognition
- Values mismatch

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) Maslach et al., 2019



# Jennifer Moss:

“to address the burnout problem, the first step is repeating and internalizing this mantra: burnout is about your organization, not your people”



“...wellness strategies that place ownership on individuals for preventing and managing their own burnout” is the wrong approach.



“Instead, we need to look at ourselves as leaders, at the role our organizations play.”



# Myth: We can do it all.

- Social Perfectionism principle (psychological theory)
- Shame of letting others down and we begin to normalize this experience
- The need to meet a certain external expectation, held against a standard

# The Myth is Connected to Burnout

Burnout is a “psychological syndrome that is associated with motivational, performance, and psychological difficulties” and has three core symptoms (Hill & Curran, 2015)...

1. Emotional exhaustion - a general feeling of being overstretched due to excessive demands
2. Failure to delegate - trying to do everything yourself
3. Impersonal or cynical attitude - a sense of indifference or detachment from others or the environment
4. Reduced sense of competence or accomplishment - the higher the sense of incompetence or failure, the more burned out the individual

# Table Engagement



**Take 2 minutes to discuss delegating.**

- **What are some legitimate reasons for not delegating?**
- **What is keeping you personally from delegating?**



# Moving forward to healthier habits...for you and others

Reflect on how you as the leader can address burnout for yourself and others in your organization by taking small steps...today and next week, extending to the activities under:

HOPE

EFFICACY

RESILIENCE

OPTIMISM

GRATITUDE

EMPATHY

MINDFULNESS





Today is an example of taking small actions to create positive outcomes.

Use self-care practices to change the organization to support wellness.

The Burnout Epidemic with Jennifer Moss Podcast

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbD4lqKt7gc>





# What Do Good Leaders Do?

**LEAD** with open eyes

**PAY ATTENTION** to relevant data

**RECOGNIZE** both opportunities  
and signs of disaster

**MONITOR  
SIGNALS** of flagging resilience  
in his/her organization

**TAKE STEPS** to shore up resiliency





It's All About  
Relationships

NETWORKING  
AND  
MENTORS





# What is Networking?

Networking is about making connections and building enduring, mutually beneficial relationships.



# Why Network?

- Learn dynamics within your own field
- Get acquainted with your community
- Seek new career opportunities
- Establish your business contacts
- Accelerate your professional development
- Develop a cadre of resources
- Facilitate “win-win” relationships



# Helpful Hints

- View it as an opportunity to find what you have in common with a potential mentor.
- Approach others, introduce yourself, and share a piece of information that could reveal the common thread.
- Use the shared background or interests as the basis for sustaining conversations.
- Take the initiative to ask an individual if they would serve as your mentor.





# It is known that...

- Relationships are the catalyst for success. It is all about relationships.
- Build them and keep them strong. People interact with those they like and trust.
- Through networking you can build supportive resources and enlist mentors who you can call on for advice or help.

# Reframe the Day

**Dr. Julie Vitale**  
*Superintendent*  
*Oceanside Unified School District*

**How do you build a network of mentors and  
build alliances with like-minded leaders?**





# Questions?





# Celebration and Closing





Thank you SDCOE for  
supporting your leaders!



# Conference Presenters

## **Dr. Carmella S. Franco**

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## **Dr. Maria G. Ott**

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