

Technology Services as ~~Utility~~ Partner

Dr. Jarod M. Lambert, CETL
Texas Educational Technology Leaders
Summer Conference | June 25, 2026

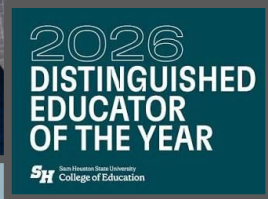
Today's Road Map

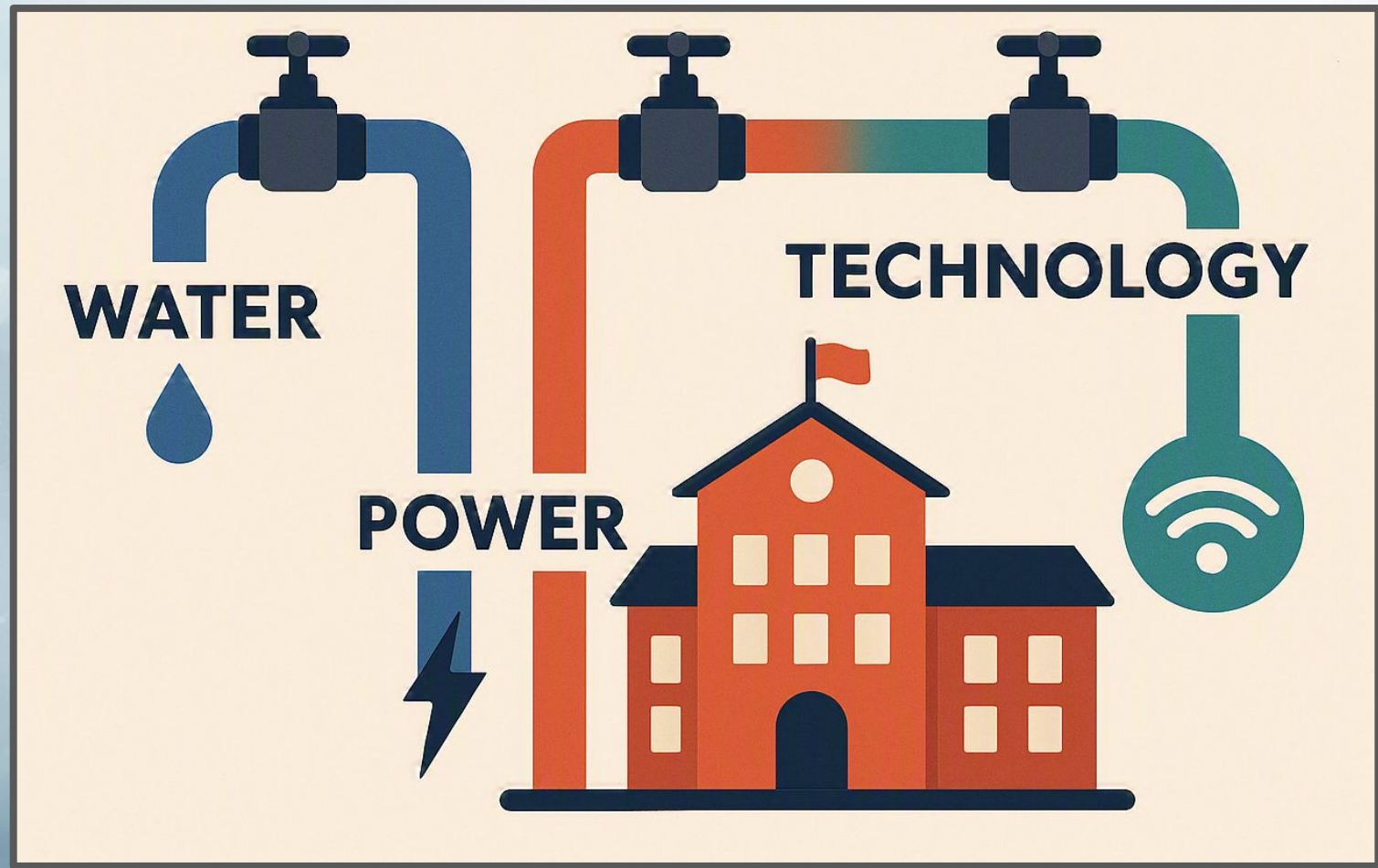
- About Me
- Session Key Ideas
- Moving from Utility to Partnership
- Wrap Up

about me



- ➡ Executive Director, Klein ISD
- ➡ Former Exec. Dir., Conroe ISD
- ➡ Elementary Principal
- ➡ District Inst. Tech. Coord.
- ➡ Assistant Professor
- ➡ Teacher/Tech. Specialist
- ➡ Starting Year 29







ENERGY PRODUCTION
25,725%

WATER PRESSURE
20.067%

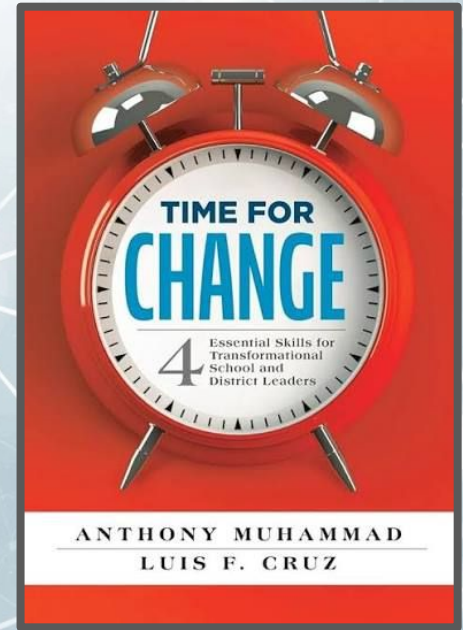
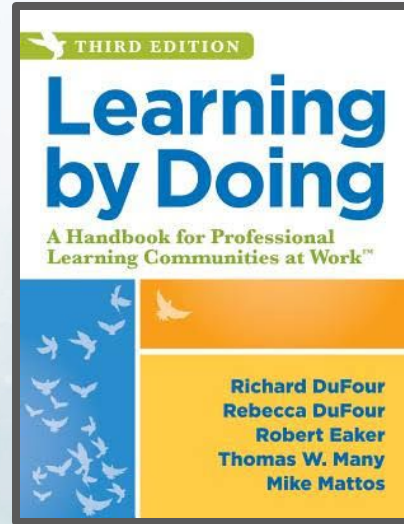
GAS FLOW
23,979%

WATER SUPPLY
0.119.5%

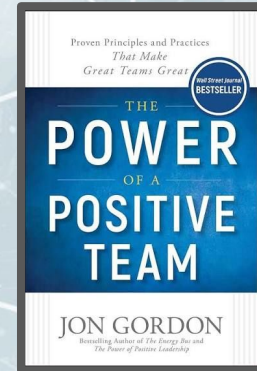
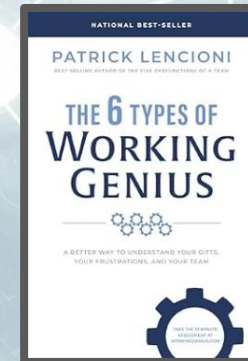
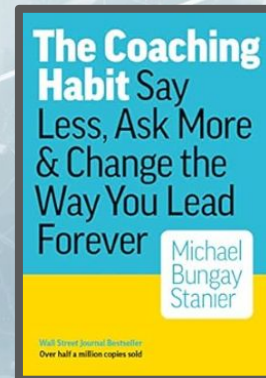
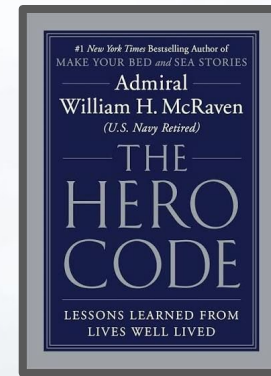
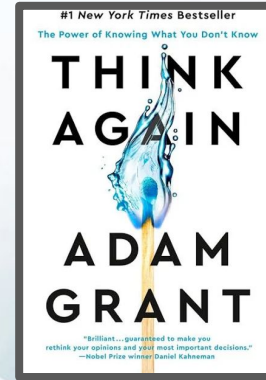
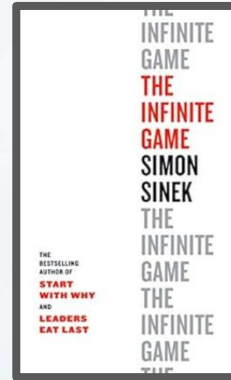
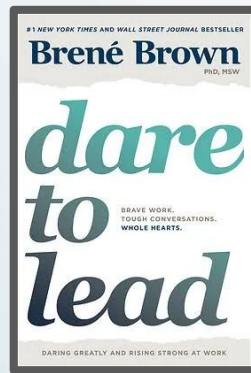
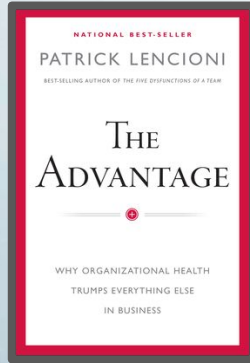
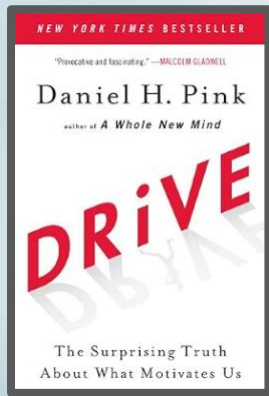
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Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

- Leveraging Instructional Side of the House
- Focusing on Continuous Improvement
- Including Empowered Teams in the Work
- Identifying Current Reality



It's about the books.



Key Ideas

1. Too often, technology is seen as providing internet and devices.
2. Most school district decisions impact or are impacted by technology.
3. Often, technology leaders fixate on cabinet seats, but the real work is partnering with the larger organization.
4. That work begins inside the technology department.
5. We won't be seen as partners until we act like partners.



Too often, technology is seen as
providing internet and devices.





The Utility Paradox

When technology is viewed like water or power—expected to work silently—it loses its strategic voice.

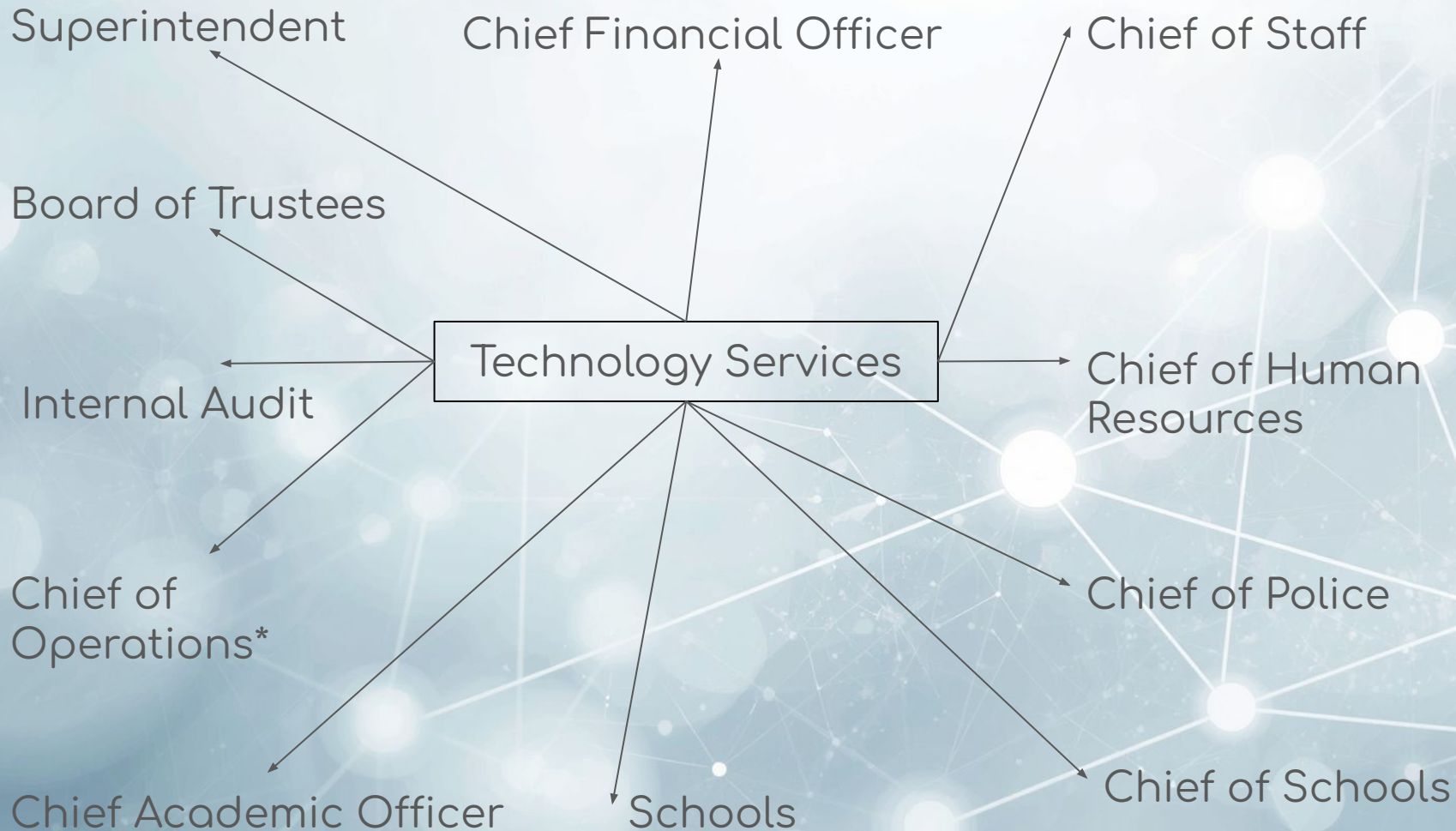
- Infrastructure Focus vs. Educational Impact
- Forgotten Until Failure Occurs
- Diminished Role in Cabinet-level Strategy

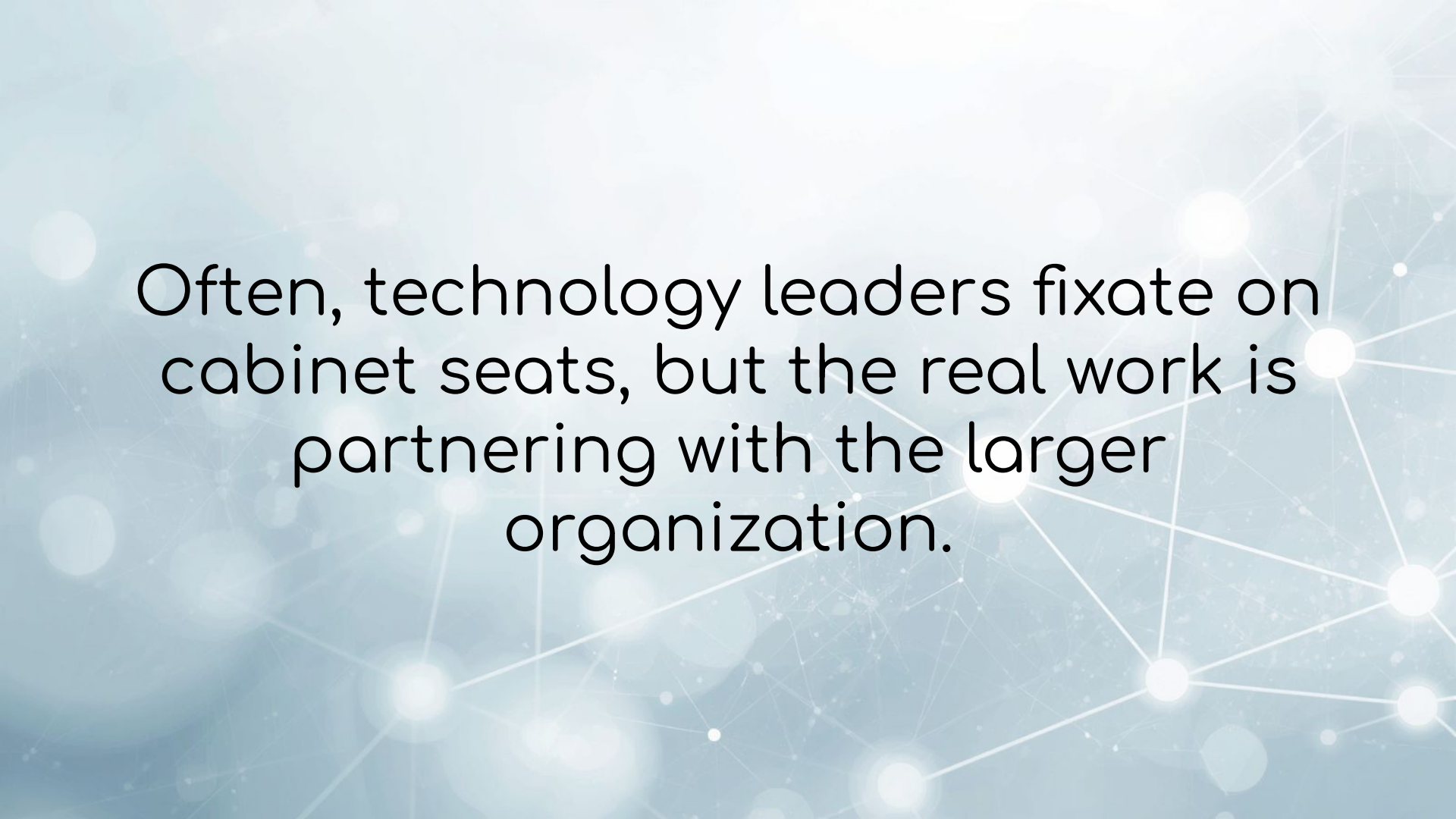




Most school district decisions impact
or are impacted by technology.







Often, technology leaders fixate on cabinet seats, but the real work is partnering with the larger organization.

"Mark has found the IT leadership chemo after Agile went to. Finally, an idea of how to structure IT, including leadership and five teams, and joining the business and IT together!"
—Joshua Becker, Chief Engineer at Whetlock CEC, Inc.

a Seat at the Table

MARK SCHWARTZ
Author of *The Art of Business Value*



IT Leadership in the Age of Agility



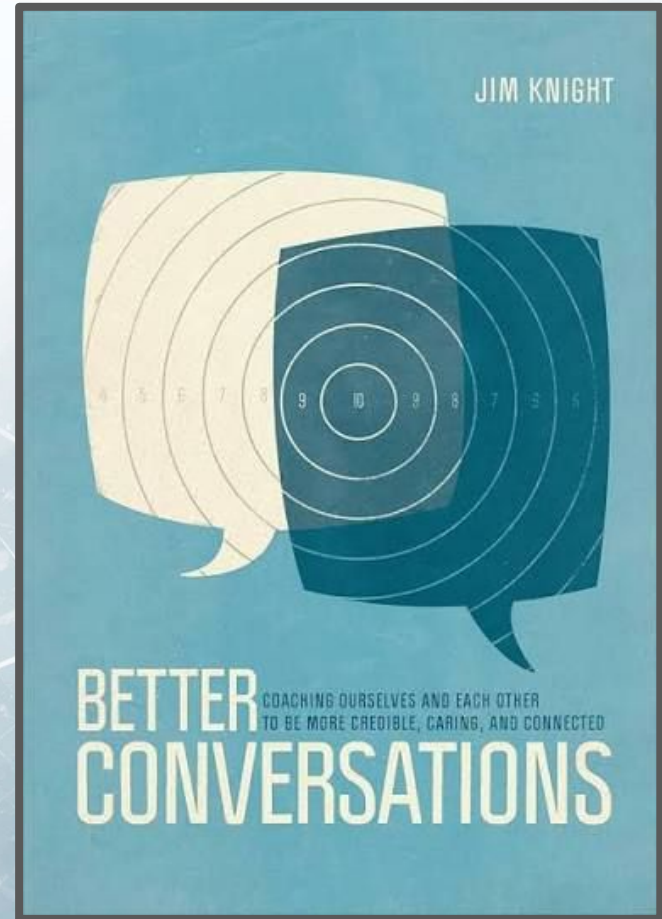




That work begins inside the
technology department.

“We have found that the single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, things get better. If they remain the same or get worse, ground is lost. Thus leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups—especially with people different than themselves.”

—Jim Knight



THE BETTER CONVERSATIONS BELIEFS

1. I see conversation partners as equals.
2. I want to hear what others have to say.
3. I believe people should have a lot of autonomy.
4. I don't judge others.
5. Conversation should be back and forth.
6. Conversation should be life-giving.

Mission and Values

The Instructional Technology Team advances educational best practices that cultivate life-long skills through critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and digital citizenship for the Conroe ISD community.

Values

Collaboration
Humor
Adaptability
Respect
Grace
Equality
Innovative
Trust

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY TEAM

Mission and Values

The District PEIMS department is here to foster an open line of patient and positive communication while offering support, training, and kindness to all.

Values

Patience

Excellence

Kindness

Making a Difference

Support

DISTRICT PEIMS DEPARTMENT

Mission and Values

The Training and Support Team collaborates with end users to adapt in an ever-changing technology environment. Providing support and information, we empower effortless use of devices, applications, and software. In keeping with the District vision, we strive to foster learning by serving the Conroe ISD community with knowledge, patience, and kindness.

Values

Members of the Training and Support Team are

Knowledgeable,
Collaborative,
Reliable, Adaptable,
Patient, and have
Integrity.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT TEAM



Information Systems

Department Meeting



October 4, 2022



Roadmap

- Welcome and Celebrations
- Team Building Activity
- Presentation: Leadership, Heroism, and Service
- Lunch and Fellowship
 - Lunch Provided

Leadership, Heroism, and Service

Why?





Leadership



*“A leader is anyone
who takes responsibility
for finding the potential
in people and processes,
and who has the courage
to develop that potential.”*

- **BRENÉ BROWN**, *Dare to Lead*



Listen Free



PARCAST

“The responsibility of leaders is to teach their people the rules, train them to gain competency and build their competence. At that point, leadership must step back and trust that their people know what they are doing and will do what needs to be done.”

—Simon Sinek, *Leaders Eat Last*

“Hopefully you understand that leadership is not just about what you do but what you can inspire, encourage, and empower others to do.”

—Jon Gordon, *The Power of Positive Leadership*

“Learn to say I don’t know when you actually don’t know the answer, and learn to take the blame even if it isn’t your fault so that you don’t hang people out to dry.”

—Tim Brighthouse

quoted in *Change Leader* by Michael Fullan

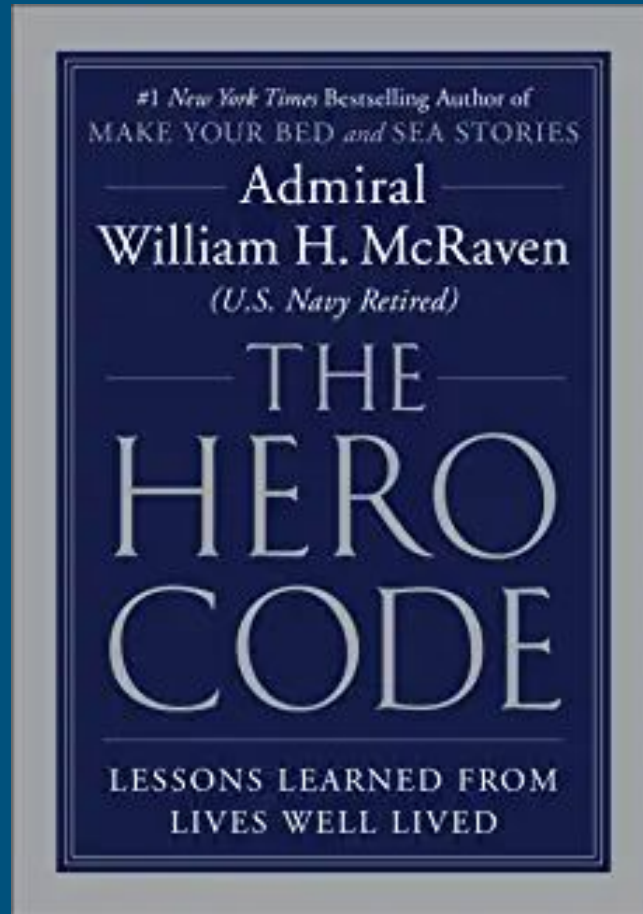
*Who we
are is
how we
lead.*



Brené Brown

Heroism

The Hero Code



The Hero Code

1. I will always strive to be COURAGEOUS; to take one step forward as I confront my fears.
1. I will work to be HUMBLE; to recognize the limits of my intellect, my understanding, and my power.

The Hero Code

- 3. I will learn to SACRIFICE by giving a little of my time, my talent, and my treasure to those in need.
- 3. I will be a person of INTEGRITY; every decision I make will be moral, legal, and ethical.

The Hero Code

- 5. I will be kind and COMPASSIONATE to at least one person every single day and expect nothing in return.
- 5. I will never give up on matters that are important to me, my family, my country, or my faith. I will PERSEVERE.

The Hero Code

- 7. Whatever job I am given, whatever DUTY I am bound by, I will do it to the best of my ability.
- 7. I will use my unique talents to inspire others and give them HOPE that tomorrow will be a better day.

The Hero Code

- 9. I will use HUMOR to comfort others, and never be afraid to laugh at myself.
- 9. No matter how great or small the offense against me, I will try to FORGIVE. I will be the victor, not the victim.

Be Someone's Hero

Service



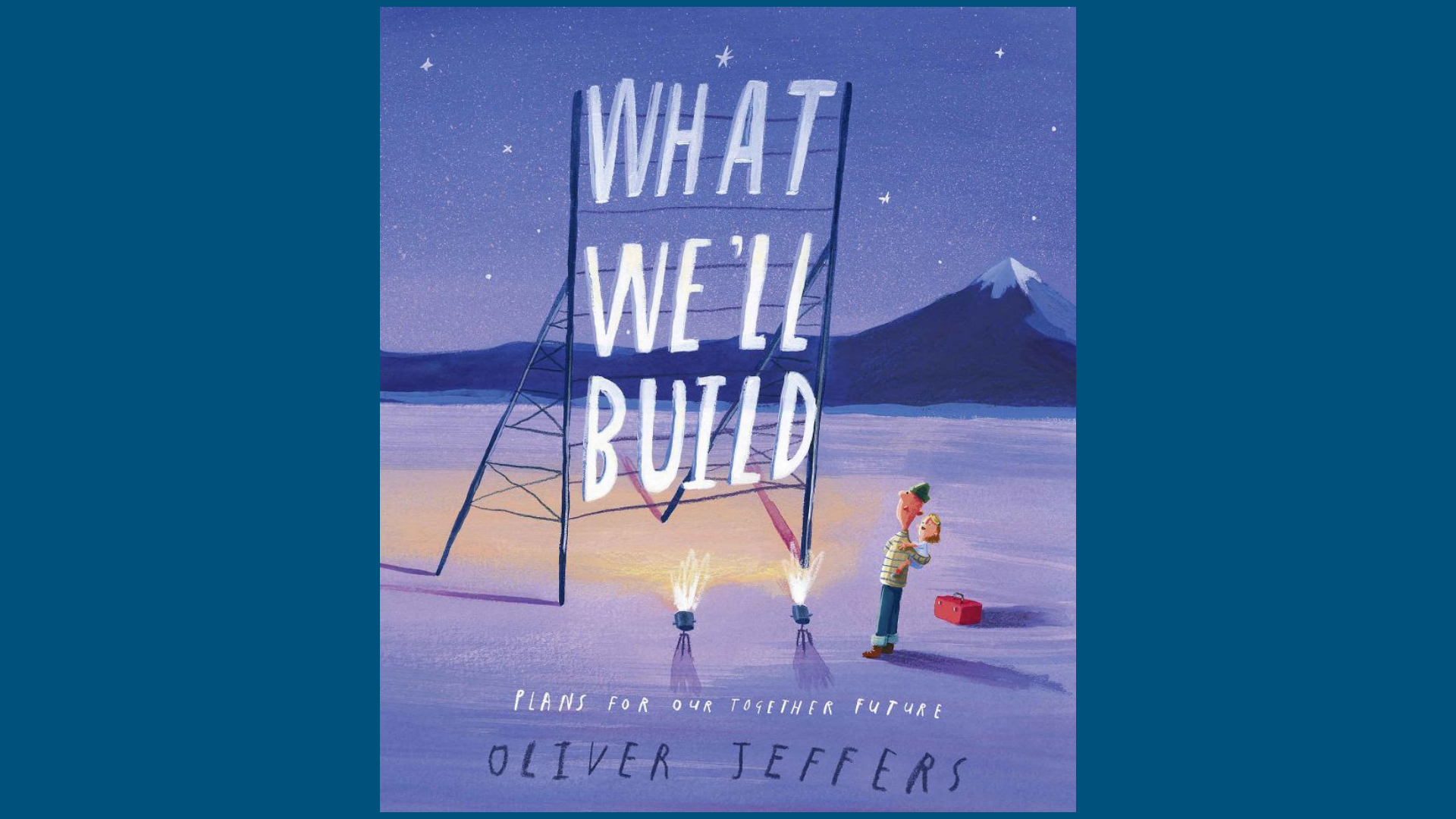
“What we know matters, but who we are matters more.”

—Brené Brown, *Dare to Lead*

“The most meaningful way to succeed is to help other people succeed.”

—Adam Grant

In service to
others, what will
we build?



WHAT WE'LL BUILD

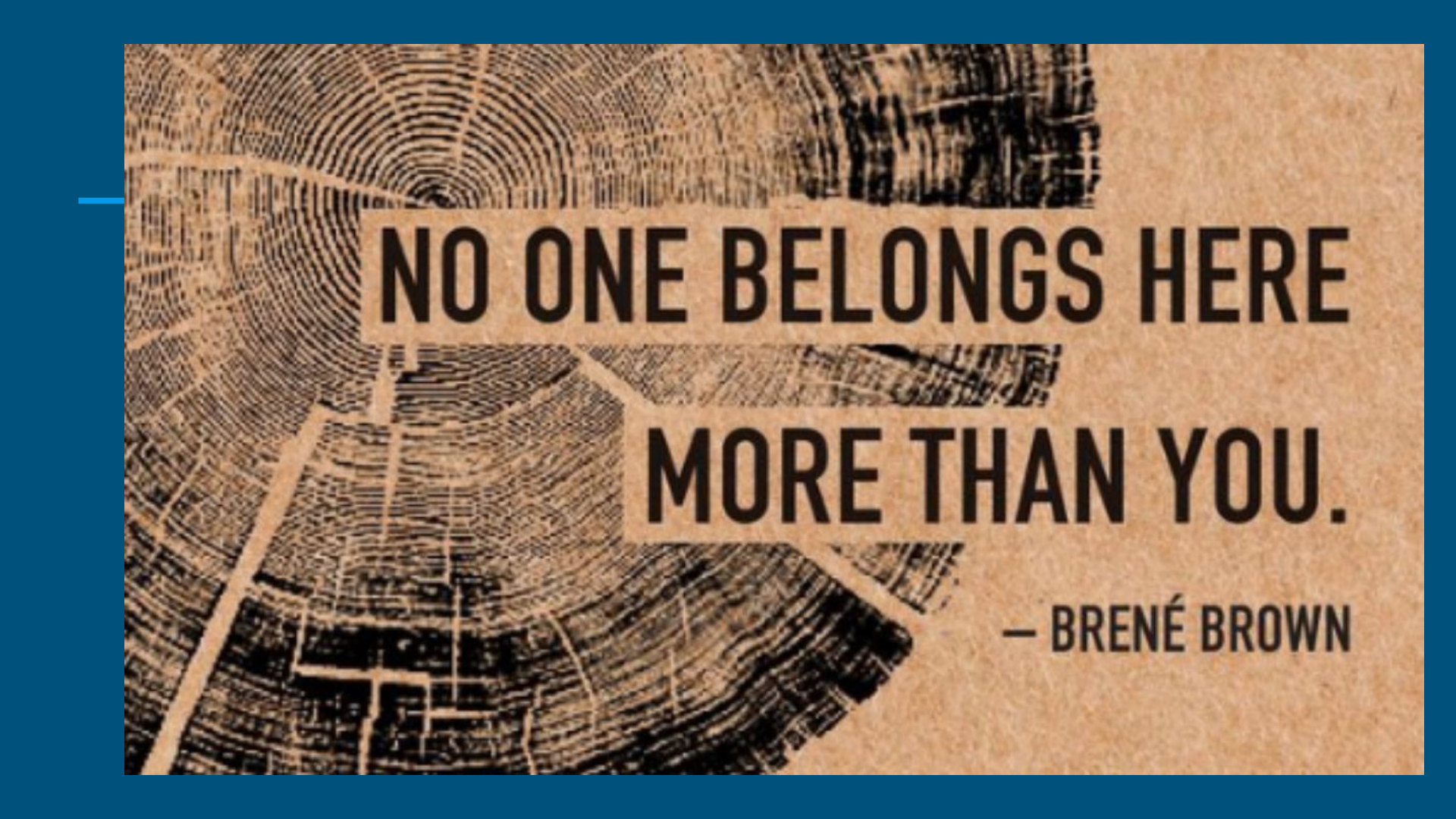
PLANS FOR OUR TOGETHER FUTURE

OLIVER JEFFERS

In service to
others, what will
we build?

Defining Objective

- Cultivate a departmental culture of collaboration while identifying and developing leadership potential in department staff.



**NO ONE BELONGS HERE
MORE THAN YOU.**

— BRENE BROWN



Information Systems Department Meeting

November 6, 2023

About Psychological Safety

- It's not about being nice. It's about candor and productive disagreement.
- It's not a personality factor. It is about work climate and our ability to offer ideas and voice concerns.



About Psychological Safety

- It's not just another word for trust. It's experienced at the group level and about the here and now – not what we expect from people in the future.
- It's not about lowering performance standards. It's about a more honest, more challenging, and more collaborative work environment.



About Psychological Safety



How Psychological Safety Relates to Performance Standards



About Psychological Safety

Defining Performance Standards

- Team Missions
- Team Values

Managing Performance Standards

- Group Expectations
- Group Effort



From *The New York Times* bestselling creator of *The Word Collector* and *Say Something!*

PETER H. REYNOLDS

Be You!



Psychological Safety



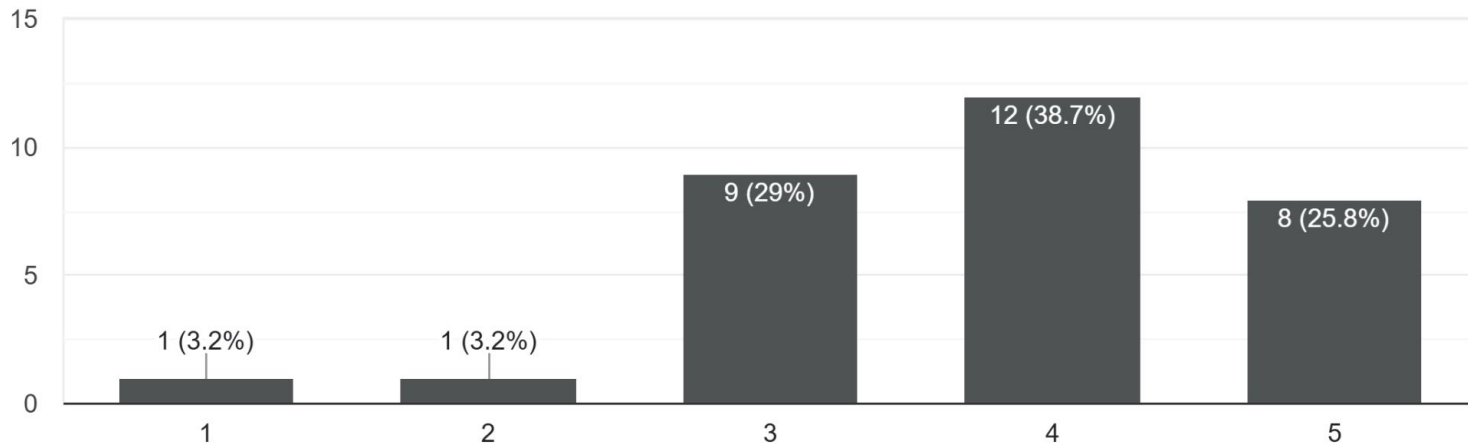
“a belief that **one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up** with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that **the team is safe** for interpersonal risk-taking”

-Amy Edmondson

January 2026

It is safe to take a risk on this team.

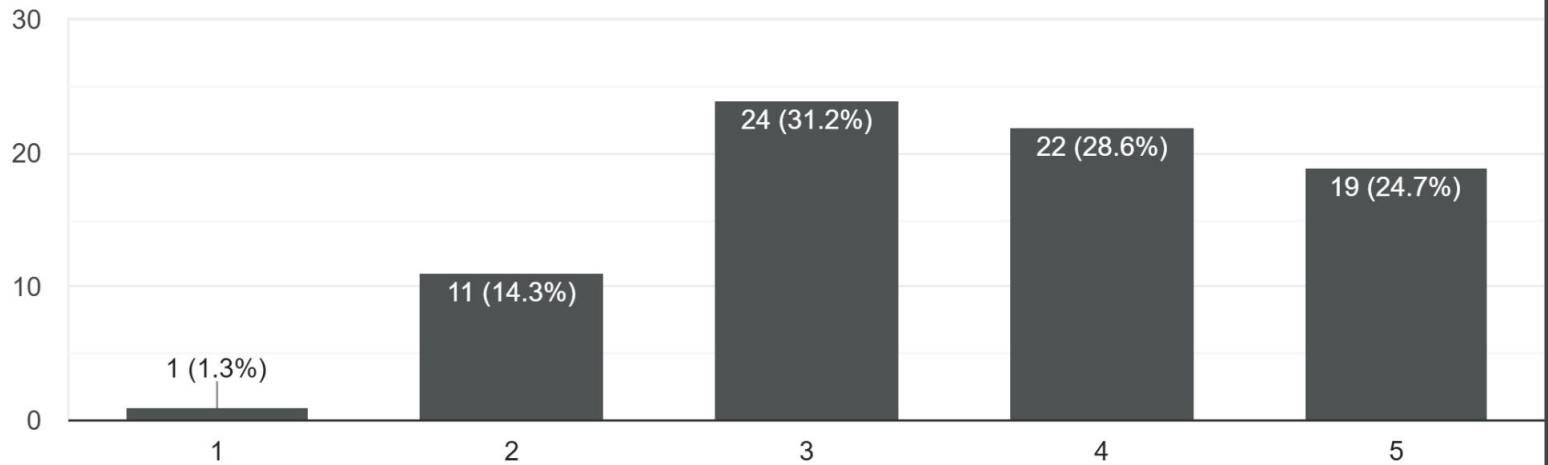
31 responses



April 2026

It is safe to take a risk on this team.

77 responses



from THE NEW YORK TIMES bestselling creator of THE WORD COLLECTOR

PETER H. REYNOLDS
**SAY
SOMETHING!**





Welcome to Technology Services

Department Meeting | May 2, 2025



Roadmap

- Welcome
- Technology Services Department
 - Structure
 - Leadership
- Communication
 - Department
 - Community
- Priorities
 - Who We Are
 - Why We Exist

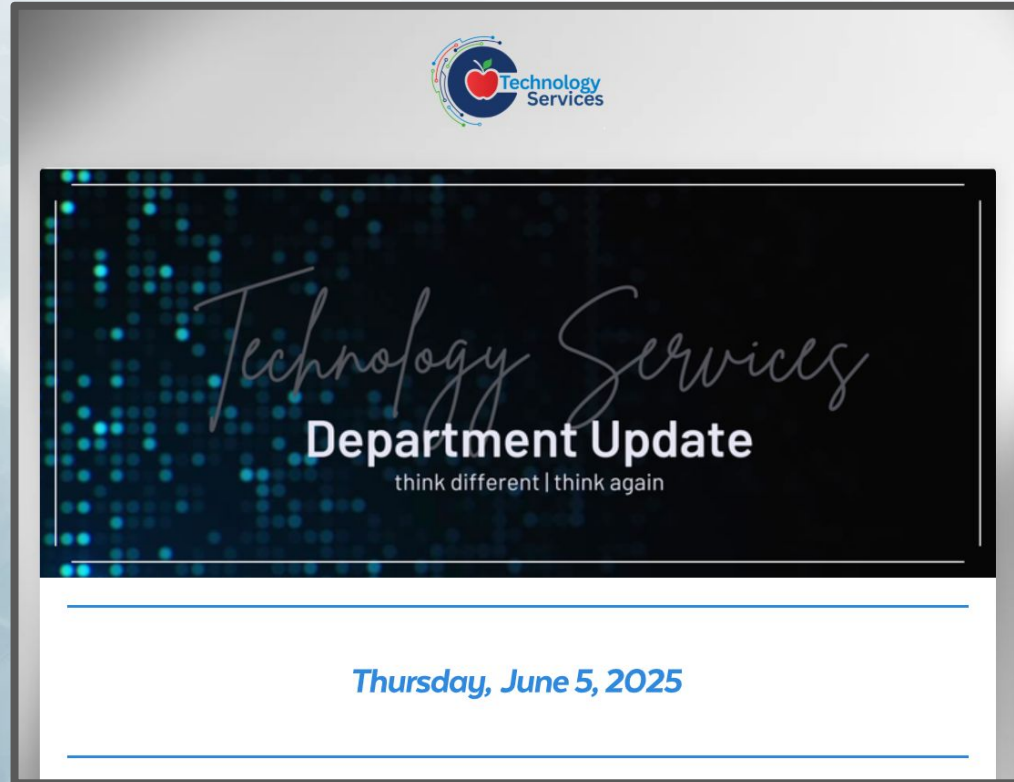


Communication Pathways

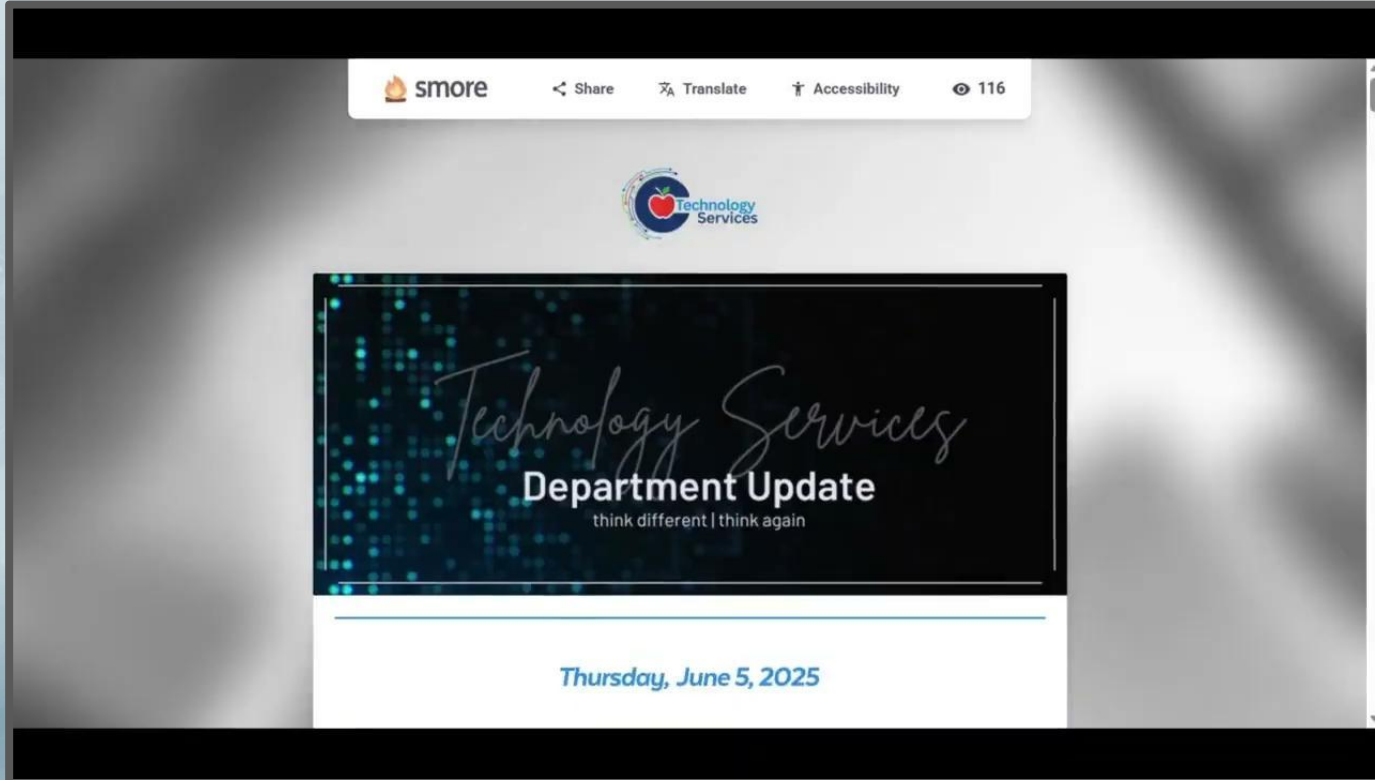
- Department Update
- Microsoft Teams
 - Technology Services Announcements
 - Help Desk Strike Team
 - Specific Team Chats
- Leadership Team
- Guiding Coalition
- 1:1 Meetings
 - Regularly Scheduled
 - Appointment Based
 - Open Door



Department Update



Department Update



Department Update



Department Update

People ♦ Service ♦ Communication

Technology Services Department Update

Friday, April 17, 2026

Workplace Culture

We've just completed the second administration of the Psychological Safety Survey. This time, we had 79 people complete the survey. That's nearly 80% of the department. There are nearly twice as many participants as in December. Thank you!

There are two items linked below. The first item is the slide deck with information about responses to each item in the survey. The second item is a video of me talking through that slide deck.

- 📄 Department Update 2026 - 04 17 Pysch Safety Survey
- <https://go.screenpal.com/watch/cOfb3DnOgKd>

I value your feedback, and we have already begun having leadership conversations about these results. Please also feel free to reach out to me individually if you would like to discuss this (or anything else). I am scheduling 1-on-1 conversations with anyone who would like to touch base.

Much love,

—Jarod



Staff Council Selection 2026

Use this form to express your interest in serving on the 2026 Technology Services Staff Council. Once interest is expressed, another form will be sent out for each group to select its Staff Council representative for the year.

Please do not nominate someone else. This is an opportunity for you to express your interest in being part of this leadership group. *Remember: Supervisors may not serve on the Staff Council.*

This form is automatically collecting emails from all respondents. [Change settings](#)

Community Communication

- Trust is Built Through Open Communication
- We Must
 - Communicate to make Decisions
 - Communicate Decisions
 - Communicate Good & Bad News
 - Communicate to Train
 - Communicate to Understand Needs



Why We Exist

- Support Teachers in Classrooms
- Be Colleagues
- Find and Implement Solutions to Support District Goals and Objectives



"LISTEN to ideas that
make you think hard—not
just opinions that make
you feel good."

—ADAM GRANT,
THINK AGAIN



BLUF

Bottom Line Up Front

The work of technology is *our* work.



BLUF

Bottom Line Up Front

We are focused on the *user* experience.





We won't be seen as partners until we
act like partners.

The Formula

- 3 Expectations
 - **People.** Everything we do is about people.
 - **Service.** Our role is to serve our community.
 - **Communication.** We are responsible for making sure our communication is clear and understood.
- 2 Foundational Tasks
 - **Enrollment.** Everything we do as a district starts here. Educating children starts here. Funding the district starts here. Everything starts here.
 - **Safety.** We are responsible for ensuring the safety of our students and colleagues. We must plan for safety, work toward safety, and train for safety.
- 1 Priority
 - **Empower Innovation.** When things are working as they should, Technology Services should be somewhat invisible. People should be able to do their work with ease. Moreover, they should be able to work toward innovative solutions without having to wonder if their tools will work. We should never be the roadblock!

You Have Permission

To Make a Difference

UN
REAS
ABLE
HOSI
TALITY

So many of us wait for permission. Early in my career, I thought I had to be pointed in the right direction. I was unsure of my authority. Who was I to make a decision? Wasn't someone else in charge?

Well, turns out, I didn't need permission to make things better for my students. You don't need permission to make things better for our colleagues who need your help. But, if you want it, here it is: **You have permission to make a difference.**

Take the time to hear the person in front of you. Understand what they need. And, figure out what it takes to help them. You may not be responsible for what they need or the system owner for the thing they are having problems with, but take the next step anyway. Don't tell the person in front of you who they need to talk to; make the connection for them. Find the answer. Solve the problem. Make a difference.

You have permission!





Exchange Day - Technology Components

Technology Components

- **Asynchronous Days**
 - Canvas Courses
 - Canvas Commons
 - Principal Emails and Reports
 - Teacher Emails
- **Exchange Days**
 - Exchange Day Eligible Eduphoria Courses (District & Campus)
 - Principal Emails and Reports
 - Teacher Emails



Information Systems Focus

- Automate as much as possible
- Minimize impact on principals
- Provide timely updates for principals and teachers
- Provide training and support for District module creators
- Provide training and support for campus course creators



100 - 95 - 90

Partnering means fully committing to district annual goals.

- 100% of our campuses with an A or B rating
- 95% average daily attendance for students
- 95% employee satisfaction
- 90% students indicating they feel a sense of belonging in their schools

Toward a Service Model

Food for Thought

Dr. Jarod Lambert & David Santiago

Technology Services Department

June 3, 2026



Central Principle

of the Service Model

Each team may have specific systems, roles, responsibilities, and areas of expertise, but the service outcome belongs to Technology Services as a whole. The goal is not for each team to prove that the problem is not theirs. The goal is for the right teams to work together until the service is understood, restored, improved, or properly assigned.



Service Catalog

User-facing Services

- Endpoint and Classroom Technology Services
- Connectivity Services
- Account and Access Services
- Application and Business System Services
- Communication Services
- Security, Privacy, Filtering, and Compliance Services
- Student Information, Data Services, and PEIMS Services

The Analogy

Technology Services as Restaurant

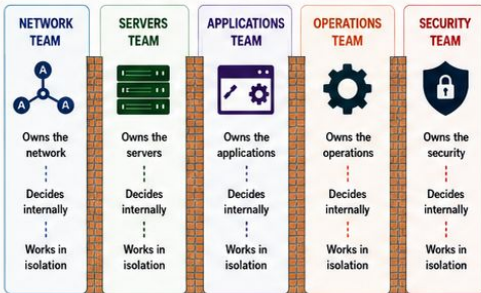


BE THE
Reason

1 SILOED MODEL: THE OLD WAY

Administrative Boundaries = Operational Boundaries

Work happens in silos. Decisions stay in silos.
Problems get passed around. Users feel the pain.



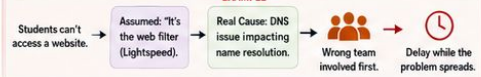
THE RESULT: SILOS CREATE PAIN FOR EVERYONE

DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

Issues are treated as belonging to one system or one team—even when the real cause is elsewhere.



EXAMPLE



CHANGE AND EXTERNAL IMPACTS

Not all impact comes from our changes. External or cloud changes can ripple across our environment.

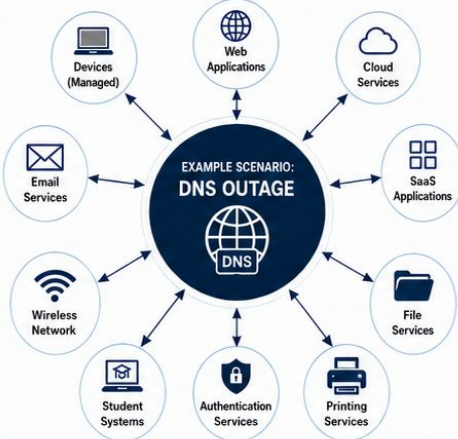


❌ Silos hide the real cause, slow down resolution, and create frustration for users and teams.

2 MODERN ENVIRONMENT: THE REALITY

Everything Is Connected

A change or issue anywhere can affect everything.
Dependencies are everywhere.



THE RIPPLE EFFECT



REALITY CHECK

We don't control everything.
Vendors update. Cloud providers change. Internet routes shift. Dependencies break.

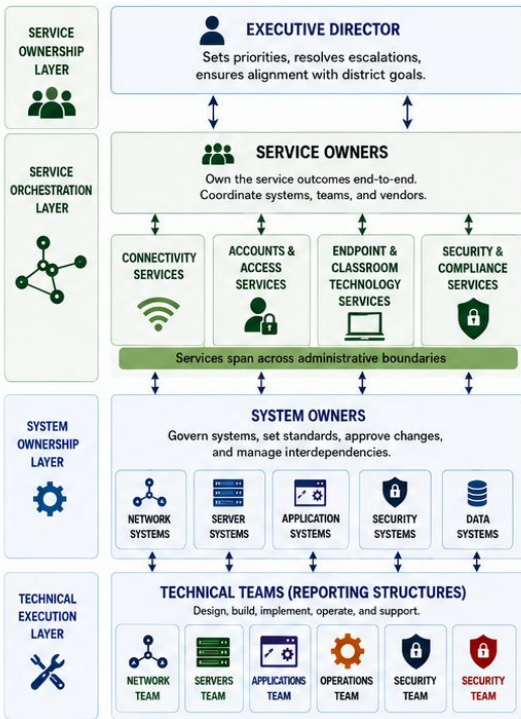
Our changes can have big impact.
A small change in one place can ripple across many systems and services.

⚠️ In a connected environment, there are no isolated problems and no risk-free changes—only managed risk.

3 SERVICE MODEL: THE NEW WAY

Operational Boundaries Expand Across Administrative Boundaries

We focus on services, not silos.
We collaborate across teams to deliver reliable outcomes.



✅ We solve the right problems, together.
Faster resolution. Better experience. Stronger trust.



THE SHIFT: From Siloed Work to Coordinated Service Delivery
Our goal: Seamless services for users. Stronger outcomes for our district.



User Experience Comes First



Our Work, Not Siloed Work



One Team, One Mission



Reliable Services. Stronger Trust.

BE THE Reason

1

SILOED MODEL: THE OLD WAY

Administrative Boundaries = Operational Boundaries

2

MODERN ENVIRONMENT: THE REALITY

Everything Is Connected

3

SERVICE MODEL: THE NEW WAY

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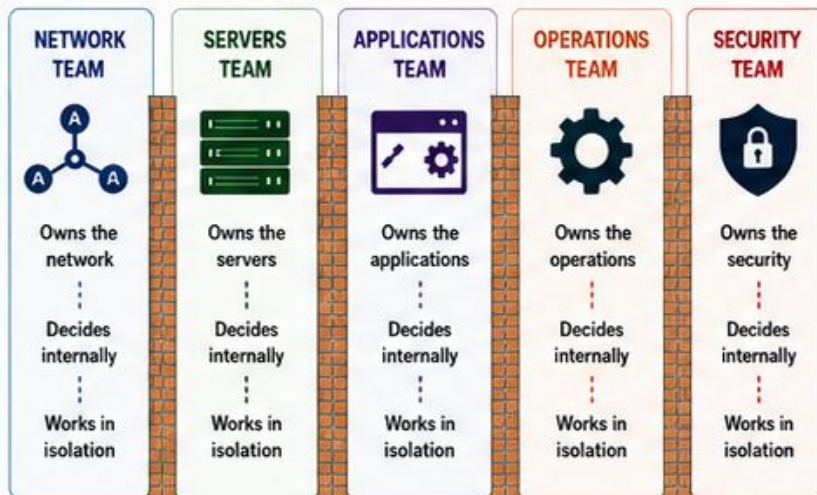
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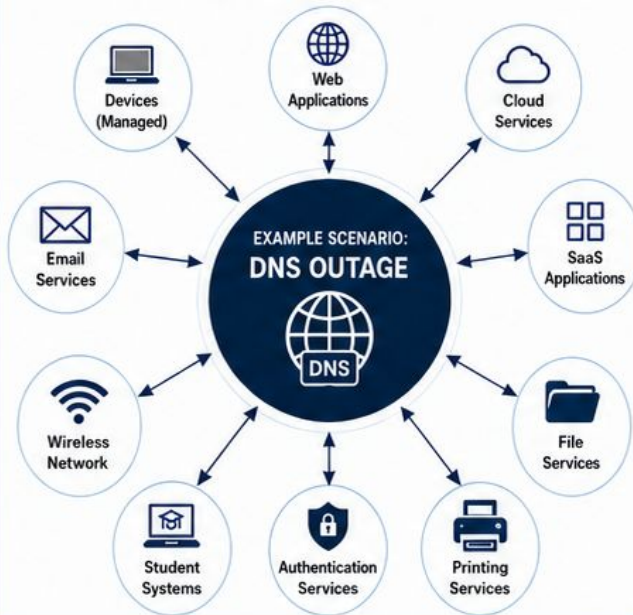
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MODERN ENVIRONMENT: THE REALITY

Everything Is Connected

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THE RIPPLE EFFECT



DNS outage occurs



Many services can't resolve properly



Widespread impact to users and staff



Harder to identify the true cause



Longer recovery and ongoing frustration

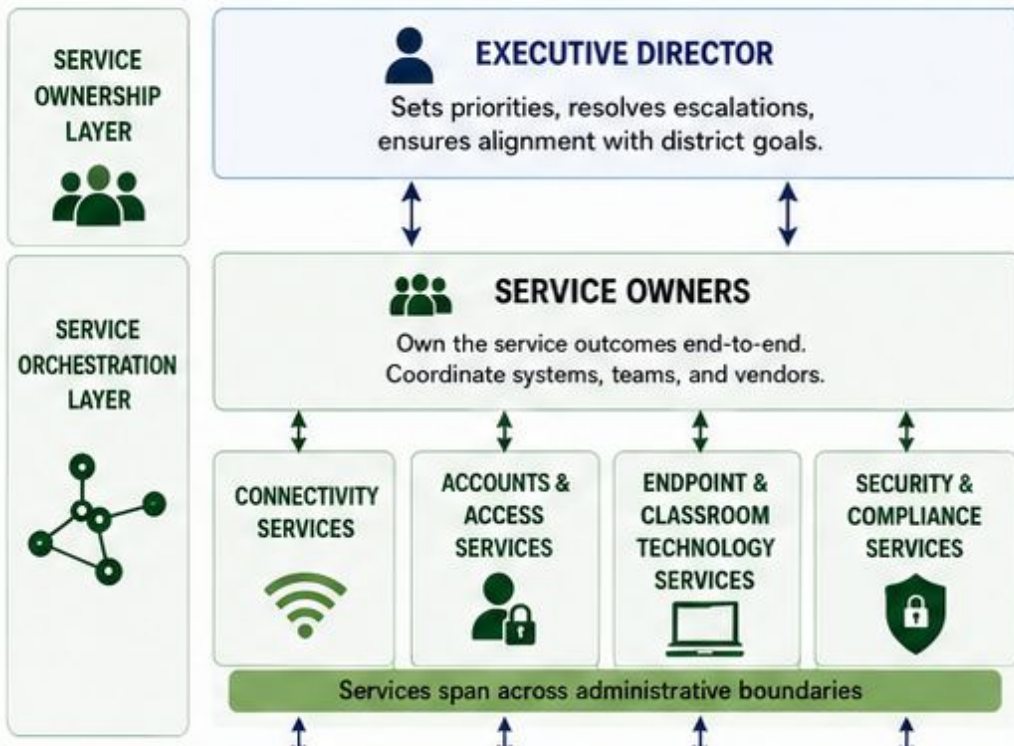
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User Experience
Comes First



Our Work,
Not Siloed Work

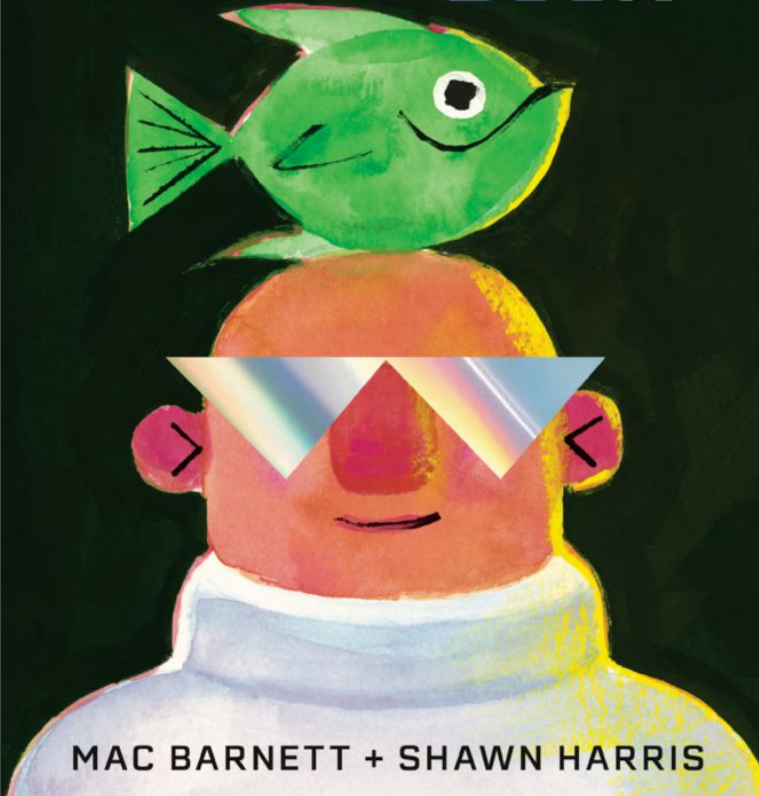


One Team,
One Mission



Reliable Services.
Stronger Trust.

THE FUTURE BOOK



BE THE
Reason
★

Contact

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