

Questions and Answers: Paul Garro

1. How long have you lived in Grey Forest, TX?

My wife and I purchased the Coggeshall property at 19214 Sherwood Trail from two amazing people and moved to Grey Forest in December of 2002. We immediately celebrated Christmas Eve with more than 50 family and friends at our new “forever home”. We became good friends with Mr. and Mrs. Coggeshall, helped them move to Floresville, attended their funeral services and remain grateful to them for entrusting us with their home in Grey Forest.

2. What do you like most about Grey Forest?

We love the serenity of Grey Forest, the radiant sunrise, the enlivening tree canopy, the commencement of birds singing in the morning, the deer awakening from beneath our fig tree, the peacock searching to satisfy the hunger of her peachicks, the tranquility of the sunset, and most of all, the loving hearts of so many neighbors. The community is filled with creative persons, diverse perspectives, eclectic experiences, and a collective embracing of one of the most unique cities in Texas. We love that Grey Forest can provide us with daily respite from the noise of urban life, and a feeling of being safe among neighbors that care for one another.

3. What are some of the ways you have contributed to the Grey Forest community?

I would hope that my greatest contribution to the Grey Forest community is being a good neighbor. For example, caring for and serving Chris Templeton as she fought cancer; trusted friend, handyman and priority responder for Peli Plyer as she aged; mentor to teens needing guidance; resourcing employment for neighbors searching for opportunities and volunteering when neighbors needed help with a project.

4. What are some of the ways you have served the Greater San Antonio Community?

President of the San Antonio Rotary Club (One of the largest clubs in the United States engaging in “service above self” to create lasting change globally, locally and within ourselves through 7 main causes):

1. Promoting Peace,
2. Fighting disease,
3. Providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene,
4. Supporting mothers and children,
5. Supporting education,
6. Growing local economies and
7. Protecting the environment.

Founding board member of the StayStrong Foundation Advisory Board (supporting families battling childhood cancer); Executive Board member of the Boy Scouts of America Alamo Area Council (character development and value-based leadership);

Board member of St. Mary's University, Greehey School of Business, Forum on Entrepreneurship; Past-President of San Fernando Cathedral Parish Council. Past participant of the FBI Citizens Academy (an in-depth education of the threats to our nation and the role of the FBI in protecting the nation from those threats); and participant of the Masters Leadership Program (professional development for community leadership).

Designed a number of inspiring murals to engage the community and connect the community to the services provided at places like, The Children's Shelter, The Children's Bereavement Centers, Pre-K 4 SA, The Boys and Girls Clubs, Haven for Hope, CASA (Child Advocates San Antonio), and Any Baby Can.

5. Describe your leadership philosophy and how it has been shaped by your personal values?

My leadership philosophy integrates three personal values:

- 1. Human beings are inherently gifted;
Acknowledge their gifts and lead by serving;**
- 2. Relationships are paramount; and**
- 3. Results matter.**

In order to accomplish meaningful goals, understanding and leveraging the individual and composite talent of the team is essential. Self-awareness of one's own gifts and team awareness of the collective team talent is critical in advancing a mission and executing on a strategic vision. To this end, developing genuine relationships remains vital. Authentic relationships build the bonds of trust, unleashes creativity and stirs the deep passion necessary to complete difficult tasks. Cultivating relationships is an important element in communicating passion, mission focus, and a compelling vision. Maintaining a positive, "can-do" attitude along with a discipline of listening attentively and actively results in high yield. Through Effective Listening, a leader can harness the team's common ground, passion and talent to bring extraordinary results towards a common goal. And results matter! Tangible and valued results creates a culture that moves exponentially towards the common goal.

6. What are 3 formative highlights from your professional experience?

- a) Deeply formed by the experience in East St. Louis, Illinois and in Appalachia region of Eastern Kentucky. East St. Louis is a city described by Jonathan Kozol in the book *Savage Inequalities* as a city so poor and devastated that it has had to lay off 84% of its city work force and cannot afford regular garbage pick-up. It is a city where raw sewage regularly backs up into the homes of its residents and into yards where children play; and where nearby chemical plants pollute the air and soil with lead, arsenic and mercury. It is a city so rundown that burned-out buildings are a common sight and that some of its major thoroughfares resemble ghost towns. It has been described as America's Soweto. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Appalachian

county where served has the lowest median household income in the United States - a staggering 41.5 per cent of residents falling below the poverty line. The U.S. Census Bureau considers low income roughly \$45,000 a year for a family of four. In Owsley, the median household income is \$19,351 - the lowest in the country outside of Puerto Rico.

- b) Numerous times, the students at the Missouri School for The Blind/Multi-handicapped Center helped me understand a life lesson that... “To be a teacher in the right sense is to be a learner. I am not a teacher, only a fellow student.” — Soren Kierkegaard
- c) My disposition towards my work has been shaped by Results Based Leadership training received through the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore. Results Based Leadership is a highly regarded leadership development program that combines results based leadership techniques with hands on implementation. This training has proven process to accelerate meaningful change across an organization. The Foundation’s unique approach to results-based leadership development stems from a conviction that results-driven leaders are vital to achieving measurable and lasting improvements for kids, youth and families. I gained the skills and experience needed to be data driven and outcome oriented while focusing on collaboration and internal alignment.

7. What are some Noteworthy Accomplishments?

- Award recipient for the **2024 Hearts of Gold Awards** – Wall of Fame. A panel of judges selects five individuals from around the globe who have clearly distinguished themselves in helping those with special needs and disabilities;
- Featured **speaker for DreamWeek 2024** about the tangible practice of Compassion in our communities. Invited to speak in order to share insights and expertise instrumental in driving the mission towards building a more equitable and enlightened society;
- Invitation as a featured **artist** in a curated art show for DreamWeek 2024;
- Facilitator of conversations with prominent business leaders (Executive Book Review) with the book ***Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit*** by Parker J. Palmer
- Recipient of Texas A&M College Station’s **Transformational Leader Award** given to individuals who have been role models, mentors, and servant-leaders transforming their communities;
- Recipient of two Rotary awards: **1. Rotarian of the Year and 2. Service Above Self Award** (Rotary's highest honor recognizing Rotarians who demonstrate Rotary's motto, Service Above Self, by volunteering their time and talents to help others. The award is internationally competitive, and is granted to no more than 150 Rotarians worldwide). Named President for the San Antonio Downtown Rotary beginning July 2023;
- Participant in the **National Conference of State Legislatures** to speak about innovative educational programs for children at-risk;

- Invitation to the **Oxford Roundtable** (an international forum to promote quality education);
- As an educator, earned the honor of classroom **“teacher of the year”** three times including the distinguished district “teacher of the year” from Northside Independent School District;
- Filmed by Association for Supervision and & Curriculum Development (ASCD) as an example of superb teaching; chosen to create content for the video production by the JC Penney Leadership Institute on School Improvement;
- Chosen to keynote at the annual Finland National Symposium on School Improvement.

8. What three leadership characteristics would you choose to describe yourself as a professional and give me a behavioral example of how you have applied each of them in your career?

- Listener/Servant leader-** At various times in my career, I have explicitly sought to hone my skills as a listener (i.e. Hospital Chaplain program, 10-day silent retreat, missionary service in the hallows of Appalachia, the Colonials of Coatzacoalcos, Mexico, various professional development workshops on servant leadership, and reading books on the topic). Listening nurtures humility, fosters personal reflection, and cultivates service to others. With genuine listening skills, there is no job too small to support a team mate and no person too distant. It is normal for me to engage in a daily “walk-about” to touch base and check in with staff.
- Passion/Commitment to the mission-** Fueled by a deep faith, trust in humans and optimistic outlook, I bring positive and inventive energy to all that I do. I have been told by colleagues that my passion is contagious and uplifting. I try to delight someone each day with a small token of appreciation, gesture or giving my time. One behavioral example is the noticeable thoroughness of written material, speeches/presentations and accompanying art work. Another example is simply the dedication to approach each day and each person with a smile and positivity.
- Trusted Steward-** I feel very respectful and responsible to care for this world and the people that make up the world. Therefore, I am a leader that will keep information confidential, follow through on promises, and remain attentive to details.

9. What would you bring to Mayoral position that is uniquely you?

I started my own business when I was 14 years old painting houses (interior and exterior), small home remodeling, and maintenance jobs (I kept that business part-time for approximately 20 years). It allowed me to serve elected officials, famous authors, business executives and everyday neighbors. I have worked in high poverty areas, racially and ethnically diverse regions and successfully served in leadership positions by encompassing diverse opinions and communicating the common ground for diverse stakeholders. I have managed multi-million dollar budgets and

have always cultivated a robust volunteer corps to compliment the explicit priorities in the budget.

I will bring humility, creativity, innovation, novel ideas, increased connectivity to our fellow neighbors and to the greater Grey Forest community. I bring a network of national, state level and local leaders from the business, philanthropic and educational communities which could foster exceptional partnerships for Grey Forest.

I believe that leadership is more than just a transactional activity, but an essential function in serving others. I bring an ethos of care and willingness to match actions with words in service to others. I live my beliefs and principles every day. I bring 20 years of executive leadership. I seek to restore unity to our community.

10. When do you include subordinates in the decision-making process?

I have been trained extensively and practice the principle of subsidiarity when it comes to decision making. In other words, educate, train and empower authority to those most responsible for the outcomes. As a leader, I feel obligated to shape a clear and compelling vision, for establishing desired outcomes (i.e. results-based leadership) and for communicating the guideposts along the path towards that vision, but delegate authority to the people closest to the action where outcomes are produced. This tends to foster ownership of the outcomes, yields greater accountability and performance.

Coupled with the idea of subsidiarity is to ensure that feedback loops and that an open communication culture exists in the organization. With the existence of these key elements in organizational culture, subordinates have a voice even when decisions are reserved for the CEO and leadership team.

11. If you could have dinner with anyone who has ever lived, regardless of whether they are alive or not, who would that person be and why would you want to have dinner with them?

My little brother, Joey, passed away in 2006 at the age of 36. We were very close and I often wish we had more time together.

He was born with Down Syndrome yet approached life with great zeal and enthusiasm. Throughout his lifetime, he wrote hundreds of short "episodes" depicting his life and experiences. Joey dreamed about creating a movie or TV show from these episodes and recently, a prominent marketing CEO read Joey's episodes with the plan to write a script for movie production.

I would love to have dinner with Joey and everyone potentially involved in the production of his movie(s) to ask clarifying questions about his writings and seek his guidance on the scenes he created. Besides the amazing conversations and shared insights, the dinner would allow us to celebrate with Joey the reality of his vision for creating a movie written by him arriving at fruition.

12. What was your most challenging career transition? Why was it such a challenge? How did you make it successful?

The transition from Director of School Improvement in the Northeast ISD to taking on the role of Executive Director of City Year San Antonio was a very challenging transition. At NEISD, I was part of a high performing team making significant and meaningful impact with ample local, state and federal Funds to execute our strategic plans. At NEISD, we shared a strong work-ethic culture, a unified mission and a collaborative team approach that yielded excellent results. In retrospect, the experience at NEISD readily presented an aspirational road map for the challenging transition to leading City Year San Antonio (CYSA).

After acquiring the position at CYSA, I completely embraced its mission, however, the non-profit environment was unfamiliar to me, and because of funding shortfalls, excessive debt, programmatic deficiencies and a fractured reputation in the community, decisions were amplified, and time lines were short. In addition, City Year National was aggressively assembling a plan to scale City Year. The transition required diverse and intense leadership skills and the humility to seek help promptly to turn around a failing local non-profit and join the national scaling efforts.

After taking a deep breath, I secured my immediate advisors/mentors to help me build perspective and guide me through the transition. These immediate advisors were gathered from existing trusted relationships and with the local board chair. Also, I reached out to the City Year National network and received mentorship from the Executive Director of New York (He was tested, mature and successful). Secondly, I met one-on-one with every staff person, the existing AmeriCorps members and strategic community leaders. Our conversations were sincere and transparent. My goal in the transition was to develop strong relationships, listen, collaboratively discover what mattered the most and surround myself with thoughtful, experienced leaders that would give me candid feedback and assessment of the path needed to turn things around.

13. Tell me about a time when you developed a group into a strong, well-functioning team?

While I was principal at Sunset High School, NISD, the core leadership team developed into an especially strong team. The school was unique and designed to accommodate the learning needs of high school students that did not fit into the traditional routine of high schools. I was a rookie principal charged to assemble a small, diverse leadership team that could pioneer a school model and persevere through the challenges presented by the unique student body.

There were multi-faceted reasons for the success of the team, but the main pillars seemed to originate with the fact that all chose the assignment and were willing to innovate a new paradigm for educating at-risk high school students. Additionally, the team members spent quality time to get to know each other and their families. This evolved into a strengths-based platform that was particularly useful in team

cohesion. The last pillar that seemed to be immensely important was the depth of agreement on the data that would be used to track progress and measure success. This team's commitment earned accolades from the Texas Education Agency, the US Department of Education and the students that graduated.

14. Have you ever had to develop a vision and communicate that vision to the employees of a company?

I have been involved in reimagining the vision of a company and/or enlivening the vision of a company.

My first response to this question comes from a composite experience in the education landscape where I was privileged to be involved numerous times in reinventing schools that would be more engaging and meaningful (i.e. small learning communities, magnet schools, and "choice" schools). Each time, it was critical to collaboratively hone the vision of that particular school, tell the stories that build the path to reach that vision and most importantly, provide the resources, education and professional development to empower everyone to move towards the vision.

My second response to the question centers around the two companies I was privileged to lead (City Year San Antonio and Central Catholic High School San Antonio). The common lesson gained from each of these experiences was in the formation of a vision that honored the foundation of each company and reimagined that founding vision so that it was relevant, inspiring and enduring.

I find storytelling (whole group and one-on-one) with intentional images to be a powerful way to communicate the vision. The process of communicating the vision must permeate not only internal/external brand and training, but also be evident in behaviors (especially from the leadership). Being able to articulate, model and observe key behaviors seems critical in moving a company towards a vision. When the vision is communicated experientially, it tends to create company "fitness and muscle memory" towards the vision. Another key element in communicating the vision is to have listening vehicles, data and/or feedback loops in order to calibrate, and celebrate progress.

15. Tell me about a time when you managed a group or department that was heading south and you needed them to head north?

When chosen to serve as President of Central Catholic HS, I found that the JROTC program was deteriorating, and facing extinction (i.e. falling enrollment, low morale, outdated curriculum, mediocre performance, and poor leadership). In conversations and surveys with staff, alumni and potential students/families, we agreed that this program was critical to the leadership development and formation of the students. The department needed to be heading in a positive direction to not only serve the current students, but also to attract future students.

A lengthy SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) process took place to level set status and begin the process towards improvement. Regular meetings were established to strategically plan and monitor the execution of the plan. Key performance indicators were established, expectations clarified and appropriate resources/support were made available to optimize success. Eventually there was voluntary reassignment and retirement of 3/4 of the JROTC staff that led to new JROTC staff and especially new leadership of the program. The ¼ staff that remained was invigorated and important to the sustainability of the new direction.

My role in correcting the direction of the program was primarily twofold: 1. Remain vigilant in communicating and monitoring what matters most and 2. Remain a loyal mentor and coach to the leader of the JROTC program and support his leadership to meet the agreed upon goals.

The new JROTC leadership and staff embraced the vision for the program and with disciplined effort, brought the program from near failure to national recognition (i.e. increased enrollment, exceptional morale, innovative curriculum, top performance nationally, and great leadership).

16. What do you do to put people at ease when they come to you with a work problem?

When an employee or colleague comes to me with a work problem, I thank them for communicating and trusting me with the information. Depending on the environment and circumstances, I will physically stop whatever I am doing and give them my undivided attention. As I am listening to the problem, I will try to help define the problem and help shape a path to solve the problem. Depending on the depth and complexity of the problem, I will together with the employee determine the appropriate follow through and next steps.

17. Tell me about a time when you deliberately planned the tone of a particular conversation. How did you do that? What result did it have?

Planning the tone of a conversation is important in amplifying the message. Choosing the appropriate environment, taking the time for proper preparation and creating the runway for the conversation are important. I like to be transparent and leverage the power of invitation and agenda to set a tone. I make efforts to reveal and/or give a glimpse of the tone of a conversation so that there are no surprises. For example, if there is a pending difficult conversation, I will invite the person to a meeting, give them a general sense of the agenda and I may say something like, "let's meet where you feel most comfortable because the conversation may get difficult." Sometimes, I will use a personal story, an anecdote or recount a common scene from a piece of literature or movie as a catalyst for the tone of a conversation.

All in all, being thoughtful about the audience, cognizant of the spectrum of emotional response and properly setting the stage for the tone desired, usually yields positive results.

18. Have you ever had to be a spokesperson for an organization in front of the press? What did you learn from that experience?

I have been through various forms of media training by the school district, non-profit organizations and contracted marketing firms over my career. The training was important to my role because I would often be the spokesperson for the organization in front of the press/media. I have had the privilege of promoting organizations by being interviewed for newspaper, appeared on live news, talk shows, podcasts and radio. I have also had to represent organizations in front of the press over difficult issues (i.e. school tragedies, controversial matters, and political issues).

What I have learned the most is that body language, and clear and concise thoughts are essential. Being prepared with talking points is important and maintaining discipline in thought, critical. In other words, be honest always and transparent as appropriate, but be in control of the message at all times. I can recall times when I have given 30 minute interviews to the press and 15 seconds was used of the 30 minutes. So, words and body language must be intentional and arranged in segments that can communicate the message accurately regardless of which segment is used.

19. Tell me about a long-range business or personal goal that you set and achieved. Walk me through your planning process. Tell me about obstacles you had to overcome and what you did to celebrate the accomplishment of it?

Years ago, my niece who lives 1000+ miles from San Antonio was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia. I wanted to do something substantial to help her through the struggle to overcome the cancer so I created a goal to raise funds (\$10,000) for the Leukemia Society by training for and running a full marathon. Besides my letters of support, everyone that was solicited for marathon funds, also wrote encouraging letters to her.

The organization supplied a comprehensive training plan, benchmarks, health and nutrition tips, training resources, a training schedule, a fund raising guide with accompanying resources and a personal coach. Runners met every week 6 months prior to the marathon to execute the training plan and discuss obstacles to the plan.

Although there was a thorough playbook and enthusiastic support staff, the obstacles to raise funds and completing the marathon were daunting.

Fund raising obstacles- I had never raised money for a cause and it was difficult asking my friends and family to donate. My initial list of potential donors was very

limited and it fell short of the \$10,000 goal. Also, I was uncomfortable composing a letter expressing my niece's predicament and there was temptation to lower the goal.

Finishing a full marathon obstacles- My running coach told me that if I follow the daily training regimen, my body would adjust and be able to complete the run, but he went on to explain that the largest barrier to finishing would be in my mind. He was correct! Getting up at 5:00am every day to train was taxing and time-consuming. Many dropped out of the program as weeks passed on and it was a consideration. My body ached and my resolve wavered.

Perspective kept me motivated to overcome all obstacles. My plight paled to my niece's battle with cancer. Over 2 years I was able to run 3 marathons and raise approximately \$25,000 for the Leukemia Society. My niece persevered the treatments and she is doing well to this day. My celebration was a small dinner with my wife and closest friends.

20. What was the best job you've ever had? Why was it the best?

In general, I feel blessed that I have had terrific job opportunities throughout my career, worked beside some incredible people and frankly, I really enjoy working. So, it's difficult to choose one best job.

The job I had in East St, Louis, Illinois as high school classroom teacher, administrator and coach was one of the most difficult and best jobs I have had. I sought a teaching position in East St. Louis when I became aware of its scarred history, economic disparities and extreme poverty (i.e. circa 1985 East St. Louis had a population of approximately 56,000 residents, 96% black, 50% unemployment, 67% of residents receiving public assistance, no garbage pick-up, no police force, soaring crime/violence and a sub-standard education system). I was contemplating missionary work in Mexico, India or Bangladesh and a close friend suggested I aim my zeal to be a missionary to the children here in the U.S. that are living in nearly 3rd world conditions. I heeded that advice and applied for and accepted a teaching position.

Teaching and living in East St. Louis was one of the best jobs I've had because the mission was profoundly meaningful, my talents were embraced and appreciated and the results of my job were not only tangible, but also fulfilling. The principal of the school was an amazing leader and she incredibly nurtured all of us that were on her team. The members of the greater East St. Louis community graciously accepted me and I have friendships that endure to this day. The job was one of the best because it provided both challenge and purpose at every turn. And the life-lessons reached to the core.

21. Tell me about a time when you were overwhelmed with obligations? What did you do to get some relief?

It seems I have always had a large workload, and I choose to get involved in leading initiatives with my church, and my community. Obligations with my family are priority and my wife and I choose periodically to give our time and devotion to some of the most vulnerable people in our community (i.e. Pediatric AIDS children, Children & adults with disability, and those in the dying process). Therefore, mitigating the risk of being overwhelmed with obligations must be given constant attention.

One particular time in my career was when I was Executive Director of City Year. I was immersed in the normal responsibilities of a large non-profit and playing a role in some very important initiatives at the community level (i.e. Collective Impact Initiatives like the U.S. Department's Promise Neighborhood Grant, and Creating a College Access Network for San Antonio). During all of this, my little brother was in the dying process and eventually passed away (one week from our annual gala).

All of the obligations were important, but my time and energy turned to my little brother and my immediate family. Communicating my dilemma to friends and colleagues and delegating the voluminous obligations was essential. Relief came from the humbling process of leaning on others to carry the weight for me while I mourned and tended to my family.

22. How do you best take in information?

I prefer information to be visual because that is how I best process and I am grateful when I can receive and unpack complex information with someone else (i.e. Colleague, subject-matter expert). In the process of taking in information, I often proceed to saturate myself with the information and research context and circumstances that are not necessarily explicit in the information provided.

23. We don't always have the luxury of time when making important decisions. How do you go about making those decisions that you have to make when you don't have all the information you would like to have?

Knowing the primary mission of any organization acts as a decision-making compass and keeping decisions customer centric provides direction. "Is this decision aligned with our mission?" "Will this decision benefit the client?" "How will this decision advance our mission?" "Will this decision compromise our mission?" etc. So first, be prepared, well-read, trained for emergency and vigilant to make important decisions even if they have heightened time constraints.

Secondly, I keep a few trusted confidants/advisors in metaphorically close proximity to get valuable feedback before I act (i.e. an email, text or phone call away).

Lastly, if I feel pressured by the timeline and the void of reliable data makes me uncomfortable with making a decision, I will try to extend the time of making a decision.

24. What is the most creative thing you've ever done to gain or retain a funder's support?

I was helping the American Cancer Society raise money at their annual gala to support pediatric cancer. I had an idea to gather approximately 100 cowboy boots as part of a project that would be auctioned at the event. An element in the project was having children with cancer paint images on the boots and to describe some of their journey in battling childhood cancer. The boots formed a mosaic on a much the larger sculpture and a poem was created gleaned from the conversations the children had while painting the boots. At the event, the sculpture was installed with the context and process of the sculpture exposed to the guests.

In addition, I designed and painted a shirt that artistically amplified the sculpture that I wore throughout the evening of the event. This created a dynamic throughout the evening that was twofold: 1. I became a walking billboard advertising the sculpture and 2. It was easy for guests to locate me and pursue questions about the whole project and the resulting sculpture.

I was able to join the MC on the main stage to discuss the sculpture and promote investment in childhood cancer. In the end, I spontaneously offered the shirt I was wearing to push the bids that would meet our desired funding goal. It was epic!

25. What 3 things do you think are most important for successfully working with a group of volunteers to get something important done?

First, volunteering is of extreme importance in a community. Community service and a volunteering culture breaks down societal barriers, forges friendships and builds lasting ownership of the community (outside our normal day-to-day patterns).

The 3 things most important for successfully working with volunteers is to:

1. Communicate the need for volunteers and prepare an easy way for volunteers to register and access schedules, events, etc.
2. Shape meaningful tasks for volunteers. Trust them to do something important.
3. Take the time to set the context for their volunteer work, invent an easy way for volunteers to get to know each other (and if possible, the people that are benefitting from their volunteer work), and take the time to show gratitude!

26. Do you enjoy making presentations to groups of people?

Yes. Although there is always a healthy nervousness whenever I present to groups of people, I enjoy the challenge of facilitating a message, activating the group's energy and harnessing that energy towards a meaningful mission.

Besides being a classroom teacher and campus administrator, I have presented at local, state and national events to both small and large that reached thousands. I was even invited to Finland, one time, to help them build an education program for students with special needs. I have testified at the state senate education hearing and in our own city council. I have led civic events and introduced prominent figures of our greater community (i.e. President of the U.S., U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Mayor, etc.). I have interviewed prominent business people as the program of a large event and I have been the Master of Ceremonies for various fund raising events.

27. How do you best prepare yourself for making oral presentations to groups of people?

The most important element in preparing for an oral presentation is to understand the goal of the presentation and to know the audience! Next, I reverse engineer the presentation. I visualize what people are talking about as they leave the presentation, comment on social media, and talk in the parking lot. Once this is established, I storyboard my presentation until I achieve the desired outcome. During the process of storyboarding, I will either create original images or find bold images/videos that help communicate the message. Then I write the corresponding talking points. Lastly, I rehearse until the presentation flows smoothly and naturally. Prior to presenting, I will check AV and logistics in hopes of rehearsing with the actual AV in the actual space of the presentation.

28. Tell me how you go about setting goals with your staff. Give me an example of a time when someone wasn't meeting a goal. What did you do?

My preference for goal setting is the S.M.A.R.T. goal construct (i.e. **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, Time-bound**). With a current strategic plan that has been shaped by key stakeholders, I prefer to communicate the bigger vision to the staff and empower departments and/or the leadership team to collaboratively set goals that help reach the vision and determine both leading and lagging indicators that advance towards the vision. This process ensures that goals are aligned and orchestrated in a way that is coordinated and unified.

This process is recorded in a simple dashboard and regularly monitored. The dashboard is transparent and adjustments made continually to stay on track and meet goals. Lastly, expectations are set so that teams are incentivized to support one another and help each other achieve goals successfully.

It's important to monitor with a proactive cadence that reveals early warning indicators of being off-track. This allows for adjustments and a greater propensity to reach goals.

When someone is off track from meeting a goal, my first response is to get input from the person and see if they have any insights how to get back on track. If possible, I will offer additional resources to help them get on track (i.e. Temporary staff, funding, “all-hands-on-deck” support). In the end, if persistent non-performance occurs, then it might be necessary to help the person find another position on the team or another job where they can excel.

29. Tell me about a time during your career when you anticipated the future and made changes to products or services to better meet the needs of your clients. What strategies did you conceive and how did you come up with them?

The 21st century has been witness to an unprecedented pace of technological progress that is speeding exponentially over time. Implementing a holistic response to this phenomenon with our youth seemed critical. From one perspective, I researched and visited high schools and universities that had already implemented programmatically various technologies into the curriculum (i.e. Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Robotics, Gaming, and Multi-Media Communication). Then, I researched and sought advice about how we can integrate social-emotional supports that would help deal with the pace of technological process.

Respective committees were established with content experts to advise and guide. Curriculum was written, teachers and counselors trained, parents/families were kept informed and listened to and key staff was hired to lead the new efforts. One of the most important strategies was to engage students in the process and to create focus groups and feedback loops with these students to understand and monitor the changes.

30. Describe your thought processes when analyzing data to make a decision.

When analyzing data to make decisions, my first response is to proactively determine and gather data that matters most in reaching the goals of the mission or project. Next, take time to remind each other what the data represents and its significance to the organization. I seek multiple perspectives of the data through available research, surveys and focus groups. And finally, determine which data can be influenced. Understanding our circle of influence is important in making data-driven decisions.

The Data Analysis and Transparency Division of the State of Texas provides technical assistance on a wide range of topics including economic impact analysis, financial transparency, limiting financial exposure and purchasing efficiencies.

31. What factors promote an innovative work environment?

An innovative work environment must have a culture of risk and support of new ideas. The organization must nurture trust and incentivize risks. Also, the organization must have excellent internal communication systems that are vehicles

to communicate and execute innovation. Lastly, it is important to acknowledge and reward the innovation derived from co-workers.

32. How do you motivate people?

I believe I motivate people by first and foremost, listening. Secondly, by articulating clear expectations and modeling the expectations that were communicated. Third, by sharing my passion for the work and by praising the people I work with who also demonstrate their commitment to the organization. As a leader, I believe a part of our role is to amplify peoples voice and ideas, stir commitment to the mission by understanding each person's individual mission and how it aligns. Create a strong and supportive community culture, and in showing the need/vulnerability that necessitates team contribution.

33. Describe a time when you were working on several projects at once. How did you make the transition from one to the next over the course of a day?

When working on multiple work-projects, volunteering on multiple non-profit boards, and immersed in multi-dimensional projects, a visual construct and accurate calendar is important. The visual construct helps place things in context and shows their interrelatedness. Methodically calendaring not only documents the pieces of each project, but also creates proper space for preparation. Preparing for each segment of a multi-dimensional project necessitates delegation, good communication and segmentation. Applications like synchronized calendars, zoom and "remind me" are helpful tools, also.

I process things very visually, so it is important for me to visualize my day (and all of its components and transitions) in a movie-like format. I visualize each scene, make note of the physical tools I need for each scene and create checklists as needed.