

Sean Slade Episode

[00:00:02] Hello and welcome back. You are joining us today for our twenty fifth episode of Opportunity Thrives on Gene Sharp, and on this show we are committed to better supporting the needs of today's secondary students through interviews with students, teachers, administrators, technologists and education influencers.

[00:00:22] We want to understand what's working in our schools today, what's not, and how we can impact positive, lasting change. We would love to hear your feedback and suggestions on our show. Please click in the podcast notes to leave us a review, provide your input or send us questions. You can also reach out to us at info at Opportunity Thrives Dotcom. Today we have the pleasure of speaking with Shawn Slade, a global education leader, speaker, author and policy maker with over twenty five years of experience spanning five countries and four continents. He currently serves as the senior director of Global Outreach at a study focusing on promoting and expanding the whole child approach across the United States and globally. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a membership based non-profit organization founded in nineteen forty three. It has more than one hundred twenty five thousand members from more than one hundred twenty eight countries, including superintendents, principals, teachers, professors of education and other educators. Shawn, welcome. As we begin our conversation today, would you tell our listeners a little bit more about yourself, your background and the path that led you to As'ad?

[00:01:45] Certainly. Thank you very much, Jean, and thank you for the opportunity, an invitation to to have a discussion with you and your listeners, as people can probably tell straight from my voice. I have traveled a little bit and my journey has been a bit of a varied one.

[00:02:00] So originally from Australia and originally was a physical education history and science teacher for a number of years. And I think as many people in education have experienced, once you start to get a handle on how to teach in the first couple of years, after about five or so years, you start to ponder why you're teaching and you start to try to ponder the purpose of what you're doing to try and give a little bit more of a context to your daily activities.

[00:02:32] And so that sort of journey took me on a path of sort of having discussions with colleagues and people I was working with, whether it was in Australia or I moved into Europe, in Italy and then South America before moving to the US, but having discussions around the purpose of education. And to me, even as a physical education teacher, originally, I was less concerned about the let's say, the the sports skills that a student would learn.

[00:03:01] Then I was concerned about the what I was calling at the time, the character development skills or the personal skills they were learning.

[00:03:10] And by that I mean not just grit or resilience, but the teamwork and leadership and problem-solving and the ability of a subject or learning to change the student self efficacy or self-esteem. So that then really took me on a path via an organisation over in California called Westhead that was based around resilience and youth development, took me on a path to SCD where I've been for a decade now, leading the whole child work.

[00:03:41] And I, like many people in the organization, came to SCD because of the whole job focus, because it was really one of the first leading organisations back in 2007 to redirect the focus of education around what's good for the child. And let's start sort of having those conversations about the purpose. And then also after that, let's start talking about how we start to change and implement not only school practices, but also education policy. So they're more directed towards the needs of the child.

[00:04:16] Shonn, it occurs to me that there may be a few in our audience who are not familiar or as familiar with ASD. So would you take a moment and just describe a little bit about the mission and priorities of the organisation?

[00:04:28] Certainly. Well, as you were mentioning in the intro, it's been around for seventy seven years and it's really even though the way we go by a SCD now, it was formally known by the longer title, the Association for Curriculum and Super Curriculum Development, Supervision and Curriculum Development.

[00:04:45] Even I get mixed up every now and then. The but the interesting thing about it is we've always been based around educational leadership.

[00:04:53] So we serve the educators. We serve the teachers. We serve the school principal. And we provide not only professional development, but also publications, many people may know our flagship magazine, Educational Leadership, comes out monthly and has a readership of around about a million. But we also do and this is one of the reasons I hold ACD in high esteem as well, is we don't only publish magazines and books when we don't only do professional development and we don't only do large conferences and symposiums and thought leadership events.

[00:05:32] We also have an advocacy arm. We have a policy, we have a student chapters. We have affiliates in every state and across another 22 countries around the world. So the way that I look at it is SCD provides everything that a school leader or a potential school leader or a person that is has some control and influence over the climate and culture of that school building. It provides them with everything they need in order to to grow and flourish. And we don't only serve one portion of the education community, even though we're focused primarily on leaders. That's a very broad term. So a leader does not mean an official title. A leader means somebody who is leading or intends to lead either in the classroom or their school or their district or their state or their country so that I can testify to the value of membership.

[00:06:35] I have been a part of the acid community and mostly throughout most of my career, actually, and I have found that the services and the publications that As'ad offers, quite frankly, have high value and high relevancy.

[00:06:49] So I appreciate the work that you do. Shawn, as the senior director for global outreach at As'ad, you have the responsibility to promote and expand the whole child approach both in the US and throughout the world. This is really transformational initiatives to move from a focus of academic achievement to one that promotes the long term development and success of all children. Would you describe for our listeners what the whole child approach involves? What is the vision and who are your stakeholders in this work?

[00:07:23] Certainly. And also good to hear that from your feedback about your approval of active products. It's always good to get some first hand reactions.

[00:07:31] So basically a whole child approach to education is fundamentally one that sees education as more than just academics. But students and children are in schools.

[00:07:46] Yes. To develop cognitively. So they are ready for the world beyond school, but they're also in school being prepared to enter society. And that means socially, emotionally, mentally, physically, civically as well as cognitively. And that's that's the that's the fundamental basis that we're looking at, not just one portion of the child, the academics.

[00:08:12] We're looking at the whole child.

[00:08:14] And when you look back to when we started this work, which was before my time, so two thousand seven that was in the middle of the No Child Left Behind use.

[00:08:25] And that was at a time when everything around school achievement was being based around student success on test scores and annual yearly progress. And at the time, you were getting schools that were being closed down, principals that were being fired, staff that were being dismissed or reassigned, based around standardized test scores and annual yearly progress.

[00:08:50] We came out at that time not because it was politically expedient to do so. And to be honest, it probably wasn't financially expedient to do so. But we came out of out of that time and said there is more to education than just academics. We need to take a step back and have a discussion about what the purpose of education is or what we came up with. And we didn't invent the term, but we certainly adopted it and raised it to the fore. We came up with a whole child approach to education.

[00:09:21] So one which sees the child as in the center of our equation and an equation where we start to array resources around that child that they need in order to flourish in schools.

[00:09:34] You asked about our stakeholders and our stakeholders are primarily any person who was involved with children and young people.

[00:09:42] So obviously that targets superintendents, school principals, teachers. But we're also talking more and more often to parents, to school boards, to students themselves, community members. And what's been really interesting over the last couple of years, as we've seen. More and more states adopt hope, child policy and hold child initiatives is when you start talking to parents. I'm a parent myself, as I believe you are as well, Jane.

[00:10:12] When you start talking to parents about what they want their children to get out of school, they very often talk about things which are of a higher level than what we might obviously or regularly be talking about.

[00:10:27] So if I go and ask parents around, what do you want your child to be like at the end of school, they're going to say things like happy, healthy, productive, empathetic, a citizen, a leader, a team player, a problem solver, independent, almost nobody says able to pass right algebra. Now, that's a stepping stone. Almost nobody says able to pass up an English lit test. Those things are stepping stones on the path. But what people are concerned about is what the child is getting out of this from a holistic point of view. So what's been really reassuring the last couple of years is the messages that we're giving our educators. Stakeholders are also now resonating with our parents and community stakeholders. And I think that's also why we've seen such a change over the last couple of years, as I was mentioning, around states and districts changing their policies and changing their initiatives to be far more child centric.

[00:11:28] Thank you, Sean. That's incredibly helpful to lay that foundation. And certainly we speak about a child centered approach or a student centered approach as well. And, you know, as I looked at the ACTU website I must share with you, I was particularly drawn to a line that described the whole child's approach in this way.

[00:11:46] It indicated it was ensuring that each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenge that is aspirational. But today it's also critical.

[00:11:57] So I'm curious from your perspective, if we layer on the current challenges amid the pandemic, what has impacted your resolve to address the needs of the whole child today, perhaps even more than ever?

[00:12:10] Yeah, it's it's a it's a blessing. It's bittersweet in a way, because to be honest, our work is more relevant now than are probably ever has been. And not that anybody wanted this or wish the covid or even the racial unrest that's occurred in this country in twenty twenty. But I think what it has done is reframe what we're doing in schools of why we're doing it.

[00:12:31] Just thought I'd take one quick step back just so your listeners can understand why those phrases or what we call tenants are so important to healthy, safe and supported, challenged. And and I think it'll explain the second part of my question. Well, the second part of my answer, the tenants of a whole child were based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. So five things that every person needs, not only to survive, but to thrive.

[00:12:58] And so when we developed back in 2007, our whole child approach, we based them on Maslow's hierarchy. And so therefore, there was a reason that we have healthy on the bottom of that pyramid, followed by SCIAF, followed by engaged, supported and challenged.

[00:13:14] And it comes from a fundamental understanding that if the individual is not healthy, if they likely will not even be in school, if they're not healthy. And we also mean mentally or socially, emotionally as well as physically unhealthy. And if they are unhealthy and are at school, they may not be ready to learn.

[00:13:36] They may not be able to see the whiteboard. They may not be able to feel safe interacting with their peers or with the teacher if they don't feel safe in their environment.

[00:13:46] It's also very hard for us to engage them in problem solving, to engage them in various types of learning. If they're not engaged in the work, if they don't believe that it's meaningful, that it doesn't resonate with them, again, it's hard for them to absorb and it's hard to them to make meaning out of it if they're not supported by caring adults who are trained and understand child and youth development, learning and supported by counsellors and family.

[00:14:16] It's difficult for them to push and excel themselves. And then finally, at the top of that pyramid, you have challenged and challenged, we phrase, as making sure that everybody has access to challenging learning experiences. So it's not just refined or restricted to a certain group. And it's also made relevant. So very much like the the donkey with the carrot. The teacher understands what's going to push each individual student or what's going to pull them into their next experience without having to jump over hurdles. So we are raising these tenants in our hierarchy for a purpose. And for the longest time, I think in education we've actually flip. That pyramid we focused on challenging, we've made thing we've not supported our students or our teachers very well. We have not really focused on the engagement inside the classroom and inside the school in what's being learned.

[00:15:18] And we've definitely taken our eye off the ball in terms of ensuring that our classrooms and our school settings are safe and healthy places for learning.

[00:15:32] Now, it's not to say that we've forgotten all of those things. We've just taken our emphasis off those things and replaced our emphasis with more challenging material, more high stakes testing and more accountability measures which actually do the opposite of what we're intending. Some of these accountability measures that we built into schools and systems have made schools more anxiety ridden, more unsafe, more unhealthy and less supportive. So that's where the tenants come from and that's where our pyramid around child comes from. Now, you mentioned about covid, and there's obviously it's been a horrendous year for all of us. But unfortunately, even though it's been a horrendous year for all of us, it's been a terrible year for many students in society, in many communities in society who very often are underserved around this time. So what we've seen during covid is many of the students who were underserved previously are more underserved during the time of covid.

[00:16:42] So whether it's access to Internet, whether whether it's access to health services, whether it's access to community services, whether it's access to peers and social networks, you find that whilst some students are doing okay, some students are doing better.

[00:17:00] There is a group of students who are typically underserved by our systems who are doing far worse. And many of these students, unfortunately, might get lost to the education system if we're not careful.

[00:17:13] So that is definitely a huge challenge. These gaps in societies are being shown to be chasms. And so unless we start to readdress some of our funding, especially towards Title one schools, unless we start to readdress some of the services that we can provide, many of these students are going to be far, far worse off. The second issue, which is unfortunately related to that as well, is and I don't think we appreciate I think we're aware of this now, but I think we appreciate the depth of this. Everybody in society is going through differing levels of trauma. And typically, when you have an incident at a school or in a town or a city, you're able to isolate that group and bring in expert, whether they're counselors or psychologists or social workers or FEMA or anybody to help support network. What we're experiencing now is that everybody is going through the covid trauma and to a certain degree, everybody is going through some of the racial traumas that are occurring as well. So the people that we would typically send in to be a support network are themselves coming from environments of trauma.

[00:18:27] And when you think about the front line grocery workers, when you think about the people who are working casual jobs, when you then start to think about the school health fraternity and you start to think about the education fraternity, they are all coming from experience of trauma where they have been battling for the last six, seven months in readjusting their services on a dime, having to do with their own health issues, their own family and community health issues, and then having to readjust schooling, maybe not once, not twice, but maybe three or four times over the last couple of months since many schools have reopened and they're doing a phenomenal job.

[00:19:12] But I don't think we appreciate the effect that trauma is going to have on not only our students, but also our communities and our adults that helped serve those students.

[00:19:25] And we probably would understand that level of trauma for another six months to a year and not end on a or in answer to your question here on a two dire

note. But I but I do think what it has done to go back to those tenants is it has reframed or begun to reframe the discussion about how schools operate.

[00:19:48] And it really has opened up many policymakers, eyes and educational leaders eyes to the need for us to focus on their.

[00:19:59] Health and the well-being and the safety and security of our students and teachers and our community members, and I think until we get that right, it's very hard for us to progress and start to move into those other levels of the hierarchy and start to really focus on challenging our students cognitively or academically.

[00:20:26] So the slight glass half full result of covid is, I think, having a reframing of what education is for. And we're having a communal or a societal appreciation that well-being is central to everything that we do.

[00:20:47] I so appreciate your comments here, Shawn. Certainly, we know that as we talk to teachers and district leaders across the country, there has been a collective agreement that we have to put Mazzello before Blome and we have to put Connexions before curriculum.

[00:21:03] At this point in time, we have to take care of the needs of our students. So let me ask you this. Clearly, there has been such a focus on the social and emotional needs of our students. And I would say the need is there for our staff, our school staff as well, whether their teachers or workers in the school environment, educational leaders. This is a concern for everyone. But as we focus on our students for a moment here, we know that they have been isolated from their peers. They have not been able to engage in the social interaction that's so important for growth and development overall. And sadly, some have become disengaged in learning because of that as well. We are concerned about their overall health and well-being. How do you think that we as adults need to respond to that, both in the school and as well as at home in order to support those emotional, social and emotional needs of students?

[00:21:58] I couldn't agree more with what you are saying, and I would say the first thing to do is to have more educational leaders speak up and be vocal.

[00:22:07] And by educational leader, I mean, I'm a classroom teacher, I'm a principal, I mean superintendent.

[00:22:13] And then all the way up to Department of Education, be vocal and speak more about the educational need to focus on the well-being, safety and security of students.

[00:22:26] Because when you get voices of authority speaking out around social emotional well-being, connectedness, feeling safe and secure, it automatically gives that concept educational credibility.

[00:22:43] So if I come through and I work around a whole child, so I come through and I talk about social emotional learning and putting the child at the center and wellbeing that's taken well.

[00:22:53] But if the secretary of education or the secretary at a state level comes out and says the same thing, it comes across with more credibility.

[00:23:02] So the first thing is having our leaders speak out about well-being.

[00:23:08] It gives it a place in the educational landscape and therefore it then allows the principals and the teachers and the parents to give it more time and give it more space. I often when I talk to teachers, go back and talk to them about some of their best lessons they've ever taught, all their best experiences in school around education, and whether we're talking about teachers who adapt their lessons for cultural competency or whether we like it, they adapt them to the level of the learner or what has happened recently.

[00:23:42] The common denominator that all of those teachers talk about are the relationships and the connections they have with their students, because in two, you know, your students and until you have that level of trust with your students, you can't make those adaptations.

[00:24:00] You can't make those assumptions. You can't adjust things to suit the students unless you know the students and vice versa.

[00:24:08] So the first thing would be having leaders speak about it and be more vocal. Now, there have been lots of leaders that have been very vocal and have been very forthcoming about it, whether that's classroom teachers that have purposefully taken their their living room environments and redesigned them to look like their classroom, which I thought was a wonderful idea to make sure that their students felt connected and a part of it, or whether it's even some of those drive bys, celebrations the schools were having for the graduates of last year or teacher parades, all of these things, they they sound nice and they sound warm and fuzzy, but they came and they are important.

[00:24:50] So the first thing would be to talk about the second thing would be keep making time in your schedules to allow students. To talk about how they're feeling or even just to connect on a social level with their peers, and I know most schools are already doing that, the majority of schools really did well when they opened up, whether they were going to be face to face or or hybrid or remote in the first couple of weeks by making sure that we're focusing on that safety and connectedness. And so I keep saying to them is keep that going. That's not a one stop shop that you need to do for the first week.

[00:25:32] And then we click back into regular normal schooling. This is something that needs to continue not only because of covid, but because it's good pedagogy. And so making sure that happens.

[00:25:47] And then the last one would be allowing students more agency in what they're learning, how they're learning it, and how they're actually providing examples that they have learnt. So giving more agency and ownership back to the students. If you want people to feel connected or engaged in something, then they have to hold it.

[00:26:11] They have to own it. They have to have some control over it. Now, what does that mean?

[00:26:16] At the simplest level, it will mean giving a selection of choices, but that's the simplest level. At the first level, it means having a discussion with your students about what you want them to achieve in this unit and then discussing with them how they are going to learn that work via what projects, via what topics and how are they going to

demonstrate that they've learned to and very often working in small groups to get that done.

[00:26:50] Now, I'm not expecting that schools change from giving an option of seven choices in what to do on day one, and then they jump straight into complete code code developed project based learning, but start to get the students more accustomed to making their own decisions, owning their own learning, evaluating their own successes, doing more peer reviews, and start to see the classroom as more of a community of learners than a didactic teaching learning experience.

[00:27:28] Yeah, thank you, Sean. That's really informative. And it reminds me that one of the challenges that we often hear teachers and education leaders talking about over and over again right now is that our transition to emergency remote learning last spring really raised the issue of student engagement overall.

[00:27:47] And you've talked about how relationships matter. We believe that very firmly as well, and how a student agency plays a role in it and wondering if there's anything else that you see in relationship to what's preventing our students from engaging in learning and how can we encourage them to re-engage?

[00:28:05] Well, first of all, I will say that we are one of the only professions that was asked and was also able to change almost immediately back in March.

[00:28:17] Very often many of these teachers had two or three days to go from in-person learning to online learning, many with no experience prior to doing it, so that the ability of our teachers to change so quickly was phenomenal. What I've also seen since schools have reopened is the experience has been really different since August. And so teachers have spent even during the confusion of would it be open, would it be hybrid, would it be online?

[00:28:46] Our teachers have been amazing in learning and readjusting how they're teaching, especially online to their students.

[00:28:55] So that's the first thing I would I would probably just go back to the two things I was saying, which was what this has done is it's been able to allow us to to rethink why

we're teaching. And I and I do think one of the benefits that's also come out of covid during this time is it's allowed that discussion to rise up a little bit quicker than maybe it would normally. So it's allowed not only students to have a little bit more agency, it's allowing teachers to have a little bit more agency as well in what they do and how they do it. So my my my two points that I've seen about what's been working probably wouldn't change much from my previous answers. It's rethinking about why we're doing what we're doing. This covid time has allowed us to do that. And it's also a re-emphasis on agency. And for this answer, not just student, but also a teacher.

[00:29:47] Absolutely. Thank you. You know, in September, Shawn, you published a blog that suggested that educators need to get prepared for a W shaped recovery. And this was not talking about an economic recover.

[00:29:59] It was talking about an emotional recovery. You indicated that schools should start preparing themselves for what will be a W shaped recovery in terms of our emotional well-being and a sense of security. Can you elaborate a little bit more on that for our listeners and in terms of what you think that means in the near term as well as in the long term?

[00:30:19] Certainly so. The the term W recovery comes from economics where you don't just you go into a dip and it's not a V that springs back up, but you you have little dips and little rises and little dips and little rises.

[00:30:32] And it was obvious as we were heading towards reopening in August that there was this sense of anticipation and sense of relief that we're going to get back to something resembling normalcy.

[00:30:47] But it was obvious at the time as well, given the the trauma and the crises that that we in the country had gone through, it was obvious that people were wanting an end. And what if we take a step back? What's obvious is that and I think we're seeing it at the moment is that this will be something that will be with us for at least the next six months. And our adaptations to covid especially, we'll have to adjust and change over the six months, just as they have over the last or the previous seven months.

[00:31:22] With that, there was this anticipation that once schools opened up, everything would be fine again. And realistically thinking that was that's never going to be the case. There was an understanding that when schools opened up, people would be back in school and that would be back learning. But for many teachers, the online experience, whilst it's been interesting and good, does not replicate that face to face experience. And so it's it's a different experience.

[00:31:51] Many of the teachers who are actually in school and doing face to face are reporting that, yeah, this is great and it's the best we can do right now. But having the students back in rows, having me behind a desk and lecturing or giving instructions is really harking back to the way school was 10, 20, 30 years ago. And it's different than what school should be, especially from a pedagogical point of view.

[00:32:20] And so the idea around the article was we need to be smart enough to understand that we are going to go through a number of dips emotionally as schools start to work out what the new normal is going to be. So in order to do that, schools need to prepare their environments to be safer, more supportive and more protective.

[00:32:46] And if we know that there is, for example, if we know there is a storm coming, we know that we can go and barricade up the windows and we can evacuate if we need to. If the storm is getting more and more severe, there are things we can do, precautions we can do that will alleviate or buffer some of those impacts. And the best thing we can do if we know that we're going to go through emotional swings. And when I say we, I mean staff, community students, there are things we can do to buffer it.

[00:33:19] And it's, again, reemphasize those relationships, reemphasize the social connections, reach out to students on a daily basis, allow students a person or the teacher they can contact at certain times or if they need to at any times to get some advice or support. It's forming a spiderweb around that school community so that people know who they can turn to if they need support.

[00:33:51] Because sometimes it's not the fact that you need to get that piece of advice from a teacher or from a social worker or from somebody else in the community. It's just the fact that, you know, that you can which actually provides support and connection.

It's when you feel alone and it's when you feel unsupported and it's when you feel you don't have the answers that these emotional crises start to play out far worse.

[00:34:23] So the article was hopefully getting people to think about what can we do in the medium to long term to continue to make our school communities safe, supportive environments. And what can we do knowing that these peaks and troughs are going to appear not only for students, but also for the teachers throughout the next six at a minimum months moving forward? So that was that was really the purpose of the the article.

[00:34:52] Excellent. Thank you, Sean. Some say that we can find good in the messiness. So I'm curious from your point. Perspective, are there currently silver linings that you are seeing throughout this crisis and what gives you optimism about the opportunities for education to emerge changed and stronger and more focused on serving the needs of all of our students?

[00:35:16] Yeah, this every every day without being too cliched. Every issue, every action is going to have both positive and negative outcomes.

[00:35:23] And so there are there are definitely positive outcomes coming out of this. You know, I was mentioning some of them before about the the reframing of education and the understanding around well-being. And there's there's another one which I haven't mentioned, which is there has been a real appreciation of expertise during the Kofod crisis. So all of a sudden, we are supporting our health professionals. We are supporting our experts.

[00:35:53] And I believe because we've had our students at home learning for the majority, you're getting a lot of parents who are really appreciating the skills and the expertise of our teachers as well.

[00:36:08] But there are probably three three things which are going to be so monumental coming out of this. And there are things these are things that we've not that we have been talking about for a number of years. But education has been a laggard as a sector in making change.

[00:36:24] And when you think about education, since we're actually preparing individuals for the future, should actually be the forerunner of making change.

[00:36:34] But we tend to drag our feet a little bit in policy and testing and so forth and don't make too many changes unless they're necessary. What covid has done is it has forced many of these changes immediately. So we are we've been having during covid every discussion about the purpose of education that's been occurring. If you Google terms like reimagine education or what if or future of education, there's all these discussions happening around the world where people are reappraising why do we have an education system, which I think is the perfect place for us to be not just now, but all the time.

[00:37:20] And to add on to that, we're also having discussions which have been forced upon us about the value and the necessity of some of our high state testing systems. And again, not to say that those they don't have any value, but I do think we need to discuss these things to understand what their value is.

[00:37:42] And if the value is just historical context, I don't believe that's a good enough reason to not make changes. So we've we've seen discussions around assessments, high stakes tests, assessments, how schools are being evaluated, how teachers are being evaluated, and much of that is being thrown out over the last six months. And so those discussions are happening. The second thing which has been happening, and it plays back into the topics of agency we spoke about is we've been talking for at least a decade or more about moving away from the sage on the stage to the guide on the side.

[00:38:20] So moving away from having a lecture, didactic instructional method of teaching and learning to one where the teacher and the students are developing and learning together, that is taking place during this time just because it is almost physically and mentally impossible to be on Zoom classrooms synchronously for the whole school day. You are getting a lot more teachers who are giving agency to their students and to their project based learning. So you're starting to see that happen. And the last one is an understanding that learning does not take place only inside the classroom between nine and three, or in the case of the schools here in Virginia, between somewhere between 730 and 330. It's an understanding that learning should be taking

place inside a learning ecosystem, and that ecosystem incorporates the home, incorporates the community, it incorporates online. It incorporates any where the student can access information. So the good thing is, I think covid has is forcing education 10 years into the future. We should have done some of this work and many schools have, but we should have done this work writ large 10 years ago. But maybe we'll finally see education taken.

[00:39:58] That it is indeed the disruptive change that we've been waiting for, not from the situation itself, but from the opportunity it is to to significantly leapfrog what we've been doing in the classroom on a day to day basis.

[00:40:11] Sean, as we come to begin to bring closure to our conversation today. I want to just ask you what words of wisdom are closing thoughts what you like to leave with our listeners today? And if our listeners would like to know more about the whole child's approach, how do they find that out?

[00:40:27] So if they want to find out more, it's pretty simple. You can go to exceed OAG, whole child. And if people are interested, we do have a free network of over seventeen hundred members and schools and districts across fifty five countries. It's a free network and you can join it by going to ask whole child network words of wisdom.

[00:40:49] Well, I don't know how how wise they are, but I just think we always need to ask ourselves why we're doing something. And your wife doesn't have to be the same answer as my wife. I think it needs to be a personal reflection. So my only parting questions would be I'd like to ask listeners to ask themselves why they became educators in the first place, because I think that holds very true to what they believe education is about.

[00:41:17] And if they came in for it for a reason, because they believed, as I've heard from many people, that it's the best way for a student to reach their potential or to change their lot in life or to help society, then just stay with that thought or that question for another minute or two and think about what that means in a school or a classroom setting, and then ask themselves how they're actually doing that or helping them with their own students.

[00:41:46] And it doesn't need to be a direct answer or a direct change in what they do, because I think most teachers are doing it subliminally at a minimum. But I just think it's a good question to ask ourselves every now and then why we're doing something and why we became educators in the first place.

[00:42:04] And I think I think many individuals will come to their own understanding and rationalization about what they're doing and why.

[00:42:11] Because of that side, I am confident that our listeners will find great insight from the conversation and the messages that you share today. Thank you so much for your time. We recognize how important it is to talk with leaders like you who are making such a difference in shaping the future of education. So thank you and Opportunity Thrive listeners. Thank you for your time today. If you are enjoying our podcast, we would love it if you would take up just a moment of your time and share your feedback on our show by providing a review on either Spotify or iTunes or whatever platform you listen. And please reach out to us with questions or comments and info at Opportunity Thrives. Dotcom, thanks so much for tuning in today and we'll see you next time.