



Springfield Middle School
Robertson County Innovation Academy



715 5th Avenue West ♦ Springfield, TN 37172 ♦ Phone (615) 384-4821
Dr. Grant Bell, Principal ♦ Ms. Amanda Mounts, Asst. Principal ♦ Mr. Patrick Carneal, Asst. Principal

“We are EPIC!”

The Jacket's Buzz

October 29, 2018

“Providing a well-lit path in the pursuit of purpose and happiness.”

“Every single day, we will strive to ensure that everyone is safe and respected; and that ALL scholars are responsible for working to master ALL standards.”



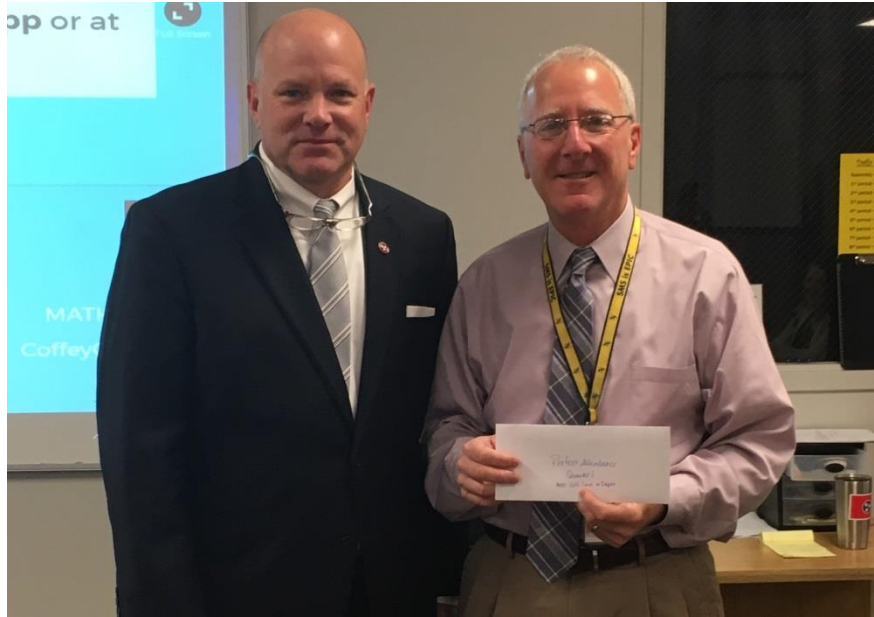
**“When witches go riding, and black cats are seen,
the moon laughs and whispers ‘tis near Halloween.”**

Monday:	RED Ribbon Week: Wear Pink Cheerleading Tumbler Practice 3:30
Tuesday:	Faculty Conversation 7:30 AM RED Ribbon Week: Crazy Socks Intruder Drill: Gym 2:30 Jazz Band Rehearsal 3:30 Wrestling @ Cheatham County 5:00
Wednesday:	RED Ribbon Week: Wear Red
Thursday:	Wrestling @ Dickson 5:00
Friday:	Drama Club Costume Field Trip

Bus Duty:

<u>Monday</u> Language Arts	<u>Tuesday</u> Related Arts	<u>Wednesday</u> Math	<u>Thursday</u> Social Studies	<u>Friday</u> Science
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------

TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY



Mr. Corbin- Perfect Attendance 1st Quarter
\$100 Gift Certificate to The Depot



Ms Axley- Teacher of the Month
\$50 Gift Certificate to The Depot



Yellow Jacket Basketball



Basketball is officially underway! The Yellow Jackets and Lady Jackets participated in the Robertson County basketball jamboree hosted by Coopertown last Thursday. The Lady Jackets played to a tie against Greenbrier, and the Yellow Jackets won against Greenbrier. Good luck this season!





Yellow Jacket artists in the News!



Springfield Middle School students display art work at NorthCrest

Springfield Middle School students had the opportunity again this year to showcase their art at NorthCrest Medical Center. The students' art is displayed in the first-floor lobby by the visitor elevators. The student artists had an opportunity to see the display recently. They are (left to right): Jacqueline Garcia Ortiz (eighth grade); teacher Amy Jernigan; Amarria Love (eighth grade); Maya Atkins (sixth grade); and Max Baldwin (eighth grade).

SUBMITTED

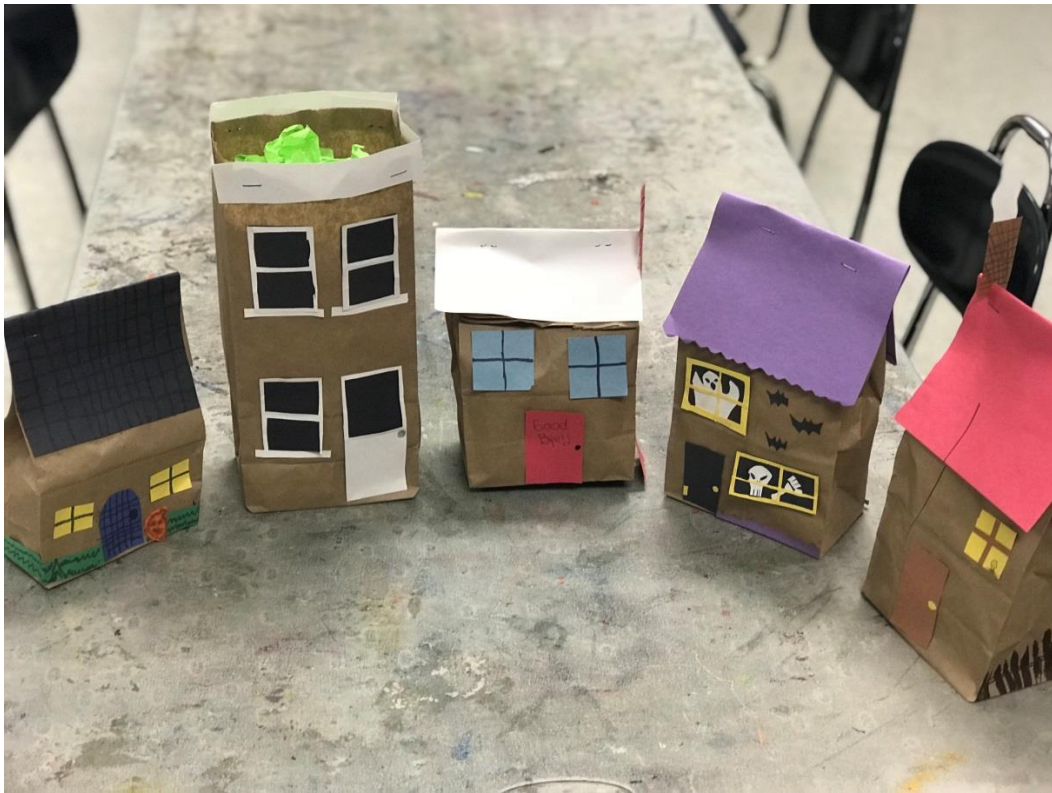
Art teacher Ms. Amy Jernigan and 4 SMS scholars were featured in the Robertson County Connection last week. Congratulations!

RESPECT
yourself
BE DRUG FREE

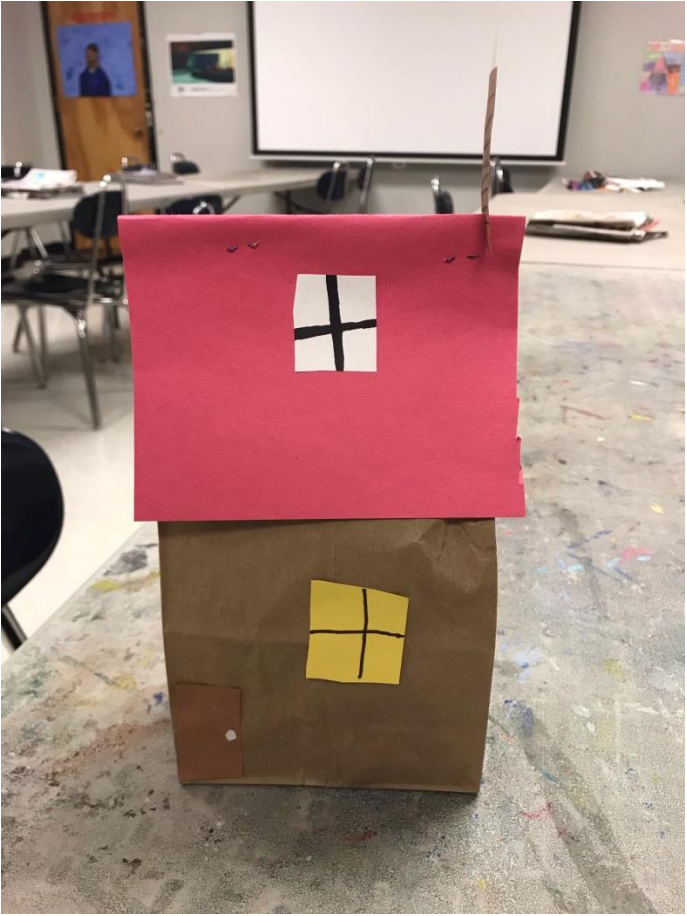
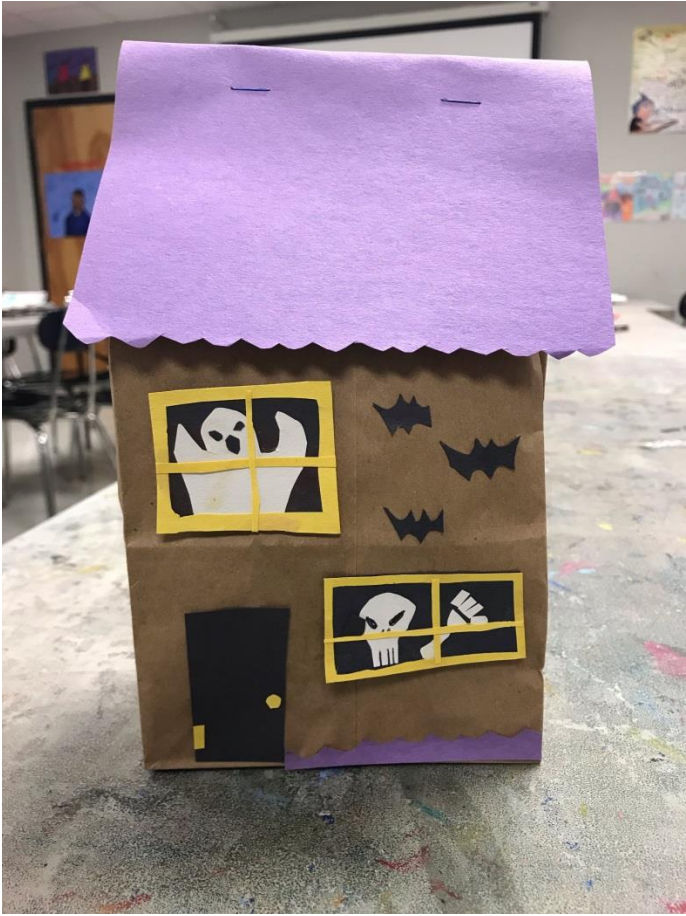
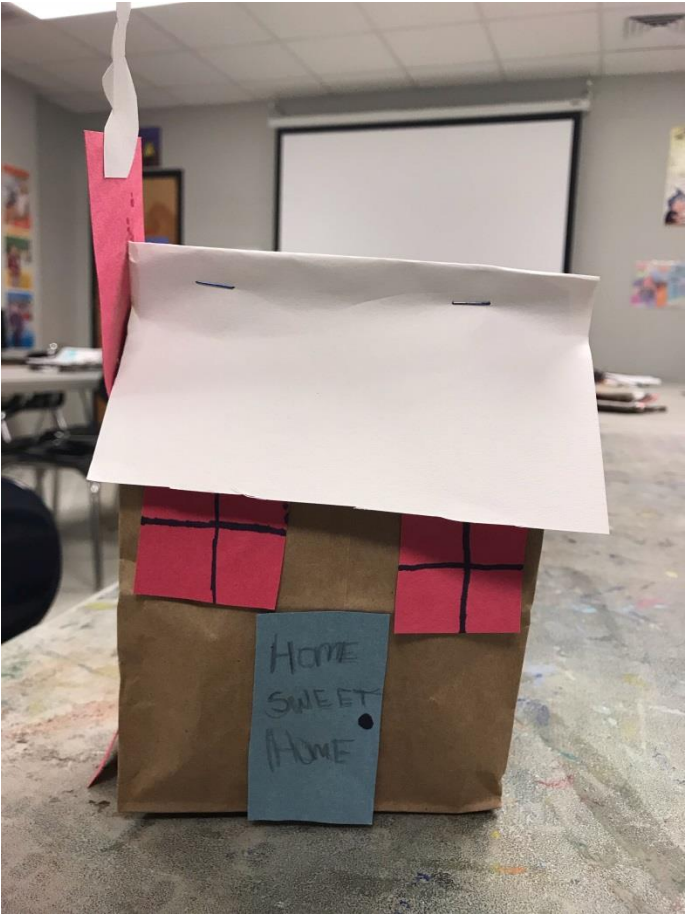
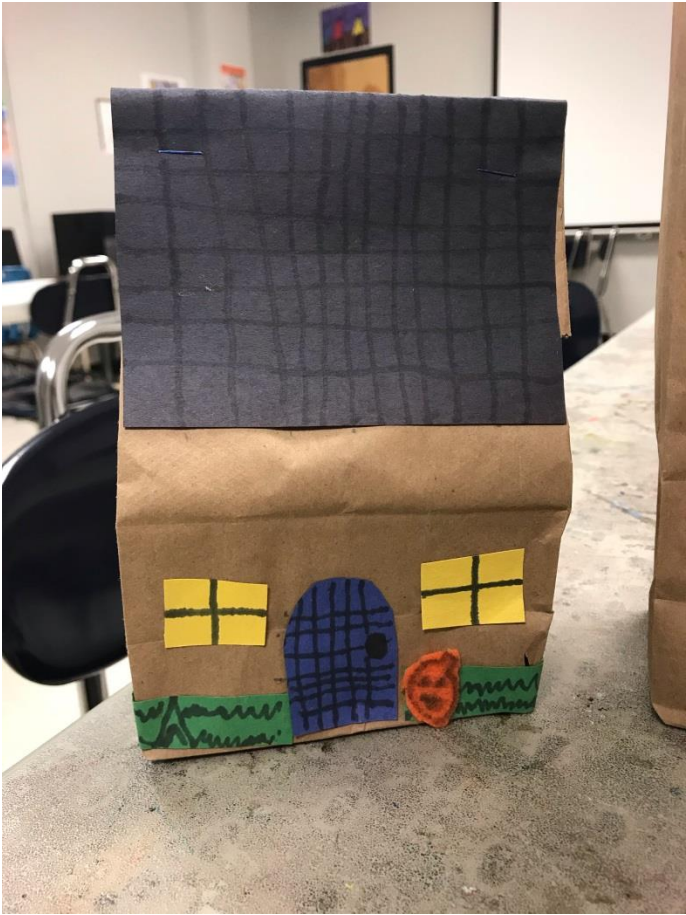


Mr. Green and Mr. Arnow- Twin Day

FRANK
LLOYD
WRIGHT



7th and 8th grade scholars learned about Frank Lloyd Wright and architecture!! We took paper bags, construction paper and numerous other materials and created different types of houses!!! Art Teacher Ms. Amy Jernigan
Kevin Gonzales, Taylor Milteer, Emarion Leavell, Zoe Clarkson, Noah Richardson





7th grade Innovation Academy scholars visited Cheekwood last week

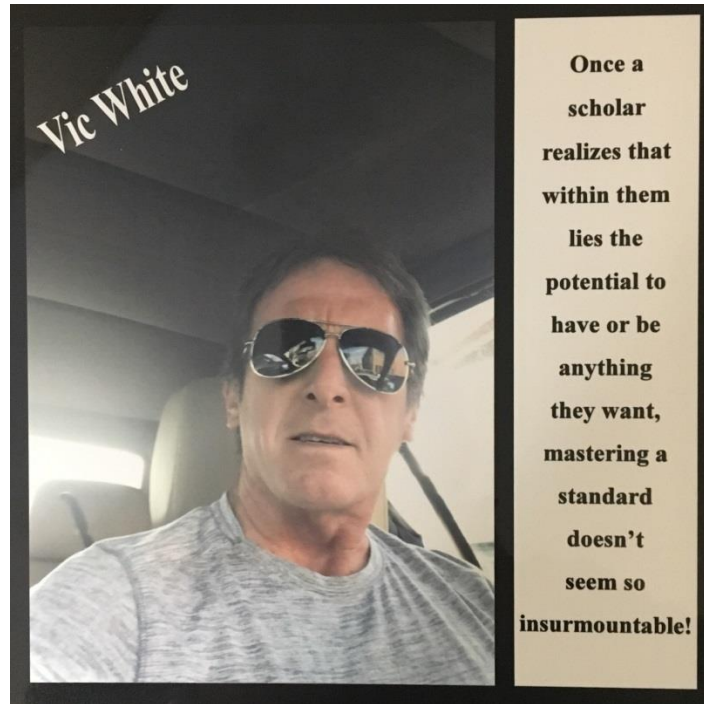




“The SMS Eighth Grade Band participated in the SHS Eighth Grade Night with the SHS Marching Band on Friday night. Twenty-six 8th graders combined with several others from Coopertown Middle to see their next step in the Band world. They played in the stands throughout the game and gave a great performance at halftime. There is a lot of great growth and support for Springfield Bands and Friday night shows a bright future for the SHS Band. The SMS Band has their annual Winter Concert coming up on December 4th at 7pm. Admission is free and we look forward to seeing many in the community there.”



Staff Member of the Week



Name : Vic White

Grade : 8th

Subject: Algebra-math

Hometown: Hendersonville, TN Family: Daughter- Carly

Education: Masters

How did your career lead you to Springfield Middle School? I took an interim position here in 2012 as my first teaching job.

What do you love about our school and children?

I love helping children who may not think they have a future or a very bright one, realize they can have the world if they want it. Helping them realize they can be or have whatever they want if they're willing to give everything they have. It's very moving when you see our kids succeed and accomplish more than they ever thought they could.

What is the most challenging aspect of your responsibilities?

Not forgetting where our kids are from. It's easy to forget the circumstances that a lot of our kids endure when we make decisions concerning them. I hope that is always an item I will acknowledge before making important decisions.

Personal Philosophy of Education:

I just believe teachers sometime focus too much on the teaching part and not enough on the learning part. Both have to be present to get real academic growth. A lot of focus is on the teaching aspect, but the learning side is more important. How can we create better learners?

What is EPIC about SMS?

Our kids feel safe and comfortable here at school. And a lot consider SMS the best part of their day.



What Is Grit, Why Kids Need It, and How You Can Foster It

by *Jenny Williams*.

(This article is part of the **Building Character** series. Get free article updates [here](#).)



You've probably heard the word *grit* mentioned several times in the recent years in the context of raising kids who go on to fulfill their potential.

While the word *grit* may conjure images of Rocky Balboa or Dirty Harry, in the past decade or so it has taken on a whole new meaning that has stolen the attention of parents and educators alike.

That's because according to University of Pennsylvania psychologist and MacArthur 'genius' Angela Duckworth, *grit*, defined as a child's "**perseverance and passion for long-term goals**," is a better indicator of future earnings and **happiness** than either IQ or talent.

Today's mounting research on *grit* suggests that your child's ability to work hard, endure struggle, fail, and try again may be the key to determining his or her long-term success and happiness.

So, What Is Grit and Why Does it Matter?

When we are in pursuit of a lofty goal, we don't know when or even *whether* we will succeed. Until we do.

Grit is a distinct combination of passion, resilience, determination, and focus that allows a person to maintain the discipline and optimism to persevere in their goals even in the face of discomfort, rejection, and a lack of visible progress for years, or even decades.

To be a gentle, supportive parent who raises gritty kids, [click here](#) to get our FREE mini-course
How to Be a Positive Parent.

Through extensive research, Angela Duckworth and her team have proven that the common denominator among spelling bee finalists, successful West Point cadets, salespeople and teachers who not only stick with, but improve in their performance is *grit*.

And according to study after study, people who are smart, talented, kind, curious, and come from stable, loving homes, generally don't succeed if they don't know how to work hard, remain committed to their goals, and persevere through struggles and failure.

Can We Foster Grit in Children and How?

As word of Duckworth's research has spread, *grit* has become a hot topic in education and parenting circles, and supporters want to know how to build grit in children. Although Duckworth herself says she doesn't know definitively how to increase grit in young people, she is hopeful it can be taught, and she and her team are working with researchers and schools across the country to find out how.

In 2004 and 2006, Duckworth and a team of researchers tested the grit and self-control of several thousand incoming West Point cadets before their first summer at school. The summer program, known as "Beast Barracks" is designed to push cadets to their mental and emotional limits, so much so that about 1 in 20 cadets drops out.

After taking their measurements, researchers looked for correlations between summer retention rates and cadets' Whole Candidate Scores (a number calculated by West Point's using, in part, SAT scores, GPA, and leadership potential), their grit scores and their [self-discipline](#) scores. It was *grit* that predicted retention better than any other score; cadets who scored at least one standard deviation above the norm in grit were 60% more likely to remain at West Point after the first summer than those with lower grit scores.

Although the terminology may be different, the Army includes this concept in the evaluation of even its most elite soldiers. My husband tells the story of his qualification to attend the U.S. Army's Ranger School, its premier small-unit leadership course.

In the final exercise before soldiers were chosen to attend the school, he and his fellow soldiers were told to "ruck up" with 35-pound packs and start walking. The instruction was something like, "We're not going to tell you how far you have to walk or what the cut-off time is, but if you don't finish under time, you're going home."

The would-be Rangers started walking, fast.

Finally, after hours of walking, the soldiers came to the spot where they had begun. From a distance, it looked like the finish. But as each man approached the sergeant yelled out a time and then said, "Good work. One lap down."

More than one soldier crumbled there, dropping his pack and surrendering his spot in Ranger School. But those who continued walking found that the real finish was just around the corner, a few hundred yards away.

"Never quit in a valley," says Angela Duckworth. Indeed, had those soldiers who quit maintained the fortitude to go on and move past that low-point they would have secured their spots in Ranger School.

As parents, it is up to us to cultivate the confidence and optimism in our children that will allow them to power through those low moments. A mother of two, Duckworth told [Marguerite Del Giudice](#), "Kids are not able to just spontaneously grow up to be gritty people without being supported in that."

So as parents, what can we do to provide that support? How do we teach our kids to push themselves? What can we do to help our kids be receptive to these tough lessons? Here are few ideas gleaned from the "grit" experts about how to be intentional in our quest to build grit.

#1 Find a Passion (or At Least an Engaging Activity)

Okay, so it's probably overkill to expect your five-year-old to have found his "passion." But as children grow older, pursuing a particular interest of their own choosing can help them to identify a passion and understand that practice, hard work and perseverance are surest way to achievement.

One of the characteristics of “gritty” people is that they are “especially motivated to seek happiness through focused engagement and a sense of meaning or purpose,” ([Duckworth Lab Research Statement](#)), so letting a child find his or her own passion is necessary in the long term.

In a [story for NPR](#), Duckworth told Tovia Smith, “I don’t think people can become truly gritty and great at things they don’t love, so when we try to develop grit in kids, we also need to find and help them cultivate their passions.”

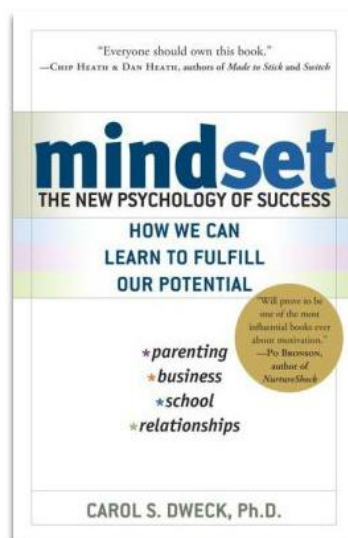
But even if our kids haven’t found their life’s work yet, we can help them learn the habits and traits that comprise grit.

At the Duckworth house, they have implemented a “[Hard Thing Rule](#),” which says that every member of the family has to be working on something difficult at any given time. Each person can choose his or her “thing” but it should be both interesting and require “deliberate practice almost daily.” And everyone has to stick with his or her selected activity for a set period of time. No one is allowed to quit mid-season because things seem too hard.

The idea is to teach kids to commit to something and work hard. The learning process is not always fun, and improvement does not come without effort. But if a child is motivated to improve at something because she likes it, then the struggle will seem worthwhile and success will be its own reward.

Be it ballet, soccer, violin, or karate, allowing a child to choose an activity and work at it for a whole season (or longer for older children) not only helps children find and cultivate a passion, it also teaches self-discipline and reinforces the idea that practice begets skill.

#2 Recognize That Frustration, Confusion and Practice Are Par for the Course



According to the Duckworth lab, those who believe that diligence and perseverance pay off beat out their less optimistic, and often more talented, counterparts nearly every time.

In a [2013 TED Talk](#), Duckworth said it is the “best idea” she has heard about how to increase grit in children is to teach what Stanford professor and author of the highly acclaimed book [Mindset: The New Psychology of Success](#), Carol Dweck, calls a “[growth mindset](#).”

Dweck has found that people with “growth mindsets” are more resilient and tend to push through struggle because they believe that hard work is part of the process and they understand that failure is not a permanent condition. Those with “fixed mindsets” on the other hand, believe that success stems from innate talent and tend to give up easily—why work hard at something if you don’t believe you can change anything?

The Duckworth lab’s [recent research](#), undertaken in partnership with classroom teachers, shows that students become less frustrated with the learning process and put forth more effort when they understand that even experts struggle to learn their craft.

First-hand accounts of the obstacles that experts have to overcome to “make it” have a real impact on helping kids manage frustration.

When a skilled performer does something well, it looks easy. Watching Jordan Spieth drive a golf ball, Taylor Swift perform a song or Ina Garten prepare a meal can make success seem easy because we never see the frustration, fatigue or years of practice and preparation that precede the final product. In working to develop grit in children, we must point out the toil that goes on behind the scenes.

Duckworth is fond of quoting world-class dancer Martha Graham who said, “Dancing appears glamorous, easy, delightful. But the path to the paradise of achievement is not easier than any other. There is fatigue so great that the body cries, even in its sleep. There are times of complete frustration, there are daily small deaths.”

Last summer while at the City Farmer’s Market, my children and I stopped to watch a talented tap dancer performing a street show. My daughter Sue* was mesmerized. “I want to dance like that,” she said. “I want to take tap.”

When the dancer took a break, we asked him how long he had been dancing.

“14 years,” he said.

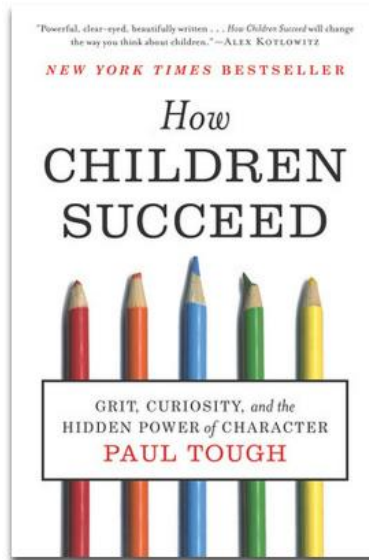
“And how much do you practice?” I asked.

“Three hours a day,” he said.

Later, Sue and I got out the calculator. That’s 15,330 hours of practice!

It’s not that we should never let our children change interests or shift activities as they grow—they are kids after all—but understanding the value of practice, hard work and even struggle may be the thing that carries them across the finish line.

#3 Take Risks (and Tell Your Kids About It)



Grit demands risk taking. Successful people are willing to step out of their comfort zones and risk failure in order to learn something new or pursue a long-term goal. And while, by definition, a risk may end in failure, successful adults don’t give up.

Paul Tough, author of **How Children Succeed** says, “Lots of parents don’t want to talk about their failures in front of their kids, but that’s denying kids the potentially powerful experience of seeing their parents bounce back.”

The Summers boys were 9, 11, and 13 when the late Dr. Robert Summers, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, applied for a Ford Foundation grant that would allow the family to spend a year in England.

As his wife, Dr. Anita Summers, tells it, the Summers decided to share their risk-taking with their children by telling the boys about the application months before they knew the outcome.

In addition to wanting the boys to “get their arms around the possibility of being away for the year,” Dr. Summers says they wanted their sons to see that if their father didn’t win the fellowship they “would be very disappointed, but [that] life goes on.”

Either way, the boys would gain valuable insights from their father’s experience. They could feel the anticipation and excitement that accompanies risk-taking as they waited to learn their fate, and then either experience the joy of success or share in the disappointment of failure, but, win or lose, their father would continue to pursue his life’s work.

On the day that Dr. Summers finally received his letter, the family waited for him to come home and deliver the news. And when he produced the acceptance letter, the boys were able to celebrate with their parents in a way that they could not have if they hadn’t felt the apprehension and excitement that preceded the acceptance.

Further, if the boys hadn’t been privy to the discomfort of not knowing the outcome, they might have been left with the impression that winning a prestigious fellowship simply falls into one’s lap rather than being sought after and hard won.

The lesson seems to have worked. All three of their boys have gone on to successful careers in law, medicine and public policy. Their oldest, Larry, has served as Secretary of the Treasury and President of Harvard University.

When Dr. Summers shared this story, I thought about the handful of high school seniors I had met who were afraid to apply to certain colleges out of a fear of rejection. Some were kids with high test scores and exceptional GPAs who refused to strive for acceptance to an elite schools because they didn’t think they would get in, and others were lower achieving students who refused to apply at all. It’s hard to imagine that those kids would not be better off today if they had possessed the courage to risk rejection in pursuit of success.

It’s easy to spout aphorisms like “*Nothing ventured, nothing gained,*” but letting our kids see us put a little skin in the game may build the optimism and courage they need to take some risks themselves.

#4 Teach That Failure Is Not the End

5,127 – The number of failed vacuum prototypes created by James Dyson before he came out with the Dual Cyclone bagless vacuum cleaner that made him a billionaire.

30 – The number of rejections Stephen King received before his first novel, *Carrie*, was finally accepted by a publisher.

\$4 million – The number of dollars lost on GoPro inventor, Nick Woodman’s, failed first company.

According to the Duckworth lab statement, gritty people have “cognitive dispositions that incline [them] to look for changeable causes of their current problems.”

Grit means maintaining the hope and vision to change even under the most challenging circumstances.

The internet is littered with one-liners about overcoming failure, but inspiring aphorisms are not enough to convince children that they should endure rejections, setbacks and failures, especially painful ones.

In order to teach children to be resilient, we need to show them real examples of how failures and setbacks can lead to success—by talking about them regularly, sharing our own experiences, and most importantly *allowing them to fail*.

In his *New York Times* article “**The Secret to Success is Failure**,” Paul Tough says,

It is a central paradox of contemporary parenting, in fact: we have an acute, almost biological impulse to provide for our children, to give them everything they want and need, to protect them from dangers and discomforts both large and small. And yet we all know — on some level, at least — that what kids need more than anything is a little hardship: some challenge, some deprivation that they can overcome, even if just to prove to themselves that they can. As parents, it is important that we don’t let our protective instincts rob our kids of first-hand experiences with hard-won victories.

This winter my husband and I put Paul Tough’s assertion to the test. At our local gym, kids who pass a swimming test are given a wristband that allows them to swim in the pool without a life jacket on. Despite having taken several years of swimming lessons, our daughter, Sue, has struggled with swimming and been slow to master floating on her back.

Until a few weeks ago, she would not attempt the swimming test because she was terrified of failing. Likewise, while we wanted her to earn her band, we did not want her to become discouraged if she failed.

Finally, we put a deadline before her: She had to attempt the swimming test before spring break. We weren’t sure whether or not she would pass, but decided that Sue facing her fear of failing was paramount. “If you pass,” we told her, “you’ll get your wristband, and if you don’t, we’ll know what you need to work on. We’ll practice and take the test again.”

When the moment came, Sue hopped into the pool and swam her freestyle without any trouble, but when it came time to float, she couldn't flip onto her back and tried several times before she burst into tears.

"I want to practice. I want to practice," she begged as we got out of the test pool and back into the kiddie pool. We spent the next 15 minutes half playing, half practicing before she said, "I want to take it again."

While I was proud of her resilience, I was also apprehensive about a second failure and told her I didn't think she had practiced enough. When she insisted, I summoned the lifeguard. Then Sue failed her test for a second time.

At home that night, we celebrated Sue's decision to take the test but talked about how we'd need to practice her back float a lot more before she tried the test again.

Sue is still working toward her swimming test goal by taking weekly swimming lessons and practicing on her own, but the failure has not kept her out of the pool or dampened her resolve.

Now that she's failed once, the prospect of another failure remains unpleasant but no longer deters her from trying. We are all confident that with practice she will also succeed in earning her wristband.

As parents, we all want to see our kids succeed, but **as they search to find their footing on the pathway to success**, it is important to **show them that failure is part of the process**, not an endpoint, but a necessary crossing on the road to achievement.

And if we don't let them see us fail or experience a failure themselves in the safety of our presence, they may not have the stamina to overcome one when they are on their own.

In the months leading up to December 2014 Tyler Wagner trained to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. He sacrificed time with his family, a wife and four children, for training and shared his excitement about the challenge with them as he worked toward his goal. His daughter even checked out a library book with a picture of Mount Kilimanjaro on the front.

Then, the day after Christmas, he left his family and journeyed toward the peak with a group of friends. But before he could reach the summit, Tyler became so sick that he could not go on.

Even now months later, he finds it difficult to reflect on the failed attempt. "I know I was a mess with a fever and cough and physically unable to continue," he says, "but even that excuse doesn't make it okay in my head."

Still, he and his wife, Lauren, have turned his failure into a lesson for his kids.

When Tyler talked to his family on Skype soon after leaving the mountain, he shared his sadness and frustration over not finishing the climb. But since then they have talked a lot about his experience in Africa, not just the climb but also the safari that followed—the animals, the food, and the way Tyler adapted daily routines in this foreign environment.

“Fear of failure and disappointment is something I don’t want them to focus on,” he says. “I hope they saw that I took a chance and stepped out of my comfort zone, and while I didn’t climb to the summit, I was still able to have a great experience.”

Today Tyler is talking about a second attempt, and Lauren says it may be a family affair. “The kids believe that Tyler will definitely try again,” she says, “and they plan to be there with him. It has now become a goal of theirs to do it with him.”

Failure is painful and humbling, and as parents it is difficult to admit to our kids that it happens to us too. Yet exposing them to failure may be the very thing to inoculate them against giving up when they come face-to-face with failure themselves. They need to know that frustrating and painful moments are not the end of something but a natural part of the journey toward achievement.

Love this article? Receive others just like it once per week directly in your mailbox. [Click here](#) to join us... we’ll even get you started with our FREE mini-course **How to Be a Positive Parent**.

The 2-Minute Action Plan for Fine Parents

Consider how you and your spouse approach risk and failure. Where have you felt challenged in your own life and what did you do about it?

Do you approach problems with a sense of optimism or defeat?

Take the “[grit test](#),” then remember that your score isn’t fixed and neither is your child’s.

The Ongoing Action Plan for Fine Parents

Join the Duckworths and implement a “Hard Thing Rule.” Help your child identify a challenging long-term goal to work toward and encourage regular practice.

Talk about setbacks as they arise. Help your child build a plan B or C when necessary.

Share your feelings about your challenge and celebrate when family members attempt persevere through difficult tasks.

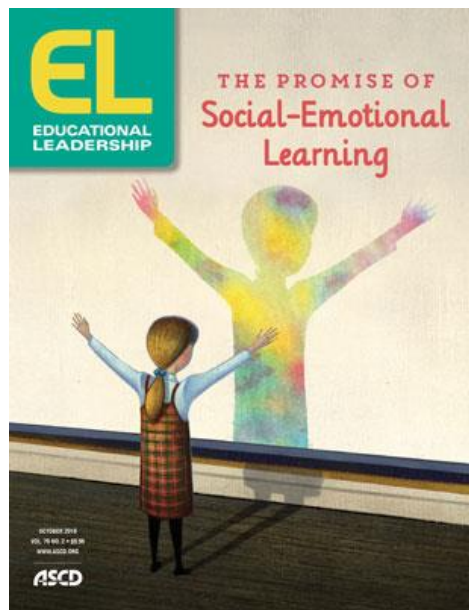
Talk with your children regularly about your own failures and how you persevered (or could have).

When you child meets with a skill, activity or sport that is difficult to master, resist the urge to “save” her and don’t allow her to quit at the first sign of trouble. Discourage her from quitting at a low point. Instead, use the experience as a way to teach resilience and an opportunity for success. Help her to brainstorm strategies and make an action plan but allow her to take ownership of the solution.

Lagniappe



EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP



October 2018 | Volume 76 | Number 2

The Promise of Social-Emotional Learning Pages 40-45

Grit and the Greater Good: A Conversation with Angela Duckworth

Sarah McKibben

The nation's foremost expert on grit says being a "good" person is more imperative than being "great" at something.

University of Pennsylvania professor Angela Duckworth's research on the importance of "grit" to academic success sparked a new area of focus in K–12 education—as well as its fair share of criticism. But Duckworth, founder and CEO of the Character Lab, believes that the concept is often misunderstood, and that character strengths that drive achievement shouldn't overshadow those that make us good.

You literally wrote the book on grit. Yet lately you've been careful to emphasize that "grit isn't everything"—that in fact, "character is plural."

I'll first begin by saying that different communities use different terms; but when I say character, I really mean social-emotional learning. There are three families of character strengths that we see in our data: one is *interpersonal* character strengths. We like to call them strengths of heart. They include gratitude, empathy, honesty, and social and emotional intelligence—all the things that help you get along and contribute to the lives of other people. I think those are probably the most important aspects of character, and they're not grit. It's important for me to say that as a mother, as a former teacher, and as a scientist.

The second family of strengths, which are the ones I study as a scientist, are *intrapersonal* character strengths, or strengths of will. These include academic self-control, delay of gratification, grit, and related ways of thinking about the world, like optimism or growth mindset. Without strengths of will, a kid isn't getting their work done or moving toward their own personal goals.

The third category is deeply important and kind of obvious, but I think schools can do a lot better job developing them. These are strengths of mind, or *intellectual* character strengths, like curiosity, open-mindedness, intellectual humility, imagination, and creativity.

These strengths of heart, mind, and will collectively are what I refer to as character. But I respect other schools, communities, and individuals who prefer different terms: *life skills*, *soft skills*, *21st century skills*, *social-emotional learning skills*, and so on.

You mentioned that interpersonal skills are the most important aspects of character. Are they also the most important to success in school?

No, and that's a great question. In fact, these interpersonal character strengths—strengths of heart—are not as correlated with grades as are the strengths of will. When I say most important, I mean most imperative in a moral or social way. I am horrified at the idea that my daughters would grow up to be unkind and unempathetic people. It's important for my kids to be good before it's important for me that they are great. As a human, I think it's most important that we treat other people with respect first and foremost.

Your work with the Character Lab has shown promising developments for measuring SEL skills. What can you share with us?

We have had success in three different ways (and some disappointments): First, we have questionnaires designed for research and self-reflection that were kid-created. We went into schools and asked kids to tell us what self-control or gratitude or curiosity look like in their daily lives. And then we had teachers rate these items on a simple scale to determine which were most common among their students, like "forgetting my homework because I wasn't paying attention." We did years of statistical analysis and looked to see which items predicted actual outcomes like GPA or the number of friends you have. And that's how we developed the Character Growth Card and came up with the strengths of heart, mind, and will.

The second thing we did was create performance measures of character, including a frustration task and an academic-diligence task. These are less fakable because they are behavioral tasks, not self-report questionnaires. But performance tasks, like the Marshmallow Test or any of the ones we developed, have a lot of error in them. It's effectively a single observation, and there are all kinds of reasons why you might not do well—you don't have very good hand-eye coordination or you were hungry that day or the cafeteria smelled like bologna. The latter actually happened to us once. Literally, the cafeteria smelled like bologna and all the kids were talking about was bologna and they were distracted and didn't do very well.

The third thing, which I think is the future, involves big data. More and more information is going online, like school records and homework completion. In fact, kids are learning more online, through Kahn Academy and other kinds of platforms. So what are the implications for measurement? Maybe we can see a future, at least for certain SEL competencies or character strengths—like persistence, challenge-seeking, and openness to feedback—where you won't have to ask a single question or ask kids to do any extra thing. Instead, you can analyze the data that's there. For example, we've been looking at the extracurricular activities that kids list in the Common App, and we're finding that the data is a good proxy for grit. When we see continuity and persistence in these extracurriculars, it's predicting all the same outcomes that a questionnaire measure of grit would.

Carol Dweck recently came out to say growth mindset was being misinterpreted and misapplied in schools. Are there cases where schools are also getting grit wrong?

I think Carol Dweck and I might both worry that our message is not being heard as we intend. Grit is *not* about blaming the student. I think it's an easy misinterpretation. To say that grit is important doesn't mean that when kids are not performing well, it's their fault, instead of needing more support, better instruction, and more opportunities. I remember when the *New York Times* reviewed my book two years ago, my feelings were hurt a little bit. The review suggested I'm tone-deaf to the need for structural change and that I didn't understand the plight of poor kids. And I thought to myself, "My own father wouldn't speak to me for six months when I went into education to teach disadvantaged kids in cities like New York." I sure as heck am not out for ignoring the problems that I confronted as a teacher on a daily basis.

So I think the misunderstanding is an easy one, which is that growth mindset and grit are about the individual, and therefore not about society and culture and structural change. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, what does give a kid the hope that they can change and learn, what does give a kid resilience and passion, are their experiences. There's a responsibility for society, classroom teachers, superintendents, headmasters to create the circumstances under which growth mindset and grit and other aspects of character can grow.

When it comes down to the tactical things that go wrong, a teacher who hears about growth mindset and grit may say to a struggling kid, "Oh well, at least you tried hard." That's not what Carol and I want. At the tactical level, we would advise saying something like, "Well, let's get out that last test and let's go through every problem together and figure out what went wrong. And then let's practice what needs to go better next time."

So developing grit is not just on the student, but also on the community and systems?

Yes. It's a combination of both. When I talk to my own kids, I talk to them about taking responsibility. I want kids to feel like they have agency, which they do. So I'm not saying it's only the responsibility of the schools, the teachers, and society. I'm certainly not saying it's only the responsibility of the kids. I really think of it as joint work, but we have to set kids up for growth and success. I've been in classrooms where I have thought to myself, "I can't see how a gritty kid would even survive here. It is so poorly managed, it is so hostile in its culture." I wouldn't want to go into that classroom and say, "Well, it's on you kids." But I also wouldn't want to go into that classroom and say, "It's 100 percent your teacher's responsibility, and you are all passive receptacles." I want kids to have agency, but I also want society to take responsibility.

A lot of people say poor kids already have large reserves of grit that they don't get credit for. Are there certain types of grit that are being overlooked in schools, like the grit it takes to hold down a job after school, raise a sibling, and still make it to class every day?

That's a really excellent point. If I look at a kid's record and they spent four years on the tennis team and they ended up the captain and they overcame an injury ... it's obvious that kid has grit. But what about the kid who is holding things together at home and taking care of a sibling or making dinner or helping to pay the bills?

We had support from the Gates Foundation to look at high school seniors and ways of measuring and thinking about predictors of college persistence. And when we looked at their activities, we were very intentional in asking, not just what sports have you done, but also what are you doing as part of a religious tradition or household responsibilities or paid work? Kids don't think that's what colleges want to see on applications, so it doesn't occur to them to write down that they were working at Domino's 20 hours a week.

That said, I think that when kids can demonstrate or be gritty in an area like that, they—not because they're poor, but just because they're human—sometimes need help in transferring that asset into a different domain of life. So just to use an example that has no class lines: Say kids are on a soccer or basketball team, and they're very gritty and resilient and they can take feedback and they're coachable on the playing field. But then they're in math class and all of a sudden they're shut down, and the teacher says, "Let's try that problem again" and they're like, "No, I can't do it." I've taught kids like that—I'm like, wait a second, where does all your grit, your resilience, your growth mindset, your terrific coachable attitude go? They sometimes need help in understanding that it is the same situation. They need to be able to say to themselves, "I'm being challenged, I'm being asked to do something I can't yet do. But I *can* do it with some support and some practice and effort."

Grit, as you describe it, is one part passion and one part perseverance. What practices support each area of grit in the classroom?

We have an "Expert Practice Playbook" on our website to help students build mastery toward a specific skill with ongoing practice and teacher feedback. It was codeveloped by Anders Ericsson, who's the world expert on world experts, and a team of teachers. What expert practice is not, is rote, drill-and-kill kind of practice. For example, homework could in many cases be better designed. Is it really focusing on a particular skill? Is it a skill that the kid really needs to improve upon, as opposed to, "Oh, I'm going to fill up a half an hour of time?" And are they getting feedback? With a lot of work that kids do in class or at home, the feedback is not the way it's supposed to be, which is immediate and formative. If you're giving out an essay in English class with one comment on it four months later—which happens—there's no incentive for the kid to take the feedback and improve. What I'd like to see is that the essay comes back in as quick a time turnaround as possible with really helpful comments.

Another thing teachers could do is provide a structure where kids can improve. I really like schools that are trying to innovate in that way, making it mastery-oriented, where you can take the same test over and over again—or different versions of tests—and your grade reflects that improvement.

What about kids who haven't found a passion? Can they be gritty?

Grit really starts with passion. People always focus on the work ethic part of it, but I actually think that the passion comes first developmentally. Usually it starts as interest, curiosity. In a fully grown mature adult, you usually find that there's also purpose and meaning and the feeling that you're in service of something greater than yourself. But when you're 9 or 10, you're usually not that other-oriented, and you're not quite able to think of that bigger picture. What you are doing is discovering, "I like rocks" or "That was fun. Turns out I like being outside a lot." I think this idea of curiosity being central to grit is so important. If you look at graphs of curiosity or engagement in school, the graphs are downward ski slopes from 5th grade on. Wouldn't it be great if those graphs went up? That for every year a kid was in school they were more intellectually curious about something?

In a grittier world, we really wouldn't be forcing kids to do tons of practice on hard things that they don't care about; we would find ways to have them be playful and enjoy things.

What does a grit-informed school look like?

I would say that it is a school where kids are probably doing more project-based learning. Oftentimes schools, for example, assign a senior thesis or a senior project, something where the kids take ownership and have choice, so they're able to do something which is of personal interest to them.

It would look like teachers being demanding, yet supportive, like the greatest teachers always are. I was recently interviewing a paragon of grit, Toby Cosgrove, who is dyslexic and only diagnosed in his early 30s. But despite his struggles academically, he had become the head of the Cleveland Clinic and arguably the best heart surgeon in the world. We were talking about teaching, and he asked me, "You've probably had over 100 teachers. Who do you remember?" I

immediately remembered my English teacher Mr. Carr. He was just about the hardest teacher I ever had, but he loved and cared so much for us. He was that combination. And I think that's what a gritty school and a gritty classroom looks like. It's *really* demanding. It asks for things that you don't think you can do, but then you have this person who has so much unconditional support, that you surprise yourself with what you can accomplish.

Your family lives by the *Hard Thing Rule*. Tell us about it.

The *Hard Thing Rule* is that everyone in the family has to do one hard thing like yoga, running, or the viola that requires daily deliberate practice. My kids have to complete what they start: So they're not allowed to quit sports in the middle of the season or quit instruments before the tuition payment is up. They can quit at the end of a commitment, but they have to then pick the next hard thing. Part of the rule is that they pick their own activity; I don't want to choose what my kids do with their time. I don't think that's where passion comes from.

What if schools had a *Hard Thing Rule*, where everybody in the school is doing something hard? They would have to finish their commitments. For younger kids, it might be a commitment of two weeks. For older kids, it might be as long as a year. And they would have some autonomy in saying, I want to do violin or gymnastics or community service. I think those are good rules for any school.

On a final note, you often reference MLK's quote, "Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education." How far have schools come, and how far do we have to go, in achieving Dr. King's vision?

We're now in kind of a renaissance of understanding what we probably just forgot for a while, which is that kids are people; they're not just test scores, and they have responsibilities to themselves and to others. They need our help in developing. I would say that what we're on the cusp of is doing what schools have long been understood to do, which is educate the whole child. What I'm really excited about is the possibility that science—which has advanced a lot since Martin Luther King Jr. and since Aristotle and Benjamin Franklin and John Dewey—will help us go farther than we have before.

Sarah McKibben is senior editor of *Educational Leadership*.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION The Robertson County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion or marital status, in training, activities or employment practices in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Americans with Disabilities Acts of 1997 and 2004.