



Speaking the Truth from the Field (w/ Myles Finn and Haley Finn) (Transcript)

*Educator Wellness Podcast
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[PODCAST INTRO] 0:00 | Dr. Kari Vogelgesang:

Hello everyone. I'm Kari Vogelgesang, your host of the Educator Wellness Podcast. Here to share and promote my life's work and passion, all things' wellness, but not just any wellness. We're here to discuss wellness specifically as it pertains to educators. I am a former elementary school teacher and I am passionate about helping educators see wellness in a very different way. This podcast is dedicated to educators across the globe, creating a space for us to come together in an authentic and therapeutic way, sharing our stories, our hopes, our joys, our fears, our sorrows, and hopefully creating some space to share some laughter with one another as well in our journey to learn how to support one another, to prioritize wellness and enhance our overall well-being. Please join me as we talk with nationally recognized experts to guide us on a transformative journey of self-discovery, helping us to embrace and weave all dimensions of wellness into the fabric of both our personal and professional lives.

Also, please note that the opinions and perspectives that are shared on this podcast do not necessarily represent those at the Scanlan Center for School Mental Health, or the University of Iowa.

[EPISODE INTRO] 1:12 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Welcome to today's episode of the Scanlan Center for School Mental Health Educator Wellness Podcast.

Get ready for an insightful and captivating episode titled Speaking the Truth from the Field. In this episode, we bring you unfiltered insights, straight from the front lines of education with experienced educators sharing their raw and honest accounts of the daily challenges and triumphs they encounter in our schools. From navigating policy changes to addressing societal issues impacting our students, today's guests offer a candid glimpse into the complexities of modern education. I welcome our guest, Haley and Myles Finn to the conversation. Haley just finished her very first year as a middle school counselor at Indianola Middle School in Indianola, Iowa.

Previously she was an elementary school counselor at Pleasantville Elementary for two years, and she has worked in substance abuse, recovery and mental health services. Haley also co-directs musicals at Indianola High School with her husband Myles with Productions, including The Wizard of Oz, the Addams family, the Sound of Music, and the 25th annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. Myles is in his sixth year as the choral director at Indianola High School. He directs multiple choirs, but you may all know him best for his viral TikTok videos that sparked a love for choral music and musical theater. Myles has amassed over 120 million views and 1.1 million followers. Wow. Myles also holds a master's degree in choral conducting from Michigan State University and a bachelor's in music education from Wartburg College. He credits his success to his work at Michigan State Guidance from Dr. Lee Nelson at Wartburg and also his high school choir director, Dwayne Philgreen.

Outside of their professional lives, Myles and Haley are proud parents to two beautiful children, Rory and Lyra. Please join us as we dive into the real world experiences that shape today's educational landscape, providing you with a deeper understanding of the incredible work happening in our schools every day. Let's get started.

3:41 | Kari Vogelgesang:

So I am going to start with a question that might be a little bit personal, but I love asking teachers this question and I can get into that a little bit more through your answer maybe, but what is it like, you're both educators, so what is it like to be married to another educator? Is it helpful? Does it get in the way of things sometimes? Do you have disagreements about pedagogy or process?

4:12 | Haley Finn:

I think we're in a unique situation of where Myles is the music educator and I'm the school counselor, and so I feel like our specialties are different enough that we really collaborate and we work really, really well together. Yeah.

4:33 | Myles Finn:

I think she helps me a lot in that whenever I'm dealing with a student that's maybe having a mental health crisis or things like that, I always know that I can ask Haley about those things. Now sometimes our work definitely comes home with us and we'll be talking about school stuff until 10, 11 o'clock at night when truthfully, it's probably better for us to leave it at school. But

there are definitely times when I think we learn from each other in good ways and we can just make each other better educators because we're bouncing ideas off of each other and just working on our outlook on education together. And I think we've both grown in a good way since Haley has answered the education field and it's helped me immensely and I hope that I'm helping you with a couple of things here and there too.

5:26 | Haley Finn:

Well, and the fun part about that too is because you're in music education, that's where my outlet is. So music and dance and art have been huge impacts or huge things in my life that have been very impactful since I was in grade school. And so then being able to be a part of those things like after a long and stressful day at school, there are times where I'm able to go up to show choir practice or I choreograph his musicals. And so in the springtime, even though we are crazy busy and sometimes that's honestly probably the hardest part about our roles and you being a music educator as most of your stuff happens outside of the normal school hours.

But it's also so refreshing because then I can go and I can be around the big kids is what we call them. For our little ones, we call them the big kids. And it's so refreshing that I get to still live out the dance and the music part of me that's so special and I get to share that with him too. So it really is a fun and unique situation and we work really well together even when it's really stressful, when it becomes winter time and then probably all the way till May, that's probably the most stressful time in our lives just because-

6:50 | Myles Finn:

We're always out of the house.

6:51 | Haley Finn:

We're always out of the house. You're spending late nights, whether it's show choir season, solo ensemble, musical, all that. And now we have two little ones. So that can be a lot, especially for me because at times I feel like the go-to parent. But the other really neat thing is that our kids know nothing else than to just be loaded up in the car and go to the high school to go see dad. And the high school kids love it and we trust them and we can just be like, hey, can somebody go watch Rory or when he is running around and so I can do this choreo and the kids do it. So even though there are some really stressful times, there are also such beautiful moments and getting our kids to grow up in such a fun and meaningful atmosphere that means so much to us I think is really beautiful too.

7:44 | Myles Finn:

For sure.

7:45 | Kari Vogelgesang:

I do think your kids will have some really great memories. So my dad was an educator and a track and cross country coach, and I feel like his track and cross country athletes and just actually he was also our athletic director. I feel like I was also semi raised by all of his athletes growing up. I mean, I was, every basketball game, every track meet, every softball game, I'm talking everything packed up in the car. We just had this cooler full of snaps all the time. We never knew what town we were going to be in that day. And I know what show choir season is, my kids weren't show choir kids, but my friends have show choir kids and a girl that I ended up taking in and she was in show choir and holy bananas.

8:40 | Myles Finn:

It's just a lot. It's a lot. And the seasons are just like... I mean, we're starting choreography camp in two weeks and then we will be done performing mid-March. So, I mean, we're talking nine, 10 months of together as a group, which is so rare. I mean, any activity that you do, you're never meeting for that amount of time.

9:03 | Kari Vogelgesang:

No. So, Sarah, if you're listening, so Sarah's my child that came, my bonus child. And when she started doing Show Choir, well, she was doing it in junior high and then when she was a freshman and she was like my first show choir... Well, actually her auditions were in the spring. Would've been in the spring. So really started in the spring of the year before she was even in high school. And I was like... And then going to these camps. I was like this is crazy.

9:40 | Myles Finn:

It's never ending. I mean, they love it though. The kids that are in show choir are obsessed with show choir.

9:47 | Haley Finn:

Choir Lifers.

9:48 | Myles Finn:

Yeah, seriously. I mean, it's so stinking fun. It's a different outlook too.

9:56 | Kari Vogelgesang:

I feel so blessed to gotten to know it and just the hard work that goes into it and the commitment and the teamwork and they're learning so much through the whole process and parents are learning along with them and it's quite the deal.

10:09 | Myles Finn:

It's so fun.

10:10 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Okay, so there's show choir and I did want to touch on show choir because I became obsessed and fascinated with show choir.

10:18 | Myles Finn:

It's a wild thing. But I think is taking, setting foot in a lot of other states more than I think it has in years past. So it's become a national thing. Probably in the last 20 years it's gotten even more chaotic throughout chaotic fun throughout the last 20 years throughout the US. There are so many different states that are going crazy with it. I flew out to West Virginia for a show choir competition and they are doing big and beautiful things as well, and most of the Midwest goes crazy for it. So it's a fun challenge for sure. Let's just put it that way.

10:59 | Kari Vogelgesang:

And it's extremely educational.

11:01 | Myles Finn:

Absolutely. I mean, to work on different performance things that I think you can directly relate to a job interview, having confidence when you walk into that room is something that we're talking about every time that you set foot on stage, you are setting the tone for how you want this to go. So it's a little things like that that they can absolutely take into the rest of their life. So there are things like that that are so beautiful about us.

11:31 | Haley Finn:

So many life and social skills that they don't even realize for for

11:34 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Sure. Who knew that today's episode was really going to be about show choir?

11:39 | Myles Finn: It's just show choir.

11:40 | Kari Vogelgesang: The transferable life skills.

11:41 | Myles Finn: Exactly. Exactly.

11:42 | Haley Finn: I mean, we could do a show on, I'm sure we remember some of our high school choreo.

11:48 | Kari Vogelgesang:

That's so funny. Now let's talk a little, if we can shift gears just a little bit. I really want this front lines inside voice from teachers about what's really going on in schools right now. School is always and always has been, especially over the past, probably three to four decades I would say been a really sexy topic for people. It's become really political and it's really easy to get people's emotions going when politicians, legislators, community members start to talk about education and what that means for your particular child and for our lives as a whole. And I'm just starting, I'd like to know directly from teachers who are in it right now, how does that feel to all of you? Are you feeling that as educators right now, that people are really talking about your profession in a way to convince other people to do things or not to do things legislatively? And how does that feel to you? Do you follow it? Is it noise? Do you just try to block out the noise and focus on your job?

13:12 | Myles Finn:

It's a lot of noise a lot of the time because I think that if we followed it probably as much as we should, then I think that we would never actually teach and all we would do is follow the legislation just because there are so much that goes into it. Like you said, it's such a hot button issue that everyone wants to talk about it at all times. There are certain things that hit a little bit harder when it comes down the pike from the legislature, but there are some things that we just let happen and don't necessarily think about because I think, like I said, if we thought about it too much, then it would just bog us down.

And I think that we wouldn't focus on the right things. We have to focus on the bodies in the room and we have to focus on changing these young people into the future generation that we want them to be and to be good stewards of the community and things like that. And I think if we focus too much on legislation and things like that, then I think we lose the purpose of why we're in the classroom.

14:21 | Kari Vogelgesang: Sure.

14:22 | Haley Finn:

It's really hard though, for the other side of it for me though, is as a school counselor, it's really hard not to listen to it and it's really hard not for... So I work at the middle school here in Indianola and I work, I'm one of three counselors and they're a wonderful team. And I will say that though it's noise and it's most of the time really frustrating noise, it's really hard to not become... It's just frustrating as a counselor. It hits us a little bit differently because there have been so many policy changes and things going on in legislation about social emotional learning that directly impacts our role as a counselor and directly impacts the welfare of our students. And people who have never worked in education shouldn't be the ones making the laws and the policies because that's where educators feel so, or unlike, they don't feel valued, they don't feel heard because sometimes it's just like we sit back and we're like, what is happening?

Everything you say you're doing for students is actually, it feels like it's going against education educators and the welfare of the students. With the AEA changes going on, I think the biggest frustration with that is that no one knows where we have ideas, there are rumors, there are things that are being said, but really it's going to look so different for every district. And I think that's where there's so much anxiety and concern because at the middle school, I work really closely with our AEA people and they don't know if they're going to have jobs. They don't know what their job is going to look like. One of the main concerns for us as school counselors is how is that going to impact with special education, the concern of eliminating supports that aren't under the umbrella of special education. Well, we have so many students who need or receive mental health supports who aren't in special education.

So what happens to them and what happens to the mental health crisis response? What happens to trainings and resources for educators like suicide prevention training or mental health? In Indianola we are in the thralls of being a trauma informed school. So does any of that change things that are for the welfare of our students, but some of the changes in the talks and the policies that are being made and all of that, that doesn't feel that way to us. And so I think our looks on it are similar, but they just hit a little bit differently because our roles are not the same. And so yeah, that's my take on it at the middle school anyways.

17:31 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yeah, this is what I talk to school administrators nearly every single day and helping plan different types of trainings and professional development and also talk with my AEA colleagues every week as well. And I think this is the big question mark, right? If we're going to move into this direction, how are we still going to, on a state level, especially being such a rural state, going to ensure that there isn't going to be even one single student who doesn't access the supports that they're currently able to access right now, if not even improve. We're trying to even improve and broaden and bolster a lot of those services. So I think that's still the big

question mark. I'm not sure anybody really has an answer for that right now. It feels to me we're building the plane as we fly it.

18:28 | Myles Finn: Honestly.

18:29 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yeah, so it'll be interesting to see how things start to play out in the course of this year. And I am just hopeful that as this happens, if these changes that are being made don't end up working in favor for students, that people are still willing to come to the table and just have enough, be able to say, okay, well maybe that wasn't the exact way the legislation. Maybe we need to go back and revisit this, be able to be humble enough to say that. If it does work out, then great, let's keep pushing forward. But I do think there's lots of anxiety around us because we love our students so much and it's very difficult to know that there's some major changes coming, but we just don't have all of the answers yet.

19:22 | Myles Finn:

Right. And I think, well, two things. One, I hope that our politicians keep a growth mindset and just want to continue growing at all times because like you said, if they see that this change isn't working the way that we want it to, and then they just continue hoping for the best, then nothing's going to be accomplished. But if they take the mindset of this isn't working exactly how we want it to, but we are going to work to make it better, then I think awesome. I think that's great. Again, I do hope that they continue to work with educators, with people with boots on the ground to make those changes as opposed to somebody that's not at all involved in education making decisions for people in education, because I mean, it's a very unique career path to take to be an educator, and I hope that it's continued to be valued no matter who is making the decisions.

The other thing I was going to say is that Haley and I both have experiences in smaller districts and then coming to Indianola, which is a relatively big district. So like you said, of the idea of making sure that no matter the size of the school, that every student that needs a service is given that service, rather than basing that off of the funding within each school or the size of the school and the money that follows that or whatever, making sure that no matter if you are a kindergartner at Pleasantville Elementary or you are a senior at Indianola High School, you still have the same opportunity for services, not based on where you live or things like that.

21:01 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Absolutely. And I do think that that's one of the biggest factors that's creating such anxiety teachers, especially teachers in rural communities, know that. I mean, if we don't have those services through AEAs, then there aren't service providers. I mean, that's the problem is that, okay, you can give us money, but then where do we go if there aren't service providers in the area?

21:36 | Myles Finn:

Drive two hours to Des Moines just so that you can get the service that you need, who's actually going to take that?

21:41 | Haley Finn:

Well, Myles and we talked last night, we even have personal connection to the resources that the AEA offers right now with Rory, our almost three-year-old. We were worried for a little bit about his communication skills, and so we utilized their services, and so they came out to the house for free, and they met with him probably three times and just evaluated him and just to see where he is at, if he's developmentally where he should be, and then if he was, but it was so validating to hear that from professionals who know what they're doing and calm our anxieties of, we were like, "Oh my gosh, he's behind." And then you play the compare game of like, well, that two-year-old is doing those things. Why isn't Rory doing that? And so we have that personal connection to that, and that was so important at that time. And so it's things like that too. There are so many services and I think so many services and resources that people aren't even aware of that the AEA do. And so again, it's just like, whew.

22:57 | Myles Finn: It's such an important thing.

22:58 | Haley Finn: Yeah.

22:59 | Myles Finn:

And to be able to get that for free, obviously we would have been willing to pay for that as well, but there are so many families that Do not have that opportunity, that need this. So to be able to do that at cost was incredible and so perfect for us in that moment.

23:20 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Okay. Let's shift a little bit and move away from policy to societal issues. So one of my guiding questions is what are some of the most pressing societal issues you see impacting your students today? I mean, I can think of one that comes up nearly every day right now when I'm working with at school administrators, but I'm interested to hear what you all have to say.

23:48 | Haley Finn:

Social media.

23:50 | Myles Finn:

Was that what you were going to say?

23:54 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yes. I was going to say something about technology. Yeah.

23:59 | Haley Finn:

Yeah. It's horrendous. For the middle school every day. My students every day struggled with social media and technology.

24:14 | Myles Finn:

And using it inappropriately.

24:15 | Haley Finn:

Using it inappropriately. Well, cyber bullying, I mean, body positivity, anxiety. And then of course you get the whole mental health because of things that are being done on social media and technology. It was an every day... I had a kid in my office every day over something social media or technology related,

24:39 | Kari Vogelgesang:

And these things, I mean, you're the one that's in the school, Haley, but happening both in school and out of school. Even when it's happening out of school, it's essentially still happening in school because they bring-

24:51 | Haley Finn:

Yeah. And honestly, most of the issues that were coming in for my students, so we loop best counselors. So we stay with the same group of kids through sixth, seventh, and eighth. So I started last year, so I got all of the kids who were seventh graders this year, so they're seventh grade and then eighth grade. And so you're dealing with so many different things, but it does, it starts at home. And so much of what was coming into school were things that were being done over Snapchat, over TikTok. Text messages that were being sent in the middle of the night, girls being awful to each other, and people sending inappropriate or asking for inappropriate pictures of each other over Snapchat Instagram. And so it felt like we were always trying to put out fires that weren't even started in school, but then it was brought in, and then you had kids reporting things and you had groups of kids who were being awful to each other in school because of things that were happening out.

And so then that's where you hit that such gray area of, okay, it started at home. What are the things that we need to know? How do we address that here? Even though a lot of times or sometimes it's not being addressed at home, not being addressed outside. And so then it's hard because you're fighting so many battles every which way trying to help and support the students. But honestly, a lot of it was out outside of school.

26:31 | Myles Finn:

Well, and you could only control what's happening inside your building. Well, I shouldn't say that. You can only-

26:38 | Haley Finn: There's only so much we can do.

26:39 | Myles Finn:

Yeah. Or give punishments to kids based on what happened inside a school.

26:45 | Haley Finn: Then educate and encourage.

26:47 | Myles Finn:

Exactly. Exactly. And that's the most important part.

26:51 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yeah, I'm sure you're seeing this too. We're starting to see an increase in schools taking a stance across the nation of absolutely no cell phones in schools anymore. They're not allowed to not bring them. There's a couple of people that I've connected with, I haven't heard back from them yet, who have taken this stand, and I'm wanting to talk to them just to see how this has either helped or had any an impact. Do you think because of all the things that even happen outside of school, to what extent do you think that would be beneficial if we just said, no phones in schools period?

27:30 | Myles Finn:

I think that's so hard because what message are we teaching our kids if we just say, "Nope, you don't get to use that here?" Because I think what a perfect opportunity to educate and say, this is how we use this beautiful technology because there are so many wonderful things that we can do with it. And granted, you're also talking to somebody who is big into social media right now. So I see the benefits of that. Obviously I see some of the bad side too, but I take a pretty relaxed stance with cell phones in my classroom specifically, just simply because I tell them at the beginning of the year, I want you to learn how to be a good member of society in the 21st century with all of these beautiful technologies that are put in front of you. If we're having a conversation and you get your phone out, how rude is that?

And so it's little things like that that I hope to educate them on. But there are so many things that go past my classroom that I'm unable to tackle Haley's talking about with cyber bullying and things like that that I can reference. But it's almost better for me to just be like, this is something that we need to learn how to use correctly and just continue to have those conversations because I don't know that there is necessarily a one size fits all answer to that. But I think taking them away really alleviates the opportunity for an educational moment for them to be able to learn this is a good thing. How do we use it well, how do we learn how to be good people?

29:20 | Haley Finn: It's always going to be there.

29:21 | Myles Finn: Absolutely. It's going to get crazier.

29:22 | Haley Finn:

And having to learn that responsibility and accountability of being a good person, whether it's screens in front of you or not, is really important. And that's always the conversation I try to have with my students is you guys get so brave behind a screen, you're so brave. And some of the messages that I've seen are just horrific. And it's like, would you ever say that to somebody in person? And they were like, "Well, no." And I'm like, "So why would you think it was appropriate to say that behind a screen?" "Well, because it was easy because all you had to do was type it out." I agree, I think taking it away would just, I mean, during the school day, you really don't need them, but I know the kids get them out and they access them. And if they're being inappropriate, my thing is like, okay, be appropriate.

I have my phone out during the day and I know how to be appropriate with it. And so I really do think that as educators, we are at the forefront of showing them what that looks like. And I think that's important, but also I encourage my kids, I don't know how many times a day I would say it, but we have to be willing to have hard conversations in person. And so take the phone and take

the screen out of it, and you have to be able to say, hey, that hurt my feelings and let's talk about it. Instead of saying like, hey, you suck and I hate you.

30:56 | Myles Finn: And I'm sending you that over a text.

30:57 | Haley Finn:

Yeah. And I'm going to tell everybody to stop being. They have to learn how to use it appropriately. And I just think taking it away would do the opposite effect. And then I think it would make them be even more sneaky and more inappropriate, to be honest. Yeah.

31:15 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yeah. You said something, Haley, that I think is really important to touch on, which is teaching people how to have difficult conversations. And actually, I'm not even just talking about students right now, like minors. I'm talking about people, period. And I do think you're right. I think we have so many screens in our lives right now. It's so easy for us to say something in a way that we would never say it or phrase it if we were having a face-to-face conversation. And then it creates a lot of problems and a lot of issues for ourselves, for our communities.

And so I've thought about this a lot, particularly in the past few years, how uncomfortable people have gotten to even just have a really... I'm not even sure we would've considered it a difficult conversation 10 years ago, but now, I don't know. I just see it. I see it in meetings, I see it in schools, I see it. And even conversations that I have with my friends, how unwilling we are to just have even as mild disagreement about something and just talk about it. Do you feel like it's hard to do this?

32:29 | Haley Finn: Yes.

32:30 | Myles Finn:

Yeah. And I've definitely battled my own anxieties with having conversations like that too, whether it be with a student, with a parent, with an whatever. And I wonder if part of that had to do with the pandemic and not being able to have face-to-face conversations for a decent amount of time. I think some people had to relearn how to do that. And I don't know that some people ever did relearn how to have those conversations or get themselves back into that mindset of being able to do that. Granted, we're talking three and a half years ago, so hopefully we have gotten to the point where we're starting to get back from that. But I think anxieties are definitely higher than they ever have been. I think people still will have issues having those conversations. But I think you're right that the education of being willing to have hard conversations needs to also be top-down. We need to make sure that parents are willing to have these conversations.

33:30 | Haley Finn: Administration.

33:31 | Myles Finn:

Administration. We need to make sure that everyone needs to understand that you are going to have, there's always going to be a difficulty. There's always going to be some resistance. There's always going to be things like that that you just have to work through in order to get where we want to go. You always have to just push through things like that. Sometimes you just got to grit your teeth and go.

33:56 | Haley Finn:

I think that's the hard part though too, is what you were saying. I see it all the time just with adults at school too, and it's so crazy sometimes because it's like how do you expect to be a good role model and for students to respect you and respect your classroom and respect each other. When we as adults aren't even willing to have hard conversations or address things. And honestly, there's, I don't know how other people feel in other districts and other schools, but sometimes it really does feel like people are okay with just staying mad instead of having a hard conversation. And that is exhausting because our jobs are so hard and we shouldn't have to fight with each other and be mad at each other when our job and education is already so hard, and we're worried about the welfare of our students, and yet we're willing to be mad at each other.

And that's something I've worked on too, is I have been a people-pleaser my whole life, and I have worked really, really hard to advocate for myself. And even this year, and I think honestly, it's because I'm working in middle school, and I'm seeing how important those hard conversations are is that it really has made me grow as a person and professional and just saying, nope, if I'm asking this of my students, I also have to be willing to be like, hey, I don't know that you intended it this way, but that actually really hurt my feelings. Or, hey, I'm feeling a little frustrated, can we talk about this?

35:32 | Myles Finn:

With parents, with other teachers, all that.

35:35 | Haley Finn:

And honestly, nine times out of it has gone over so well, but I think it would've been worse if I wouldn't have been willing to have that hard conversation? And I can't tell you the amount of adults I've had stop in my office throughout the year who have been going through similar things, and I just say, you are valued and your feelings are valid, and it is so important for you to advocate for yourself time and time again. And so yeah, we see it all the time just like how people just want to avoid it and they don't want to talk about it. And it impacts us so much when we don't.

36:14 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yeah. Oh, gosh, I couldn't agree with what you're saying more. And I, know Brené Brown talks about this thing that I think we have started to do so much in our society, which is so damaging. And she calls it the meeting after the meeting, and it's like, we have this meeting and maybe administration pulls us together and they talk about something. And then as a teacher, as a faculty member, I feel frustrated about what was presented to me, but instead of trying to hash that out and starting to hash that out in that meeting with everyone there for transparency, then I just wait and I go into somebody's office after the meeting and we talk, whatever just happened, and I get it. We also need to have time and space to vent. And I think that's absolutely your

partner, whatever your cat mine would be. My cat gives me great advice somehow. He always agrees with me.

37:20 | Haley Finn:

I love that. What a good relationship.

37:23 | Kari Vogelgesang:

So I think that happens a lot. I also think that one thing that I have found when working with a few people in schools is that when you talk about advocating for yourself, somehow it gets mixed up with always, if I advocate for myself, I'm going to get my way. You have to be really clear. Yes, you can advocate for yourself and you should be very transparent about your feelings and what you're wanting. I mean, at least to some extent, oversharing is also an issue sometimes. But also understand that if you don't get exactly what you want, that's life and it's okay. You can keep working on it and just keep trying to compromise. And sometimes you just have to also just let it go and just focus on your job and move forward. Right. So I do think that there are two things that are really creating some issues. When I'm in schools and doing school mental health stuff, those things pop up a lot in conversations,

38:31 | Myles Finn:

The meeting after the meeting. Yeah.

38:33 | Haley Finn:

That's so true.

38:34 | Myles Finn:

It's so true. And those get so toxic so fast. And what is that doing but just creating more animosity? You have to tackle the problems straight away. And like you said, it's not always going to turn out the way that you wanted to. There are going to be things that you're going to disagree with an administrator, another teacher, whatever. But you have to be willing to have those conversations, which is going back to what we were just talking about.

39:03 | Kari Vogelgesang:

That's hard. But also it's like a muscle. The more you practice, the stronger it gets and the more, less uncomfortable it is to do it. It's not that it's ever easy. I mean, I know that I have a couple difficult conversations coming up this week, but it needs to happen. Do it face to face, and it's going to be okay. We're else going to be

39:25 | Haley Finn:

Okay. Yeah. Yeah. And that's the thing too, going off of what you were just saying, I will say though too, I know I'm guilty of meeting after the meeting and it's hard, but going back to it truly goes from top down though. So the environment, especially in education, everybody has to be willing to have those hard conversations. And I think that's part of the problem right now too in a lot of districts, is that not everybody is on the same page and is willing to do that. And I know I've had a number of teachers who have confided in me and who have felt like unheard or not

heard or not valued. And not to say that that was actually the case, but that's how they were feeling, and that's valid.

And I feel like we are also to a point in education because it's been such a hot-button topic, and there is just so much crap going on with it, is that I think there is a sense of numbness in people who are just like, well, this is how it's been for a long time, and I've tried to do something different, but nothing happened. So now I'm just going to sit here and just let it happen. And that's where I'm just like, "No, we can't." Especially being fresh into school counseling, I refuse to be numb. I've had that conversation multiple times this year of I refuse to be numb because that's not how things should be.

And I'm sorry that you felt have experienced things that make you feel like what you have to say is unimportant or that you are not valued. You are, and you're valid in that. But people deserve to hear what you're thinking, people, you deserve to advocate for yourself, even if it means maybe in the end, like you said, it doesn't work out the way you want, but at least you can look back and say, hey, I advocated for myself. I spoke my piece. I can feel good about that. And sometimes it's not even for me.

It's not even getting my way. It's just like I need to be heard. I need how that made me feel. And if you can acknowledge that, then that's okay too, and we can move forward in that. But I think there's just a toxic culture right now of people being okay, staying stagnant because of past experiences. And that makes me really sad because again, of everything else we're dealing with, the culture of a school is so important, and I hope that we can start making progress in that way too. And again, it goes back to how educators are feeling right now, and I hope we can make progress in that too.

42:15 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yeah, I hope we can too. And that is uniting. It's not doing the meeting after the meeting. It's becoming a collective front. And I am hoping that as we move into the academic year of 2024, 2025, that we can start to do more of that. I know one of the sessions that we're going to have at Iowa BEST 2024 is about how to become a united front.

42:41 | Haley Finn:

Love it, that's great.

42:42 | Myles Finn:

Going to be really a really good one.

42:45 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Okay. Let's move into challenges and triumphs. So I don't want this all to be doom and gloom. No, it's not. But we do know that there are some specific challenges. We've already addressed the social media. So maybe outside of social media, what are some specific challenges that you are working on right now in your schools with students? And then what are some really specific triumphs that you feel like happened over the course of maybe even just this last year?

43:17 | Myles Finn:

So I would say my first, when I saw this prompt from you, the first thing that I was thinking about was just understanding how to be an authentic educator. Understanding how to be my truest

self in the classroom was something that I struggled with for years and really, really did not just feel comfortable being who I was in a classroom because I felt this need to be, I'm going to say uppity or I am the educated one. I'm going to make sure that you understand everything that I've known or whatever. So getting away from that egocentric, it was very egocentric. Getting away from that mindset and bringing my authentic self into the classroom has been something that has made my relationships with my classes so much stronger. I think-

44:20 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Can I interrupt you for just a second?

44:21 | Myles Finn:

Yeah, please. Yeah.

44:22 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Because I'm so shocked by this because I mean, believe you, of course, I believe what you're saying, but to who just watches your videos here and there, I would have never thought this, that you struggle with this. And it's a real thing with teachers. By the way, when I was teaching, I'm not teaching right now. My role is different now, and I have a 100% admin position at the university. But when I was teaching undergrads in our teacher prep program, it was something that I talked with them a lot about. You can't watch Robin Williams and Dead Poets Society and then just go to your classroom and stand up on a table and start shouting poetry.

45:03 | Myles Finn:

Exactly.

45:04 | Kari Vogelgesang:

If inauthentic, if I were to do that, they would make fun of me. They would never have respect for me. That's not who I'm, and so helping them find their authentic teacher self is so... I don't think we spend enough time on this with students, but you just see, when I watch you now anyway, when I watch you, I'm like, oh, he's like a perfect example of this.

45:27 | Myles Finn:

Oh, it was so bad. It took me years to get comfortable in my own skin in front of a group of kids. I apologize if you were one of my first students at South Hamilton because it was rough. I just came out and I was like, I know everything. Nothing. You're going to learn everything from me. And that is so not the case. I learned more from my students in those first three years of teaching than I had probably learned in a lot of my undergrad of just how to be a teacher. Yes, of course. I learned wonderful music theory. I learned those wonderful things at Warburg. But then after that, I learned so much about being true to myself and being again, the most authentic version of myself in front of my kids that I can be at all times in those first couple of years of teaching.

And then obviously I'm more comfortable now and I am more comfortable being in front of kids now, but it took years for me to be comfortable and let them know that I'm nerdy. I love Star

Wars. I play video games. I love stuff like that. And for them to see the human aspect of that rather than Mr. Finn that's teaching me notes and rhythms, they engage so much better because of that. I think that has been over almost 10 years of teaching. That's been my biggest triumph, I think is just becoming authentically me in front of a class of high school students specifically.

47:07 | Haley Finn:

Well, and you didn't know you wanted to be a teacher when you got to college.

47:11 | Myles Finn:

Yeah, I went in as an exploring major. I took a lot of business classes and hated them. And then I give so much credit to my undergrad choir director, Dr. Nelson at Wartburg College. He is a master educator. And so good at that authenticity piece. Haley and I sang in the Wartburg Choir together, and we both look back on our relationship with Dr. Nelson so fondly just simply because he was that person that was so true to who he was. We would hear stories in the middle of a choir rehearsal about him reading Harry Potter to his son, and then he would then relate that back to what we were learning, obviously. But we got a glimpse into his life and we got to see who he was outside of rehearsal time.

48:00 | Haley Finn:

He was more than just our choir director.

48:01 | Myles Finn:

Absolutely. And the more that I think about it, the more that I realized what I was trying to be him when I started teaching and what I needed to be was authentically me, which he was. So that was such a hard thing for me to learn in those first couple of years. But I give so much credit to him for helping me figure that out, whether he knows that or not.

48:27 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yeah. I hope pre-service teachers get to listen to this because I think this is one of, if not the biggest lesson that needs to be taught in a teacher prep program. As soon as you can find that your authentic self, you will catch a cadence and a rhythm with your teaching that is so exciting and so fulfilling, and it makes your life so much easier. And you are creating these amazing connections with your students and with your colleagues and with your parents that you just cannot do. It cannot happen until you really know yourself and you let your true self shine within your teaching and with your education process. And it's so hard to do, and you can't do it until you start practicing. You get in there and you just start doing it and practicing it. And again, I love hearing that story. I think that everybody needs to hear that. Who wants to, or it's thinking about being a teacher.

49:35 | Myles Finn:

Yeah. I mean, it makes education so much more fun when it's true to you, because then I think you believe in what you're teaching so much more and you have more fun ways to relate the things that you're teaching so much more.

49:50 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Don't you think though? That's the just life especially. So I'm 46, and I can tell you that I would've probably told you in my thirties that I really thought I knew who I was. I mean, I genuinely probably did think this too, and maybe I did to some extent. But I can tell you that particularly in the last couple of years, I mean, I must be a late bloomer or something, but I can tell you how much more satisfying my life is because I feel like I can show up as my authentic self. I know who I am. I'm comfortable with who I am, I'm proud of who I am, and I feel like I can show up as my authentic self in all spaces of my life. There's always side steps that you take here and there for sure. For sure. Not perfect, but I feel like this isn't just applicable to education, but just when you can find this in yourself, who you really are and be proud of it, your life is going to improve tenfold.

50:53 | Myles Finn:

Not just as an educator, but in every walk of life as a person.

50:50 | Haley Finn:

Yeah.

51:00 | Myles Finn:

And that's what we try teaching too. And it's such an abstract concept to try to understand or try to explain to people. But I think we try to do that as much as we can by example and just showing them, yeah, we are going to have Legos in our office and we're going to be goofy, but-

51:21 | Haley Finn:

We're going to make mistakes and we're going to apologize. We're going to make mistakes.

51:23 | Myles Finn:

Yeah. Exactly. But that's who we are. And we want to help you find that. We want you as a teenager to find who you are as a person and you will have so much more fun both in the activities that we're involved in, and like we're saying as just people living life, you have to be true to yourself.

51:47 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Okay, Haley, how do you want to do this? Do you want to go to your triumph or do you want us to stick with Myles and have him do his challenge?

51:55 | Haley Finn:

You can stick with Myles. That's fine. He's on a roll.

51:59 | Myles Finn:

What's my challenge?

52:01 | Kari Vogelgesang:

What is your challenge?

52:03 | Myles Finn:

I wrote down challenges. Ooh, this is a big one, and Haley will nod as I say it. My biggest thing has been balancing work-life balance, finding work-life balance. And specifically when my TikTok blew up, that was probably when it was the hardest for me because I would get home, I would see like, Ooh, this video is at millions and millions of views. I need to go through and scroll through all of these comments and things like that, when actually it was more important for me to be a dad and a husband in that moment. So I would come home from school and I'd be thinking about what's the next warm up that I'm going to be doing, or how am I going to be thinking... And not just TikTok, it was also what am I going to be doing with my show choir season?

What am I going to be doing with musical? Things like that. And it took me... I'm still not great at it, and it's something that I'm still continuing to work on of just making sure that when I'm home, I'm going to shut my phone off. We're going to go play with balloons, with Rory, and I'm not going to be thinking about school. I'm not going to be thinking about social media. I'm going to try to be as in the moment as possible. But as an educator, I think it's so expected of us to always be thinking about what is the next day going to look like? Do you have your prep done?

All of that stuff, when really it's probably more important for you to be present in whatever you're doing, whether that's being a father and husband or whether that is coaching a tee ball team or whatever you're doing outside of school equally impacts how you are going to be inside of school. So I think working on that work-life balance, staying away from bringing my work home, whether that be emotionally or physically working on stuff at home, I think has been so important for me. So I have really, really struggled with that work-life balance, but that's something that I am aware of and I'm continually working to get better at.

54:18 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Yeah, that's fair. That resonates.

54:22 | Myles Finn:

It's rough. It's hard. It's hard. We give ourselves that moniker of educator, and sometimes that lives with us so heavily as part of our personality when sometimes it's more important to expand on the other things. I'm a dad, I'm a husband. I'm going to put so much of my chips into that. And then some of my chips into the other part of my personality. I've just got multiple personalities. Okay.

54:55 | Haley Finn:

When we talk about the importance of you would be replaced tomorrow in school as a counselor, as an educator, as a music teacher, you would be replaced tomorrow. Your title as a dad and a husband and a son and everything else, that's not replaceable. That would leave a hole in the life of so many. And so making sure you're keeping that at the forefront because

you're a dad, you're a husband, you're a son first, and the rest of it had... It has to be there too, but-

55:37 | Myles Finn:

Falls into place afterwards.

55:39 | Haley Finn:

Yeah. And that's hard.

55:40 | Myles Finn:

Right.

55:41 | Kari Vogelgesang:

It's hard, especially when you're so passionate about your career and it is part of our identity, for sure.

55:44 | Myles Finn:

Yeah, for sure.

55:48 | Kari Vogelgesang:

About our whole identity.

55:49 | Myles Finn:

Right.

55:51 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Okay. Haley, what about you? Challenges and triumphs?

55:56 | Haley Finn:

I would say that my biggest challenge this past year has been advocating and educating people on the role of a school counselor.

56:08 | Kari Vogelgesang:

This is so good.

56:11 | Haley Finn:

So there, if you want a school counseling hot button issue, it's guidance counselor versus school counselor. And so just educating people on there is a difference. School counselor is the appropriate title now. Guidance counselor is just it was what we used to be called. And it doesn't make sense for us to be called that anymore. And because of we are educated very differently.

Guidance was very career. What are you going to do in your future focused? I will say that that is not a lot of what I do. That's a part of it, but that mental health and social emotional is what I do every single day. And I'm trained in those things, and it just looks a lot different.

And so I, as school counselors, there are still people who don't understand our role and some who I don't know that ever truly will. But the other part of that is they have to be willing to educate themselves too, and educate themselves and ask questions. And some people just aren't. And so I've had to learn the authenticity piece. I just have to be myself and hopefully that will shine through and that they will see what my role as a school counselor is and the importance that I have in my students' lives. Because I will be completely honest with you, I think that there are people, well, I don't think I know that there are people who I interact with who I think don't think that we're important and don't understand even what we do.

58:12 | Myles Finn:

It's so frustrating.

58:13 | Haley Finn:

It is. It's frustrating. But I've had to really come to find that balance between advocating and then letting them do the rest, then being there for my students and just almost proving myself, but in a good way, trying to find the balance between proving myself to appease others and proving myself for myself and for the welfare of my students. Because it used to be really hard to do that. I wanted everybody to, like me wanted, even though I wanted people to know what I did was important, but that would get muddled.

58:56 | Myles Finn:

You didn't want to ruffle feathers.

58:57 | Haley Finn:

I didn't want to ruffle feathers. I was okay being stepped on. I was okay with people treating me poorly and questioning things. And I just, I've gotten a lot better about that. And I honestly have a really good counseling team that I work with, and they mean the world to me, and they have helped me grow and just figure out where I'm at as a counselor and-

59:26 | Myles Finn:

What are your values as a counselor?

59:27 | Haley Finn:

Yeah. What are my values and what do I want to be taken away from that? And first and foremost, it's how my students feel. And so the rest of it just has to be let go sometimes. And I don't want to say I should have to let go of people treating me poorly, but sometimes if they're not willing to put in the work, then again, there's not a lot else that I can always do. If I can be my authentic self and show them why my work is important and why I matter, I think that's the most important thing. And how that impacts the students. Because hopefully that's what we can agree on is that the important thing is the student. So yeah, I've had a couple of challenging conversations and interactions this year of just like, wow, you really don't understand my role, or, wow, that was really hurtful.

And school counselors get looped into admin a lot. We are not administrators. And my team at the Indianola Middle School, we fight really, really hard to make sure that we're not being viewed that way, both for the student's sake and for the relationships that we have with the adults. Because so much of what admin do doesn't line up with our counseling ethics and values. One of the things that we really, really try to not be involved in is the consequences or punishments, because the minute that a school counselor starts punishing a student and handing out a consequence, you don't want to talk to me anymore. And so trying to make sure there are clear lines between the roles is really hard. And again, I think we fight what was a guidance counselor and the role of that and how that has modernized. But yeah, that's been a little challenging, more challenging than I guess I would've thought in this day and age.

1:01:46 | Myles Finn:

An important thing to educate people about though the importance of your job and showing them, no, I'm dealing with these crises on a regular basis. I'm making sure that students are getting the services that they need regularly. Things like that.

1:02:01 | Haley Finn:

Oh, and I can't tell you the others too, is even though it's been some of the most challenging experiences this year, there have been some really great conversations that have come from that of frustration of how you made me feel. And then they'd be like, wow, I didn't know.

1:02:15 | Kari Vogelgesang: Yeah.

1:02:16 | Haley Finn:

Great. So now you do. And I'm really glad that we could have this conversation and that, again, going back to we have to be willing to have a hard conversation. And so I can't tell you the number of those conversations that I've had too that have just started the conversation and have hopefully filled that gap of, I think there are... I'm trying to think what. I'm trying to say there. Just the gap of feeling sometimes there's like, you're the counselor, you're the teacher. You want there to feel support all the way around. And so I think those are important conversations to have too, in regards to that. Yeah, I'd say that was my challenge.

1:03:06 | Kari Vogelgesang:

It sounds like there's some triumph in there though, too.

1:03:08 | Haley Finn:

Yeah, for sure. And I think the triumph that I would say is off of that. But with the authenticity piece again, is having students who have connected with me and connected with the counseling program in ways that maybe they struggled with that in the past. Maybe they've had bad counseling experiences, maybe they don't have supportive parents. They don't have a supportive lifestyle of people they even feel like they can talk to. Seventh grade is a really, really tough year because academically it's a really hard year, but then you're also hormones. You're trying to figure yourself out. You are trying to figure friends out. The amount of friendship problems that I had this year was astronomical, and it's so hard because a lot of times they're

still coming off of elementary where they're told they should be friends with everybody, but that's not the case.

And so now you're getting into the older middle school of where they're realizing that they've outgrown their friends, and that's a really, really scary place to be. And having outgrown people you've known your entire life who you can say like, you're going to be in my wedding one day and then the next day feel like you don't make me feel good, or we've outgrown each other, but instead of having that hard conversation, we're just going to stay mad at each other. We're going to be nasty to each other instead of just simply being like, Hey, let's not simple, but just saying, Hey, we've outgrown each other. I loved the time that we had. We don't fit together anymore, and that is natural and that is appropriate. And developmentally like, okay, that's a really scary place to be.

1:05:01 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Oh, God, it's scary for adults. I mean, yeah, good instances where I've had friends as an adult and for various reasons, our kids get older, and so our bond was over sports or show. Yes, it goes away and don't really, even as an adult, it's so uncomfortable because you used to know each other so well, and then you get to a space where you're like, well, we don't really like to do this. We used to hang out at track meets and now we don't like to do the same thing.

1:05:33 | Myles Finn: Right. Yeah.

1:05:34 | Haley Finn:

It puts us in a vulnerable spot too, of acknowledging the minute I tell my seventh grade girls, there were people in my wedding that I don't talk to anymore. And they're like, what? And it's like, yeah, but it's not because I don't hate them. We just, our past went different ways and I wish them the best, and do I wish we still talked? Absolutely. But life happens and there's no animosity there, and their role in my life was beautiful, and I don't regret that. And so just trying to teach those life skills and tell them my own experiences, and I know that's another thing too, of how much of school counselors and educators do we share? For me, I think I probably sometimes overshare, but for me, I think it's so important that they see us as humans and they see us as genuine, authentic people.

And I think that's where my triumph would go is that I've had so many students who have entered my room who have never talked to a counselor before, and they are like, Mrs. Finn, your counseling office. It feels so safe and comforting in here, and it just makes my whole day when kids feel that way. And by the end of the school year, I had kids who just wanted to come and hang out. They would pencil me in for lunch, and it's just because they felt safe and they knew the conversation was genuine. And middle school students in high school, I mean all students, they can read you a book. They know when you're not being genuine and authentic, and so to have kids come in and just say, I know that you'll listen. I'm not, and who can take accountability? Honestly, there have been times where kids have been like, hey, I know I was in the wrong for that.

Or through our conversation have been able to be like, "Wow, Mrs. Finn. I didn't think about that and I need to apologize to that person." That is such a triumph and such a win, especially in this

day and age when they're stuck to their phones of just being able to get them to see beyond themselves and see how they impacted someone and honestly how they feel. It's such a rewarding job being a middle school counselor, and if you would've told me 10 years ago, I would've been in middle school counseling, I would've laughed in your face even as a counselor.

1:08:03 | Kari Vogelgesang:

I'm glad that you made a turn, a left turn and decided to join the profession. It was good for you.

1:08:10 | Haley Finn:

Yes. I have never felt more impactful in a than I do right now. Yeah.

1:08:18 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Okay. I am going to ask you each, your final question, and this isn't in the guide, by the way.

1:08:25 | Myles Finn: Oh, no.

1:08:26 | Kari Vogelgesang:

But I think it's a fun question because for you two, because you are both music lovers and it's been part of your lives, it's a huge part of your lives. Okay, so if you had to name a song that summarizes the 2023, 2024 school year for you, what would that song be?

1:08:55 | Myles Finn: I've got it. Mine is-I.

1:08:56 | Kari Vogelgesang: That's pretty good.

1:08:57 | Myles Finn: My mind works in songs. I hope that we understand that. Don't Lose Sight by the band Lawrence.

1:09:07 | Kari Vogelgesang: Okay. Don't Lose Sight.

1:09:08 | Myles Finn: It talks about this shit is going to kill me, but I won't let it. That's the very first line of the song, so there are swear words in it for sure, but it's all about all of these bad things are going to happen, but I'm not going to lose sight. I'm going to still stay true to myself. I'm still going to do the things that I love that I'm so happy.

1:09:29 | Kari Vogelgesang: I love that.

1:09:30 | Myles Finn:

You asked that question because that is like, I have been jamming to that song a lot recently. Oh, the acoustic version specifically is the one that acoustic version. It's on Spotify.

1:09:39 | Kari Vogelgesang:

We'll pull it up. We'll pull it up and we'll see. We'll loop it in. Okay. Sounds good. I'm impressed. I shouldn't be on music.

1:09:48 | Haley Finn: That's a lot of pressure.

1:09:49 | Kari Vogelgesang: Haley, do you have one?

1:09:51 | Haley Finn: Oh my gosh, that's so much pressure.

1:09:54 | Myles Finn: Texas Hold'em by Beyonce.

1:09:57 | Haley Finn: That is my go-to right now. Gosh, you might have to help me with this.

1:10:07 | Myles Finn: Hold on would be another one.

1:10:08 | Haley Finn: Hold on. By who?

1:10:10 | Myles Finn:

Somewhere over the rainbow, << because I think I got a hold on you. >>

1:10:15 | Kari Vogelgesang: Oh, yeah. Maybe I should ask you to sing it.

1:10:18 | Haley Finn: Yeah, there you go, Myles.

1:10:19 | Myles Finn:

No, absolutely not. You'll get humming. You'll get little mumbling. That's about it.

1:10:24 | Kari Vogelgesang: Could you just do the choreography to it?

1:10:26 | Haley Finn: Yeah.

1:10:27 | Myles Finn: She'll dance, I'll sing.

1:10:28 | Haley Finn: We could do that for sure.

1:10:30 | Myles Finn: That'd be great.

1:10:231 | Haley Finn: Oh, gosh. I don't know. Something uplifting.

1:10:36 | Myles Finn: SINGING: You raise me up.

1:10:37 | Haley Finn:

Josh Groban. You can never go wrong with Josh Groban. Gosh, I don't know. I don't know that I have one song that comes to mind if I'm being honest.

1:10:48 | Myles Finn: I'm trying to think of what's on your playlist right now that you would say.

1:10:53 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Was there one song that you listened to throughout the year a lot this year that got your spirits up?

1:10:59 | Haley Finn: Oh, can I look at my phone?

1:11:00 | Kari Vogelgesang: Sure, of course.

1:11:01 | Haley Finn: Can I bring up my Spotify list?

1:11:03 | Myles Finn: Yeah.

1:11:04 | Haley Finn: Trying to think.

1:11:05 | Kari Vogelgesang: You just share that list with me.

1:11:07 | Haley Finn: Right.

1:11:08 | Myles Finn:

Yes, exactly. You get all of it. It's so hard because our Spotify will come back and it'll be like, you listened to a lot of Beyonce, whatever, and then three things down and then yeah, Taylor Swift, and then it's all kids songs. The things that we're listening to with our son and daughter.

1:11:26 | Kari Vogelgesang:

I have to tell you something, so I've been in a writing mode later. I'm going up for promotion, so I'm having to put together all of these statements, professional productivity statements, service, all of these statements, and I'm surprised that Taylor's new album, when I put that album on, I can get into a writing zone like no other. I was just telling Sarah this actually yesterday. I was like, I'm sorry, but we have to have Taylor on all the time because I just slide into this writing zone when I'm listening to that.

1:12:00 | Haley Finn:

She's incredible, incredible. Speaking of Taylor, I have so much of her on my...

1:12:09 | Myles Finn: 2024 playlist?

1:12:10 | Haley Finn:

Yeah. I'd say my very sentimental song is called Wildflowers by the Waylon Jennings, so it's like being a wildflower and being free. I don't know how else to put it.

1:12:29 | Kari Vogelgesang: No, I know this song. I love this song.

1:12:31 | Haley Finn:

Yeah, it's beautiful, and I'd say that's my sentimental song. I'd say Taylor Swift though always puts me into a good lavender haze. That's one of my-

1:12:41 | Kari Vogelgesang: Vibes.

1:12:42 | Haley Finn:

... fun ones. I grew up on Shania Twain, and so she never fails to put me in a good mood. Her new song, Giddy Up, is real fun. I just saw her in concert with my cousin this past year, so that was really fun. Yeah, I don't know.

1:13:00 | Kari Vogelgesang: Well, we'll have to somehow weave those in.

1:13:03 | Haley Finn: Yeah. Yes.

1:13:08 | Kari Vogelgesang:

I really appreciate both of you. I loved chatting with you today and I hope that we can continue our conversation in other ways as well. And I just have to say educators like you, if we could just clone you over and over and over again for all content areas, then it would be really great. So I really appreciate you both, not only just coming on the show, but just what you do every single day and how you show up for our students and our communities.

1:13:36 | Myles Finn: Thank you.

1:13:37 | Haley Finn: Thank you.

1:13:39 | Myles Finn: And thank you so much for having us on, too. This has been fun.

1:13:40 | Haley Finn: Yeah, this has been really fun. We appreciate you talking with us too.

1:13:45 | Kari Vogelgesang:

Okay, well, have a good day everyone. Thank you for joining us for this episode of the Scanlan Center for School Mental Health Educator Wellness Podcast. As we've heard today, the work of educators is incredibly complex. We hope these unfiltered insights have given you a deeper appreciation for the challenges and the triumphs of our educators and what they face on a daily basis. We encourage you to take steps to better understand the inner workings of schools and all that it takes to teach in 2024 and beyond. I encourage everyone to continue to support and uplift our educators as they navigate this ever-evolving landscape. Thank you for listening, and we look forward to having you with us for our next episode. I'm your host, Kari Vogelgesang, forever cheering you on.