

THE
ENERGY
BUS
for SCHOOLS

FIELD GUIDE



JON
GORDON

Bestselling Author of *The Energy Bus*

DR. JIM
VAN ALLAN

President, Energy Bus for Schools

Praise for *The Energy Bus for Schools*

“*The Energy Bus for Schools* is an empowering and transformative guide that transcends the boundaries of conventional education. Filled with relatable insights and actionable steps, it’s a game-changer for schools, teachers, and anyone invested in making a positive impact. A must-read if you are seeking to amplify leadership, inspire minds, and create a legacy that truly matters.”

—**Jessica Holsman**, bestselling author and founder of *Study With Jess*

“*The Energy Bus for Schools* provides a clear roadmap for establishing and maintaining a positive school culture that’s easy to follow and simple to implement! Gordon and Van Allan give suggestions, tips, and examples that will guide educational leaders through the process for building and improving school culture one step at a time in order to increase success for all stakeholders, including staff members, students, and communities.”

—**Michelle Emerson**, author of *First Class Teaching*

“At a time when educators are feeling particularly tested, *The Energy Bus for Schools* is the perfect companion to its widely read predecessor. Jon Gordon and Dr. Jim Van Allan share a collection of motivating and often moving stories from schools across the country to support educators as we reframe how we ‘do school’ moving forward.”

—**Donna Hayward**, NASSP 2023 National Principal of the Year

“Jim Van Allan and Jon Gordon’s *The Energy Bus for Schools* is exactly the message I needed to organize my thoughts and improve my approach in overcoming negativity and adversity that are often encountered in the workplace. The tools learned in this book will assist me in building a positive culture, where the staff can reach our school goals, despite any obstacles that may come our way.”

—**Adam Lane**, NASSP 2022 Florida Principal of the Year

“Calling all educators! *The Energy Bus for Schools* is a game-changer for educators seeking to create a positive and unified school culture. Jon and Jim have compiled powerful examples from schools nationwide, providing transformative strategies that truly work. With real stories, turn-key strategies, and research-based insights, this invaluable resource will help you make a lasting positive impact on your school community!”

—**Dr. David Arencibia**, National Principal of the Year
Finalist and Texas Principal of the Year

THE
ENERGY
BUS
for SCHOOLS

FIELD GUIDE

THE ENERGY BUS *for* SCHOOLS

F I E L D G U I D E



JON
GORDON

Bestselling Author of *The Energy Bus*

DR. JIM
VAN ALLAN

President, Energy Bus for Schools

WILEY

Copyright © 2025 by Jon Gordon. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.
Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 750-4470, or on the web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permission>.

The manufacturer's authorized representative according to the EU General Product Safety Regulation is Wiley-VCH GmbH, Boschstr. 12, 69469 Weinheim, Germany, e-mail: Product_Safety@wiley.com.

Trademarks: Wiley and the Wiley logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Further, readers should be aware that websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read. Neither the publisher nor authors shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic formats. For more information about Wiley products, visit our web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available:

ISBN: 9781394352883 (Paperback)

ISBN: 9781394352890 (ePub)

ISBN: 9781394352906 (ePDF)

COVER DESIGN: PAUL MCCARTHY

COVER ART: © ISCHNEIDER/GETTY IMAGES

Contents

<i>The Case for a Positive School Culture</i>	<i>ix</i>
Chapter 1 Invite Others on the Bus and Share the Vision	1
Chapter 2 Build a Positive Culture	17
Chapter 3 Fuel Your Ride with Positive Energy	31
Chapter 4 Love Your Passengers	45
Chapter 5 Transform Negativity	65
Chapter 6 Refuel, Reenergize, Refocus with Purpose	79
Chapter 7 Create a Fleet of Bus Drivers to Enjoy the Ride	93
<i>Additional Case Studies</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Powering Up: Connecting Your School to The Energy Bus</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>What's Next</i>	<i>119</i>
<i>About the Authors</i>	<i>124</i>
<i>Other Books by Jon Gordon</i>	<i>125</i>

The Case for a Positive School Culture

Jon Gordon and I have been immensely influenced by teachers, administrators, and schools. Jon Gordon, through his educational experience on Long Island, New York, and Dr. Jim Van Allan, from Palm Harbor, Florida, can point to specific teachers, schools, and moments that shaped our ways of thinking. These experiences developed us into positive leaders and planted seeds for us to become speakers later in life. We also both benefited from amazing school environments and teachers who loved, supported, challenged, and valued us. We are the men, fathers, husbands, and speakers we are today because of the inspiring school leaders, supportive staff, and empowering culture that laid the foundation for our growth.

Teaching and leading schools can sometimes be thankless jobs, especially as students graduate and move on with their lives. However, as students journey through life, they will inevitably look back and remember the educators that influenced, inspired, and impacted them.

The key is to give these current students an experience that will last a lifetime—one so powerful and so positive that they will want to re-create it for their own children. When students have their own families, they will try to emulate experiences and environments they had growing up or run from them. It's that simple. We lean into good thoughts and experiences and shy away from others. There is no greater responsibility for a parent than to protect and love their children. One way they can do this is through selecting a school that will partner with them to accomplish this.

This field guide offers the perfect opportunity to think about your school culture and your role, responsibilities, and ability to impact others. Recent studies in the *Educational Administration* journal show how important it is to create a positive workplace culture that keeps employees engaged and boosts morale. When staff feel supported, their well-being improves, which leads to better results for

students. We created this field guide to make this a reality. Our current and future students need educators who are motivated and passionate and equipped to deal with the challenges surrounding the ever-changing field of education.

A positive school culture is the heartbeat of every thriving campus. When culture is strong, everything else finds its rhythm and rises with it. Vision, mission, and strategy cannot be effectively implemented and lived unless there is a culture in place that values collaboration, trust, and a shared commitment to growth and well-being. When a school knows what they stand for and has a positive and relationship-driven culture, they will hire people who reflect those attributes. As schools grow, and times change, even the best and most engaged schools have to constantly assess their culture. This field guide represents an opportunity to do just that.

The positive examples and case studies featured in this field guide will inspire you to look inward and develop a strong culture that will lower attrition rates and increase student and staff engagement. A positive culture does not happen by accident. It takes a group of ambitious and motivated people who share a common language and a love for the profession working toward the same goal. Together, you have the power to create something extraordinary because a positive culture isn't just built; it's lived every day through purpose, passion, and unwavering belief in what's possible.

Exploring *The Energy Bus for Schools Field Guide*

Since the original book, *The Energy Bus*, came out in 2007, it has consistently been a bestseller. Schools and educators still gravitate toward that book as an effective tool to become more positive and overcome negativity. As *The Energy Bus* grew in popularity, there were requests for more resources from schools.

This led us to create The Energy Bus for Schools Certified program. It is a simple and transformative program that helps schools bring to life the concepts in *The Energy Bus*. It provides a blueprint and framework to energize teachers and empower students through classroom activities, monthly coaching, and staff development resources.

As the Certified Energy Bus for Schools program expanded around the country and across the world, we heard many incredible stories of transformation and growth as

schools drove their Energy Buses. We wanted to share these stories and case studies. This led us to write *The Energy Bus for Schools* book in 2024, a much-anticipated follow-up to the original *The Energy Bus* book from 2007. Schools can now dive into both books, experiencing the original fable before learning and implementing specific strategies to inspire your school.

Enter this field guide, a valuable resource that is intended to be completed after reading *The Energy Bus for Schools* book. It equips and empowers educators to bring the concepts from the book to life in an engaging and collaborative format.

Who Should Use This Field Guide?

This field guide is designed for all educators connected to a school or district, including teachers, staff members, administrators, district-level employees, and classified staff. It can be used individually, in professional learning communities (PLCs), as part of staff professional development, or even during book club discussions. It serves as a companion to *The Energy Bus for Schools*.

Here are a few ways schools can utilize this guide effectively: One option is to introduce it at the beginning of the school year and complete one or two principles at a time during professional development days before students return to campus. Also, schools can implement it gradually by incorporating it into staff meetings throughout the fall semester. Additionally, smaller groups, such as PLCs, can work through the guide one principle at a time. Be sure to tailor this guide to align with your school's unique calendar and needs.

If your school staff is seeking to empower one another, strengthen relationships, and reflect on individual and collective well-being, this field guide will support your journey. It is designed to challenge educators while fostering collaboration and meaningful conversations about school culture. The guide follows the core principles outlined in *The Energy Bus for Schools* to help bring these concepts to life in an actionable way.

As you develop ideas from this field guide, be sure to utilize your Positive Culture team to help turn the ideas into reality (see Chapter 2, "Build a Positive Culture"). This team will help to organize people, ideas, and initiatives and delegate responsibility and monitor progress.

A Quick Overview of the Principles from The Energy Bus for Schools

These principles, inspired by the original *The Energy Bus* book, are tailored to provide schools and educators with streamlined content that makes building a positive school culture effective and accessible.

Invite Others on the Bus

Build a Positive Culture

Fuel Your Ride with Positive Energy

Love Your Passengers

Transform Negativity

Refuel, Reenergize, and Refocus with Purpose

Create a Fleet of Bus Drivers

We know you will enjoy the ride!