

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER, 2016



Image from National Geographic

*The best teachers have the best students-every year. Todd Whitaker*

## FIRST WEEKS OF SCHOOL

Routines are starting to take hold, activities are in full swing and even the kindergarten students are getting better with going through the lunch line and staying awake through the whole school day. As we approach our third week of school it is imperative that we continue to build upon/develop the relationships we have started to build with our students. The first weeks of school are crucial building blocks to set the tone, culture, and foundation for the development of relationships with your students. James Conner, from Yale states, “No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship.” These relationships are even more important with students who struggle. Some of us are able to develop these strong relationships with kids easily, while others of us have to work a little more at developing these relationships. In a recent article, “What to do in Week One” by Rick Wormeli, he discusses not only the importance of developing relationships with students, but how the success of your school year as a teacher hinges on the relationships you build with your students. Making students feel safe is the first step in developing strong relationships with students. Be willing to laugh at your mistakes as a teacher. When kids can see that you are human and do make mistakes it can make them feel safe to take risks in your classroom. Instead of shooting down a “wrong” answer a student may give, ask students to explain their thinking. This simple question will help you figure out where a student may be making a mistake and many times may help the student figure out their errors. Be cautious of what you say and do in class. Students are always attune to how you respond to their classmates and how you handle situations that arise in class. Sarcasm, making fun of a student, or being curt or unsupportive of students will not only hinder your relationship with that student but can damage the culture in your classroom with the other students. We all know that knowing your students is important, but the depth of knowing your students varies between teachers. Do you know the family dynamics, parent’s jobs, personal interests, leadership qualities, clubs and activities the students are involved in, and challenges students may have in their lives? When we truly know our students beyond the walls of the school we will find out that students will be loyal to you and invest in not only their success, but also your success as a teacher. We are in this together...we need students to meet us half way in their educational journey but the foundation and success is from the relationships we build now and into the school year. Have a great long weekend!

The school district of Seward, in cooperation with parents and community, affirms that all students will have the skills to become productive and contributing members of a global community. The district is committed to the development of each student academically, emotionally, socially and physically.

