

December Staff Development

A newsletter by Dr. Dominy

Gifts

Greetings Staff,

This time of year the word "gifts" is certainly a multiple meaning word. In this newsletter I would like you to think about the gifts that are unique to you, your strengths, your uniqueness, your passion. In staff development we often think about the things that we need to get better at. We identify the things we need to improve, make plans of action, design professional growth plans, and strive to get better in these areas. There is a purpose to this type of action planning. However, during the month of December, I want you to think about the things you do really well.

*Please take a minute right now to list 5 things that you are really good at, think about school first and then your home life.

How often do you get to do the things you are really good at? What would happen if you thought more about your "gifts" and how you could use them to make your teaching better, rather than operating from a deficit mindset? When we get to use our gifts at work and we have a sense of efficacy that what we do makes a difference, the workplace becomes a wonderful place that we all want to come to.

My mission for you this month is to share your gifts with your students and your colleagues. When you do this, reflect on how you feel about it and if that practice made a difference in your teaching. December can be a stressful month for many of our staff and students, however, if all 221 staff members of Seward Public Schools are focusing on our gifts and sharing them with staff and students, the month of December will be a joyful celebration to the year 2017.

Element #3 Celebrating Success

Many of you are tracking student progress and providing scales and rubrics for students to self-monitor their learning. These are terrific strategies to keep students reflecting on their learning throughout the instructional period. My question for you is, are you taking the time to celebrate success?

Element #3 of our instructional model is about celebrating success. In education we have been good about giving students verbal praise, like "good job." We need to be more specific about the feedback that we give students. An example might be, "When you go back and check your answers it shows me that you care about your work, I am proud of your effort." Have you told students lately that you are proud of them? When you have those moments of pride, please tell them, it may make a huge difference in the trajectory of that student's education.

The instructional model suggests celebrating when a student reaches different benchmarks along the way to the goal and then celebrating the goal attainment. Celebration can look like many things, but as I suggest earlier, personal feedback can go a long way. When this element is fully implemented you should see the following:

- *Students demonstrate pride regarding their accomplishments in class.
- *Students appear to strive for higher scores on a proficiency scale.
- *Students say they enjoy celebrations.

I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday season!

Matt

