

MAY STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

— A NEWSLETTER FOR THE SEWARD STAFF BY DR. DOMINY —

Thank you

This may be the strangest end to a school year that any of us have experienced or will experience in our career. I appreciate all that you have done to make this 4th quarter the best that it could be under the circumstances. I know that this has not been easy to provide instruction in a completely different format and monitor communication in many different mediums. I also know that assessment has been difficult and appreciate how hard you have worked to provide specific feedback to students that is meaningful and helps them grow.

Though this work has been difficult, it has also served as a tipping point in integrating technology in our school district. Every conversation I have with teachers includes how much they have learned regarding technology platforms and how they see using this technology in their classroom. This summer we will evaluate some of the programs that we have been using during remote learning. Where possible financially, and with alignment, we will strive to purchase programs that can help us not only during remote learning but also help us with in-class instruction. If you have programs that you would like us to evaluate for purchase, please let me know.

Finally, Dr. Fields, has said several times that we should not let the Covid Pandemic overshadow the many accomplishments that our staff and students have achieved during this school year. We had three amazing quarters of instruction, we learned more about Social and Emotional Learning, and we created moments that our students will remember for the rest of our lives- and on top of that we completely flipped our delivery of instruction during the 4th quarter! I am proud of you- job well done! If I don't see you this summer, I look forward to seeing you in August!

Matt

Survey regarding Remote Learning from the Nebraska Department of Education

The Nebraska Department of Education is seeking feedback regarding the challenges of providing education during the COVID-19 pandemic from all stakeholders to understand local

needs as well as potential investments and supports. Please take a moment to complete this short survey: https://nde.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_efislqh4QDEA1KZ.

IT'S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY

It's okay to not be okay.

You never want to ignore or deny how you feel.

Being positive doesn't mean you suck it up and put a fake smile on your face.

It's okay to go through a wide range of emotions and feel the stages of grief.

You might have felt denial, anger, sadness, acceptance and meaning over the last 4 to 5 weeks. Actually you might even feel these stages and emotions in the course of a day.

There's no rule book on how to feel during the course of a global pandemic where the rules and social norms of our lives have changed.

You were used to seeing your colleagues at the office, hugging your friends, going to church, taking your kids to school, eating at restaurants, going to sporting events, rooting for your favorite pro baseball or basketball team, gathering with friends, petting your neighbors dogs... and now you can't.

You're not used to seeing a daily ticker on the television screen counting the deaths of people around the world and in your country and seeing daily images of people in hospitals... and now you are.

So if you aren't okay, it's okay.

It's okay to be scared, frustrated and feel down.

You just don't want to stay there too long and allow these feelings to take you down a spiral staircase of depression and despair.

The key is to find the optimism, hope and faith to keep going and create a better future.

This is not about seeing the world through rose colored glasses. This is knowing you have the power to overcome the thorns.

You have the power to shift your perspective and turn your pain into purpose and struggle into strength.

One day I honestly was letting everything get the best of me. I realized my worry, fear, sadness and anger weren't going to help me be my best or bring out the best in others.

So, I decided I wasn't going to buy the doom and gloom being sold and told on the news and social media. Instead I was going to invest in faith, love and hope. Everything changed after that.

The biggest compliment I receive is that people will tell me I helped them keep going when they wanted to give up and I hope these words do this for you today.

Winston Churchill said, "If you are going through hell, don't stop. Keep going!"

In other words, feel your feelings, give yourself permission to not be okay and then empower yourself with the tools you need to keep moving forward so you can be okay.

Keep believing, keep working, keep going!-- Jon Gordon

The Strategic Plan- Where we have been and where we are going...

I appreciate all the work that our action team leaders and action teams have done this school year. Every plan in every building is important to our district and our stakeholders. The strategic plan drives us to be the district that we dream to be. The strategic plan drives our professional development topics for the school year. This year our focus in professional development has been mental health. We have had great opportunities to learn more about this area and we have worked to provide a common language through our book study. We feel that it is important as a district, considering the circumstances and the emphasis of this area for our stakeholders that we continue to look at mental health. Next year we will look at mental health through the lens of developing the resiliency and grit of all students. We will also build our capacity to better support students who suffer or have suffered from trauma. This should be quality learning applicable to all content areas.

