

December Staff Development News

A newsletter for the Seward Staff by Dr. Dominy

A note from Matt

Welcome to December everyone!

I'm sure our science teachers will keep me honest here, but if I recall correctly, the rings of a tree reveal its age and tell the story of its life. As you look at the background of this newsletter, you'll notice that this tree has lived through many years. Each ring represents a season of growth, marked by the challenges and opportunities the tree faced: drought, wind, fires, heavy rains—each event leaving its mark and contributing to the tree's story.

The same is true for us as humans. Our lives are shaped by countless experiences—some visible, some invisible. While the marks of our growth may not appear on our exterior (aside from perhaps a sunburn or two we regret!), they remain with us internally, forming who we are. The good, the bad, the joyful, and the difficult—all these moments come together to create our unique stories.

This understanding reminds me of the profound impact we have in our roles. Every interaction we have with a student, no matter how small, becomes a part of their story. We have the privilege—and responsibility—to contribute to their growth, helping them navigate challenges and embrace their potential.

As we recently celebrated Thanksgiving, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude. I am deeply thankful for each of you—for the dedication, care, and passion you bring to our students and this community. You've not only shaped countless lives but also influenced mine and my children's lives in meaningful ways.

We are fortunate to live and work in a community filled with incredible people, and I am truly blessed to have you as part of our team. Together, let's continue to nurture and inspire the growth of those around us—just like the rings of a tree tell a story, let's help create stories of strength, resilience, and potential.



Thank you

Matt

Jon Gordon- The Power of Thank you

In the spirit of Thanksgiving this week I'd love to share with you the benefits and power of two simple words. THANK YOU.

They are two words that have the power to transform our health, happiness, athletic performance and success. Research shows that grateful people are happier and more likely to maintain good friendships. A state of gratitude, according to research by the Institute of HeartMath, also improves the heart's rhythmic functioning, which helps us to reduce stress, think more clearly under pressure and heal physically. It's actually physiologically impossible to be stressed and thankful at the same time. When you are grateful you flood your body and brain with emotions and endorphins that uplift and energize you rather than the stress hormones that drain you.

Gratitude and appreciation are also essential for a healthy work environment. In fact, the number one reason why people leave their jobs is because they don't feel appreciated. A simple thank you and a show of appreciation can make all the difference.

Gratitude is like muscle. The more we do with it the stronger it gets. In this spirit here are 5 ways to practice Thanksgiving every day of the year.

1) Take a Daily Thank You Walk – I started this practice 16 years ago and it changed my life. Take a simple 10-30 minute walk each day and say out loud what you are thankful for. This will set you up for a positive day. I wrote more about this in [The Positive Dog](#).

2) Meal Time Thank You's – On Thanksgiving, or just at dinner go around the table and have each person, including the kids, say what they are thankful for.

3) Gratitude Visit – Martin Seligman, Ph.D., the father of positive psychology, suggests that we write a letter expressing our gratitude to someone. Then we visit this person and read them the letter. His research shows that people who do this are measurably happier and less depressed a month later.

4) Say Thank You at Work – When Doug Conant was the CEO of Campbell Soup he wrote approximately 30,000 thank you notes to his employees and energized the company in the process. Energize and engage your co-workers and team by letting them know you are grateful for them and their work. Organizations spend billions of dollars collectively on recognition programs but the best and cheapest recognition program of all consists of a sincere THANK YOU. And of course don't forget to say thank you to your clients and customers too.

5) Say Thank you and Goodnight – At bedtime reflect on your day, identify and share all that you are thankful for. If you have children you can read [Thank You and Goodnight](#) with them and add to it.

I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving. Thank you for allowing me to share this newsletter with you. I'm thankful for YOU.

-Jon

MTSS Pitfalls: Going from Abstract Theory to On-The-Ground Success

An article about the struggles of impacting MTSS.



MTSS Pitfalls: Going from Abstract Theory to On-The-Ground Success

K-12 researcher and PowerSchool Education Solutions Director Sarah Singer explains five common MTSS pitfalls and how to move past them.

powerschool.com

January Staff Development Day

On our January Staff Development Day, we will again be celebrating the day with a motivational speaker. John U. Bacon has worked nearly three decades as a writer, a public speaker, and a college instructor, winning awards for all three. We can't wait for you to hear from Mr. Bacon and explore his powerful message! A sample can be found below.

We will also get to enjoy the Waffleman as well as share this time with Milford and Centennial.

The real Ted Lasso



Patriotic Holidays

PATRIOTIC HOLIDAYS

Nebraska Revised Statute 79-724 requires the following:

Appropriate patriotic exercises suitable to the occasion shall be held under the direction of the superintendent in every public, private, denominational, and parochial school on George Washington's birthday, Abraham Lincoln's birthday, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, Native American Heritage Day, Constitution Day, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving Day, or on the day or week preceding or following such holiday, if the school is in session.

There are no Patriotic Holidays in December.



Seward Public Schools