

March Staff Development Newsletter

March 1st, 2026

Mission of SPS

Seward Public Schools - a district rooted in excellence - in cooperation with family and community members is committed to the development of the whole student and affirms that all students will have the skills to become productive, resilient, and contributing members of their community.

A Message From Matt

Daffodil Season

Years ago, an assistant superintendent I had the privilege of working with, Dr. Kirby Eltiste, would remind us that when the daffodils begin to bloom in March and April, schools begin to enter



a unique season. He called it "Daffodil Season." It is the time of year when students start anticipating the end of the year and do not always make their best choices, when staff members—after months of steady commitment—may feel their patience wearing thin, and when parents grow more frustrated as they balance school concerns with whatever else life is placing on their shoulders.

It can be a difficult stretch of the school year, but it does not have to be. Spring energy is real. The days are longer, activities increase, testing approaches, and calendars fill quickly. Without intention, small issues can become larger ones. This is the time for us to be proactive rather than reactive. We must reteach expectations clearly and consistently, not assuming that students remember what was established in August. Expectations revisited are expectations strengthened. At the same time, we must hold students accountable in a way that communicates belief in their ability to meet those standards. High expectations, paired with support, reinforce that growth still matters in April and May.

We also need to teach with urgency until the very end of the year. Learning does not taper off simply because summer is visible on the horizon. The tone we set now will shape how the year concludes.

Clear and consistent communication with families is equally important. Many parents are managing significant demands, and predictable communication helps reduce frustration and build

partnership. If we ensure that students stay on track, if we remain steady in our patience, and if we communicate with clarity, we create stability during a season that can otherwise feel unsettled. Spring does not have to be defined by discipline concerns or fatigue. It can be defined by focus, encouragement, and memorable experiences. This is the season of concerts, competitions, field trips, celebrations, and milestone moments. With unified effort, Daffodil Season can become one of the most meaningful times of the year.

Let us finish strong, steady, and purposeful—so that when the year closes, it is marked not by frustration, but by memories that last a lifetime.

Jon Gordon- Use Your Past to Define Your Future

When I started my career as a speaker my dad said, “I can’t believe people actually pay you to speak. When you were a kid we paid you to shut up.”

It’s true. My dad often called me “Mouth” and told me to be quiet.

I was a talker but no one wanted to hear what I had to say.

Truth be told I think that’s one of the reasons why I became a writer and speaker. I wanted to be heard because growing up no one cared to hear what I was thinking.

I share this because I believe our past not only prepares us for our future, but it informs it, inspires it and gives us clues to our mission and purpose.

The resistance, adversity, challenges and pain of your past are part of your complete story and when you look back, you’ll realize it all paved the way to your purpose and future.

The woman who didn’t feel significant makes it her mission to help others feel significant.

The person who dealt with abuse becomes a healer at work making everyone feel seen and heard.

The guy who didn’t live up to his potential as a teen becomes a leader who wants to maximize the potential of his team.

Where you came from connects to where you are and where you are going.

So how do you use your past to create your future?

Look for the clues!

What resistance did you face?

What were your biggest struggles?

What adversity did you have to deal with?

What did you love to do?

What were your gifts, talents and strengths?

What energized you and made you come alive?

Then ask what do you still dream of, hope for and desire to do?

What positive impact do you want to make?

As you answer these questions, patterns and pictures will begin to emerge. You’ll understand yourself better. You’ll connect the dots. Feelings and desires will emerge. It may be a little uncomfortable, but this discomfort will be a good sign you are ready to grow.

As you gain clarity you'll see how the path led you to where you are and you'll live with a new exciting vision of where you are doing.

Your greatest struggles will lead to your greatest strengths.

Your toughest tests will become part of your testimony. And your past pain will pave the way for your powerful purpose.

You won't let your past define you. You will use it to define and create your future!

-Jon

4-12 Literacy Instruction

Our Preschool through 3rd grade teachers have engaged in focused literacy professional development throughout this school year during scheduled staff development days. Building on that foundation, next year we will expand our literacy efforts to include teachers in grades 4–12 across all content areas.

To support this work, we have selected *Keys to Adolescent Literacy* as our core professional learning resource. This framework will allow us to differentiate professional development to meet the varied needs of our staff while also creating a shared understanding of effective literacy instruction across the district.

Below, you will find a brief video from the author of *Keys to Adolescent Literacy* that helps set the stage for the learning ahead and introduces the key concepts that will guide our work.

Components of Adolescent Literacy Instruction in an MTSS Model

What are the essential components of supporting adolescent learners' reading needs through tiered instruction in a multi-tiered system of supports?

Patriotic Holidays

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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 March.



Seward Public Schools