

The Spartan Sentinel

...inspiring and equipping our students...

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“Our students are only limited by our beliefs about them.”

Team,

I heard this quote recently and actually posted it on Twitter yesterday. This quote really got me stirred up about our mindset about students. Read it again, “Our students are only limited by our beliefs about them.”

I believe this quote to be true. I believe that literally, the only thing that can hold any of our students back is our beliefs about them. ***Our mission is to inspire and equip ALL students to continuously acquire and apply knowledge and skills while pursuing their dreams and enriching the lives of others.*** I know we all believe this and we do our best to live it out, but so often our practices and our day to day actions tell a different story.

I’ve been *so proud* of the work you’re doing with your collaborative teams as you’re setting goals for the year. It’s always a tough balance when setting goals to have a growth mindset about your students and at the same time set an attainable goal. *I want to encourage you to believe the best about your students.* Don’t hold them back! Don’t limit their possibilities. Now, we want to be realistic about things, but we’ve seen firsthand the incredible things kids do when we reach for the stars with them! We know that this idea of efficacy, BELIEF that it can be done is a critical part of highly effective teams.

This week I was reflecting on this idea of Spartan Scholars and how important those choice words are with our kids. They’re not students, they’re SCHOLARS! Last year, when I asked you about what we did to go from a D to an A as a school, a major theme was the mindset of success with our students. We had students set goals for themselves; we reframed our mindset about ISTEP from something we “had” to do, to something we “get” to do. We made it about showing off, rather than survival. *But more than anything, we helped ALL students believe that they were great; that they were scholars.* For many of our top students, we were simply reinforcing what they already knew. *However, for many kids, this was the first time that someone actually believed that they could do it academically!* What are we doing to

keep that mindset going this year? What are we communicating to our students both verbally and with our actions?

How about you? Is it easy to say you believe all kids can learn, but when you sit down to set goals do you rule kids out because the deck is stacked against them? Remember, I'm pointing the finger at me as much as anyone else. I've been guilty of saying things like, "well, he's not getting much at home, so he probably won't be one we expect to pass...." *Shame on me!* These kids come to us with literally unlimited potential. Let's make sure our policies, procedures, and practices don't become the limitation that keeps them from being all they were meant to be.

Dave