

MODEL SCHOOLS, MONTI INSIGHTS: A MONTHLY REFLECTION FROM MONTICELLO EDUCATORS.

Each year, a team of Monticello staff members attends the Model Schools Conference, where they are immersed in opportunities to learn about innovative, out-of-the-box strategies that are transforming education and student success nationwide. This year, we asked each attendee from our district to bring some of that knowledge back to Monticello. Each month, the Navigator will feature a "spotlight" story highlighting new ways to engage our students and prepare them to be life-ready students. Our first month's spotlight is courtesy of MHS Principal, Stephen Wilder.



Going to the Model Schools conference was an opportunity to challenge my conventional thinking, suspend judgment while opening my mind to new possibilities, and have access to stories that have led educators around our great nation to succeed with their students. It is inspiring, overwhelming, exhausting, enlightening, and worth every minute.

There are many workshops and presentations to choose from at the conference. I chose the ones that spoke to the personalization of the educational experience for students. This is where I believe the greatest leverage point for student success is. Here are the top 10 things I heard, thought about, or read that resonated with me at this year's Model Schools Conference.

1. "When focusing on what students know and are able to do, don't forget about who they are." This is a great reminder to remember the humanity of our work and the importance of equipping our students with Life Ready skills.
2. "Every moment in school can be meaningful and purposeful." From the moment student's walk in the school door, to passing through your classroom door, to going through the lunch line doors, there are skills to equip our students with. How do we become more intentional?
3. "Love your kids more than you love your subject." What really matters is *who* really matters.
4. "Every day is an opportunity for anyone to become someone better, to make better decisions, and to be the person who does great things for themselves and others." How are we expressing that opportunity to students and creating hope in them?
5. "How do we structure opportunities for kids to think, analyze, and contribute meaningfully to the world around them?" If our kids don't learn to think critically as kids, how will they learn to do so as adults?" We norm ourselves to the people around us. Are we pushing ourselves to be more and thereby inspiring others to be more also? When friends are succeeding the other friends don't want to be left behind. Create a culture of success!

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6. "Eliminate inconsistencies, inefficiencies, and ineffectiveness by increasing coherence, continuity, and consistency across buildings, classrooms and offices. How is our own system contributing to student struggles? Analyze our systems!"
7. "Keep things simple. Complex solutions are often not sustainable."
8. "We run when we hear thunder but it's the lightening that kills you. Test scores are the thunder. Culture is the lightening."
9. "Do not wait for failure. Correct along the way. Do not wait for things to be too late."
10. "Never stop trying." Amplify and replicate successes while learning and moving forward from failures.



While at the conference I picked up the book Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise by Anders Ericsson and Robert Pool. It speaks to how the limits we reach are self-constructed. We must think about what we are capable of and then aim for what is beyond that in order to achieve the results we are truly capable of. We can do this.

Let us make this year an incredible year!