

Reflecting On Why We Teach



One of my favorite teacher books was published in 2005 by Mr. Phillip Done, a veteran third grade teacher. In his book, *"32 Third Graders and One Class Bunny,"* Mr. Done provides the readers with a glimpse into a year in the life of a teacher. From the first day of school to the last, Mr. Done humorously describes the life of an elementary teacher. As we celebrate teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week May 7-11, I'm reminded of the wonderful stories in this book and of the reasons I'm proud to be a teacher.

I often times refer to the profession of teaching as one that chose me rather than me choosing it. Like the dedicated teachers we have in Kansas, I was drawn to this profession because I wanted to share my passion for learning and discovery with others. Teachers genuinely desire to make a difference in the lives of their students and we see that happening each and every day in our Kansas classrooms.

During this week of appreciation for our teachers, please take the time to reflect on why you are a teacher and on the impact you have on the students who enter your classrooms each year. Your love of learning, your ability to motivate and inspire others, your compassion, your sense of adventure; all of these qualities have contributed to your success in the classroom and to the success of your students.

A wonderful chapter in Mr. Done's book is titled, *"Why Do I Teach."* In it, he reminds the readers that someone taught us how to solve problems, read, write and do many other things. He reminds us that there was a time when we moved from not knowing to knowing. From not understanding to understanding. Finally, he writes, "That's why I became a teacher."

Graduation for our high school seniors is just a few weeks away. Many of you have watched these students grow up in your schools and your communities. As they walk across the stage and receive their diplomas, take pride in knowing you were a part of their journey and will forever be a part of their lives. That's why you teach!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane".

Dr. Diane DeBacker
Kansas Commissioner of Education