

**EdElements Presents: Personalized Learning Summit  
2018**

Union Square Hilton Hotel  
San Francisco, CA  
May 2-4, 2018

To begin I would like to thank the administration and school board for supporting educators with Career Development Grants to extend our knowledge and professionalism. The continued support is much appreciated by myself and others. The 2018 EdElements Personalized Learning Summit was an informative and comprehensive event revolving around the practice and implementation of personalized learning as a mode of instruction in schools. Presenters I was able to see included Anthony Kim, George Couros, Sarah Jones, Alexis Gonzales Black, and Vicki Abeles. Some thoughts or “takeaways” that I left this conference with area, a better understanding of personalized learning, some pitfalls of implementing personalized learning, personalized grading practices and how other districts have used personalized learning to change their way of teaching.

As I have talked with the Wave One and Wave Two schools who have worked with EdElements on the move to PL I could sense their enthusiasm and deepened understanding of the PL process and the importance of establishing them in our schools. I also sense a little bit of trepidation and hear of mixed results in getting staff on board with this major shift. As we continue to move to personalized learning and our initial Learning Walk with EdElements has occurred I began to realize that I needed to learn more with the concepts, vocabulary and ideas behind the process. I spent a good majority of the first half of the conference in the keynote and breakout presentations given by George Couros. Thoughts that I had during these presentations on building the foundations and school culture required to have successful personalized learning included that as a school system and as an area wide group we have a long way to go in this process of building meaningful PL. While our teachers inherently understand the importance of working collaboratively and meeting individual learning needs of students there is still resistance because it is seen as something additional they have to do on top of their regular duties. We need to continue to work to break down this wall of this is the next “thing” and focus on this is and will be the “thing”. It will take commitment from us as administrators as we proceed to overcome this sentiment and to build an

“innovator’s mindset” with our staffs . A statement made by Couros in a follow up session to his key note was very thought provoking. He pointed out that the PL process is about learning not about teaching. While I had heard this before at previous PLC conferences, it really struck me as he spoke that many of our teachers really feel teaching is about them presenting the material and the opportunity for students to learn from their bank of knowledge, not about how much the students actually learn, self-reflect, or engage in the process of learning. While we have some of the best teachers I have worked with in our district I still do not think many of them spend enough time actually analyzing the learning that goes on in their rooms or in others. This is an area I have and will to work on at Soldotna Prep. If we can build a culture of “we not me” and “what is best of this student at this time” where we work together to achieve common goals that are benefiting our students we will be taking steps in the right direction. To do this we need an overriding goal that will tie us together. I continue to hope that the goal of eventually having 100 per cent of students achieve 6 or more credits by the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade continues to provide the required motivation for teachers to adopt and embrace personalized learning. From that goal we should be able to work collaboratively to change grading practices, evaluate “soft skills”, and build thematic units that are personalized and require students to reflect on what they actually learned. Making sure that each student can demonstrate they know or do not know is important to making sure every kids achieves the goal of 6 or more credits and without personalization it is doubtful we have students functioning at the required level of self-awareness to meet that goal.

Overall, the 2018 EdElements Personalized Learning Summit was a very positive experience and provided me with some inspiration and tools to continue the implementation of personalized learning within Soldotna Prep. I am thankful for the opportunity to attend this conference and feel that it would be somewhat beneficial for any administrator or counselor to attend in the future. However, attendees really need to actively participate in each session and speak up and ask questions as most of the sessions and the “tech tours” rely on a personalized model which too often allows the direction of the breakout sessions to veer off topic or to be steered in directions that are not meaningful to all participants in the room.



5/21/18