

Addressing OSEU Two with Cheryl Medearis

To me, that's one of the strongest of the essential understandings. To be able to give people and our children, our students, our students at the college, university level, the understanding that they are okay who they are and that they can learn and be whatever they want to be. And sometimes I sell them, but sometimes I do. I share my story of walking away from school because it wasn't important. My family moved from one area to the other in South Dakota, from one ranch community to another where I grew up.

I was accepted for who I was, although they sometimes thought I was strange because I lived with my grandparents because the rural school wasn't open at that time. It was like, don't you have a mom or dad? And to just go back and to share how school wasn't important to me. And I missed a lot of opportunities or was given a lot of opportunities, depending on how you look at it, walking away from school because I did not fit and I did not belong.

And then moving into the area of teacher education to really say it's somebody who made a difference in your life. And I really think that's why you've chosen the track to be a teacher, which is a tough job these days. Harder than it ever was when I was in a K-12 classroom. So for them to try really diligently every day from when they greet students, when they walk in, until they leave that day to say, you are okay who you are and I'll meet you where you need to be met.

And still meet the rigor of all the standards and all the things that they have to do in the day of a school. So it's a huge balancing act that they have to do. But that's a very strong understanding and the stories from the elders that go with that one is powerful.