



January 7, 2015

KFCS' District Newsletter

By Paul Hillyer, KFCS' Superintendent

A New Year's Resolution for All of Us

Happy 2015! Are you looking for a great new year's resolution? If so, I have one for you. If not, you still might want to give this a try: Start looking at life from the lens of growth. What do I mean by that? Carol Dweck in her book, *Mindset*, tells us there are two ways to look at ourselves and others. One is with each person having fixed ability. The other is seeing people having great growth potential. This basic orientation towards others and ourselves can make a huge difference.

Those that have a fixed mindset see themselves and others as having very little hope for change and improvement. They believe that who we are is pretty well set at birth, or at least in the early years, and the likelihood of much improvement is slim after that. People with a growth mindset on the other hand believe people can make dramatic improvements in their abilities with effort and persistence throughout their lives.

To me, having a growth mindset, or developing one, should be on everyone's resolution short list. It is good for each of us personally. For parents, educators, and others who work with children it is even more important as it helps them maximize their potential.

Dweck tells us that a growth mindset is characterized by the idea that abilities are like muscles. They get stronger with practice and use. In practical terms, this means a person will get better at reading, writing, and math the more they read, write, and calculate. Similarly, if a person wants to get better at a sport or an art, they must practice. Often the ones that are persistent and hard working bypass those that are more naturally gifted.

Such a way of thinking also sees today's failure as a necessary investment toward tomorrow's accomplishments. Dweck tells us the most long-lasting improvements come from a three steps forward, two steps back process. Though the two steps back can be frustrating, they are essential to long-term success. Therefore, failure is not an option; it is a requirement if we want to get good at anything.

This year, especially as we interact with children, I recommend seeing life from a growth perspective. Such a look at life will cause us to help young people to expect some failure as they attempt to gain skills and develop talents. It will also enable them to see such setbacks as necessary steps in the process of learning and growing. This perspective is critical in helping youth see the great possibility in their lives – even if they come from challenging backgrounds. It can be the first step toward developing another mindset in children – one of hope and excitement for a better future.

Other News:

1. Daily, our district website (<http://www.kfalls.k12.or.us/>) gives an update on whether school is open or closed for the day. Should school be closed, a SchoolReach phone message will also be sent out to all homes that have opted to be a part of this district messaging system.
2. We are nearing the end of the first semester. Please check your child's progress in school and help them improve their grades during these last critical days.
3. A large number of students have poor attendance, poor grades, or both. Schools are working very hard to improve both areas with students. Please encourage your children daily to have faithful attendance, unless sick, and to give their school work their best effort. We are considering an option for next year of extending the student day for students who do not have passing grades in reading and/or math. The extra time would be devoted to requiring them to receive tutoring in areas of need. Let us know what you think of this idea.
4. We still have openings in our after-school programs. If your children are not taking advantage of these very low-cost services, we encourage you to sign them up. Participation fee assistance is available so that these programs can be utilized by all children regardless of ability to pay. Call Gayle Yamasaki at 541-885-6761 or your child's school office if you would like more information.
5. Here are this month's employment opportunities in KFCS. Please check our website or come into our Human Resource Office at 1336 Avalon Street for more details:
 - [School Psychologist \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Bus Drivers - Transportation Department \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Migrant-EL Call Back - licensed Teacher - 1 position - Spanish speaking \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Paraprofessional - Bridge Classroom - Conger Elementary School \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Home to School Indian Education Liaison - \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Mills - Title 1 Paraprofessional - temporary \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Mills - Paraprofessional \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Elementary Technology and Assessment Specialist - Conger Elementary School \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Elementary Technology and Assessment Specialist - Mills Elementary School \(Open until filled\)](#)
 - [Elementary Technology and Assessment Specialist - Roosevelt Elementary School \(Open until filled\)](#)

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