

HOPE 2.0

April 6, 2018

The Power of Yet

The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset. This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives. – Carol Dweck

The word yet is defined as *at the present time, or up to this particular time*. Dr. Carol Dweck, the author of the book *Mindset*, was inspired by a group of ten-year-olds who, when presented with a series of complex problems, became excited about the challenge and eager about what they stood to learn through their mistakes. Somewhere along the way, these children were nurtured to believe that challenges represented opportunities and grappling with those challenge created stepping stones to greater successes as learners. These children demonstrated a growth mindset and therefore approached these problems armed with the power of *yet*. *Yet* represents a promise of continual improvement, given equal amounts of commitment and effort. *Yet* allows us to learn from our mistakes and then use that knowledge to grow and improve. We like to call our mistakes, OFIs (opportunities for improvement).

As you know, we are on a journey to ensure that every learner is successful. Admittedly, we are facing complex challenges like mental health needs, disruptive behaviors and learning deficiencies. However, I encourage each of you to approach these challenges with a growth mindset and subscribe to the power of *yet*. Rather than becoming frustrated with what we have not accomplished, consider for example what we have learned in our efforts to address behavior across the district. I promised that this matter would not be solved overnight. It wasn't created overnight. However, we have learned a great deal from our collaborative, candid and sometimes contentious conversations about root causes. Our team has listened to and gathered feedback from many stakeholders. We have generated behavioral norms for students and adults. We are asking parents to participate in two focus groups to provide input on our norms. The committee will share the final draft of norms with all staff in the coming weeks. The professional development committee is preparing professional development to ensure that students and staff receive training on our expectations. Our Parent Engagement Committee is working to ensure that parents receive similar trainings. All hands are truly on deck.

Although we will never punish our way out of our behavioral challenges, we will also revisit our Code of Conduct over the summer to ensure that our norms are aligned with our consequences and that guidelines for how we will address student infractions are clearly articulated. Further, our collaborative approach will focus on restorative justice, diversion and training rather than zero tolerance. The research is clear that zero-tolerance has not been successful in changing behavior and has, in some cases, increased the number of students entering the school to prison pipeline. So once again, I encourage you to stay on the journey with us. Consider each challenge a stepping stone toward ensuring that every learner in our district is a success. The power of *yet* says that we may not be there today, but we will surely get there with equal parts commitment and effort. Stay the course.

Enjoy your weekend!

Tamara Willis, Ph.D.,
Superintendent

Piece of the Puzzle



One of our core values states that community partnerships are vital to our success. Thanks to everyone who participated in Blue Jeans for Babies through The March of Dimes. We raised \$193.00 for this community partner. Kudos to all!