

Incremental Growth Works

#Elevate

As we continue with the new year, I want to remind everyone of the goal to be more attuned to how we think. Do you remember the saying, "If you believe, you can achieve?" This affirmation is a true statement we use here in Halifax County Schools. The idea of this has been tested, studied, and proven! Our situations in life reflect our thoughts, actions, and thinking behind them. I would like to ask one question. Are you able to see your goals clearly, or are you stuck in a fixed mindset?

Dr. Carol Dweck developed a learning theory called a growth mindset. In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be acquired through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.” (Dweck, 2015). The opposite, a fixed mindset, “people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort.” (Dweck, 2015). However, this definition limits the growth mindset to one component of a school community. Students are not the only people who can grow and change—teachers, educators, and administration can improve through concentrated efforts. Instilling a growth mindset does more than enable school districts to grow—it encourages them to grow.

Measuring performance is integral to any organization, a private company, or a public education system. Improvement occurs when realistic goals are set, effective strategies are implemented, and people and institutions are held accountable. Data drives everything we do in Halifax County Schools. Throughout the district, we use a variety of diagnostic tests to measure the growth of our students. We expect incremental growth in our English scores across the district from the data we see with the diagnostic tests. This growth is expected due to the new curriculum we purchased. Next, we hope to see an increase in our math scores as we purchased this new curriculum this past year. Due to the lack of funding in Halifax County Schools, we do things incrementally since we are unable to purchase all new curriculums at once. As we continue to chart a new course, we want to be better than we were yesterday; incremental growth in practice.

This incremental growth is linked to the encouragement and praise given to our scholars. In Halifax County Schools, we encourage our scholars to strive for five! When students strive for five, they know they are delivering 100% in and out of the classrooms. Teachers and parents are vital players in motivating our scholars to have a growth mindset. This feedback can influence their confidence in positive ways and encourage our scholars to continue to grow.

Let the year 2022 be a year you set your goals clearly and create a path towards success. Go for your passions and dreams with a new mindset. Remember that baby steps towards your goal are okay. We must crawl before we can walk and walk before we can run. The first step in getting started with this mindset is identifying where you may feel complacent. I still use this old saying, “anything is possible if you set your mind to it.” With this mindset, we can ensure that the youth of our community will continue to strive for success. With this mindset, we will continue to see growth as a district.