



RESCUE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2016



RUSD is in need of substitute Yard Duty Supervisors!

Do you love helping at your child's school or have some extra time mid-day? Please see the principal at your school if you are interested.

DATES to REMEMBER:

November 21-25
Schools Closed
Thanksgiving Break

December 7
LCAP Parent Advisory
Committee Meeting
6:30 PM District Office
Board Room

December 13, 2016
Regular Board Meeting
7:00 PM District Office
Board Room

December 19-January 2
Schools Closed
Winter Break

Dear Parents/Guardians of RUSD Students,

This year, we are continuing to present more information to Rescue Union parents and staff about the exciting work of Dr. Carol Dweck of Stanford University, around the concept of "Growth Mindset" (2006) and how by changing a few simple beliefs and practices, teachers and parents can vastly improve the learning outcomes for *every single student* in our District. Growth Mindset is being implemented in schools across the state and nation. It is the "buzzword" at professional symposiums all around California, and is being implemented in many leading school districts. Many of our classroom teachers already have significant expertise in this area through class work and individual research. At the present time, our administrators are doing a comprehensive book study and as the instructional leaders of their schools, will then work with their teachers to provide staff development to implement these concepts in our classrooms. We will also be providing Growth Mindset workshops for parents after the Winter Break.

The concept of Growth Mindset is simply that what we believe can affect our actions and that intelligence, ability and talent are not "fixed" attributes, but can go up and down based on the amount of effort, focus, persistence, use of alternative strategies, and coaching/mentoring that is applied. If students believe that success is due to innate factors rather than effort, they are less motivated to learn and less willing to take chances in the learning process. If they believe that hard work and effort bring rewards, they will apply themselves to the learning.

For example, if we believe that "we are not good at math" and that no amount of effort or perseverance will change this, we have what is called a "fixed mindset". A fixed mindset believes that talent and ability are traits set at birth and cannot be changed. Growth mindset teaches that if we work hard enough (effort), have a specific focus, determination, resilience (grit), appropriate mentoring (teachers and peers) we can and will overcome any obstacle to achieve success. When we as educators and parents reinforce the right things, our students can go farther and do more. They believe in themselves, are less afraid of making mistakes and are more willing to see tasks through to their completion. We can teach all of our students these skills and parents can support this at home.

Early Release Days and Attendance

The opportunity for teachers to collaborate with colleagues to refine their instructional practice is a key factor in improving the quality of the educational services schools deliver. To that end, our teachers are engaged in professional development and collaboration on "Early Release Mondays" throughout the school year. These early release days, like other minimum days, are still extremely valuable, both in terms of academics and school funding. When students miss school, even on a minimum day, they miss out on the opportunity to receive quality first instruction from their teacher and to meaningfully interact with their peers through discussions and other learning activities. Additionally, schools receive funding based on the number of days students attend, so absences can significantly reduce the money that is available for schools to run educational programs. We greatly appreciate your continued support and your ongoing commitment to sending your students to our schools. We are honored and fortunate to work with such remarkable children and their families.

Happy Thanksgiving

Thank you to all of the dedicated people who support our students every day in each of our excellent schools. We are also grateful to you, our parents, for trusting us to do a great job with your student. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season from all of us at the Rescue Union School District.

David Swart