



THE PUPIL PULSE

ISSUE #2: GRATITUDE AND GROWTH

NOVEMBER
2025

GRATITUDE AND GROWTH

The Pupil Services Department at Moon Area School District invites you to celebrate the everyday progress happening in our homes, classrooms, and community. Maybe a student took a deep breath instead of acting out when they got frustrated, a teacher tried a new way to reach learners, or a parent showed extra patience during a tough homework session. These moments—though not always reflected on a test—really matter!

At the same time, we're focusing on gratitude, not just for achievements, but for the people and everyday moments that help us each day. In this newsletter, we'll share how fostering a culture of appreciation and persistence supports learning and well-being for all of us.

Why Gratitude Is Important

Gratitude isn't just a nice-to-have—it has real benefits. When we focus on the good in our lives, even the small things, we tend to feel happier, more connected, and more at ease. It's like giving our minds a gentle reminder of everything that helps us thrive.

Why a Growth Mindset Makes a Difference

When we teach our children—or remind ourselves—that skills and abilities grow with effort, we open the door for true learning. Instead of seeing a mistake as failure, it becomes a lesson. Instead of avoiding challenges, we begin to face them with curiosity.

Whether you think you can or can't, you're right ~Henry Ford



Students at McCormick Elementary during the Pink Out Jog-a-thon, which raised money for supporting research at Magee-Women's Research Institute (MWRI).

This Month's Highlights

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Parent Perspective

HOMEWORK EDITION, VOLUME 2

Organization, Planning, and Time Management

Last month, we focused on getting homework recorded and completed. But students also need tools to stay organized, plan ahead, and manage their time. This month's Parent Perspective offers simple, research-based strategies to build those skills—one small step at a time.

1. Organizing Papers and Materials

When papers go missing, backpacks explode, or folders seem to eat homework...it's time to build an organizing system.

Try This:

- Color-code subjects (e.g., red = math, blue = reading).
- Use labeled folders or binders—one for each class, with separate sections for homework to do and homework done.
- Weekly backpack clean-outs: Set a time (e.g., Sunday evening) to remove old papers, file graded work, and refresh supplies.

Sources

Langberg, J. M. (2022). *Homework, Organization, and Planning Skills (HOPS) Intervention, 2nd Edition*. National Association of School Psychologists.

Langberg, J. M. (2014). *Improving children's homework, organization, and planning skills (HOPS): A parent's guide*. National Association of School Psychologists

2. Planning Ahead

Many students procrastinate—not out of laziness, but because they're overwhelmed. Planning gives them a path forward.

Try This:

- Help your child look at their planner or school portal for upcoming tests, projects, or deadlines.
- Break big tasks into parts. Instead of "Book report due Friday," make a checklist:
 - Mon: Pick book
 - Tues: Read 2 chapters
 - Wed: Write intro
- Use visual calendars or post-its to track small goals.



Ask: "What's one thing you can do today to get started?" Not "Have you finished everything?"

3. Managing Time

Kids often struggle to estimate how long things take—or they jump between tasks without finishing any.

Try This:

- Set a timer for specific tasks (e.g., 20 minutes of focused math work, then a 5-minute break).
- Use a visual schedule with blocks for homework, breaks, and free time.
- Encourage them to "race the clock" for familiar tasks like packing their bag or copying notes.

Tip: Some kids do better with digital reminders (e.g., phone alarms), while others prefer paper schedules. Let your child help choose what works best.

Summary: Small Habits = Big Growth

- ✓ Focus on one skill at a time
- ✓ Keep expectations clear and consistent
- ✓ Offer positive reinforcement for effort and progress
- ✓ Partner with your child's teacher or support team—they may already be using some of these strategies at school

Building organization, planning, and time management takes time—but the payoff is confidence, independence, and calmer evenings for everyone.

Make it routine: Organization isn't a one-time fix. Praise consistency, not perfection



Teacher Toolbox

Encouraging Resilience & Growth Mindset

Resilience and a growth mindset are more than just buzzwords—they're essential skills for lifelong learners. When students learn to embrace challenges, reflect on their efforts, and bounce back from setbacks, they develop the confidence and curiosity to keep growing. Consider the graphic on the right.

So how can teachers foster a resiliency and a growth mindset in students? Here are a few research-backed practices and practical ideas:

1. Model Optimism

Struggling students often lose hope when learning gets tough. By modeling a “we can figure this out” attitude, you show them that persistence pays off:

- Say things like, “*This was hard, but we broke it down and made real progress!*”
- End the day by asking, “*What was the best part of today?*”

2. Teach Smart Learning Strategies

Help students become active thinkers—

- Offer strategies for focusing attention (e.g., chunking tasks, brain breaks).
- Use teaching resources that explain how the brain learns best.

3. Build Success Files

Let students collect products of their own achievements:

- Give each student a folder or digital space labeled “Success.”
- Encourage daily additions—finished work, good drafts
- Begin each class by reviewing the files to reinforce positivity and motivation.

4. Use Growth-Focused Assessments

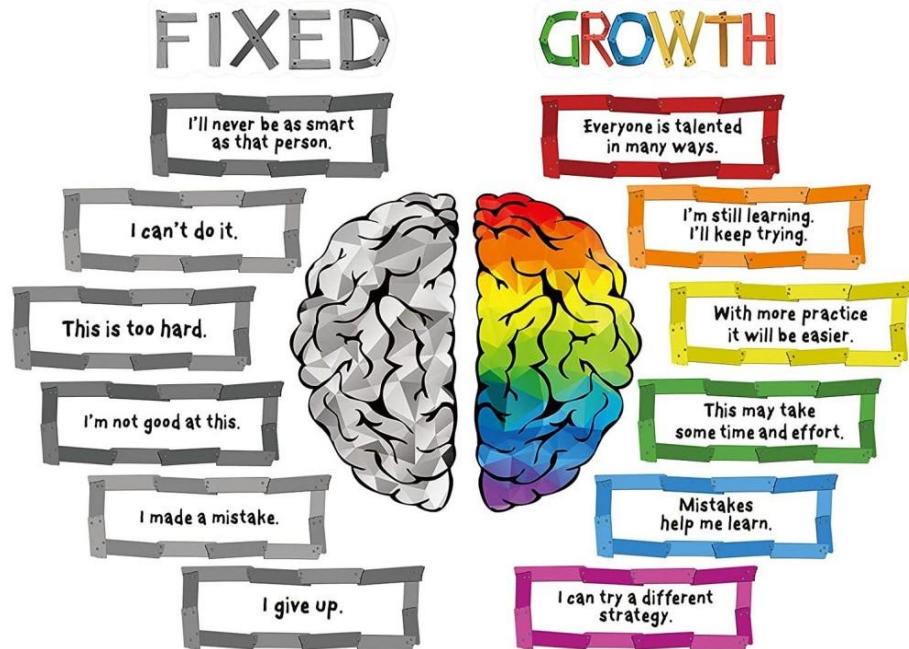
Move away from evaluation-only tests. Embrace tools that guide growth:

- Check in often—through discussions, feedback sessions, and self-reflection.
- Help students track strengths and identify areas needing more practice.
- Encourage self-monitoring: journals, checklists, peer feedback—all fuel ownership and growth.

5. Let Students Choose Their Learning

When learners make choices, they feel ownership and interest stays higher:

- Let them choose topics, project formats, or how they present their learning.



You Make a Difference!

When students see evidence of their own success, understand how to approach challenges, and feel in control, growth mindset becomes more than a concept—it becomes a core belief. Teachers often talk about that moment when the spark flips on—when a student thinks, “I can do this!”

Thank you for building classrooms where students feel seen, capable, and inspired to grow!



What's on your plate?

Have a question about behavior, learning, or student support? Or maybe there's a topic you'd love to see us cover? We'd love to hear from you!

Click [HERE](#) to share your question for an upcoming edition of *What's on Your Plate*—where we dish out evidence-based, practical insights to help you navigate school life with confidence (and a sprinkle of humor).

Or simply scan the QR code below to submit your idea!



What's on Your Plate?

Q: How can I help my child read better?

A: The secret ingredient? *You!* Kids who see and hear reading at home tend to become stronger readers themselves. Here are a few bite-sized ways to build reading muscles:



Read together—every day if you can.

Even 10–15 minutes counts! Let your child pick the book sometimes (yes, even if it's *that* dinosaur story again).



Talk about what you read.

Ask fun “what if” questions or wonder aloud about the characters—this builds comprehension naturally.



Play with words.

Rhyming games, silly songs, and spotting words on signs all strengthen early reading skills.



Be a reading role model.

Let your child see you enjoying a good book, magazine, or even a recipe—reading is reading!

Small moments add up, and before you know it, your child will be the one reading *you* the bedtime story!

Behind The Scenes

What is a Transition Coordinator?

If you've ever wondered who is behind the scenes helping students with special needs prepare for life after high school, meet your school's Transition Coordinator, Tara Harvan—part case manager, part coach, part event planner, and 100% champion of student success.

At first glance, it may sound like a simple title. But what a Transition Coordinator actually does is nothing short of incredible. Here's a look into the organized chaos and heart behind this vital role!

Connecting with Students (and Teachers, and Parents, and Agencies...)

Whether it's a one-on-one interview, an assessment, or just a friendly chat in the Transition Office, students come in regularly to discuss their future goals. The coordinator is the hub of all things future-focused.

Turning Goals into Action

Each student receives individualized resources—college options, job training, applications for support, you name it. This includes, summarizing transition plans in IEPs, linking students to services like OVR, ACCESS, and Blended Case Management, helping students apply for jobs or summer programs, organizing field trips to places like CCAC, Rock Life, or Job Corps, and much more!

Building Bridges with the Community

Thanks to the Coordinator's dedication, over 22 local businesses collaborate in Community Based Instruction (CBI). Students get real-world practice through job shadowing, training, and supported employment experiences.

Collaborating with Everyone

The Transition Coordinator is in constant collaboration with parents, teachers, and agencies to ensure students are supported every step of the way

So... What's the Big Picture?

The Transition Coordinator is a guiding force for students with IEPs as they plan for life after school—whether that's college, employment, trade programs, or independent living. The goal is to make sure every student has the tools, resources, and opportunities to succeed after graduation.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Moon Education & Support Series Virtual Presentation

Tuesday December 9 at 6pm – [RMU Trees Network](#)

Vicki Donne & Dearna Hiltz

Provides services and training to enhance supports for children and adolescents with disabilities and their families through professional preparation of teachers, continued professional development of teachers and service providers, and direct services to children and families.

CLICK: [Join the virtual meeting now](#) or SCAN: QR Code:



FEATURED RESOURCES:

(control + click to follow links)

- For paraprofessionals: [Free Five-Course Series for Paraprofessionals | Reading Universe](#)
- For families: [Reading and Writing SOS: Expert Answers to Family Questions | Reading Rockets](#)
- For teachers: [Growth Mindset and Enhanced Learning | Teaching Commons](#)
- For FUN! [212 Best Jokes for Kids to Get the Whole Family Giggling](#)



High School Volleyball donates to Club Hope



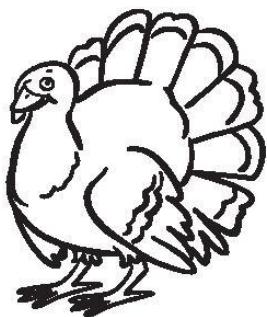
Allard Fall Giving Drive



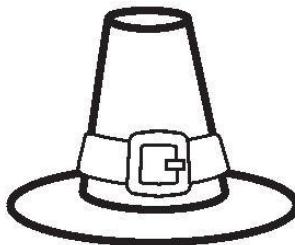
Veterans Day Candy Donation

Giving to Others is
The Greatest Gift You
Can Give Yourself

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Thanksgiving Word Search



Find and circle all of the items that are hidden in the grid.
The words may be hidden down or across.



THANKFUL

PILGRIM

INDIANS

PUMPKIN

NOVEMBER

GRAVY

FEAST

TURKEY

FAMILY

HARVEST

STUFFING

YAMS