

***Polson School District #23
Office of the Superintendent***

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you back to the 2015-2016 school year as together we learn the power of “yet” with the children we serve.

Author Caryl Dweck in her book, *Mindset*, states “that the view we have of ourselves profoundly affects the way we lead our lives.” She identifies two different mindsets---the *growth mindset* and a *fixed mindset*. A *fixed mindset* is a belief that everyone’s gifts and abilities are “carved in stone” and judged when challenged. A child with a *fixed mindset* does not believe he can become smarter. Whereas, children with a *growth mindset* welcome difficulties and challenges and believe they can become smarter through effort, hard work and perseverance. Children with a *fixed mindset* run from difficulty. Children with a *growth mindset* welcome challenge and difficulty. The *growth mindset* children in Dweck’s research understood the power of “not yet” rather than “I failed.”

The good news is that as educators we can develop a *growth mindset* environment in our classrooms. Just using the words “yet” or “not yet” will give kids greater confidence. One way to develop a *growth mindset* according to Dweck, is to “praise the process” helping students to focus on strategies, improvement, effort and perseverance rather than “getting the right answer” emphasizing intelligence and talent. Dweck’s research shows that when children engage in the process of learning, brain neurons form new connections and children do get smarter. (Dweck, 2006)

Dweck also documents that educators play an important role as powerful change agents in developing a *growth mindset* with students. If we collectively develop a *growth mindset*, our students will achieve higher levels of achievement.

We will begin our school year August 24, 2015 with a continental breakfast at Polson High School at 8:00 AM followed by presentations in the auditorium at 8:30 AM. A schedule for this day is attached.

Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Polson School District team and committment to ensuring that our students will possess the skills necessary to meet the challenges through a *growth mindset* prepared for higher education and the world of work.

Dr. Linda E Reksten
Superintendent