

A Leadership Strategy for Hope

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Cedar Valley Elementary School

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About Me

- 24 years in education, 16 in school or district leadership
- 9<sup>th</sup> year as Principal in WA and 4<sup>th</sup> year at Cedar Valley Elementary in KSD
- Wife, mom, dog mom

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Three Core Truths

1. Kids are successful when surrounded by adults who believe in them.  
*On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is very little belief and 10 is total belief, where do you rate yourself?*
2. Kids are successful when they have meaningful and sustainable connections with adults.  
*Adult connections are like Aces in a deck of cards. The more aces, the more likelihood of a winning game!*
3. Kids are successful when they can articulate their future.  
*The future isn't just their career but also includes hobbies, community service, and family.*

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At Risk or At Hope?

Believing youth are "at risk" gives the adults around them an easy out.

Believing youth are "at hope" gives the adults around them responsibility for doing everything possible to ensure their success.

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What would it look like if we really meant it?

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We Believe

Daily pledges

I am a Kid at Hope  
I am talented, smart and capable of success.  
I have dreams for the future,  
And I will climb to reach those goals and dreams every day.  
All kids are capable of success,  
NO EXCEPTIONS

As an adult and Treasure Hunter,  
I am committed to search for all the talents, skills and intelligences that exist in all children and youth.  
I believe all kids are capable of success,  
NO EXCEPTIONS

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## Report Cards—not just for grades

- Our words matter! Strength-based language is critical.
- Memorize their strengths! Write down strengths, how those strengths help them now and will benefit them in their future.

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## We Connect

- Learn about background, culture, experiences
- Connect before you correct
- Different adults mean different types of relationships
- Community engagement—Tunnel of Hope

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## Aces—what we give kids through relationships



- Clubs: Caring Adults
- Diamonds: Opportunities for Success
- Spades: High Expectations
- Hearts: Anchor at Home

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We Time Travel

- Who do you want to be in the future?

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Dreams for the Future

- 4 Destinations
  - Home and Family
  - Education and Career
  - Hobbies and Recreation
  - Community and Service

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- Community and Service**
  - Re-imagine collection drives as "Hope Drives"
  - Tunnel of Hope
- Hobbies and Recreation**
  - STEAM Clubs
  - Sports
- Education and Career**
  - Community career fair
  - Celebrate all future careers as valid and important
- Home and Family**
  - Inclusive language re: family structure and people in families
  - Family Nights monthly

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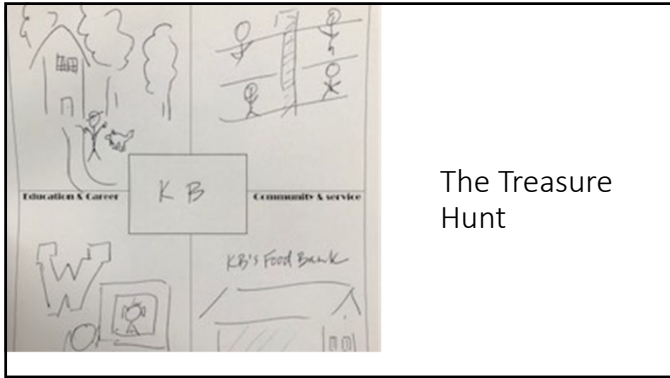
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### The Treasure Hunt

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### Three steps to a new organizational culture

- Retire
- Inspire
- Hire

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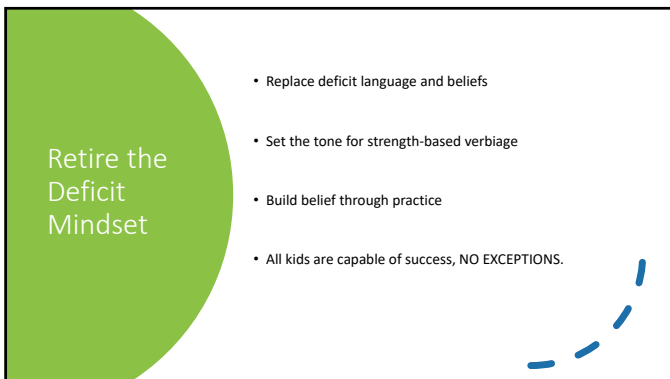
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### Retire the Deficit Mindset

- Replace deficit language and beliefs
- Set the tone for strength-based verbiage
- Build belief through practice
- All kids are capable of success, NO EXCEPTIONS.

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Inspire inside and out

- Model—Be the Change
- Encourage risks, celebrate successes
- Involve the community—It takes a village. Who are the villagers?

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Hire only those who are like-minded

- You are the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with.
- Find others who can rate themselves a "10."
  - Maintain and grow a network
  - Publicize priorities
  - Recruit with intention
- Interview question: What do you believe about kids and how do you show it?

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Celebrate the Successes—Cedar Valley

- Largest food collection in school history
- Academic Growth
- 100% Parent Participation in Fall 2022 Conferences

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