

Curriculum coordinator sharpens the focus on teaching, learning

Kaitlin Sylvester will “seek first to understand” in her new position as Hamburg Central’s Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction. Joining the district in October, it’s her responsibility to support Hamburg’s educa-



K. Sylvester

tors in what they teach, how they teach it and how students demonstrate that they understand what they’ve learned. She said this starts by listening and learning as she has conversations with stakeholders about the curriculum. It’s her goal to be out in the schools and in classrooms as much as possible in the months ahead to get a better sense of what teaching and learning look like in Hamburg.

“Through these observations and planned conversations, I hope to gain an in-depth understanding of the instructional practices, systems and structures that are in place and the impact they have on student learning,” Ms. Sylvester said.

“We have amazing, talented teachers; dedicated leaders; curious and interested students; and a supportive community. Now, as we look at our vision and consider how we will best meet our goals for student learning, we have to tap into this collective capacity for problem-solving and creative thinking if we are going to continue to move the district forward.”

Most recently, Ms. Sylvester was a staff development specialist with Erie 2 Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES. Prior to that, she was an instructional coach (K-8) with Buffalo Public Schools. She also has experience as an education specialist with CAO of Erie County Head Start and as an instructional coach ELA (K-6) with Community Charter School. She was a reading teacher for the summer program at Oakfield Alabama Middle/High School and a summer school teacher for Buffalo Public Schools.

Ms. Sylvester received her bachelor’s degree in childhood inclusive education from SUNY Fredonia, master’s degree in literacy education from St. John Fisher College and master’s in education leadership and supervision from Canisius College.

Superintendent’s Column



Growth Mindset important to learning

You will find many of the educators throughout our school district animated by the principles of the “Growth Mindset” as we support our students in developing the skills of modern learning and literacy. Based on the work of Carol Dweck, the Growth Mindset is a way of thinking about ourselves that inspires and empowers us to know that each of us can always improve if we focus on working hard and improving a little bit each day.



Michael Cornell
Superintendent

A Fixed Mindset is a way of thinking about ourselves that tells us that there is little chance that we can learn and grow beyond our current ability. For example, a 3rd grader with a Fixed Mindset might say, “I am bad at math,” whereas a 3rd grader with a Growth Mindset might say, “I haven’t solved this math problem yet.” One of the most empowering words in education, and in life, is the word “yet”. You can expect us to continue to leverage the power of “yet” in all that we do in our schools.

One of the most powerful applications of the Growth Mindset outside of education can be found in the resurgence of Microsoft. While its products have

been essential in our lives for decades, in recent years its corporate culture had become fractured and lethargic, and lacked the ability to successfully innovate. In 2015, new CEO Satya Nardella injected the Growth Mindset into every element of Microsoft. In a few short years, Microsoft is innovating and its stock price has doubled, with much of the credit going to the Growth Mindset principle of asking every employee to be a “learn-it-all” instead of a “know-it-all”. Far from “fluffy, feel good stuff”, the Growth Mindset is powerful, research based and will help us help your children on their journey to becoming life-long, productive and modern “learner-it-alls.”

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As always, we are thankful for the opportunity to be your partners in the learning and growth of your children. Please feel free to reach out to your child’s school if you feel that there is any way we can assist.