



Dear parents,

We are in a straight path to the end of the year. Hold on tight as there are so many things to accomplish and not a whole lot of time to get them done! Good Luck.

Sunday I leave to take our grades 6-8 on the end of the year trip. This year we will once again explore Death Valley. It will be a wonderful chance for our students and some parents to spend quality time with our students in an outdoor classroom. Pray for our safe travels!

We have several events coming up that demand our full attention! Our Spring Program and Academic Achievement evening will be on **Thursday, May 24 at 7:00 PM** This year our attention is turned to our Humanities and projects will highlight History and English. I think the gym will be very full so you will want to come early and take your time viewing the multitude of projects.

When he lectured in the United States, Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget would invariably get what he called "the American question" from a member of the audience. After he had explained various developmental phases that young children go through in their understanding of concepts like length and volume, someone would raise their hand and ask, "How can we accelerate a child's progress through the stages?"

Baffled, **Piaget would explain that there is absolutely no advantage to speeding up a child's progression.** The point of knowing the stages is to be aware of what stage a child is in, so that we can create the conditions and offer the guidance to help her move to the next one. **It's not a race.**

Too many kids who are hurried and harried toward the level they're "supposed" to be on by the end of a given grading period, with too little attention given to the path they're walking to get there. Children begin to define themselves by test scores, grades, and how quickly they're leapfrogging from one level to the next.

Here are two ways that teachers, parents, and administrators can take a deep breath and see past the timetables set by adults to the particular journeys of the children themselves.

1. Focus on the path, not just the destination.

Kids should like school. They should become strong readers, writers, scientists, and mathematicians, but they should also enjoy reading, writing, science, and math.

But here's the critical point about progress: that growth is a positive side effect, not the end goal. The true purpose of that reading time is for my students to come to love reading, so that they will lead richer lives—not just in the future, when they go on to college or a career, but in the present.

We adults tend to dramatically discount the present moment in favor of future outcomes. Yet childhood is a fleeting time. We should be encouraging the children in our care to revel in their childhood, not hurry out of it as if children were no more than miniature, imperfect versions of adults.

2. Honor growth above proficiency.

It takes time to learn English and to become a strong reader, writer, or mathematician. We have to give children that time. We have to celebrate every step along their steep path to proficiency, rather than holding up only the end goal—a particular reading level or test score—as the single outcome worth celebrating.

Gardeners know how long seeds take to grow. It's hard work tilling the soil, nurturing the first fragile green tendrils, and staying vigilant when frosts or murderous insects threaten the seedlings' survival.

Our job as teachers is no different. The work of sustaining a gradual miracle requires patience. If we can teach ourselves that hard habit, our students will grow. They may also learn to slow down, delight in the present, and take time to fully experience the many moments before the harvest.

Experience your child's growth and journey together!

In Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Stokes'.

Stephen Stokes
Principal

