

Coronado Compass

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Dear Coronado Families,

Summer has arrived, and I hope you have begun to settle into a routine that includes some relaxation and rejuvenation after a busy school year. Whether you will spend your summer months at the local pool, explore Colorado, travel across the country or simply enjoy backyard barbecues each weekend, we hope your time is spent together laughing, smiling and making memories with those most dear to you.

As we close out the 15-16 school year, I would like to continue our exploration of the fourth of five competencies that make up Jeffco's 2020 Vision. If you have missed any of the previous descriptions of these core competencies in our monthly newsletters, please feel free to check them out on our Coronado website under the [School Documents](#) tab. This month's focus will be on **critical thinking & creativity** which seem to be perfect for staying engaged over summer vacation! Critical and creative thinkers engage in *higher order questioning, problem solving with creative solution finding, risk-taking* and have a *growth mindset*.

Higher order questioning is a term we refer to often in the classroom but isn't necessarily second nature. The most common type of question asked both in school and in the real world is a simple recall question that results in a yes/no or one word answer. Higher order questioning provides an opportunity to apply knowledge or understanding, analyze or evaluate a situation or create something new. As you engage in conversations with your child consider asking him/her a question that requires a higher level of thinking, such as:

- *Why do you think that?*
- *What if...? or What would happen if...?*
- *What would you do differently?*
- *How would you develop/plan...*

Problem solving and creative solution finding go hand in hand with higher order questioning and align to workforce readiness in the 21st century. In a study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management in 2015, 40% of HR professionals indicate that applicants have gaps in critical thinking and problem-solving. These two skills are essential for maintaining a productive society that is both innovative and progressive yet in a world where answers are literally at our finger tips, we do not often engage in the process of finding creative solutions to solve some of our most perplexing problems. So, the next time you find yourself trying to figure out a home improvement project or find an easier way to complete a task...ask your child to help you think through it!

Most importantly, critical thinking and creativity require risk-taking and a growth mindset. The journey toward successful problem solving involves repetition, trial and error, and perseverance.

Students often struggle to take risks out of fear that they may be wrong. At Coronado we strive to create learning environments that encourage students to become comfortable with struggle, academic vulnerability and self-confidence. By applying a growth mindset to all that we do, we develop persistence and belief that with effort our abilities can be developed and we can get smarter. Remember the word *yet* when your child comes to you with a scraped knee and tears streaming down his/her face insisting that he/she will never be able to ride a bike without training wheels. Apply the power of *yet* anytime statements of hopelessness are spoken in your home. Most of all, believe it about your own struggles and your child will soon begin to believe as well. Here are two resources by Carol Dweck related to her studies on growth mindset: [EdWeek Article](#) & [TED Talk](#). Thank you for your strong support this year! Your partnership is vital to the success of each and every student, staff member and community member at Coronado. Enjoy your summer and watch for back to school information in early August. We look forward to seeing many of you at Coronado this fall!

Take care of each other,

Amanda Pierorazio
Principal, Coronado Elementary

