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A Parent's Letter to My Children in School

Written by Jeff Thredgold, CSP, President, Thredgold Economic Associates

To my children...

With your return to school, I find myself thinking of how much the world has changed since I was in your shoes. The world is now a much “smaller” place—people of all cultures can communicate and travel with ease. You face great challenges today...just as I did...just as my parents before me. These words of advice might be helpful:

- Recognize that the only limits you face are those you set for yourself
- “Be the BEST that you can be”
- Recognize that YOU are responsible for your successes and failures
- You must earn your way
- Strive for excellence...not perfection
- See the glass as half-full, rather than seeing it as half-empty
- Focus on positives, rather than on negatives
- Look to praise, rather than to criticize
- Look for ways to succeed, rather than excuses to fail
- Commit yourself to constant improvement
- Understand how important education is to success
- School is the key. Technology rules. You need better skills to succeed
- Learn what is being taught, but most importantly, learn “how” to learn
- Develop other information sources to verify, or challenge, what you are being taught. “History” is routinely twisted or re-written to support a particular point of view...get other ideas
- Treat teachers, administrators, and fellow students as you would like to be treated
- Be the first to say “Hello”
- Develop your mind in school, but also develop other skills and interests, including music, art, and physical fitness...this is where teamwork develops its roots
- Be a well-rounded person
- Resist taking “easy” classes
- Dig into math, the sciences, and computers...these form the technical foundation for future success
- Study language
- Speak and write English correctly
- Appreciate other cultures by learning another language
- Be honest in your approach to learning
- Resist the temptation to cheat—you only hurt yourself
- Develop a keen interest in the outside world



- Pay attention to the “news”...the “real” world can be very different from the student world you live in today
- Avoid the temptations of alcohol, smoking, drugs, gangs, and irresponsible personal behavior
- Understand the steps you take today have lifelong implications
- Choose your friends wisely
- Do what you can to make a teacher’s job easier, not harder...teaching is one of the most important, most difficult, and most underpaid jobs in the world
- Participate—but don’t be a pain!
- Be a friend to all. Extend a hand of friendship to all other students, regardless of race, creed, gender, or color
- Make a special effort to be a friend to those less fortunate than you
- As you mature and face new challenges, don’t hesitate to discuss with me what is on your mind...you might learn from the mistakes of others
- Recognize how LUCKY you are to live and be educated in this great country. People from around the world are dying every day trying to get INTO this country...not out
- Don’t forget to have fun!
- School can be a great time in your life
- Experience it
- Live it
- Enjoy it



Many of these suggestions will be useful throughout your life—learn them well. I wish you the greatest success in your efforts and hope you find school both rewarding and enjoyable.

Love,

Dad

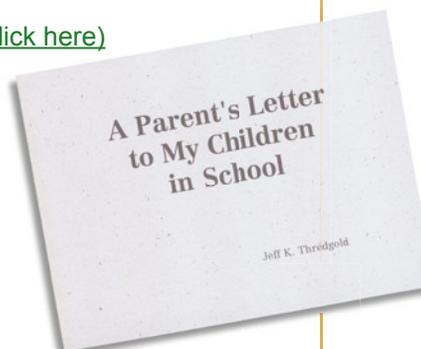
I have been writing a weekly update piece under one banner or another for the past 31 years. Eleven years ago, I published this letter as “A Father’s Letter to My Children in School” and the response was amazing. I had dozens of requests for permission to reprint more than 150,000 copies. Since then, just as children around the country are getting ready to go back to school, I run it again. I hope you enjoy it.

Due to the strong demand for this piece, I have published it as a soft-cover book that is available from our web site at:

<http://www.thredgold.com/html/parentletter.html> (click here)

The price is \$4.95, which **includes** shipping to anywhere in the continental U.S. Significant quantity discounts are available, and all orders are shipped within 24 hours.

The final page says “Love,” and then is left blank to be signed by the giver, typically a parent or grandparent.



“TEA”ser

“Minds are like parachutes— they only function when open.”

—Thomas Dewar



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