

Green Valley Elementary

270 Green Valley Road
Sinking Springs, PA 19608
Principal: Dina Wert

Green Valley Elementary is one of eight elementary schools in the Wilson School District, in Berks County, Pennsylvania. The school opened in 2006 and includes 30 certified teachers.

When the Wilson School District adopted the Institute of Learning's *Principles of Learning* program, one of the sixth grade teachers saw the relevance of the research regarding the impact of learning about the brain's ability to grow as a response to effort and practice in relation to her classes. The teacher contacted a Stanford researcher for further information. This eventually led to Green Valley Elementary providing the reading material recommended by the researcher to all of its teachers.

- ◆ Elementary (K-6)
- ◆ 87% White
- ◆ 6% Hispanic
- ◆ 4% African American
- ◆ 7% free- and reduced-price lunch
- ◆ 47% Female Students

Green Valley's teachers integrated this practice of teaching that abilities are expandable into their teaching model, and started emphasizing to their students the physiological ability of their brains to become stronger and develop new connections. Teachers made green "brain hats," and wore them at school. The school's website now says "Home of the Big Green Brains (getting bigger every day)," and includes a brain logo and a quote that reflects the brain "growth mindset" advocated by Dweck.

Teachers collaborated in identifying students with low self-confidence who would most benefit from an attitude that abilities are expandable. They also began to reward students' efforts instead of their performance. They deemphasized getting the "right" answer, and started to embrace mistakes as useful learning experiences. After only a few months of this new teaching philosophy, teachers saw noticeable improvements in math and reading for several struggling students.