West Virginia Department of Education

“Integrating Effective Character Education Programs into Rural Schools: Measuring a Replicable Model”

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Introduction

In 2005, the West Virginia Department of Education was awarded a four year Character Education Grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools Partnerships in Character Education Programs to study, through an experimental design, the effective integration of character education models into rural schools.

The project title for this award was “Integrating Effective Character Education Programs into Rural Schools: Measuring a Replicable Model”. The participants from this study were recruited from eight rural schools selected through a matched random sampling technique. Four were randomly assigned to be control schools and 4 were assigned to develop and practice an intervention process model rich in character education. Boone, Clay, Summers and Tyler Counties were the participants in this project. Experimental schools were Ashford-Rumble Elementary K-6th (Boone County), Talcott Elementary PK-5th (Summers County), Tyler Consolidated Middle 6th-8th (Tyler County) and Tyler Consolidated High 9th-12th (Tyler County). Control schools included Hinton Area Elementary K-5th (Summers County), Whitesville Elementary K-6th (Boone County), Summers Middle School 6th-8th (Summers County), and Clay County High School 9th-12th (Clay County).

The purpose of the grant project was to design and implement effective character education models into rural schools that could be integrated into existing curricula to teach students character education elements such as caring, civic virtues, justice and fairness, respect and responsibility. The project included a quasi-experimental design involving the four control schools and four experimental schools previously mentioned.

The “Integrating Effective Character Education Programs into Rural Schools: Measuring a Replicable Model” Grant included the following seven objectives.

• development and dissemination of a Character Education Resource Manual
• development and dissemination of a crosswalk between the WV Core Content Standards and the Character Education Traits
• publication of qualitative & quantitative finds that highlight the hypothesized affects gained through integrating character education efforts
• involvement of many stakeholders in the development & implementation of the character education program
• provision of character education training for teachers & parents
• provision of technical & professional assistance in program development & implementation to all partner LEAs and resource assistance to all other LEAs
• inclusion of character education in the WVDE’s Framework for High Performing Schools as a contributor to increased academic achievement

This resource manual presents the “Integrating Effective Character Education Programs into Rural Schools: Measuring a Replicable Model” with the research and findings from multiple data collection sources employed during the project.
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Chapter One: The Status of Rural Schools in America

In July 2007, The National Center for Education Statistics released an extensive report entitled, *Status of Education in Rural America* (Provasnik, S. et al). The report provided a research based comprehensive analysis of rural education in the United States today. We cannot share or discuss all of the highlights within the report. Therefore we are picking and selecting some of the more interesting conclusions found within the report with a hope that you will download and study, in greater depth, the findings. Among some demographic highlights of the report are:

- In 2003-04, a larger percentage of public school students in rural areas (10 percent) attended very small schools (schools with fewer than 200 students) than public school students in towns (3 percent), suburbs (1 percent) or cities (1 percent).
- The percentage of white public school students in rural areas was larger than that in any other locale. The same was true for American Indian/Alaska Native public school students. However the percentages of public school students in rural areas who were Black, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islanders were smaller than those in any other locale.
- A larger percentage of public school students in the South and the Midwest were enrolled in rural schools (28 and 25 percent, respectively) than in the Northeast and the West (16 and 13 percent, respectively) in 2003-04.
- Rural public schools overall had a smaller percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in 2003-04, 38% percent. Public schools in cities and towns had 53% percent and 43% percent, respectively. The percentage of public school students in rural remote areas attending a moderate-to-high poverty school (45 percent) was higher than the percentages in all other locales except large and midsize cities (66 and 49 percent).
- In 2003-04, larger percentages of Black and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students in remote rural areas attended moderate-to-high poverty...
schools (87 and 79 percent, respectively) than in larger cities (78 and 62 percent, respectively).

- In 2004, the percentages of school-age children in rural areas with a mother or father whose highest educational attainment was a high school diploma (33 and 36 percent, respectively) were higher than the comparable percentages for children in cities (26 and 24 percent, respectively) and suburbs (25 and 24 percent respectively).

- In all locales a larger percentage of high school students in 2003 had parents who expected their child’s highest educational attainment to be a bachelor’s degree than any other level of attainment. The percentage of rural students whose parents expected their highest educational attainment to be less than a bachelor’s degree (43 percent) was larger than the percentages of students in cities and suburban areas (30 and 25 percent, respectively).

Building on this snapshot of demographics we note the following outcomes:

- A larger percentage of rural public school students in the 4th and 8th-grades in 2005 scored at or above the Proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading, mathematics, and science assessments than did public school students in cities at these grade levels. However, smaller percentages of rural public school students than suburban public school students scored at or above the Proficient level in reading and mathematics.

- The average freshman graduation rate for public high school students was higher during the 2002-2003 school year in rural areas (75 percent) than in cities (65 percent), but lower than in towns and suburban areas (76 and 79 percent, respectively).

- A larger percentage of teen-agers in rural areas (compared to those) in suburban areas were neither enrolled in school nor employed in 2004 (6 vs. 4 percent).

- College enrollment rates for both 18-to 24 year olds and 25- to 29 year olds were generally lower in rural areas than in all other locales in 2004.

- Regardless of educational attainment, persons in rural areas generally had higher median earnings in 2004 than those in cities and towns (when adjusted to reflect
regional cost differences), but lower median earnings than those in suburban areas.

Finally we should consider some of the highlights regarding the resources for public schools:

- Adjusted current public school expenditures per student were higher in rural areas in 2003-2004 ($8400) than in cities ($8,100), suburbs ($7,900), and towns ($8,400).
- In rural areas, as well as nationally, a larger percentage of public schools reported being under-enrolled (69 percent of rural schools) than overenrolled (13 percent of rural schools) in fall 2005. The percentage of public schools reporting severe under-enrollment in rural areas (33 percent) was greater than in all other locales (12-18 percent).
- The number of public school students per instructional computer with internet access in school was lower in rural areas (3.0 to 1.0 in 2005 than in suburban (4.3 to 1.0) and city (4.2 to 1.0) schools.
- Rural public schools generally had fewer pupils per teacher (15.3) than public schools in other locales (15.9-16.9) in 2003-2004.
- In 2003-04, teachers in rural public schools averaged more years of experience (14.5 years) than teachers in city public schools (13.6 years).
- In general, smaller percentages of public school teachers in rural areas than across the nation as a whole reported problems as “serious” and behavioral problems as frequent (occurring at least once a week) in their schools in 2003-2004.
- Generally, a larger percentage of public school teachers in rural areas than in other locales reported being satisfied with the teaching conditions in their school in 2003-04, though a smaller percentage of rural public school teachers than suburban public school teachers reported being satisfied with their salary.
- Public school teachers in rural areas earned less ($43,000), on average in 2003-04 than their peers in towns ($45,900), suburbs ($45,700) and cities ($44,000) even after adjusting for geographic cost differences.
Clearly the report provides a phenomenal amount of data regarding the status of education in rural America. However, there are some trends concerning this data pertinent to our research.

1. It is more likely for a rural student to attend a very small school than other students in other geographic locales. (This probably has to do with population density although a small school movement is being implemented throughout the United States in cities, towns and in suburbs with the idea of smaller schools being more productive in forging better relationships among all stakeholders in the building and community.)

2. Rural students have less need for free or reduced-price lunch than students in cities and towns.

3. People who live in rural areas have less formal education that those living in other areas and have more parents who expect their children will not obtain a bachelors degree. Yet, they fund their schools at a higher rate than other groups, have less discipline problems in their schools, and have teachers satisfied with their jobs more than in other locales despite making less money. This commitment may lead to a greater sense of connectedness to all stakeholders within the community.

4. Rural students are holding their own in academic achievement compared to other groups and are graduating high school in percentages comparable to other groups. Despite this, the students are less likely to enroll in college.

Although we have drawn a few conclusions from the data, we also want to share a few observations about rural schools gathered from living and working with schools located in rural locales.

- Rural schools are oftentimes the centerpiece of a community. It is the place where people gather for meetings, athletics and for other large community outdoor gatherings. This may be due to the fact that the school may have the only gym, auditorium or athletic fields within a community. Within the suburbs, towns or cities there are oftentimes athletic fields or athletic opportunities (i.e., YMCA) separate from school grounds. The same might be true for meeting places for the citizenry. Therefore the school in rural areas are often utilized for educational and community purposes.
• Parents may feel they have more input in rural schools because they know the members of a school board, school administrators and teachers. There is more opportunity for an informal sharing of ideas and concerns. Citizenry often live near their children’s teachers and principals having opportunity to interact with them outside of the school environment. Rural schools may have students spending several years in particular schools. For example, a greater number of K-12 or K-8 public schools are found in rural areas than in suburban, town or city schools. (However, as noted in the small school movement, many urban school districts are moving towards or considering K-8 schools as a means to develop greater community within and outside the school environment.)

• There is often a shared vision and a shared sense of norms regarding what schools can and should be doing in the education of children. Mothers and Fathers want their children to be intelligent but, a greater demand for their children to be respectful and behave themselves in school is evident. It is easier to teach community norms (both good and bad) if more people are vested in the community and especially if there are generations within the community.

This last point leads to the research interests of this study. The role that the school and greater community play in the social and moral development (the character development) of students within a rural community is of interest. Community is defined as all stakeholders and the various locales within the life of the child. Focus is on the school as a powerful agent in the social and moral development of children. Informing the efforts was the concept of connectedness of stakeholders within a school building. In essence, building connectedness with all stakeholders in a building could have a powerful impact on the students in the building. It is this sense of building connectedness that must be addressed.

**Connectedness as a Means to Foster the Character Development of Students**

The concept of school connectedness is a very broad based one. According to Blum and Libbey (2004) “…researchers have studied the concept under a variety of names such as school bonding, school climate, teacher support and school engagement.” (p. 231). Robert Blum (2005) describes school connection as the “…belief by students that adults in the school care
about their learning and about them (our italics). Blum further argues that there are consistent qualities that influence a students’ positive attachment to school:

1. Having a sense of belonging and being part of a school
2. Liking school
3. Perceiving that teachers are supportive and caring
4. Having good friends within school
5. Being engaged in their own current and future academic progress
6. Believing that discipline is fair and effective
7. Participating in extracurricular activities (p.1)

In 2003 at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, scholars who research in the area of school connectedness and its impact on students – both academically and socially - met with representatives from government and the educational and health sectors to establish a core set of principles to guide schools across America in building school connectedness. Based on group discussions, presented papers and meta-analyses (studies that synthesize many research studies to reach a greater understanding of the data) participants formulated a statement on school connectedness that has been referred to as, The Wingspread Declaration on School Connections. The key elements of the declaration include:

1. Student success can be improved through strengthened bonds with school.
2. In order to feel connected, students must experience high expectations for academic success, feel supported by staff, and feel safe in their school.
3. Critical accountability measures can be impacted by school connectedness such as: academic performance, fighting, truancy and dropout rates.
4. Increased school connectedness is related to education motivation, classroom engagement, and better attendance. These are then linked to higher academic achievement.
5. School connectedness is also related to lower rates of disruptive behavior, substance and tobacco use, emotional distress and early age of first sex.
6. School connectedness can be built through fair and consistent discipline, trust among all members of the school community, high expectations from the parents and school
staff, effective curriculum and teaching strategies, and students feeling connected to at least one member of the school staff (2004).

Each of the aforementioned key elements in school connectedness has its basis in the development of a positive school climate for all stakeholders in the building. Having a sense of connectedness and belonging mean that, “I am valued and that I value others around me.” If students perceive teachers as supportive and caring then they may be willing to take risks and participate in various extracurricular offerings as well as challenging themselves academically and/or artistically or vocationally. Furthermore, they know that others will listen to them and help insure a positive climate so that they can grow as a person. The desire to do well or in the words of Thomas Lickona and Matt Davidson, “to be smart and good” is forged via the climate of a school and the subsequent relationships one has with all stakeholders within the school environment. Marvin Berkowitz, perhaps the foremost authority on character education, told an assemblage of principals that the three key elements for the social and moral development of students are, “relationships, relationships and relationships.” Simply put, how one connects to stakeholders within the school building may determine academic success (Benniga & Berkowitz, 2004) as well as social and moral competency. (Blum and Libbey, 2004). Let us now consider the role climate plays in the building of connectedness and relationships among stakeholders.

A positive school climate requires connectedness that develops a sense of belongingness on the part of all stakeholders. Whitlock, (2003) notes that a positive school climate from a student point of view includes the following: (1) the opportunity to affect school classroom policies and procedures, (2) positive relationships with adults, (3) the perception that adults as a whole at school did not discriminate based on appearances, and (4) opportunities for creative engagement. Notice how Whitlock’s work recognizes the importance of not discriminating based on appearances. This could be racial or religious differences but, it may also be discrimination based on physical appearances including the clothes one wears. Therefore, sensitive teachers and administrators treat the children as individuals deserving their best. To paraphrase the great Dr. Martin Luther King, we care for our children not based on the clothes they wear but because we are called to love and care for these children. This is very important. There can be no doubt that there are racial issues and that some people’s racist attitudes interfere with their ability to live a caring loving life and be the moral compass of the children they teach. But, equally
damaging to children are adults who make decisions on the worth of a child based on the clothes or smell of a child. Great schools overlook the clothes and focus on treating children the way they would want their children and themselves to be treated. They are simply called to a higher mission in establishing a climate that is caring and yet based on every child developing intellectual as well as social and moral competencies. Schools that care deeply about their students establish structure and expectations of appropriate behavior on the part of the adults as well as the children within a school. Wong and Wong (1991), Marzano (2003) Vincent (2004) have argued that building climate involves the development of relationships and consistent rules and procedures that are not meant to control students but to develop them. What are the habits we want students to develop and teachers to model in their relationships with each other? Practicing and modeling of procedures or practices such as politeness towards others, until it becomes habitual would be beneficial in creating a classroom and/or school of moral and social excellence. The strategies that are useful in creating social and moral competence are also noted in schools that are focused on building connectedness with students and other stakeholders (Cohen 2006).

Our introduction on the importance of connectedness illustrates an important point. It appears that those interested in the character development of students are emphasizing much of the strategies designed to facilitate student connectedness to and within the school. Benninga & Berkowitz (2004) determined the criteria and indicators defining character education in a study of elementary schools: (1) the promotion of core ethical values within the school, (2) parents and community members as active participants in the character education initiative, (3) an intentional, proactive, comprehensive effort that character development should occur in all phases of school life, (4) staff modeling, (5) classroom and entire school focuses on caring for each other and (6) the school provides opportunities for most students to practice moral action. If one examines each of these correlates one notices that the success of each of these indicators requires a sense of obligation or connectedness of people to each other. Modeling requires awareness of one’s actions that may influence and affect another. Therefore, one must model what one wants others to do. Caring for everyone in a school requires that one, at a minimum, place the needs of others on the same level as their own – that one is connected to others in order to serve them. Indeed connectedness may be the catalyst that will allow a child’s character to
flourish. To consider this idea, turn to an investigation of character and how schools can work to facilitate the character development of their students.

**Chapter 2: Defining Character Education**

Let us examine three definitions of character education as an introduction to our present study. In his epoch book *Educating for Character: How our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (1991) Thomas Lickona defined and helped steer the discussion that has resulted in an increased awareness of the role that schools could and should play in the social and moral development of children.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle defined good character as the life of right conduct – right conduct in relation to other persons and in relation to oneself. Aristotle reminds us of what, in modern times, we are prone to forget; The virtuous life includes self-oriented virtues (such as self-control and moderation) as well as other-oriented virtues (such as generosity and compassion), and the two kinds of virtue are connected. We need to be in control of ourselves—our appetites, our passions—to do right by others…. Character so conceived has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior. *Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good*—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action. All three are necessary for leading a moral life; all three make up moral maturity, (p. 50-51)

Gordon Vessels (1998) notes that:

Character education combines direct teaching and community-building strategies in various ways to promote personal and social integrity and the development of moral virtues, moral reasoning abilities, and other personal assets and qualities that make this possible (p. 4)

Kevin Ryan and Karen Bohlin (1999) argue that:

Character, then, is very simply the sum of our intellectual and moral habits. That is, character is the composite of our good habits or virtues, and our bad habits, or vices, the habits that make us the kind of person we are. These good and bad habits mark us and continually affect the way in which we respond to life’s events and challenges. If we
have the virtue of honesty, for example, when we find someone’s wallet on the pavement, we are characteristically disposed to track down its owner and return it. If we possess the bad habit, or vice, of dishonesty, again our path is clear; we pick it up, look to the right and left, and head for Tower Records or the Gap. (p. 9)

Note what is important in all three of these definitions. Each definition addresses the development of the intellect and habits that enable us to act in a consistent social and moral manner. Clearly one values people who can consider issues that arise within life. One wants people to think and care deeply about social and ethical issues. One also wants people to develop good habits – habits of action that lead to moral examples for those around us. One develops these habits, much as a shortstop and second baseman learn to turn the double play, through practice and more practice. The development of good manners, the practice and expectation of trustworthiness, kindness and caring are all part of the development of a virtuous child and adult. Ultimately, opportunities for the student to apply their intellectual and social habits and dispositions in the service of others within the school and hopefully within the community must be available. Character education is the development of the complete person – a person we would hope one day would be our neighbors, co-workers and perhaps our son or daughter in law. Looking at character education in this manner, it is hard to imagine that this would not be at the forefront of educational policy. Yet, that is not always the case.

The mere fact that we continue to discuss and research the development of the construct called character some 2,400 years after Aristotle (1984) introduced his heuristic insights on the excellence of character, goes to show that instilling a level of greater character in mankind is no easy task; yet it is perceived as a worthwhile endeavor that many generations have and continue to embrace. As a result of this ongoing pursuit to increase the moral excellence of our youth, character education continues to persevere and search for evidence supportive of a more definitive role within the modern American education system. Thus, one might define character education today as a continuation of the means of teaching and instilling character within the citizens of a culture. Yet, given that many of the current efforts and lessons often shared by caring educators work towards such goals, it might be easier in some cases to state which educational practices are not part of a character education process rather than those that are part of character education. Regardless of one’s definition or position on the role of character
education, it is as Damon (2005) points out, “…an odd mark of our time that the first question people ask about character education is whether public schools should be doing it at all. The question is odd because it invites one to imagine that schooling …somehow could be arranged to play no role in the formation of a child’s character.”

In reality, when one considers character education as part of the natural developmental process that education has embraced for centuries one must recognize that all practice character education to some degree by default. Those who teach are role models, and their actions (good or bad) as educators are scrutinized by our students. Classrooms and schools are moral/ethical climates, for better or worse. Students observe teachers and the greater school environment. These observed individuals and influential environments theoretically impact character development. Within these moral climates are behaviors and actions, the consideration of social and moral issues and concerns that children observe, consider and contemplate adopting. Briefly, consider some of the theorists who may influence how one adopts and considers the role character education can play in the development of our students.

**Theorists and Thinkers in the Social and Moral Development of Students**

Social learning and reinforcement theories (Bandura, 1977; Skinner, 1969) suggest that the future probability of a behavior will be influenced by such consequences provided by educators. Therefore, social learning theories, socio-cultural and other development theories (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000; Dewey as cited in Cruz, 1987; Erickson, 1950; Kohlberg, Levine, & Hower, 1983; Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky as cited in Wertsch, 1985), provide a lens to view how character education is rooted within theory supporting the learning process and development of the whole child and the behaviors one models. To some practitioners character education is often perceived to consist of a few words (e.g., respect, responsibility) posted on a bulletin board or in the hallway. Character education to some rests on the adoption of such positive character traits (pillars, virtues, etc.) or elements to develop character, and is to be shared or taught directly to students as plug-in programs on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

With only a few studies on character education programs showing evidence of effectiveness (www.whatworks.ed.gov, 2007), hundreds of companies are marketing expensive character education programs or products (similar to the above mentioned approach) to schools struggling to stay fiscally afloat. To be fair, the possibility exists that the assessment of such
programs could be flawed (or nonexistent) and a few of these programs do compliment the
 instructional or developmental process. To be fair, one might question as to why educators would
 expect a simple program implemented over a short time of a child’s life to increase moral
 reasoning or academic achievement. Unfortunately, to a good number of the educators that were
 interviewed or took part in focus groups during the qualitative research efforts of this grant, the
 marketed product side of character education is one of the most significant shortcomings and/or
 challenges of character education today.

 To some teachers the marketing of such programs feeds a connotation that character
 education is a trendy, temporary thing that will go away soon. To others, the marketed programs
 and products suggest that character education can be accomplished in a mere 20 minutes
 sandwiched between lunch period and the afternoon reading block; leaving the doubt and
 question to the efficacy of character education. Additionally, some feel that such a direct
 approach to teaching character education traits may not be as effective as an indirect approach.
 Meanwhile, individuals in charge of some schools continue to make character education the sole
 responsibility of a few teachers and/or the counselor that often lack the legitimate power needed
 to successfully navigate the innovation process. To some, such programs and the approaches
 taken to implementing character education programs appear to be the “flavor of the day” and
 another thing to put on one’s already overloaded plates.

 Perhaps there is another way to think about character education. What if one considers
 character education as not another program or another thing on the plate of educators but, as the
 plate. In other words, character education should be viewed as the foundation of what must
 occur in schools and classrooms. Perhaps character education should be considered the
 foundation that compliments the social and moral development of students while simultaneously
 improving the school/learning climate, developing a sense of connectedness to others as well as a
 sense of belonging within the school community that taken together might enhance additional
 educational efforts already underway within the schools (Vincent, Wangaard, & Weimer, 2004).
 The Child Development Project practiced a similar approach with success in their
 comprehensive, whole-school interventions to foster social, ethical, and intellectual development
 in students via the development of caring communities of learners (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson,
 2004). Therefore, the efforts (educational intervention) that we hypothesize will work best
(especially for rural schools struggling with budget and staffing issues) are character education models that are fully integrated from dawn to dusk (e.g., from the classroom to the cafeteria to the playground, all day and everyday), and basically cost nothing. Following are two models designed to be integrated within the “ethos” or life of the school without the need of relying on a program or a separate time for character education. The first model was developed by Philip Vincent in 1994:

Note, this model makes use of strategies that are present or should be present in most schools. The rules and procedures are designed to develop school wide habits in adults and students which will result in a kind and caring classroom environment. Teachers are asked to consider what a school practicing respect, responsibility and caring would look like. What, using the input from all stakeholders, would this look like in practice? Schools then develop practices and procedures to develop the habits of respect, responsibility and caring. Politeness and good
manners are addressed. Learning to disagree without becoming disagreeable would also be a valued habit to develop. Cooperative learning takes place in almost every classroom. Developing consistent practices and habits enable cooperative learning to help students achieve socially, morally as well as academically. Teaching for thinking demands that students learn to “see their thinking” via graphic organizers as well as participating in practices such as seminars and great discussions. Once again, habits of civility allow us to learn to listen to others and learn from them. The use of the curriculum to have students consider ideas and examples from throughout history and various cultures is important and part of the “standard course of study.” The humanities and sciences provide ample fodder to assist students in their moral awareness and reasoning. Finally, one serves others within their school and community. The strength of this model is its visual simplicity and its focus of taking advantage of good classroom practices to insure that character education does not become another add-on program.

A more exhaustive and thorough model was developed by Thomas Lickona and Matt Davidson in their work, *Smart and Good High Schools – Integrating Excellence and Ethics for Success in School, Work, and Beyond* (2005). This work greatly advanced the thinking within the field of character education. Although anchored in the high school, it provides insights applicable to all grade levels. The model emphasizes eight strengths of character.
Reaching fruition in each of these strengths requires a relationship between the student and other adult stakeholders in the building. It requires a sense of connectedness or as Martin Buber noted, the “I and Thou” whereas one’s attention to the world must also involve one’s attention to those around them with a focus on the needs, concerns, aspirations, joys etc. of others. For example, a teacher works to help a child clarify her thinking, or to reconsider a comment made to another student. Another teacher works to help a student write and re-write a paper to reach the excellence she is capable of within her narratives. Meanwhile, a health teacher works with a class to define and assess what strategies a person should apply and what habits a person should develop to live a life of noble purpose. The student government works with the faculty to re-think the practices and behaviors in the cafeteria that can be improved upon.

Grounding the eight strengths of character is the acknowledgement that good character education requires students and adults strive toward performance as well as moral character.
**Performance character is a mastery orientation.** It consists of those qualities—such as effort, diligence, perseverance, a strong work ethic, a positive attitude, ingenuity, and self-discipline—needed to realize one’s potential for excellence in academics, co-curricular activities, the workplace, or any other area of endeavor… **Moral character is a relational orientation.** It consists of those qualities—such as integrity, justice, caring, and respect—needed for successful interpersonal relationships and social behavior. Respect includes self-respect; we have obligations to ourselves—to respect our own rights, worth, and dignity, for example—as well as to others. (p. 18)

One needs both performance and moral character. Their efforts as a person should be to do their best in all endeavors. They should strive for excellence in their craft. However, one’s moral character tempers their drive for success at any cost and requires reflection on how they treat others and themselves. A football coach can train and develop players who are excellent in their execution of plays on the field. However, a good coach also insures that his/her charges are developing habits of good sportsmanship towards their teammates and their opponents. The coach should hope to instill in these athletes that performance efforts and moral efforts are important on the field and in the classroom.

What appears clear is that the strategies designed to build students as well as adult stakeholders of good character are noted in the research on school connectedness. Although not completely in sync on every issue, it is quite apparent that the research and thinking in the field of character education reflects much of the thinking on the importance and strategies needed to build connectedness in schools. Considering the abundance of educational research, philosophical views, and theory supporting the promising efficacy of a character education process model, the West Virginia study challenged participating educators to embrace character education as an educational foundation without the need of a program. It required the process of school be reconsidered through a new instructional lens addressing the role adults would play in modeling and forging social, moral and academic excellence within their classrooms and school. Additional school activities to achieve performance and moral excellence will be shared in Chapters 4-5. The next step is to consider how one might know if efforts within the schools were making a difference in the actions and perceptions of ALL stakeholders within the school and community.
As Berkowitz (2002) explains, character education, for the most part, has been viewed as a practice and not a science. “Whereas character education is not new, scientific study of its effectiveness has been only sporadically implemented… [and] therefore not informed by a scientific knowledge base” (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, p. 72). Thus, the importance of approaching recent government funded exploration of character education with sound methods, as well as reliable and more importantly valid measures, is essential to discovering the true role that character education can play in the educational process. With a process-based definition of character education proposed, and a multitude of research and theory that begins to identify multiple components of the character education process, a dimensional model was created to assist with a more strategic approach for guiding our data collection procedures (See in Chapter 3).

With this in mind, the researchers designed a study of randomly selected schools from throughout rural West Virginia to determine the role schools and schools working within the greater community could play on the social and moral development of students. The study involved four schools, two elementary, one middle and one high school. The same configuration of schools for the comparison group was included. Each school agreed to participate in the study for three years. During the fourth year, the comparison schools received additional training and support from the experimental schools along with consultants who had worked with the experimental schools. More about each of the dimensions will follow in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Meaningful Dimensions of Education

There is an old saying, “Now that we have lost sight of our goals…we must re-double our efforts.” There are two main reasons people lose sight of their goals. The first is that they did not know what goals they were working towards. In far too many schools, teachers or students cannot recite their mission statements or clearly articulate the school goals for the upcoming school year. Let one assume that the goals are clear and that everyone knows the goals…how does one know whether they are making progress towards fulfilling the goals? What are the data points? Furthermore, does the data received provide information that would allow achievement of the goals?
The goals within the grant were quite simple. They included, to see whether well designed processes could be initiated to facilitate the social, moral and academic development of our students. In order to assess success or failure, it was imperative to have an assessment instrument that went far beyond how people felt on a brief survey. A research instrument that would be reliable and valid was needed. In other words, an instrument that would measure what it stated it would measure and would provide information that would be beyond questioning in its statistical power was needed. To accomplish this, Drs. Mike Corrigan from Marshall University in West Virginia and Doug Grove from Vanguard University in California were utilized. Both of these individuals had extensive quantitative and qualitative research backgrounds with a focus on social and moral education. They developed a multi-dimensional model that would provide feedback to students, faculty members and parents regarding their perceptions of the social/moral and academic efforts of the student, school and the home. Building on research surrounding what is needed to achieve socially/morally and academically in school, the researchers developed an instrument that would allow all stakeholders to assess their efforts in developing a positive learning environment for all stakeholders. The model is presented on the following page:
Although this study focuses on pretest data collected specifically from participating students, a multiple triangulation methodology guides this grant project’s mixed methods research effort. Multiple triangulation is defined as when the researchers combine in one investigation, multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data, and methodologies. Researchers triangulate by using different data sources to confirm one another (Gay & Airasian, 2003). During the first and last month of the school year (for 3 years), student participants (as well as parents and staff) completed a multiple scale survey. The measurements were taken twice a year in order to account for changes that might take place during the summer months away from the experimental settings. Given that this was a multiple site collection process, settings for the school’s data collection differ from place to place. However, the surveys for this pretest
assessment were administered in either the cafeteria or auditorium by outside evaluators, and no school staff or teachers were present at the time. Student identification numbers were used on the surveys and answer sheets to provide a greater level of confidentiality. Participants were asked to respond truthfully to the survey questions by reflecting on previous experiences relating to the past year in their neighborhood, community, and school. The surveys were administered in accordance with guidelines for research with human participants (American Psychological Association and the institutions involved). As part of an agreement with the Appalachian-based state’s Department of Education, additional data were provided for indicators of academic achievement, special needs, and other academic related statistics for use in analyses. Thus, the student identification number provided a mechanism to track the youth and their parents longitudinally in relation to character education received, related dimensional variables, and education related dependent variables. Confidential code numbers were assigned to participating parents, educators and school staff for longitudinal assessment efforts.

**Measures**

The survey contains demographic questions that record the participant’s sex, age, involvement in community or school-related activities, and questions relating to television use, video games, homework, and family structure. Additional data was provided by the state and participating local school systems on academic achievement (standardized test scores, GPA), special needs, and free/reduced lunch (SES). In addition to the demographic questions and archival data collected, the survey utilized multiple questions and self-report type scales, described in the following paragraphs, to begin a more thorough assessment of the proximal and distal outcomes possibly related to character education. The scales on this survey were selected following several pilot runs administered during Phase 1 of the study. (Please note that
Dimensions 4 and 5 are more related to data collected through or on teachers and administrators and will be discussed further in future reports related to the adult participants in the study.)

**Measurements of Character (Dimension 1)**

*Concern for Others Scale (CFOS).* This 9-item Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure the level of concern that students have for others. Previous research utilizing this scale reports past internal reliabilities ranging from .78 to .81 (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item is “People should look after themselves and not try to solve other people’s problems.”

*Assessment of Student Moral and Performance Character Scale (MORC & PERC).* Both of these 12-item Likert-type scales (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) were adapted from a part of the Davidson & Khmelkov (2006) CREE assessment survey that focused on performance and moral character development. Reliabilities for these scales have been reported in the .80 ranges. A sample item for the moral character scale is “I admit if I do something wrong.” A sample item for the performance character scale is “I think about my school work and consider whether I need to work harder.”

*Self-perceived Character Elements Scale (CHAR).* This Likert-type scale was developed for this study by combining the most widely published/used character traits/values/virtues/elements (e.g. honesty, respect) that are touted throughout character education and collapsing them down to 19 one word items. For example, respondents can answer as to how much they understand the term “Diligence” on a scale from 1 to 5; with 1 being “I do not know what this is” to 3 being “I know what this is, I think about it often, and practice it
occasionally” to 5 being “I know what this is, I think about it often, and practice it constantly.” These items will be studied through an educational psychology based lens that considers the process of learning through the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels. At this time no reliabilities or validity tests are available. Note that this scale is considered too advanced for elementary students and therefore was only utilized in the middle/high school survey.

*Misconduct at School (MS).* This 4-item Likert-type scale (1 never to 5 ten plus times) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure the level of misconduct that students practice in school. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .74 to .79 (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item of the MS is “Have you ever cheated on a test?”

*Altruism Scale (ALTS).* This 9-item Likert-type scale (1 never to 5 ten plus times) is a scale that was modified after Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekken (1981) by the Developmental Studies Center to measure the level of altruism that students practice in general. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .80 to .85 (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item of ALTS is “Have you stood up for someone who was being picked on?”

**Measurements of Community Engagement (Dimension 2)**

*Interpersonal Community Engagement Scale (ICE).* The ICE scale is a 20-item Likert-type scale developed to provide a measurement for the degree to which one is communicatively engaged within one’s community or neighborhood (Corrigan & Walls, 2007). For this study, participants were asked to consider the neighborhood in which they live and answer each item
(from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). The scale was designed to capture the level of community communication and involvement to better gauge the connection one feels to one’s neighborhood, and to empirically measure if interpersonal community-based dynamics have a relationship to youth behaviors and educational attitudes. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .89 to .93, and some initial support for construct validity (Corrigan, 2004). A sample item of ICE is “My relationships with my neighbors have helped me to be a better person.”

Note: In addition to the ICE scale, involvement in community or school activities at the middle/high school level was measured by several 5-point Likert-type items. The questions asked the participant to “please indicate your level of activity in the following activities based upon your involvement with 1 being the least active and 5 being the most active.” The activities included (1) band, (2) church, (3) family, (4) school (extracurricular), (5) sports teams, (6) youth organizations, and (7) neighborhood.

Measurements of School Climate (Dimension 3)

Sense of School Community (SSAI & SSUP). Both of the 9-item Likert-type sub scales (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) were developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure a sense of school community. The SSAI focuses on the autonomy and influence experienced by the student participant, while SSUP focuses on school supportiveness. Research utilizing these scales report internal reliabilities ranging from .80 to .82 (Battistich et al, 1995). Numerous studies utilizing these scales offer support for construct validity (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Battistich et al, 1995; Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1997; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). A sample item for SSAI is “Students help to decide what goes on at this school.” A sample item for SSUP is “Students at this school are willing to
go out of their way to help someone.” Please note that these sub-scales were only used on the middle/high school survey.

Victimization at School (VICS). This 6-item Likert-type scale (1 never to 5 ten plus times) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure the level of victimization students experience at school. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .75 to .79 (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item of VICS is “Did someone threaten to hurt you but did not actually hurt you?”

Liking for School (LFS). This 6-item Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure how much students like their school. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .81 to .83 (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item of LFS is “My school is a fun place to be.” Due to the length of the middle/high school survey, this scale was used only in the elementary survey.

Loneliness at School (LSS). This 8-item Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was developed by Asher, Hymel, and Renshaw (1984) to measure how lonely students feel at their school. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .83 to .85 (Battistich et al., 1995). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item of LSS is “I don’t have anyone to hang around with at school.” Due to the length of the middle/high school survey, this scale was used only in the elementary survey.
Measurements of Educational Attitudes (Dimension 4)

**Student Motivation Scale (SMS).** Brophy (1987) defined student motivation to learn as “a student tendency to find academic activities meaningful and worthwhile and to try to derive the intended academic benefits from them” (p. 205). This study used the Richmond (1990) Student Motivation Scale (SMS) to measure the state of a student’s motivation to learn, which is believed to be intrinsic. The scale consists of 5, five-step bi-polar adjectives (5-point semantic differential scale) with reported previous alpha coefficients of .94 and considerable evidence of construct validity (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994). Responses were given to “immediate feelings about school work.” Examples of the bi-polar adjectives are “motivated-unmotivated” and “interested-uninterested.” For this study, SMS also was used to identify the possible relationship between one’s level of engagement in the community and education-related views.

**Academic Self-Esteem (ASE).** This 4-item Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure a student’s level of academic self-esteem. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .82 to .84 (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item of ASE is “I am doing a good job in school.”

**Trust in Teachers (TTS) and Trust in Principals (TPS).** The trust in teachers scale was originally a six item scale that measured the level of trust a student has in one’s teachers. Due to requests from one of the participating school systems, two negatively worded items were cut from the scale. Also, with permission from the Developmental Studies Center the trust in teachers then was adapted to also measure trust in principals. Research utilizing the trust in teachers scale (as a six item measure) reports internal reliabilities ranging from .75 to .84.
(Battistich et al, 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of the trust in teachers scale have been identified. The trust in principals’ scale is a new adaptation of the trust in teachers scale and will need further research to support construct validity. Both have been edited down to four item scales that measure the level of trust a student has for teachers or principals based upon a five point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. Sample items for TTS and TPS are “The teachers in my classes really care about me” and “The principal in my school really cares about me.”

*Student Perceived Teacher Efficacy Scale (SPTES).* The SPTES is based on Milson’s (2003) Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI). SPTES consists of 24 statements on a five-point Likert-type scale adapted to measure a student’s perception of their teachers’ ability to teach and develop character, rather than teacher’s view of themselves. The original instrument has two scales: 12 items measuring personal teacher efficacy (PTE) and 12 items measuring general teacher efficacy (GTE). The CEEBI scales of PTE demonstrate alpha scores of .80 and GTE scales demonstrate alpha scores of .66. Bi-variate correlations between the scales have been significant and strong at .69. For the first test of the new scale all of the 24 items were rewritten to fit the student perceived view and will be considered in future efforts to factor analyze a more succinct measure. A sample item of SPTES is “My teachers know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students’ character.”

The following is a graphic explanation of how the surveys would be administered within each school.
School schedules time for survey

Assessment instruments are sent to each school

School surveys students and all other stakeholders

**Student Assessment**
- Student Assessments
  - Administered in Common Classrooms
  - Teachers administer using the MDA protocol

**Administration Suggestions:**
- Teachers encourage students to take the assessment seriously
- Students understand that the responses are anonymous (no one will know their individual responses)
- Principal intercom message as to the importance of the assessment

**Parent/Guardian Assessment**
- Parent and Guardian surveys are sent home by the school via students or mail

**Administration Suggestions:**
- Assessment goes home through a common class and teachers encourage return
- Assessment goes home in an envelope that parents can seal and return via student with anonymity maintained
- Assessment is accompanied by a principal letter
- Newsletters, E-mail Blasts, Phone Calls, and other forms of communication used to increase parent participation

**Faculty, Staff, Counselors, and Administrators Assessment**
- Staff, Faculty, Counselors, and Administrators assessment is distributed at the school level

**Administration Suggestions:**
- Provide a box in the main office for returning the assessments
- Provide a check off list next to the box, so participants can check off after completing the assessment

Schools return assessments

Forms are scanned and data is collected

Researchers create report and triangulate the data

Reports are sent to individual schools analysis and refocusing
The goal of the assessment is to provide a multi-dimensional assessment on the factors that contribute most to the social, moral and academic development of students in a school. Please notice that all stakeholders are assessed and that all stakeholders have a role in the success of the child within the school environment. This is a refreshing change from giving all the credit or the blame to schools based on the test scores of students. The assessment allows for a much greater and much more informative approach to assessing the factors that allow a child to flourish within a school. The next two chapters describe the intervention of the four experimental schools. Chapter 4 will feature the efforts of Talcott Elementary School and Ashford Rumble Elementary School. Chapter 5 will feature the efforts of Tyler Consolidated Middle School and Tyler Consolidated High School.
ASHFORD-RUMBLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM NARRATIVE

History

Ashford-Rumble Elementary School is a small rural school located in Ashford, West Virginia, a small coal mining community. The school was built as a direct result of the fire that destroyed Rumble Grade School in 1961. The fire resulted in the consolidation of Ashford and Rumble Grade Schools and the construction of the new Ashford-Rumble Elementary School.

The new facility was constructed during 1962 and 1963 and Ashford-Rumble Elementary School opened its doors on April 17, 1963. As the community grew, two classrooms, an annex, and a gym were added to the school to accommodate additional students. Recent construction and renovations have greatly enhanced the quality and appearance of the school and have provided additional space for new offices and classrooms.

Ashford-Rumble Elementary School provides a variety of educational programs and services to meet the needs of students. The school meets the needs of the community by offering community education classes and several recreational programs. Ashford-Rumble also opens its doors to numerous public organizations.

The current enrollment for the school year 2008-2009 is 104 students in kindergarten through grade six. This number has increased from 95 students in 2007-2008 but is still less than
the average enrollment in recent years. There are two key considerations that determine the number of students attending a school - the number of children being born and local jobs. If one were to check the number of students in the classes at Ashford-Rumble for 2008-09, one would see a huge discrepancy in the number of students between the grades. For example, Kindergarten has 20 students, 1st grade has 21 students and 2nd grade has 11 students. The increase in the number of kindergarten students is helping to increase the total number of students at Ashford-Rumble Elementary School. The other predictor regarding the recent increase of students is whether the coal companies are hiring or are reducing their workforces. The recent increase of hiring in the coal industry has allowed many families to stay in the Ashford-Rumble area and their children to attend local schools. If the coal industry takes a hit during the current dry spell in the economy, then a loss of enrollment will most likely occur because many parents will leave to find work.

Although the number of students may change from one year to another, Ashford-Rumble has consistently been a “Low Socioeconomic Status” school. For the 2006-2007 school year, 68% of the students received free or reduced lunches. For the 2007-2008 school year, 67% of the students received free or reduced lunches. 60% of the students received free or reduced lunches for 2008-2009.

Statistically, the socioeconomic status of students is a predictor of a student’s ability to learn and succeed in school but it is not the sole nor is it the dominant predictor if a school has committed stakeholders (parents and school staff). Ashford-Rumble runs counter to statistical predictions. As the school’s free and reduced numbers have remained high, so have Westest (West Virginia State Achievement Test) scores. Westest scores are used by West Virginia to assess student academic achievement and their rank when compared to other schools. In 2005-2006, 65% of the students at Ashford-Rumble received Mastery scores in the West Virginia Writing Assessment. These scores were the second lowest in the county. In 2006-2007, 100% of the school’s students received Mastery in the West Virginia Writing Assessment. These scores were the highest in the county. For the 2007-2008 school year, 93.75% of the students received Mastery in Reading/Language Arts. These scores were also the highest in the county. Over the three years of Ashford-Rumble’s concentrated efforts in character education, the school has experienced improved achievement scores in all areas.
As has occurred in many schools experiencing a decreasing enrollment, Ashford-Rumble Elementary has had to reduce staff resulting in split grades. This required Ashford-Rumble to develop four combination classes involving grades 1-6. Many of the more experienced teachers chose not to teach combination classes and took jobs in other elementary schools in the county. Teaching combination classes demands extensive planning and involves teaching to a wider span of learning styles and abilities. The character education efforts at Ashford-Rumble Elementary were impacted since so many of these teachers had been crucial players on the school’s team. In a small school, everyone is on most committees. Ashford-Rumble did not miss a beat in its character and academic pursuits. Recently hired teachers quickly understood how character and academics go hand-in-hand and that character is part of the “ethos” or life of the school. Based on the skills and commitment of teachers, students and parents, Ashford-Rumble Elementary was able to enhance its character building efforts and maintain excellent academic outcomes. As noted above, almost 94% of the school’s students made mastery in Reading and Language Arts. An increase in enrollment in 2009-10 is expected along with a return to one teacher per grade level with no combination classes. This will require additional staff members who will be trained by the “old-timers” on how character education is simply what Ashford-Rumble does in educating its children.

School Climate

There are many variables one should consider when insuring that children receive an excellent education. A school must focus on academics but must also consider the physical and emotional well being of its students as well. A key component is the development of a positive climate within the school for all stakeholders. The climate of the school must be inviting to all students, staff members, parents and community members.

The staff at Ashford-Rumble tries to make each child feel important. Staff members take into consideration that the love and affection shown students may be the only positive attention they have received that morning and may represent the best and most positive part of their day. The staff makes an effort to know the name of all students and greet them each morning. This represents a lot of smiling faces each day greeting the children. Both professional and support staff strive to improve the self-esteem of each of the students. As part of Ashford-Rumble’s character education initiative, the school has implemented many programs that allow students to
be showcased for their efforts. One such program is the Student of the Month. Each teacher chooses a student who has exhibited the highlighted character trait, i.e. caring, honesty, responsibility, or trustworthiness, for a particular month. The student’s name and picture are then exhibited on the door of the classroom for all to see. The Student of the Month’s name and picture also appear in the local newspaper.

Ashford-Rumble recognizes birthdays by announcing the student’s name during morning announcements. The birthday child is then allowed to go to the office to receive a small gift. Each week students from a different grade are chosen to recite the Pledge of Allegiance based on needed self-esteem. The Cafeteria Stars are selected from the tables that demonstrate good character, manners and respect during meal times. The school has monthly reward incentives that encourage students to be responsible for their actions. A student’s good behavior will earn “Tiger Bucks” that can be spent in a small store that the school maintains. So many times school personnel are quick to point out the things that students do wrong, but the staff at Ashford-Rumble makes it a point to draw attention to the positive accomplishments of students. The school’s staff likes to think that it focuses on the positive and not the negative.

The school is consistent in its attempts to reach the goal of having a safe and inviting school where each student can thrive. Teachers take pride in their students’ classroom behavior. Teachers establish goals and then post their expectations in the classroom so that the students can see them every day. Because classroom teachers cannot be with their students everywhere throughout the day, the staff works together to insure the continuity of positive behavior in all areas of the school. This not only helps the school to be safe and run smoothly, but it helps the students and teachers realize that being respectful and responsible is everyone’s goal.

The school staff is very supportive of each other. Ashford-Rumble also recognizes an Employee of the Month. This staff member is showcased on a bulletin board near the school entrance. This recognition gives parents and visitors an opportunity to become familiar with the staff. The PTO, along with the school, recognizes teachers by sponsoring Teacher Appreciation activities throughout the year, one of which is an annual Christmas dinner.

Community Engagement

Each of the four experimental schools involved in the West Virginia Department of Education Character Education Grant, after an initial planning year during which a variety of
character education programs were researched, developed a unique character integration model specific to the school setting and community environment. Ashford-Rumble Elementary developed its unique character education model by adopting components of existing models while taking a distinctly unique community-based approach. Ashford-Rumble’s model, BRIDGE, refers to a critical bridge which was under construction in the small community serving the school. “Building the bridge to good character at home, school and community” became the motto for the school’s initiative. The BRIDGE acronym identified the specific core values identified for emphasis at the school. Ashford-Rumble emphasizes the following virtues during the school year: B – Bravery, R – Respect, I – Integrity, D – Diligence, G – Guidance, E – Endurance.

Most small schools have limited staff and resources to develop and implement a school wide character education program. Ashford-Rumble looked at existing programs and activities to find multiple opportunities for teaching, modeling and practicing good character. The staff at Ashford-Rumble has always been involved with many individuals and groups within the community. Parents and community members have participated in the following activities at the school: Open House, Veteran’s Day program/luncheon, Thanksgiving Dinner, Halloween Parade, Christmas Lip Sync, School Carnival, various fundraisers, Read-to-Me Day, and many more activities throughout the year.

Each school involved in the Character Education grant began the year with an Open House to serve as a kick-off and introduction to the project. A family round-up dinner was held at Ashford-Rumble. All students and their families were invited to the event which included a presentation on the school’s plans to infuse character development across the school climate. Dr. Phil Vincent spoke to parents on the benefits of developing character in students. All students received t-shirts emblazoned with the school’s BRIDGE logo. Ashford-Rumble looked for additional ways to emphasize character virtues in community activities already in existence at the school. The annual Veteran’s Day program became the opportunity to teach the students about bravery, respect and endurance. The veterans of the community are invited to the school for a luncheon and program honoring their contributions to the country. Students come to understand the sacrifices that many of their parents and grandparents have made in service to the United States. The regular Thanksgiving Dinner has become another opportunity to learn about
being thankful and to practice good manners as community members, parents and students dine together.

Just as Ashford-Rumble Elementary makes many contributions to the community throughout the year, the community also contributes to the school. Local churches work with the school to insure that each student has a backpack at the beginning of the year and coats for the winter. The school also enjoys the benefits of business partnerships with several businesses in the community. Some of the greatest supporters of the school are the parents. Through the school’s PTO, there have been many dollars raised to support different activities and needs across the school environment. The PTO raised $28,000 for playground equipment and landscaping. Community and parent involvement have provided teachable moments for the students as adults model caring and generosity.

**Teaching Character**

Adult modeling and the teaching of good character is as important in a well-rounded education as academics. The staff at Ashford-Rumble Elementary believes that they not only teach good character but they model it from the time the children come through the school door until they leave to go home in the afternoon. The teachers do not teach character as a separate class, they simply integrate core virtues into the school culture and the existing curriculum. Assisted by the grant-funded document, *Correlation of 21st Century Content Standards and Objectives with Character Education Virtues* (available on the West Virginia Department of Education/Healthy Schools website), teachers at Ashford-Rumble look for those natural connections between the content of their curriculum and those core values they want to teach to their students. All schools involved in the Character Education Grant identified and, in most cases, color-coded specific character traits for emphasis. Introducing a specific virtue for inclusion each grading period served as a structure for the project.

The Reading/Language Arts content area provides numerous opportunities for Ashford-Rumble to develop character in the students. Writing assignments that focus on the character trait of the month are completed each grading period. Students also keep daily journals that focus on character. Stories are read that deal with core virtues followed by discussions about the choices made by the characters. A Readers’ Theatre allows the older students to present plays to younger students that contain a lesson to be learned pertaining to character. The use of trade
books that focus on character virtues and older students reading to younger students are two strategies used successfully by the teachers. Additional content areas provide teachable moments for learning about and practicing good character. From teaching about being a good citizen in social studies class to teaching about respect and responsibility for the environment in Science and creating character themed projects in art class, Ashford-Rumble staff members infuse character virtues throughout the curriculum.

Students need to be aware of the school’s behavior expectations. At Ashford-Rumble Elementary, respect is consistently taught throughout the school. It is second nature for the students to answer any teacher with “yes madam or sir” and “no madam or sir” and it is common practice for the students to say “thank you” or “no thank you”. It is something that comes naturally for most of the students but is modeled, taught and expected of all students and staff members. We model, teach, expect and practice civilities we expect of all stakeholders. The staff does not advocate or allow “clicks” or “bullying” in any way, shape, or form. The teachers try to make the students aware of other people’s feelings and the importance of kindness to all. Members of the staff are aware of their influence on students and model good character on a daily basis. Teachers and support staff realize that actions speak louder than words for their young impressionable students. They constantly review with students what is acceptable behavior and what will not be permitted. They work with the children to clarify why some behaviors are appropriate and some are inappropriate. It is imperative that all members of the staff be involved in the initiative. Ashford-Rumble’s cooks and custodian use “Tiger Bucks” to reward good behavior such as courtesy, helpfulness and respect for others. They encourage all students to follow the golden rule.

Teachers at Ashford-Rumble Elementary realize that effective character education programs give students many chances to practice good character, to serve the school and community. The school developed the HOPE Team, a community service group that allows students to “do the good.” The H-Helping O-Out P-People E-Everywhere Team, made up of fourth through sixth grade students, is involved in numerous service projects that benefit the surrounding community. Older students at the school have the chance to become peer mentors through a strategy in which younger students are assisted in developing portfolios of their work and accomplishments emphasizing responsibility for learning.
Positive Learning Atmosphere

The staff at Ashford-Rumble Elementary is constantly trying to improve the quality of education that the students receive. Teachers work hard to motivate the students by keeping the curriculum current and fast paced. Instruction is related to real world situations. Teachers strive to make lessons fun and interesting in order to keep the students motivated and on task. The success of the school’s curriculum is evident in its Westest scores each year. Ashford-Rumble is a Title I Distinguished School and a West Virginia Exemplary School. Because of the success of students each year, the school has made it a top priority to recognize students. Achievements of students are showcased on the “Wall of Fame” in the front office of the school. The student’s picture and successes are displayed with pride for all to see. Students are honored in the spring with an academic honor banquet. This is an opportunity to recognize the outstanding students of the school. There are many things to take into consideration when recognizing top performing students. Academic achievements are top priority but outstanding citizenship and character are also celebrated at this banquet.

Ashford-Rumble’s staff works to insure that the school is a warm and inviting place in which to receive an education. The staff wants what is best for each and every student. Realizing that each person is an individual and has individual needs is a priority. Along with the parents and the community, staff members work together to assure the highest quality of education. Students are given the encouragement and support needed in order for them to succeed. A top-notch education is a collaboration of good teachers, good students, good support staff, and good administration. All stakeholders at Ashford-Rumble work to achieve the highest potential of all students at the school. As a result of the school’s involvement in developing and implementing a character education program, the focus of the staff has moved from rewarding students for good character to expecting good character from the students. Ashford-Rumble personnel now make a conscientious effort to model, teach, expect and practice good character. The effectiveness of the school’s efforts can be seen in the reduction of discipline problems throughout the grant cycle. In-school suspensions have decreased from 22 incidences in 2005-2006 to 2 incidences in 2007-2008. Character education at Ashford-Rumble is a group effort that has impacted the climate of the school and the future academic and life success of each of its students.
TALCOTT ELEMENTARY

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM NARRATIVE

History

Talcott Elementary is a small rural school located in the beautiful mountains of southern West Virginia. The community is steeped in the legend of John Henry, the steel driving man who beat the first steam engine as it worked its way through the Big Bend Tunnel. Because that very tunnel can be viewed from Talcott’s classroom windows, the train was chosen to represent the school.

Talcott Elementary was built in the 1920s and 1930s as a K-12 school, but now serves approximately 160 students in preschool through fifth grade. The school has excellent attendance at the monthly rate of 95% or higher. The student population is predominantly Caucasian, and 61.54% of Talcott’s students come from homes in the low socioeconomic bracket. The school community is anxiously awaiting the completion of a brand new school expected in the spring of 2009. The staff of Talcott Elementary is comprised of one principal, fourteen professional personnel, and seven service personnel. The guidance counselor, physical education teacher, secretary, and music teacher are only part time. The entire staff is committed to the school’s character education program, and worked together to initiate change in the school climate

School Climate
Character Education has been the largest contributor in establishing a common goal and improving the school climate at Talcott Elementary. Staff training, student taught activities, and integrated character lessons have built stronger relationships between students, teachers, principal, school personnel, and parents.

At the onset of implementation, assigned teachers were provided training on the *Character Counts* program. The trained teachers presented an overview of the *Character Counts* training, thereby giving the staff a general introduction to Talcott Elementary’s character education initiative. Merging Talcott’s established Positive Behavior Program with ideas for a character education program created Talcott Elementary’s S.M.A.R.T. character education initiative. The school staff chose the most relevant virtues for the school climate represented by the acronym S.M.A.R.T. The S represents Service, M – Manners, A – Attitude, R – Responsibility, and T – Trustworthiness.

To foster a positive school climate, specific activities are created around each virtue. The virtues are presented through an initial school “Character Kickoff” and bi-monthly character pride campaigns. To successfully build a positive school climate, parental involvement is included with the yearly kick-off. The students’ families are invited to a school cook-out. The principal gives the audience a brief overview of the purpose of having a character education program within the school, and how important it is for the parents to be a part of the program at school and at home. At the Kickoff celebration, selected students give a presentation of Talcott’s S.M.A.R.T. train, the character education logo. Along with games, face painting, temporary tattoos, basketball relays, line dancing, and many prizes, students, parents, faculty and staff attempt to build a relationship that creates a positive climate for all stakeholders. The school climate has been greatly affected by the use of continual activities throughout the school year. A S.M.A.R.T. character pride campaign is developed for each virtue. A character pride campaign is coordinated by one teacher with input from additional colleagues. The activities for the virtue continue an entire week, and the teachers integrate the virtue throughout their instruction. Various activities are used with the support of instructional materials provided by “Character Counts” or ideas generated from online resources.

The letter “S” in the S.M.A.R.T. acronym stands for service. Students learn annually why service as a virtue is very relevant in life. One theme for service that students learn is to “Serve
with a Smile.” The students annually present a Veteran’s Day Program at school inviting veterans from the community and family. The school is decorated with posters, streamers, balloons, and banners to honor those that have served the country. A special program that consists of patriotic songs, students reading poems, waving flags, and recognizing special veterans is performed.

During the Christmas season, students collect canned food items from local business partners for every book they read. The entire school participates in the “Reading to Serve” program during November and December. The students participate in a variety of service themed activities. They annually make Christmas cards for orphans housed locally and abroad. The student’s Christmas cards have been sent to Russia and Haiti through a local mission or church in the county.

Monthly, the students visit a local nursing home and present a small program and/or make decorated items for the residents of the facility. Parents become involved in Talcott Elementary’s nursing home service projects by helping students create craft items and transporting students to the local facility.

Lastly, students are taught that serving one another throughout the school environment is important in building positive relationships within the school. The students are taught the “Golden Rule” and how it is reflected within all character virtues.

The letter “M” in the S.M.A.R.T. acronym represents the virtue “Manners.” The manners pride campaign is integrated through lessons and activities for an entire week. However, the focus on teaching manners as part of the school climate is modeled and taught throughout the year. The school’s staff demonstrates to students, through a variety of instructional strategies, how manners can benefit everyone. A variety of resources are used to integrate this virtue including posters, banners, role playing, selected books, and class discussions. Teachers have been trained on leading discussions of excellent literature utilizing the Junior Great Books program. A strength of this approach to teaching reading and thinking is the encouragement of peer-to-peer discussions on issues raised during the seminars. This approach requires learning to disagree without becoming disagreeable. Even the youngest students at Talcott Elementary learn to disagree with what a person is saying not with the person. The school guidance counselor emphasizes the virtue in her instruction and counseling sessions as well.
One of the favorite activities for the staff and students is hosting a volleyball game with parents. Students practice for this game during recess and free play. Students develop a manners cheer to present during the game. Posters are made and displayed in the gym. On game day, all parents are invited. Parents are aware of the purpose of the game and support their children by coming to watch or participate in the game.

The virtue “Attitude” is brought to everyone’s attention with a pride campaign during the last two months of school. The staff understands that reinforcing a positive attitude is necessary when the stress of wrapping up the school year and keeping the school climate safe and pleasant is vital. The campaign is taught with ideas from purchased materials or free online resources. For an entire week, teachers provide a virtue lesson and students demonstrate the lesson with posters, banners, attitude coupons, coloring sheets, badges, or inexpensive crafts such as those used to make attitude wrist bands or friendship bracelets. Primarily, the main event is the school’s field day, the final day of the attitude pride campaign. Parental involvement is essential in this activity to assist teachers in various outdoor activities. As teachers reinforce the idea of having a good attitude, students compete in relay races or play a game. The school’s multicultural guidelines are met during the Attitude pride campaign. Students play games played by children from other countries. They sometimes throw whipped cream pies at teachers for fun. Students receive field day ribbons, pencils, or badges purchased by the school’s S.M.A.R.T. program as rewards.

At the beginning of the school year, the virtue “Responsibility” is the primary focus. To enhance students’ awareness of becoming responsible students and citizens, a responsibility pride campaign theme is reinforced, such as “Don’t Monkey Around - Be Responsible” or “BEE Responsible.” Bulletin boards are decorated with activities or writings about the virtue. Students receive a daily 30 minute lesson on responsibility for a week in addition to having the virtue integrated within all academic subjects. Materials for posters, writings, and crafts are used to foster the positive climate. Parents receive tips on how to encourage their children to develop good work habits and responsibility. Parent conferences are scheduled to provide an opportunity to view classroom management and discuss teacher expectations. Students receive tokens throughout the school year for completing homework and demonstrating responsible behavior. Other activities consist of classroom weekly meetings, team building activities, role playing, and
peer buddy assistance. If a student continually fails to exhibit responsible behavior, all stakeholders participate in assisting the student. This includes a cafeteria helper, janitor, or secretary, depending on the specific school setting. All personnel have been trained on fostering a positive climate among all students and staff. Talcott Elementary stresses that positive school climate is everyone’s responsibility.

Students also collect plastic, paper items, and soda tabs displaying to the community responsible behavior in recycling and care of the environment. The students bring at least one recyclable item and participate in a competition for the most collected. Classroom winners are rewarded with pizza parties and recognition in the newspaper. A school assembly is held to recognize the accomplishments. Parents are invited to attend the assembly, building a positive relationship between parents, community, and school.

The final letter in the S.M.A.R.T. acronym stands for the virtue “Trustworthiness.” The trustworthiness pride campaign is held in January and February. Students are taught the virtue through planned character lessons and curriculum integration. Respect and honesty are the targeted virtues taught under trustworthiness. During this pride campaign, special guests are invited to a school assembly and speak about trustworthiness. The goal is to teach students that employment, family relationships, and school success depend on being trustworthy. Teachers include drug awareness instruction and assign student projects or creative writings about the dangers of using drugs or alcohol. Projects are displayed where all visitors and students can see them. A school basketball game is held annually between the staff and a local basketball team for the purpose of teaching students drug prevention. Community visitors and parents are invited to attend the basketball game. School cheerleaders develop a chant and perform it during the game. A bulletin board includes student drawings or writings about trustworthiness or drug awareness. The gymnasium is decorated with student posters for all to view.

As students display the character virtues, they receive rewards of occasional tokens, verbal praise, and/or are selected to receive a Good Character award. Students are recognized at each Student of the Month assembly. Students receive a certificate and a Good Character - Good Kid award. These recognitions are published in the local newspaper. In summary, character education is an excellent means to develop a positive school climate. Long lasting relationships among students, teachers, service personnel, and parents are generated throughout the school
year. Student and teacher expectations increase and overlap into academics. The concept of teaching students five character virtues has proven to enhance student quality and is sustained from year to year. Therefore, a positive school climate is successfully created.

**Community Engagement**

Involving the community is an important component of Talcott Elementary’s Character Education Program. This is accomplished through community awareness of our S.M.A.R.T. program, honoring community members, and service to the community.

**Community Awareness**

It is not often in the school system of Summers County that a school has a program of such magnitude as Talcott Elementary’s S.M.A.R.T. program. For S.M.A.R.T. to remain successful, it is essential to maintain community support. The train was chosen as the school’s logo because it is such an integral part of the community.

To reintroduce the S.M.A.R.T. program yearly, the school conducts a “kickoff” inviting community and parents. At the kickoff, hotdogs are cooked outside on the grill and students participate in fun activities such as karaoke, games, face painting, and line dancing. The Talcott Elementary Drama Club presents a skit or song about character education.

A great way to inform the community about Talcott Elementary’s character education program is to conduct *Power-point* presentations for various service clubs in the community. Having found it difficult to get the community involved, staff members decided to go to the community. This year, several teachers presented the S.M.A.R.T. program to the Kiwanis Club. Members of the club seemed very interested in the program and asked if Talcott Elementary’s staff members would present at other service clubs in the community. The staff presented to seven different groups including the Summers County Teacher’s Retirement Association.

One of the biggest events in Summers County is Train Days. This four day event, held on two consecutive weekends, draws over 3,000 people each weekend. The character team works with the Drama Club to get the message out into the community. The Drama Club provides street entertainment with an introduction to our S.M.A.R.T. train and sings character songs. This is a great opportunity to spread the word through music.

Being a small community, there is only one printed media outlet, *The Hinton News*. This weekly newspaper has proven to be one of the most reliable ways to make the community aware
of the different aspects of Talcott Elementary’s character education program. The newspaper regularly contains articles concerning the S.M.A.R.T. program at Talcott Elementary. Articles reporting about Talcott’s students of the month, the school’s kickoff, and pride campaigns are sources of school pride. Parents from other schools frequently ask why their schools do not have such events and publicity. This has proven to be an excellent way to let the community know what is happening at Talcott Elementary.

**Honoring Community Members**

Talcott Elementary has always had the feeling of a family atmosphere, but with the introduction of the S.M.A.R.T. Character Education Program, that family feeling is even stronger. Each month Talcott Elementary selects a community member and honors them with a *Community Character Award*. This award, given for service to our school throughout the year, is presented by the principal during the *Student of the Month* assembly. Pictures are taken and published in the Hinton News for the whole county.

Talcott Elementary honors several community members with the Veteran’s Day celebration. Each year a program is presented and veterans are invited along with their families. The program includes guest speakers, students reciting poems, and students singing patriotic songs. It is important for students to recognize those in the community who have served the USA. Past celebrations have been quite emotional. Service men and woman are often in tears and share in the love displayed by students and staff. This year cards are being made using poems to present to veterans in the local VA hospital.

**Service in our Community**

In addition to honoring community members, Talcott Elementary has several programs to serve needy families. One of the programs Talcott is proud of is *Adopt-a-Child*. Each year Talcott Elementary provides a wonderful Christmas to approximately 30 students in the school. Monetary gifts for this program are received from alumni and members of the community. Staff members shop for the gifts and the Summers County High School cheerleaders complete the gift wrapping. Christmas would not be complete without a family meal, so the school has a canned food drive with contributions from each class. The school puts together a meal package for each needy family.
Our business partners graciously assist with the food drive in our program called “Reading to Serve.” Students read books and the school’s business partners donate a can of food for each book read. This makes the community service project truly a project by the community, for the community.

One of Talcott Elementary’s most important service projects is for the residents of a local nursing home. Each month one classroom completes a craft or activity and sends the gifts to the nursing home for the patients to enjoy. At least three times a year one of the classes goes to the nursing home to visit and sing songs. Seeing the delight on the faces of the residents is a blessing in itself. Knowing how participating in the activity is helping to develop character in youth is an even greater blessing.

Talcott Elementary has found that community involvement is an important and challenging part of the school’s efforts. The school has worked hard over the last few years to insure the community is aware of the S.M.A.R.T. program. Pride is taken in recognizing and honoring community members, as students are taught to take care of others through community service. These strategies are very important and Talcott Elementary will continue to strive to engage the community within our S.M.A.R.T. program.

**Teaching Character**

Character development occurs in all classrooms at Talcott Elementary. The following are descriptions of classroom character activities and teacher perspectives on the S.M.A.R.T. Character Education Program.

*Preschool Teacher*

In the preschool classroom, there are thirteen social/emotional developmental goals. Many of these goals are basic citizenship or character building goals such as: recognizing own feelings and managing them appropriately; taking responsibility for own well-being; respecting and caring for classroom environment and materials; playing well with other children; recognizing the feelings of others and responding appropriately; sharing and respecting the rights of others; and using thinking skills to resolve conflicts. Weekly readings integrate basic character-building goals and generate discussion and activities about these goals.
The *I-Care* program is conducted during circle time throughout the year. Activities, songs, and puppets are utilized in this program. There are five “I-Care” rules posted in the room including: 1) We listen to teach other, 2) Hands are for helping not hurting, 3) We use *I-Care* language, 4) We care about other people’s feelings, and 5) We are responsible for what we say and do. These rules and practices are discussed and reviewed on a regular basis. Children can be heard saying things like, “He’s not doing the right thing” or “He’s not making good choices.” Children are encouraged to “use their own words.” If someone is doing something to them they do not like, they are encouraged to “tell” the other person that he or she hurt their feelings or that they do not like what they are doing, rather than being aggressive or getting upset.

A unit is featured the first month of school called “Beginning Together.” In this unit, the class creates rules and practices for outside, in the gym, in the cafeteria, on the bus, and in the classroom. A unit on “Community Helpers” talks about respecting teachers, doctors, firefighters, policemen, and other community helpers. The “Friends” unit addresses being a good friend, sharing, helping, and caring. Activities from the “Good Ideas” book are also utilized.

**Preschool Aide**

One of the ways character is taught in the preschool class is by modeling kindness, caring, and respecting others. Books are used to teach good character development. Discussions occur to present and teach how to use words to express “needs” and “wants”, what it means “to be a good friend”, and the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. The “I-Care” rules and teaching units on “Friends,” “Caring,” and “Responsibility” are used to emphasize the importance of good character.

**Kindergarten Teacher**

One of the most important ways to teach character education to students is by modeling correct behavior. It is essential that students are introduced to the *Golden Rule* so they will realize they should treat other people the way they would like to be treated. A variety of resources are used to teach character education to students such as *The Good Ideas* book, *The Good Manners* compliment game, finger puppet role playing, and a variety of cooperative learning activities. The teacher looks for opportunities to introduce and encourage good manners in the cafeteria.

**Kindergarten Aide**
The adults in the kindergarten classroom teach by modeling. They model what they want the children to do. They model and encourage the students to say “I’m Sorry,” “Thank you,” and “Please.” Students are encouraged to engage in cooperative play on the playground and mediate any conflicts.

1st Grade Teacher

In first grade, character education lessons are taught in both integrated and explicit manners. Many of the character lessons such as responsibility, caring, respect, trustworthiness, and citizenship are a part of our reading, math, social studies, and other lessons. In reading, many stories focus on character traits. Discussions are conducted on how the characters in the story show good and bad character traits. In math, students must work together in groups, share, take turns, and use materials in a responsible way. In science and social studies, they are taught about the world around them, how to take care of it, and how to be a good citizen. Students are reminded to use manners, be kind, and treat others with respect. They are taught to be responsible for their actions, do their best, complete their homework, and be responsible for keeping up with their belongings.

In addition to integrated lessons and daily reminders, students listen to stories, role play situations, play games, write stories, draw pictures, and do worksheets that focus on character education. Explicitly taught character lessons help students to reflect on the importance of good character traits and reinforce the ideas that have been integrated into other lessons throughout the day.

The staff at Talcott Elementary sets high expectations for the students. All students are expected to follow the school rules, treat each other with kindness and respect, use manners, and have good character. The students are aware of these expectations. Members of the staff model good character by being polite and kind to students and to each other. Students are shown that school personnel respect them and care about them by providing a safe and secure environment where they can be themselves and express their ideas. The staff at Talcott Elementary believes that most students see the way the staff acts and tries to emulate their actions.

1st/3rd Grade Teacher

Many character lessons are integrated in school subjects daily. In reading, the behavior of the characters and their traits are discussed. Students and teachers talk about whether
characters are doing good things or bad things and why. In math, students learn about character by taking turns, sharing, and being responsible for materials. In science, the students learn to take care of the world around them. With the 1st and 3rd graders a lot of time is spent talking about manners and why good character is important. Positive reinforcement is used daily to encourage positive attitudes and good manners. The students show responsibility by doing their homework and returning things to school. They are responsible for their duties during school as well, and know the consequences for not following through. The staff has done a great job modeling good character for the students. The staff treats students and co-workers with respect. The staff is kind, polite, and responsible, which makes a safe and secure teaching environment for the students.

2nd Grade Teacher

During the past few years, character education has been taught in many ways. Character education is integrated into the majority of subjects. It is very easy to integrate character education into reading. The students have examined the character traits of different characters in the stories read, and they have also been able to identify which traits they are lacking as well. During the previous presidential election, students listed character traits they thought public leaders should possess. The students know character is important because it is stressed on a daily basis. When a student is doing something good, the teacher points out what the student is doing and specifically which character trait is being portrayed. There is also a token store at Talcott Elementary. The students are given tokens when they are “caught being good” and are given the opportunity to spend these tokens at the token store. The staff has done a wonderful job modeling and communicating good character to the students. The students are aware that good character is expected. Character education isn’t an additional add-on program in our school; it is something that has been integrated into daily lessons and routines. It has become a part of the students, school staff, and parents.

3rd Grade Teacher

Character lessons are embedded into every subject that is taught. Each grade level textbook has character lessons specifically identified. For example, in the social studies text, there are character trait insets in each chapter illustrating a real person and how he/she personifies a particular character trait. In health, there are character posters that have
corresponding lessons in the text. The *Junior Great Book* stories and seminars that are used in reading instruction help students think about how they would deal with a specific character issue. These lessons are noted in lesson plans using the color that corresponds to the S.M.A.R.T. train colors (i.e., red for responsibility). There are daily responsibilities for students that are noted in lesson plans that correspond to character traits the staff is trying to instill in students through Talcott’s character education initiative.

In addition, lessons from the *Good Ideas* book are used to teach specific behaviors throughout the school year as well as during the character pride campaigns held every two months. Teachable moments crop up weekly, if not daily, in the 3rd grade classroom. These moments lend themselves to character lessons. The school year is begun with a team building activity where students learn they have things in common with their classmates as well as differences that make them unique.

**4th/5th Grade Teacher**

Character education has been taught through planned and integrated instruction, school-wide campaigns, and teachable moments. Character traits are integrated into health lessons and extend these basic concepts through further classroom discussion. The traits are applied to topics such as growth and development/change, caring for the body systems, making choices, managing feelings, and conflict resolution. Students brainstorm and discuss situations and provide suggestions and participate in role play for positive character as well as coping strategies. Character development is taught during school-wide campaigns, using the *Good Ideas* book as a springboard for class discussions and activities.

Character mini-lessons are taught as circumstances arise. It is emphasized to students that short-term attitudes and actions can affect behavior in the long term by becoming habits. The need for balance between the individual and the group/community is emphasized. For example, many individual choices can/will affect others. The teacher communicates the importance of character modeling, direct instruction, and recognition of positive character behavior. Character posters displayed in the classroom are used to initiate discussions about character. The school staff models character, reminds students about character traits and school rules, and offers verbal recognition of positive behavior.

**4th/5th Grade Teacher**
Character education is integrated through reading and social studies programs. There is an opportunity to discuss someone’s character virtues, be they good or bad, in every story read and in every historical event. Discussing a character’s motivation and alternatives and applying lessons learned to real life create rich classroom discussions.

Student Council elections are held in which students must run for office. Third, fourth and fifth grade students are nominated for Student Council positions. The students create campaign slogans and posters. They use their understanding of character virtues to plan their campaigns and write their speeches. After a week of campaigning, each candidate delivers speeches to the student body and an election is held.

Another way that character is integrated is in the praise and discipline given to students. Students are thanked for exhibiting positive virtues. They are praised when they show responsibility, caring, and citizenship. Using character terms helps to make character a part of our culture and just something we do. A discussion about what virtues were not displayed and how a student could have made better decisions is used in the discipline process.

**Special Education Teacher**

The Special Education teacher reinforces all of the character education components. Students are given tokens for the same virtues as self-contained general education classrooms. Character education pride campaign activities, whether the student is in a co-teaching setting or in my pull-out room, are followed.

The virtue that is being recognized each month is integrated in core subject instruction with all students. The schedule for Special Education is adjusted to insure that none of the special needs students are excluded from any activity that is being done by the entire school.

Different types of integration may include writing assignments, reading stories with discussion, evaluating acceptable and non-acceptable behaviors with students, providing strategies that may help each student remember “good character decisions,” and providing rewards and consequences for students that do or do not follow classroom expectations.

**Secretary**

The office tries to treat all with respect. Students are expected to say “please” and “thank you” when they request an item or a service. The office staff believes that every child, parent,
teacher, and even the occasional salesman entering the office are important. The teachers, staff, and the student body work to embrace good character as a way of life.

**Cooks**

The cook at Talcott Elementary tells students in the lunch/breakfast line to be nice to the person beside them. The cook is friendly and asks students how they are doing. Students are asked not to play with their food in the lunch/breakfast line because any spills become extra work for the custodians. The cook models good character by saying, “You’re welcome” when they say “Thank you” in the cafeteria line. The lunchroom staff sees a positive difference with the students at Talcott Elementary.

**Custodians**

Custodians at Talcott Elementary help students with their trays at lunch and ask them to share and say, “Thank you” after they ask for something. Students are asked to respect other students sitting near them and to clean up where they sit so the next child will have a clean area to eat. Custodians work hard to insure that the teaching and leaning environment is clean and inviting throughout the entire building. They are proud of the comments they get from the staff as well as outsiders who visit the school.

**Adult Stakeholders**

The adult stakeholders at Talcott Elementary have worked very hard to uphold the character education program and to make it better. Meetings with the school’s character education team are held as well as meetings with the entire staff to discuss character education. All teachers know they are not responsible for anything alone and always have the rest of the faculty willing to help with anything that is needed. Talcott Elementary has a very caring and friendly environment. The faculty at the school has worked very hard to constantly reflect upon and make the character education program better. The staff has come up with ways to reward students for good behavior and for making good decisions.

The faculty is continually coming up with new ideas that can keep Talcott students interested and keep the program relevant and updated. The pride campaigns involve a lot of planning, preparation and cooperative work by the faculty to make them successful. Talcott Elementary is a very supportive and encouraging school.

**PRINCIPAL’S STRATEGIES**
It has been the goal of the principal at Talcott Elementary to create an atmosphere conducive to the development of a character education program. In many ways the principal has acted as the conductor of the S.M.A.R.T. Train trying to provide opportunities for the program to grow within the school and community.

The principal has fostered the program by making character education obvious at Talcott Elementary. The school’s stationary and report cards were changed to include the S.M.A.R.T. Train graphic. A sign was created with Talcott’s school mascot saying “Where Students Come First.” A S.M.A.R.T. Train banner was placed in front of the school. Teachers are encouraged to decorate all hallways and bulletin boards with evidence that students and teachers take pride in the school. It is something that people notice when they first walk through Talcott’s front door.

The principal makes every effort to lead by example. She works hard to model good character traits with students, staff, and parents. She consistently praises students and staff at meetings, at the central office, and in the community. She participated with the staff in receiving staff development on character building skills and attended a week long *Character Counts* workshop in New Jersey. In addition, the principal attended all character education workshops that Talcott’s staff had the opportunity to attend.

Building positive relationships with faculty and staff has been one of the personal goals of Talcott’s principal. A book study was conducted with the entire staff on the book *Fish*. It is an inspirational book that stresses the importance of choosing your attitude, playing, being present, and making a student’s day. The book study even included a day at the river. Along with the PTO, Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheons were provided for the staff. The principal purchases Christmas dinner at a local country club for the entire staff and gives each staff member a Christmas gift. When making school policies and procedures the principal at Talcott Elementary seeks input from teachers and students.

The principal at Talcott tries to make school a special place for students as well. A free character education kick-off for all students is held at the beginning of the school year. The *ESPN Drug Free All-Stars* come to the school and play a basketball game against staff with intermissions discussing the importance of staying drug free. Programs are scheduled by the principal that promote good character such as the monthly assemblies that honor students of the month, writers of the month, and students of character from each class as well as personnel of the
month. Talcott’s principal attends and monitors ballgames held at the school encouraging good sportsmanship and the importance of not only being good winners, but good losers as well.

Talcott’s principal works to take the character education program to the community by attending meetings for local civic groups with character development team members from the school to promote the S.M.A.R.T. program. The principal speaks with students and parents at the character kick-off regarding the school’s focus on good character. Pictures and articles are sent to the local newspaper to let the county know the good things that are happening at Talcott Elementary School. Students are entered in community parades carrying the S.M.A.R.T. banner. Posters have been purchased by the principal that have been placed throughout the community as reminders that at Talcott Elementary, “Character Counts Everywhere, All The Time.”

**In Conclusion…**

All the stakeholders at Talcott have worked hard to integrate character education into all aspects of the school culture. The staff feels that the character education efforts do not represent a separate program but are part of the life of the school. The school was doing a lot of this before the grant. However, Talcott Elementary staff felt they were not as consistent or thorough in their focus and efforts. Through the grant Talcott Elementary now treats the character development of students, as well as all adults in the building, as seriously as their academic growth and success. Based on the results, the staff now understands that its work as role models and its intentional efforts in character education are paying off for students, parents, staff members and the community.
Tyler Consolidated Middle School opened its doors in August 1993. This beautiful, sprawling campus houses all Tyler County students in grades 6-12. The campus consists of 108 acres, surrounded by a creek, providing a serene setting with no “outside” distractions. The closing of the existing three middle schools presented few “territorial” issues for communities who all felt strong emotional ties to their former schools. The new Tyler Consolidated Middle School brought together approximately 450 students (grades 6-8), 33 teachers, 18 support staff, and 2 Principals from the former schools. During the transition, the overarching goal was to ensure a smooth start for everyone. The school administration was charged with the awesome task of unifying the students, faculty, and support staff as quickly as possible. Understanding and respecting the culture of three communities was crucial. The year prior to consolidation, an organized effort involving students, staff and parents was utilized to amalgamate all stakeholders for the new campus and to foster unification. Dances, picnics, skating parties and a common newsletter representing all three middle schools served to show Tyler County that all three schools could work together even prior to the consolidation. During the construction phase, time was set aside for the administrative staff to take the general public on tours of the building to show the time and effort that had gone into planning the complex. As classrooms were
completed, one of the principals spent the prior year finding coverage in order to take small
groups of teachers to the site to show them their classroom location and size in order to instill a
realization of what was taking place. Excitement began to grow for what was soon to come.

From the very beginning of the 1993 school year, greatness was determined. An
experienced staff along with enthusiastic students met the challenge and began the instructional
routine with little interruption. Students and staff had already participated in activities which
established new friendships and common expectations. Academic accomplishments quickly
reaffirmed Tyler County’s excellence in academic achievement in the state. Within two years,
the school was recognized as a WV School of Excellence. By the second year of operation,
sixth, seventh and eighth grade students ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively in the annual state
assessment. Our professional and support staff work together as a team to benefit all students. The
expectation is that each adult must be treated with respect. Tyler Consolidated Middle also
communicates that same expectation to the students.

The school’s achievements continue to this day. The most recent WESTEST state results
ranked Tyler Middle students first in four tests, second in four tests and in the top ten of the
remaining four. Our 8th graders ranked first in the state on the ACT/Explore test in the fall of
2007. Eighth graders also surpassed the National Mean on every subtest of the ACT/Explore this
past fall.

School Climate

Within the climate of academic success that has defined the history of Tyler Consolidated
Middle School, an increased emphasis on relationships and character development was a natural
fit for making a successful school even better. With the development and implementation of a
character integration model that fosters respect and responsibility throughout the school climate,
the staff and students at Tyler Middle have created a caring environment for all stakeholders.
Developing positive relationships between students, between students and teachers and between
staff members has become a main objective of the school’s initiative. This becomes obvious to
the visitor to Tyler Middle. Teachers are in the hallways between classes to greet students.
Teachers enjoy each other’s company and interact in ways that translate into a better
environment in which students can learn. Some of the activities put in place at Tyler
Consolidated Middle to build staff relationships have included:
• Free Raffle – teachers receive raffle tickets, numbers are drawn, and winning teachers choose a “prize” from an array of donated items.

• Covered Dish Meals – for an opportunity to interact in a relaxed atmosphere, each staff member contributes an item to share.

• Dress-up Days – staff members enjoy opportunities to dress up for special events, i.e., teachers dressing in their favorite team colors when WVU plays Marshall University.

• Teacher Appreciation Day – staff members are provided with a delicious lunch by the school’s principal. Other school organizations provide meals during the entire week.

• “Goodies” Weeks – during the three weeks prior to Christmas, staff members take turns providing goodies that are shared with the staff each day.

• Administration Meals – the school principal routinely surprises staff with soups, pizza, etc, to bring them together socially.

• Support Staff as Team Members – teachers and administration make it a point to include cooks and custodians in staff activities. All are considered essential in our educational efforts.

• Catered Luncheon for Secretary – the school secretary is relieved of duties in order to have free time with other secretaries in a room away from the public and students. Student administration “mans” the phones and takes care of any requests the secretary would normally handle.

• Staff members often participate in donating money for “needy” (hospital bills, deaths, illnesses, etc.) families, students and other staff members.

Support staff members have been involved in the efforts of the school to infuse character development across the school climate. Cooks, custodians, and secretaries have embraced the school’s initiative and have been involved in specific project activities as well as reinforcing the character virtues emphasized throughout the school.
Creating a climate that fosters each student’s sense of belonging and ability to succeed has been a major thrust of Tyler Consolidated Middle’s character education project. Additional activities, events and programs have been included in ways that do not interfere with the school’s academic priority. Some ways in which Tyler Middle creates an inclusive school climate have included:

- Recognition for honor roll and improvement honor roll status.
- Displays of student work throughout the building and classrooms.
- A school-wide resource eighth period each day where students can receive extra help from teachers, use the library and computers, and study with other students working on the same projects.
- Encouraging students to participate in academic competitions (i.e., social studies fair, math field day and various art competitions) and recognizing their accomplishments through daily announcements.
- The use of study buddies in some classroom settings making learning more enjoyable and effective as well as increasing the amount of student input in class discussions.
- An after-school tutoring program that provides extra help for students needing it.
- Organized fun activities to reward attendance and good behavior.
- Character education and academic recognition assemblies that focus on the virtue emphasized during that particular grading period.
- School talent show sponsored by the Student Council.
- Valentine’s Day sock dance for all students, not just for those that could attend if invited or if the event were held in the evening.
- Student activities focusing on community service through fundraising and a collection of needed resources. A different community need is addressed each grading period.
The climate of a school consists of the social climate, academic climate and the physical climate. Upon entering Tyler Consolidated Middle School, it becomes very evident that the entire complex is very student-oriented. The visitor is surrounded by walls covered with colorful student art work and recognition displays. The building is clean, well-kept and free of any debris in the hallways or classrooms. Tyler Middle’s character education initiative is very evident throughout the building by the character trait banners hanging along the corridors as well as the posters and student art projects completed to advocate for good character. It is important to note that Tyler Middle experiences no vandalism of student work or other displays throughout the complex. It is evident that students have come to appreciate the feelings, possessions and creative work of their fellow classmates through the school’s character integration efforts. Furthermore a simple visit to the restrooms will illustrate to any visitor that our bathrooms are graffiti-free and clean with no trailing odor of smoke. This attitude towards the restrooms is common throughout the building. We take care of our school environment.

Teaching Character: The “Shining Knights” Story

In 2005, Tyler Consolidated Middle School became an experimental school with the West Virginia Department of Education’s Character Education Grant. The first year, a planning year, involved researching various character education programs and models available as well as putting together a Character Development Team (CDT) to design the components of an integrated approach to character education that fits Tyler Middle’s setting. The members of the CDT chose the six character virtues from the Character Counts! model that include the traits of respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship and trustworthiness. The six chosen virtues provide a common language, focus and structure to the entire initiative. The design was further developed by color coding the six virtues (respect/yellow, responsibility/green, fairness/orange, caring/red, citizenship/purple, and trustworthiness/blue) to spark creativity in the school’s program. Tyler Middle set an objective to emphasize a different virtue/color during each six week grading period. The CDT proposed to emphasize a different character virtue each grading period by including activities focused on the virtue, character displays, communication with parents and the community, student recognition and incentives, curriculum integration and opportunities for community service projects. The unique strategies developed by the staff and
students of Tyler Consolidated Middle for the school’s character development program include the following:

- **School Character Education Logo** – Tyler Consolidated Middle used the school mascot, the Silver Knight, as the inspiration for the school’s character education program logo. The initiative and the students at Tyler Middle became the Shining Knights.

- **Staff Development & How To Integrate Character Education** – Teachers at Tyler Consolidated Middle received the opportunity for staff development that included presentations from experts in the field of character education. Teachers were given the opportunity to ask for resources to help incorporate character education into their classrooms. Teachers were asked to incorporate character education into the content of their curriculum at least once a week (i.e., teachable moments, journal writings around the character quote of the week, current events, etc.). Each teacher was provided a content specific binder that had a section for each of the six virtues and that included quotes, lesson plans, activities, reading lists that focused on specific virtues, and biographies of famous people and the virtues they used to help them succeed. A character education library was also created and made available for teachers to use in the classroom. Teachers at Tyler Middle were assisted by the document developed by the West Virginia Department of Education entitled *Correlation of 21st Century Content Standards and Objectives with Character Education Virtues* which provides a crosswalk between the content area standards and objectives and character virtues. The document, which is available on the WVDE/Healthy Schools website, indicates numerous instances in the curriculum where character education virtues can be integrated.

- **Kick-Off Event** – In an effort to introduce Tyler Middle’s new emphasis on character development to students and the community, a kick-off event was held at the beginning of the school year. Tyler Middle’s kick-off included a speaker to motivate the students, teacher skits, support staff conducting “character cheers”, and musical entertainment provided by the school’s band and choir. Each student was provided with a “Shining Knights” t-shirt and each grade was given a trait to make a wall mural.
• Getting the Message Out – Character virtue quotes were posted in each classroom weekly on colored paper to match the six week’s virtue. Virtue quotes were also made on the daily announcement broadcast through the school’s TV/Radio Broadcasting class. Character virtue banners were purchased to hang in both the upstairs/downstairs hallways. Tyler Middle purchased Character Counts! banners to hang in the trophy case hallway and the gymnasium. Tie dye “Shining Knights” t-shirts were purchased for all students, professional and support staff. On a specified day of each grading period, students were asked to wear the color of the virtue for the six weeks. Bulletin boards were changed each six weeks to match the specified virtue/color.

• Student Recognition – Recognizing students for practicing good character has become a highlight of Tyler Consolidated Middle’s list of strategies. Each six weeks, teachers were asked to nominate students that have exhibited the specific highlighted virtue as “Shining Knights”. The school sent parents “Shining Knights” letters printed on colored paper. Honored students have their name displayed on a colored star in the trophy case hallway so that visitors/staff/students can see the virtue that they displayed. Each grading period, an assembly was held to recognize the “Shining Knights” who are then eligible to have his/her name drawn to win prizes (i.e., Wal-Mart gift cards, “Shining Knights” t-shirts). Additionally, all “Shining Knights” for the semester have their names submitted for “big prizes” (i.e., portable DVD players, digital cameras, MP3 players, $50 Wal-Mart gift cards) and, at the end of the year, all honored knights for the year have their names put in a drawing for an iPod. Tyler Middle conducted a “Queen and King of Character” contest to recognize outstanding students.

• Student Character Education Team – In the second year of implementation, the CTD selected three students from each grade level to serve in an advisory capacity to the adult driven initiative. These students provided much needed input as to the programs, incentives and ideas for school improvement. The second year kick-off was totally designed and implemented by the student team.

Community Connection
The involvement of parents and community members helps to ensure that a school’s efforts to foster character development in its students will be successful. With this idea in mind, Tyler Consolidated Middle designed a variety of strategies to inform and involve all stakeholders in the school’s character education program. At the conclusion of the planning year of the project, a community dinner/workshop was held. After a presentation by Dr. Phil Vincent on the importance of educating children to be both smart and ethical, round table discussions were conducted in which participants responded to questions regarding such topics as community involvement, the use of community resources and opportunities for students to contribute to their community in caring ways. Group responses provided valuable information for the CDT as it moved forward in developing its action plan. Getting the word out to the community and parents took many forms. The usual strategies to communicate with parents, such as the school newsletter, school website, and parent/teacher conferences have provided information about the direction of character education at Tyler Middle. The school also developed a newsletter/brochure devoted to character education which was printed and distributed every six weeks as a new virtue was introduced. Known as the *Noble Knights’ News*, each volume provided information on the particular virtue along with appropriate quotes. Service learning projects involving Tyler Middle’s students were highlighted in the *Noble Knights’ News* as well as upcoming events at the school. Tyler Consolidated has continued to find ways to make parents and the community an integral part of the school’s mission. From inviting community members and parents to attend and/or speak at school events and assemblies to seeking those parents willing to contribute time and talent to the school through a volunteer survey, Tyler Middle continues to believe that community outreach only improves its success.

A vital component of Tyler Consolidated Middle’s character education initiative was determined to be the provision of opportunities for its students to practice moral action through caring projects that benefit others. The school asked existing school clubs/organizations, i.e., band, choir, National Junior Honor Society, Student Character Development Team, Student Council, to develop and implement service learning projects in the school and community. The Student Council, for example, purchased mulch for school landscaping and wrote personal “Thank You” letters to all staff members for Teacher Appreciation Week. The Student Character Development Team members visited elementary schools in the county to teach about
character and work on a transition program for the incoming 6th graders. A calendar of service projects was put in place each year to get the entire student body involved. The projects were chosen after students and staff members suggested community organizations and individuals in need of help. For example, the 2007-2008 Service Project Calendar included the following projects:

- Coats for Kids
- Canned Food Drive for local food pantries
- Pet Food Drive
- Collection for a family who lost everything in a tragic fire
- Relay for Life activities
- Collection for community resource, Goodwill, and the school clothes closet
- Volunteer teams to keep the school campus clean
- School-wide Beautification/Clean-Up Day to weed, plant and clean up around the school

Relay for Life has been and continues to be Tyler Middle’s yearlong service project. At the end of the school year, a day is devoted to a school carnival that raises funds for the local Relay for Life program. All staff members and students as well as many parent and community volunteers come together for a fun day of activities and interaction for the purpose of providing support to this worthwhile community endeavor.

**Positive Learning Atmosphere**

The staff of Tyler Consolidated Middle has been devoted to developing both the goodness of their students as well as increasing their students’ desire to do well in school. The character education integration model implemented at Tyler Middle strives always to improve their students’ academic work ethic and responsibility for learning. An emphasis on academics in ways that motivate students toward excellence has produced results. Tyler Middle continues to embrace strategies to assist students to become better learners. For example, students at all
grade levels are now developing 21st Century projects. Seventh graders are involved in Social Studies mock elections. Tyler Middle embraces the research that has proven that strong arts programs contribute to strong schools. Students develop higher levels of thinking, build self esteem, expand creativity and stimulate learning through the arts. The music and band teachers promote strong discipline and high expectations from students in class and performance groups. Recently, eleven middle school choir students were selected as members of the West Virginia All State Chorus and two sixth graders will participate in the All State Children’s Choir. In addition to participating in regional competitions as well as solo and ensemble competitions, the band director has developed a Band Council to give students an opportunity to have a say in the workings of the band. Upon entering the building at Tyler, one would see thought provoking writings and student works of art. The art teacher believes in the importance of displaying student work. Students take pride in their finished products because they know their artworks will be viewed by both classmates and the public. As a testament to Tyler Middle’s emphasis on practicing good character, displayed student work is never vandalized or destroyed. The art teacher has received grant monies to develop an outdoor classroom/patio for the use of art classes and all of Tyler Middle’s students.

The positive learning atmosphere at Tyler Consolidated Middle has become evident by the variety of ways in which teachers have found those natural connections between the content they teach and the virtues they want their students to embrace. For example, creative classroom strategies developed by teachers at Tyler Middle to teach about respect have included:

- Reading – Students write anticipatory endings to stories, i.e., *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, which focus on the virtue of respect for the bears’ privacy and property.

- Social Studies – Students are involved in discussions and study of respected, famous people.

- Math – After administering a 3-question survey about self-respect, math students used the results to find the average number for each question and to figure the percentage of certain responses.

- Health/PE – Given daily life situations, students brainstorm ways to deal with a problem in a respectful manner.
• Choir/Music – After discussions about respect for flag and flag traditions, a school-wide assembly is held to recognize the history and respect for the flag and the National Anthem.

• Computer Science – Students are involved in discussions dealing with the respect of privacy issues focusing on files and sensitive issues.

• Language Arts – After eighth graders read The Necklace, students had to document an aspect of the story as it applied to respect. Students completed journal entries based on daily prompts, i.e., “What can you do this week to show respect for others?”

• Art – After studying the work of Vincent Van Gogh, art classes wrote thank you notes to the artist expressing respect for his techniques.

• Science – Students discussed four scientists and their role in developing cell theory, and why they should be respected for their contributions.

Tyler Consolidated Middle continues to experience great success in state testing programs. Among all state middle school students for recent Westest (West Virginia’s school assessment) results, Tyler Middle students scored first in four tests, second in four tests and in the top ten on the remaining tests. Eighth graders scored above the national average on the ACT/Explore Test in the fall of 2008 and were ranked first in the state in the fall of 2007. Despite special needs student numbers that far exceed the state-mandated cell size, TCMS accomplished AYP and was recognized as an Exemplary School. Tyler Consolidated Middle continues to be a school in which a positive school climate is expected. As a result of implementing a systemic approach to character education, staff members at Tyler Middle have cited some very positive results. Character education previously had been a series of individual efforts not supported or carried out throughout the school environment. Character education has become a “shared focus” which has created a great impact on students and staff. The character education initiative has included different programs, such as service learning, Teacher Appreciation Week, Student of the Month, etc., “under one roof.” The inclusion of character development coupled with a common language has broken down communication barriers between staff and students. The number of disciplinary referrals and the number of suspensions documented at the school have decreased. The number of out-of-school
suspensions during the current 2008-2009 school year are down to six incidents. Students at Tyler Middle are motivated to make their own suggestions on the needs in the community. Students have become empowered to get involved, to think outside themselves. Students now feel that they can talk about issues of character, can feel free to report bad behavior and expect the adults to intervene because all staff members are giving a consistent message that all students are expected to act in a respectful and responsible manner.
School History

Tyler Consolidated Middle School/High School opened its doors in August, 1993. This beautiful, sprawling campus houses all Tyler County students in grades 6-12. Its 108 acres, surrounded by a creek, provide a serene setting with no “outside” distractions. The closing of the existing three middle and two rival high schools presented “territorial” issues for students, staff, and the communities who all felt strong emotional ties to their former high schools. The new High School (TCHS) brought together approximately 500 students (grades 9-12), 45 teachers, 22 support staff, and the Principals from the former schools. The overarching goal was to ensure a smooth transition for everyone. The school administration was charged with the awesome task of unifying the students, faculty, and support staff as quickly as possible. Understanding and respecting the culture of both communities was crucial.

Academic accomplishments quickly formed the cornerstone and reputation of the school. From its initial year of operation, Tyler Consolidated High School established a statewide reputation for academic excellence. The State Department of Education and even the Governor used Tyler Consolidated High School as a “model” to demonstrate that consolidation can work.
Achievement test scores repeatedly resulted in TCHS students scoring among the top five of fifty-five counties, often first in the state.

**School Climate – Setting Standards**

Prior to the Character Education initiative, TCHS had been described by numerous visitors, including the State Accreditation Office, as having a positive school climate. The primary emphasis was on academic excellence, as evidenced by achievement test scores. Teachers were highly competent in their subject matter. Several, but not all teachers understood the importance of a caring, nurturing environment and the necessity to serve as role models. The Character Education grant provided a great opportunity to improve on the school’s efforts to develop a positive school climate for all stakeholders. The Principal’s motto of “Students come first!” was to be practiced by all teachers and support staff. Taking into account both the sparse geography of this rural county and the area’s depressed economic conditions (51% free/reduced lunch), TCHS has become the social center for students. As a result, the staff recognizes that TCHS, to fulfill its goal of educating the complete child, had to branch out and address more than academic performance. Too many students lack basic needs of food, clothing, and a safe place to be where adults care about them. To that end, TCHS has established three main objectives:

1. *Clearly communicate behavioral expectations and administer disciplinary action in a fair and consistent manner;*
2. *Increase opportunities for social interaction in an effort for every student to feel a sense of belonging; and*
3. *Develop positive relationships between students and between students/teachers.*

The following activities are geared toward decreasing the number and severity of disciplinary infractions:

- Prior to the start of each school year, parents receive a letter from the Principal which, in part, outlines school rules.
- Incoming 9th graders and their parents attend a mandatory “Freshman Academy”. One of the outcomes is to ensure that the audience understands the school’s behavioral expectations.
• The first instructional day of each school year begins with an assembly. School rules are reviewed. Students are reminded that respect and personal responsibility are key components to having a successful year.

Tyler Consolidated High School emphasizes that every student has a responsibility not only for their own behavior, but also for their peers. Staff members expect students to report if they witness inappropriate behavior or know of a potential problem. Students are assured that their reporting will be kept confidential.

• Time is allotted to practice specific behavioral expectations with the 9th grade class: how to enter the lunchroom and other lunch rules, how to proceed in the hallways so that traffic flow is safe and orderly, etc.

• Teachers are required to post their classroom rules and send home a letter explaining their expectations and rules.

• Students are required to carry their AGENDA book at all times, which includes the WV Student Code of Conduct.

• Teachers are to treat students with respect, even when one chooses to misbehave. Using ridicule or humiliation will not be tolerated. Teachers and administrators must model expected behavior.

• Teachers understand that hallway supervision in the morning, during the break, after lunch, and between classes is their responsibility. Everyone in responsible for every student.

• When students are sent to the Office for disciplinary issues, they are often placed in isolation for a brief period of time to “cool down” before the Principal and/or Assistant Principal addresses the issue. This practice often prevents further escalation. The student(s) are given an opportunity to be heard and the matter is fully investigated.

For 2007-08, the Board of Education approved the proposal of TCHS to include a two-day “reentry” program as an automatic condition for returning from an out-of-school suspension. The purpose of this program is to provide an isolated environment for the student, while providing class assignments and completion of a behavioral contract. The Guidance Counselor is responsible for working with the student in developing the contract and for providing follow-
up sessions to check on progress. Additionally, the student is assigned to watch a character video and complete worksheets pertaining to the specific infraction. The student must also write an essay explaining how his/her inappropriate action will be avoided in the future. For example, a girl found guilty of bullying another student had to watch a video dealing with issues of bullying, write an essay about the topic, and have a mediation session with the victim and Counselor, prior to being re-admitted to classes.

- The teacher who is assigned to lunch detention has a discussion with students regarding why they are there and what they need to do differently. For some minor infractions, students have to read a situational story and complete a worksheet that pertains to their inappropriate behavior.

- In an effort to address the number of students whose “learning” disability impedes their ability to always conform to school rules, an “outlet” is provided for them to leave class and report directly to the Office. These students know that they have a place to go and work through their aggression before they get in trouble. They often request to talk to the Principal, School Resource Officer (SRO), or their Counselor. Teachers are aware of which students have permission to get up and leave, and they are trusted to not abuse this privilege. This practice has saved many classroom confrontations.

- The School Resource Officer is a tremendous asset to the school. He has attended the Summer Character Education Academy and fully supports our efforts. He has worked diligently to be viewed by students as not only as a police officer, but also a friend. There is no doubt that his presence has contributed to many students reporting potential fights, students carrying prescription drugs, cigarettes, and other illegal substances. He has proven that he can be trusted not to divulge the names of those who report, so students feel comfortable going to him.

- Having students feel comfortable reporting on their peers is certainly a challenge. It started slowly, but once they saw that staff members were taking reports seriously and respecting their confidentiality, things began to happen by mid-year of 2006-07. Many students would let staff know about planned fights, exchange of pills, vandalism, and smoking. When a teacher, Counselor, administrator, or SRO is told of a possible fight, an E-mail alert is immediately sent out to everyone. Then an investigation is conducted.
Often, a staff member merely has to isolate the students during lunch and/or the Counselor has a mediation session.

At the end of 2006-07, Tyler Consolidated High School experienced an increase in the number of suspensions. That jump is attributed, in large part, to an increase in reporting. The following year, suspensions leveled off:

- Each year, the seniors complete a confidential Senior Exit Survey. Results from the Class of 2008 showed that 100% of the students believed that “rules were enforced consistently and fairly. 100% also believed that “TCHS provided a safe learning environment.”

- TCHS is the social center for most students. 100% of the student body is bussed. In general, students “like school” because they can spend time with their friends. TCHS believes that providing opportunities for socialization and giving every student a sense of “belonging” are important to the success of a student’s total educational program. To that end, special activities, programs, and events have been initiated.

- EVERY student is required to belong to a club that meets once a month during the instructional day. They have a wide selection from which to choose. On the school website, there is a Club page which shows a group picture of the members of each club.

- The same picture is included in the yearbook. Including clubs demonstrates the importance of this co-curricular program and guarantees that every member of the student body has their picture on the website and in the yearbook (at least twice.)

- Students have always been allowed to go outside for the last fifteen minutes of the lunch period, weather permitting. Otherwise, they would have had to sit in the lunchroom the entire 43 minutes. There are two lunchrooms, one of which is designated for juniors and seniors and the other for freshmen and sophomores. This arrangement prevents interaction among the entire student body, unless the weather cooperates. The staff at TCHS decided to have an “open gym” on days of inclement weather. Students are permitted to play basketball, hacky-sak, or simply co-mingle in the bleachers. Students have been told and understand that this lunch activity is a privilege that can be taken away if they do not act responsibly.
• Due to the semester exam schedule and before Christmas break, the High School has three afternoons of unscheduled classes. Students who have to ride the bus home have an opportunity to socialize. There is an “open” gym for basketball, badminton, and hacky-sak. Students also have the option to watch a movie. Prior to leaving, everyone congregates in the lunchroom for ice cream.

• A door decorating contest at Christmas is a tradition at TCHS. In the past, very few students participated because it had to be done after school. A suggestion from the Student Leadership Team (SLT) led to using Advisor/Advisee periods for the purpose of planning and then actually decorating each teacher’s door. Each A/A group decides on a theme and students volunteer to bring in the needed materials. All decorations have to be homemade and every student in the group has to assist with the decorating. Christmas music is played throughout the school. This activity teaches students to work together, requires active engagement on everyone’s part, and provides a fun way to get to know their peers. The Advisor’s role is merely to facilitate. The Student Leadership Team also suggested that the cooks be asked to serve as judges.

• Another event was started due to the rural nature of TCHS and the troublesome economic picture. For the 2007 and 2008 Proms, the school incorporated a free sit-down dinner prior to the dance. The vast majority of students cannot afford to pay for a dinner after paying for everything else associated with Prom. Another obstacle is the distance one has to travel to get to a nice restaurant. Funds from the Principal’s account are used to pay for a catered affair at the school. The Prom committee gets to select the menu. Freshman volunteers help set up, clean up, and serve the meal (9th graders are not permitted to attend Prom.)

A great school climate is built upon trusting relationships. This is definitely a challenge in working with young adolescents. Too many come from one parent or no parent homes. Many feel unloved, with basic needs unmet. They learn to survive by not trusting adults and thriving on peer acceptance. In an effort to break through these barriers, the Principal lives by the motto, “Students come first.” Teachers are expected to treat all students with respect and dignity. In an effort to promote TCHS as a caring, nurturing environment, the school has implemented several new activities to convey the message that “WE CARE!”
• A Mentoring program for 9th graders was initiated in January, 2007. A teacher coordinator was hired through Character Education funds. The Counselors, Principal, and the Coordinator select 9th graders who are struggling academically and/or socially. 10th through 12th graders are carefully selected to serve as the mentors for 2-3 students. The mentors’ role is to provide a “sounding board” and to make the younger students feel that an upperclassman actually knows they exist! A kind word, a smile, or a simple “How’s it going” has turned out to be very meaningful.

• A student came to the Principal with an idea to raise money for a teacher who had just been diagnosed with cancer. On a designated day, students could pay $1.00 to wear pajama pants, slippers, and/or a hat. All money collected would be given to that teacher to help pay his expenses. The student also came up with the idea to call it “Dress Down To Raise Spirits” day. It was such a success that it developed into a monthly event. Teachers and support staff are also encouraged to participate by contributing $3.00 to wear jeans, a hat, or slippers. The Principal participated by wearing a different pair of animal slippers each month. The Student Leadership Team set guidelines that the monthly collection would be designated for a student or teacher facing a tragedy or serious illness.

• The National Honor Society sponsors canned food drives throughout the year to support local food pantries. For the December 2007 “Dress Down To Raise Spirits” day, the Student Leadership Team decided to collect either $1.00 or two cans of food. The food was given to three families who greatly appreciated this act of kindness.

• The Physical Education teacher collects clothes to distribute to needy students. Students know they can go to her when they are in need. She treats them with respect and dignity. Teachers bring in nice clothes that their own children have outgrown. The Physical Education teacher spends her own money to keep a supply of underwear and socks on hand. A group of teachers pay particular attention to students’ basic needs. If a student needs a winter coat, gloves, jeans, dress for a dance, or money to go on a field trip, individual teachers or the school provide it for them. Taking care of those in need carries over to the students.
• Two teachers volunteered to coordinate an “Adopt-a-Student” program for Christmas. The Principal and Counselors compile a list of students who they know will have a dismal holiday. In the Principal’s newsletter for November, she informed parents of the school’s efforts and invited parents to contact her if they wished to have their child(ren) included. TCHS also coordinates with Tyler Middle School to ensure that all children in a family have presents. The SALT Club has chosen to be actively involved in this project. In 2007, they raised $500.00 to donate for presents. Additionally, they sponsor one or two family dinners by purchasing a complete meal for Thanksgiving and/or Christmas.

• Prom is an exciting time but is also a particularly stressful time for girls who cannot afford a dress. For the 2007 and 2008 Proms, the Principal coordinated a dress “drive.” Girls come to the Office to try on dresses. Watching faces light up when the students find just the right dress was so rewarding.

• Graduation is another event that proves to be stressful for some seniors. At the very least, every senior must have a cap, gown, medallion, and appropriate dress clothes and dress shoes. Teachers, the Principal, and support staff have “adopted” a senior, making sure that each has everything they need. The company that sells the graduation paraphernalia sponsors as many as six seniors. The Principal gave a senior a suit and shoes that had only been worn once by her foster son.

• Pep assemblies took on a “new look” with the Character Education initiative. Previously, pep rallies before a big football or basketball game did very little to inspire school spirit. Staff members decided to have a pep assembly only when a team qualified for a State tournament. These would be scheduled just prior to a team leaving on the bus. These opportunities were used to recognize, in front of the entire student body, all other students who had recently received an extraordinary honor for athletic and/or academic success. With each assembly, teachers observed that more and more students would participate in cheers and were expected to stand for the playing of the school “fight” song. This strategy, adopted to enhance school climate, promoted school spirit and sportsmanship in athletics.
• The Coaches’ Council revised the *Code of Conduct for Athletes.* The revision is more specific regarding possession of drugs, consequences, and includes good sportsmanship as mandatory to participate in any athletic program at TCHS. The revision also includes band members, as band falls under the SSAC (Secondary Schools Athletic Commission).

• Every athlete and band member must sign and abide by the *Code of Conduct* in order to be eligible to participate. Parent meetings are held prior to the beginning of each sport’s season at which they receive a copy of the coach’s expectations and the *Code of Conduct.*

• The Coaches’ Council also approved a *Coaches’ Code of Conduct.* Modeling good sportsmanship and treating every athlete with respect and dignity are two key components. Every coach must sign and abide by the expectations set forth in the *Code of Conduct.* Their annual evaluation is based on the provisions of this contract.

• A full page ad can be found in the football and basketball programs delineating the school’s sportsmanship policy for spectators. Adults are asked to serve as good role models. Unsportsmanlike conduct may result in removal from the game and possibly a ban for the entire season. An announcement is made before football and basketball games reminding spectators of the sportsmanship policy.

• The FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) Club operates a school “store,” selling Tyler Consolidated Knights’ paraphernalia. Products are purchased through Character Education funds and the Principal’s budget to use as rewards for students who demonstrate good character. This practice helps the FBLA raise money for their State/National competition and promotes school pride.

• During 2005-06, a contest was held to design a special “Knights” tee shirt that could only be purchased by high school students. The intent was to sell the shirts, at cost, for students to wear at ballgames as a symbol of unity. The Student Leadership Team selected the winning design. In 2006-07, these “spirit” shirts were used as a part of the rewards program and for Christmas presents.

It was always a practice at TCHS to offer a “pep bus” for football playoffs or whenever the basketball team made it to the State tournament. In 2006 and 2007, the Volleyball team qualified for a trip to Charleston. TCHS made sure that any student who wanted to attend would have the money to go. For some students, this was their first visit to a large city. Three busloads
of high school students were allowed to go to the Charleston Mall, knowing that some of them had never been to a mall. They were given instructions on how to behave and were trusted to return to a designated spot. Not one student was late and there were no problems. The Volleyball team won the State tournament and became the first team sport to win a State championship in the 15 year history of the school. TCHS also won the Sportsmanship award for the tournament. The football team also made it to the second round of the State playoffs in 2007. TCHS paid for some students to go. The Principal and Physical Education teacher brought several extra pairs of gloves, hats, socks, scarves, and hoodies, knowing that several students would be underdressed for the cold weather.

- Before attending these playoffs and anytime TCHS would be playing the school’s neighboring county rival, the Principal would speak to the student body reminding everyone of behavioral expectations and the importance of good sportsmanship.
- The Band Director started a pep band to play at a number of home girls’ and boys’ basketball games. The band’s performance definitely contributes to a positive climate.

In an effort to continue developing TCHS as a warm, inviting place to be, teachers are encouraged to display student work in the classroom and in the hallways. The art teacher maintains a variety of displays from the painting, drawing, photography, and ceramics classes. Bulletin boards are decorated, “character” banners are hung, and posters from a character education poster and poetry contest have been displayed. The photography club maintains a bulletin board of pictures from recent school events. One bulletin board displays school spirit items available in the FBLA store, and the most recent athletic/academic trophies are displayed in the Office area.

Our support staff plays an integral role enhancing a positive school climate. The cooks participate in both the Middle School and High School Character Education activities. When TCHS introduces each of the character traits, the cooks prepare a dessert/treat that is color-coordinated with the trait. They decorate the serving lines for every holiday and dress in costume for Halloween. The cooks talk to students as they come through the serving line and know many by name. Students are expected to say “please” and “thank you.” They are very observant of students who seem to be exceptionally hungry. The cooks report concerns to the
Principal. Several students’ families have received assistance thanks to caring cooks! The Cafeteria Manager encourages student feedback and periodically uses a suggestion box.

Additional ways in which the support staff plays an important role in the character education initiative at TCHS include:

- Both secretaries serve as models of character. They work directly with students and treat them with respect and patience. They are friendly, courteous, and helpful. Many students feel comfortable talking to the secretaries about their problems.
- Custodians talk to students, watch out for them, and understand that they also have a duty to report problems. Students also show respect toward the custodians. Students are reminded at the beginning of each school year of the important job of a custodian. Students are expected to do their part in keeping the school clean and free from vandalism.
- The Principal conducted a workshop for all bus operators in August, 2006. The purpose was to explain the TCHS Character Education initiative and solicit input on how the drivers could join in the school’s efforts. The importance of serving as role models and treating students with respect was discussed. The bus operators agreed to praise positive behavior and notify staff members of students exhibiting good character.
- The Principal initiated a special award for a male and female at each grade level who exhibited exemplary character throughout the school year. At the end of 2006-07 and in 2007-08, she presented the “Principal’s Exemplary Character” award at the Awards Assembly.

Community Engagement

Since the consolidation, getting the community involved – to feel a sense of ownership – has been a challenge. Three school programs were successful, from the beginning, in garnering community support and participation - FFA, band and choir. The Character Education grant has provided an ideal opportunity to reach out to a wide spectrum of the community. The staff at Tyler Consolidated High School recognized that engaging the community in this initiative would be imperative to its success. Good character extends beyond the “schoolhouse doors.” The school’s strategy has been to keep the public informed and to solicit their participation.
The character education initiative began with a “Community Involvement” dinner on May 2, 2006. A written invitation was sent to every church, business, and non-profit organization in Tyler County. The response was overwhelming. The evening began with a keynote address by Dr. Phil Vincent and a power point presentation about the Character Education grant, followed by a “working” dinner. Guests were seated at assigned tables in order to have a cross-section of representation. Board of Education members also attended and Character Development Team (CDT) members served as facilitators. Student volunteers served as guides, handled registration, and served the meal. Eight questions were posed to each group, with all responses recorded. Judging from the dialogue and quality of responses, this community “kickoff” was a success.

The Character Development Team (CDT) reviewed the suggestions from the community dinner and developed a timeline for implementation of ideas that would enhance character building in students. A follow-up letter was sent in June to the participants to share results from the small group discussions. Suggestions were placed in one of two categories - (1) What Schools Can Do and (2) How the Community Can Help To Integrate Various Groups With Our School’s Initiative -- Churches, Businesses, Service and Non-Profit Organizations. Community groups were informed that the next step would be for the CDT to meet during the summer to develop a long-term Community Engagement Plan. During 2006-2007, TCHS implemented the following activities to enhance community involvement and support:

- All participants were invited to the character education “kickoff” on Oct. 16. Several attended and were recognized for their support.
- Two Middle School/High School CDT members prepare a newsletter every six weeks that provides an update and details of character activities/events. The newsletter is mailed to churches, businesses, service and non-profit organizations.
- Included in each newsletter is a “quote of the month” that incorporates the character trait being introduced at TCHS for the next grading period. Ministers had suggested incorporating the quote in a sermon and/or printing it in a Sunday bulletin.
- Non-profit organizations have been encouraged to contact TCHS with any need for student volunteers. Opportunities are posted on the Community Service bulletin board.
and are also announced on the morning student broadcast. Students who participate in approved activities receive Community Service credit.

- The Band Director wanted to do something special to contribute to the community outreach efforts. He decided to take the jazz band outside the “school walls” by conducting a concert/dinner in Sistersville. It was such a success that it is now one of the band’s annual events.

Attendance at football games had been on a decline for the past several years. The “football moms” organized two major efforts to increase adult attendance at ballgames including the following:

- They initiated a form of pre-game tailgating at all home football games for the 2006 season. A different local business sponsored each event. Any Tyler Consolidated fan was welcome to join in the fun and enjoy free food. The band and cheerleaders performed. The school radio station, in conjunction with a local radio station, broadcast from the parking lot and encouraged people to come to the game.

- In an effort to promote team unity, a team meal was provided before every home football game. The “football moms” worked with the local Ministerial Association to sponsor each meal.

At the high school level, parent involvement is often less than desired. This component of the Character Education initiative presented a challenge. Tyler Consolidated High’s strategy has been to continually convey the message to parents that TCHS needs them to be partners in character-building efforts. Specific activities geared toward increased parent participation have included:

- A Principal’s newsletter is sent home with report cards. It includes suggestions on ways to build character at home and encourages parents to reinforce the school’s targeted character trait. Dates of upcoming events are listed so that parents are kept informed.

- Two Parent-Teacher Conference nights are held each year. In an effort to increase attendance, staff at TCHS decided to offer a free dinner to all parents (families) who attended the Spring 2007 conferences. Teachers were required to contact a minimum of three parents to personally invite them. Attendance improved significantly and parents expressed gratitude for the meal.
• TCHS initiated a “Freshman Academy” for all 8th graders and their parents. The purpose is twofold: (1) to provide a forum for parents to ask questions and for the Principal and Counselors to discuss pertinent information about high school life, and (2) to develop a good rapport with parents, encouraging them to be actively involved in their child’s high school education. For the initial year of the Academy, TCHS had approximately 80% attendance. The following year, attendance grew to 98%.

• In March, 2007, the “Caring” trait was initially introduced. It centered around the theme of reaching out to neighbors in need. Each Advisor/Advisee group brainstormed ideas and then selected a specific project. Fifteen different projects were completed by the entire student body. Some of the projects included creating relief kits for accident victims, putting together gift bags for sick children in emergency rooms, and Easter baskets for needy children. Several Advisor groups decided to combine forces and bake cookies for residents at local senior centers and nursing homes. Many students created cards and wrote letters which were sent to local hospitals, nursing homes, veterans, and local heroes serving in the military. Other service learning projects included tutoring middle school students, creating fruit baskets and care packages, and taking care of the local Headstart by donating mittens, hats, and quilted blankets.

• The local School Improvement Council, in conjunction with a community organization called the Health Raisers and the county Family Resource Network, expressed concern about students not having a safe place to go after the prom. The members of these groups organized, sponsored and chaperoned the first After-Prom “Lock-In” at TCHS.

• The Health Raisers is an organization that is affiliated with Sistersville General Hospital. In an effort to promote healthy lifestyles for teens, two members of the Health Raisers started a new co-curricular club aimed at getting students actively engaged in fun, physical exercise.

• At the request of Sistersville General Hospital, the staff participated in Celebrate Jeans Day, an Easter Seals fundraiser.

• Every year, a local bank sponsors a recognition program for all students who maintain a 3.5 GPA and have no grade below a “C.”
• Besides newsletters, the Web Design class developed a Character Education page. Anyone can access the webpage to get updates on activities.

**Teaching Character**

When the Character Development Team (CDT) began meeting in the fall 2005, they unanimously agreed that another “add-on” program would be quickly rejected by teachers and students. Character development would have to be interwoven with the lesson being taught. TCHS adopted the Six Pillars of Character from the Character Counts! model. With six grading periods, this program is a nice “fit.” At the beginning of each grading period, a different trait was introduced and woven throughout the curriculum. For the initial year of implementation, it was important to establish expectations and to ensure that students would understand the meaning of each trait.

Staff development for all staff was essential to get them “on board.” The CDT assumed a leadership role in helping their professional peers. Curriculum Development Teams were identified by content areas, divided into six working groups, and facilitated by one teacher member of the CDT. The facilitators’ role was to provide direction, encouragement, and to serve as an “ambassador” for the Character Education initiative.

During the summer of 2006, a day-long workshop was held for each of the Curriculum Teams to review the curriculum to determine specific lessons where the character traits could be appropriately interwoven. The Curriculum Teams utilized two staff development days to develop specific lesson plans incorporating character traits. Teachers were required to submit examples of teaching character in their lesson plans. Modeling of good character was expected from all staff.

At the beginning of each six weeks, a 45 minute Advisor/Advisee period was held to introduce one of the six pillars of character with teachers wearing the coordinating color established by the Character Counts! model. The first three traits – Respect, Responsibility, and Fairness – were introduced through a video from the In Search of Character Video Series, followed by discussion of real-life situations. Each session concluded with the students generating a list of ways to demonstrate the character trait at school, home and in the community.
An additional component of the initiative was a “quote of the week.” The quote was displayed in a prominent location in the classrooms, office area, Guidance and Principal’s offices and by the serving lines in the cafeteria. Teachers introduced the quote on Monday with a brief discussion of its meaning and how students could apply it in their daily life. The introduction occurred during the “bell-ringer” time. Teachers would refer to the quote throughout daily instruction, as appropriate. Bus operators posted the “quote of the week” in the front of the bus.

“Teachable moments” were the most effective way to integrate the character traits. In the classroom, hallways, lunchroom, or at school events, the staff utilized opportunities to draw attention to examples of good character. It wasn’t long before students began doing the same, pointing out “good character” actions as well as “bad” ones. All stakeholders in the building understand that each person must strive to be the moral compass.

For the last three traits – Caring, Citizenship, and Trustworthiness – the format was changed to hands-on activities that required active student engagement. The Advisor/Advisee period to introduce “Caring” revolved around a discussion of reaching out to people in need resulting in the first school-wide service learning project. Students benefited from interaction with everyone in their Advisor/Advisee group. Thank you notes from recipients were shared with students.

During 2007-2008, the CDT combined activities for citizenship and trustworthiness. Elections for Student Council and Class Officers proved to be excellent opportunities to demonstrate and practice these traits. The objective was to introduce students to the importance of exercising their right to participate in the campaign process and the right to vote. At a school-wide assembly, two representatives from the Circuit Clerk’s Office spoke about the voting process, demonstrated the new electronic balloting system and registered eligible voters. The assembly was used to discuss the new school election process, campaign rules, qualifications for candidates, ethics in campaigning and rules on election day. Candidates created a commercial which was aired over the video broadcast, made buttons for their supporters and talked to students one-on-one. Campaign signs were posted throughout the school. On election day, candidates for Student Council President composed and delivered speeches to the entire student body. Students were then dispersed by grade level to different locations where candidates for class President presented a speech to peers. Voting occurred at lunch. Former class officers
volunteered to be poll workers. The poll workers were entrusted with controlling the entire voting process. No voting irregularities were reported, there were no challenged ballots, and not a single campaign sign was vandalized.

Involving students in the decision-making process certainly builds character and teaches responsibility. The Student Leadership Team (SLT) was initiated by to provide opportunity for input on improving school climate. Select students in grades 9-12 met monthly to generate ideas, to serve as a sounding-board for the Principal and to provide a forum for students to offer opinions and suggestions. Students learned to listen and respect others’ opinions.

During 2007-08, the CDT decided to expand membership to students. The Character Development Student Advisory Committee (CDSAC), representing all school organizations and athletics, was chosen to help TCHS formulate a year-long plan for integrating Character Education throughout the curriculum. The first duty of the CDSAC was to help design a character “kickoff.”

The second year of implementation assumed a different look. Incoming 9th graders had participated in the Middle School’s Character Education Initiative which used the Character Counts! model. Teachers were given more freedom to integrate “teachable moments” in their daily instruction. They continued to incorporate examples of the six traits throughout their lessons. The “quotes of the week” were eliminated, but each teacher received a packet of appropriate quotes they could use at their discretion. Every six weeks, teachers submitted an example of teaching character within their curriculum. Members of the CDSAC shared their insights. As a result, the CDT concluded that the most effective way to continue to teach character education would be to actively engage students in meaningful activities.

Four unique projects became the central focus for 2007-08. Each involved the six traits, involved the community, emphasized parent support, enhanced character within the curriculum, and promoted a positive school climate.

- The first major event combined the Character Education “Kickoff”, the fall Parent-Teacher Conferences, American Education Week and a celebration of the 15th anniversary of the opening of Tyler Consolidated. The Character Development Student Advisory Council (CDSAC) created a name for this special event. The chosen title of “WHAT’S BEYOND THE MOAT? Tyler Consolidated Honorable Students”
enhanced the fact that one must drive across the school’s exclusive bridge onto Silver Knight Drive to enter the school facility. The CDT and Student Advisory Committee planned and organized activities that showcased student work. The idea was to have the community drive “beyond the moat” and observe what TCHS is doing to prepare graduates for success in the 21st Century. An extensive advertising campaign was a part of the planning process. A former professional athlete addressing the importance of good character, commitment, goal setting and avoiding drugs and alcohol spoke with students at an assembly. Parents, guardians, and grandparents were invited to the assembly, lunch and evening activities consisting of the following:

1. Free spaghetti dinner.
2. Displays of students work.
4. A Student Advisory Committee (CDSAC) display of character initiative projects.

- The Broadcast/Yearbook/Social Studies teacher produced and narrated a video history of Tyler Consolidated.
- The public was invited to a special “Showcase” event in the auditorium that included a One-Act play performed by the Theatre class, a parliamentary procedure demonstration by the FFA Team, a choir concert and a band concert.
- Parents attending Parent/Teacher Conferences received a free family pass to a “home” athletic event.

The “Showcase” event feedback was positive. Students were afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their skills. Parents appreciated the incentives offered.

The High School Cheerleader coach initiated a “partnership” between the elementary students and the high school athletic teams and band, resulting in good role models and increased school pride when they reach high school. The elementary students made banners, signs and cards supporting the TCHS sport teams and band which further increased the connection between the elementary and high school students. Coaches and teams responded with “thank you” cards to their elementary fans. They also included positive messages about the importance of good attendance, studying, doing their best, and saying “no” to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products.
At the end of the fall sports’ seasons, the entire student body of the participating elementary school was invited to spend an afternoon with the TCHS sport team they supported. The TCHS athletes organized sport activities for the elementary students and treated them with refreshments. A total of 320 elementary students and approximately 100 high school students participated. Autographs were requested from the high school students. The bonding was apparent. It was quite a sight to witness a 6 foot, 200 pound football player holding hands with a first grader, taking him to the bus. The high school students were overwhelmed. The hero worship they experienced was one of the most memorable experiences of their lives. It was a very productive and rewarding afternoon for everyone. As a follow-up activity, the TCHS athletes and band members visited the elementary school and read to the students. The Character Education partnership evolved and expanded to the other county elementary schools.

The third major Character Education project began when one of the TCHS students applied for and was accepted as a 2007 Bezos Scholar. The student and Principal attended the week long Aspen Leadership Institute (ALI). The ALI brings together over 100 world renowned leaders, authors, actors, scientists and historians to discuss world problems and IDEAS for solutions. The purpose of inviting student leaders is to underscore the important role that America’s youth play in the future of our country and to charge them with planning and implementing a mini-festival at their school. During the return trip, the student and Principal exchanged ideas recognizing the potential for incorporating Character Education into the TCHS Mini-Ideas Festival.

The TCHS student who served as a Bezos Scholar presented her responsibilities to the staff. She also proposed the development of a TCHS IDEAS mini-festival. The purpose of the mini-festival was to strengthen educational opportunities for students by exposing them to a host of new ideas and challenges. An IDEAS club was formed. The response was very positive. This group learned to respect each other’s opinions and found tasks that interested them resulting in collaboration and trust.

The IDEAS Club decided to focus on six major topics: social issues, legal issues/the Court system, environmental concerns, world health issues, the emergence of China as a world power, and local/ community problems. Community members were invited to speak on topics within their area of expertise. Keynote speakers for the mini-festival included: Jeff Yalden,
MTV celebrity and internationally renowned youth motivational speaker and Steve Dixon who addressed self-esteem and peer pressures. Teachers conducted sessions centered around the six topics as an extension of their curriculum or as a topic of interest. The criteria for each session was to offer a time of discovery, active engagement, open dialogue, and intellectual stimulation. The IDEAS festival consisted of forty-seven (47) different concurrent sessions with a variety of community experts as presenters. The keynote speakers were the only recipients of monetary compensation.


The IDEAS Festival served as an introduction to school-wide service learning projects. The CDT worked with the Student Advisory Committee to implement many projects. Students generated the following list of ideas for service learning projects:

- The school formed a partnership with the Olive Branch Animal Rescue & Refuge in Tyler County. Students organized a pet supply drive, collecting specific items needed. In addition to school collections, students decided to reach out to the community to assist in their efforts. Flyers and boxes were placed in local grocery stores.
- The Character Development Student Advisory Committee (CDSAC) assumed responsibility to start a recycling program at school. Their goal was to extend a major recycling program to every household in Tyler County.
• Tyler County has the only “Newborns In Need” Chapter in WV, a charitable organization specializing in the needs of premature and newborn babies who are sick or in crisis. Students made baby blankets and toys for newborns in need.

• An Autism Service Project to support the local chapter of the State “Autism Speaks” organization was implemented. The first project was to raise money for the annual “Autism Walk” held in Wheeling, WV. To help raise money, the school held a “Crazy Hair Day.” For $1.00, students and staff could wear a crazy hair style, a wig, or a hat. In an effort to increase awareness of autism, one fact was read on the broadcast daily for a week. Three carloads of students took it upon themselves to drive to Wheeling on that Saturday to walk.

Positive Learning Environment

Motivation to work to one’s highest potential is a challenge for many students and some adults. Teachers, administrators, and support staff are responsible for modeling a strong work ethic. The Principal emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and responsibility during State assessments. Newsletters remind parents of the importance of sleep, attendance, and good nutrition, not only during testing but throughout the school year. TCHS achieved significant success on State assessments which can be attributed, in large part, to highly qualified teachers who take the assessments seriously and assure that students are as prepared as possible. Ways in which TCHS acknowledged student achievement included the following:

• Displays of student work.
• Broadcast announcements recognizing student award winners.
• Video clips of athletic events.
• Video broadcast honoring the valedictorian(s) and salutatorian(s).

The most important component of conveying the message to our students regarding the value of good character comes from the actions of the adults. The old adage “actions speak louder than words” certainly applies. Even if all other pieces of the Character Education “puzzle” are in place, the “big picture” could never be complete without the faculty and support staff serving as role models. Developing a caring, nurturing learning environment is a top priority for the administration. The Principal conveyed the following teacher expectations:

• All students are to be treated with respect and dignity.
• While on hall duty, teachers should speak to students, giving them a sense of belonging.
• Advisors are to know their “advisees” on a first name basis and establish a rapport with them.
• Students are to address faculty as “Mr., Mrs., or Ms.”
• Teachers are to show respect toward one another. Gossiping and/or complaining in front of students is unacceptable.
• Take responsibility for every student, not just those they have in class.

The 2008 Senior Exit Survey confirmed that TCHS maintains high academic standards. 99.1% responded that “Teachers generally held high standards and demanded quality work.” 91.5% responded that they feel prepared for life after high school and 98% believed that the counselors were helpful in the selection of a path to follow after graduation. The Class of 2008 exceeded all other graduating classes in scholarships awarded – approximately 1.2 million dollars for a class of 142 graduates.

TCHS has always maintained a statewide reputation for academic excellence. TCHS was one of only eleven WV high schools to receive a BRONZE award from US News & World Report for the Best High Schools 2008 initiative. Tyler Consolidated ranked 5th AS THE TOP HIGH SCHOOL IN THE STATE. Criteria included dropout rate, percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers, percentage of students taking the ACT, and percentage of graduates enrolling in college. TCHS was rated as DISTINGUISHED ACCREDITATION from the WV Office of Education Performance Audits for the 2007-2008 school year. Tyler Consolidated High School was one (1) of nineteen (19) high schools in WV to EXCEED 60% pass rate on the Advanced Placement (AP) course tests for the 2006-2007 school year.

**Examples of Curriculum Integration**

**MATH**

**Statistics:**
• During a discussion on survey methods, students noted that a study performed by a party with a financial stake in the results may be biased. Ethics related to the altering of data or the purposeful misrepresentation of results was discussed.
• How innovative approaches to presenting data can be used to further humanitarian causes was discussed.
• Ethical questions surfaced during lessons involving frequency distribution and local traffic speed violations.
• While discussing z scores, the class noted that these methods of comparing data of different units could easily be used to mislead consumers.
• Dealing with the mean of certain numbers brought about a brief discussion on the trust given to companies to be truthful and accurate in their labels and measurements.
• During a statistics project, the class discussed the importance of not fabricating data when presenting to the public.

**Algebra:**
• A problem in the book mentioned how police use skid marks to help solve traffic accidents. This led to a brief discussion on honesty and responsibility.
• The idea of responsibility and integrity in companies was discussed as a part of a lesson dealing with displaying and interpreting data. Students contributed examples and ideas about truth in advertising.
• In Conceptual Math, a lesson on estimation led to a discussion of companies misleading consumers by changing packages, labeling on packages, etc. A discussion on how consumers can help make companies responsible for misleading sales occurred.
• In Basic Skills Math, the concept of fractions in terms of sharing with others was reviewed.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**
• In a discussion of the Founding Fathers and the Constitution, a discussion of their character and knowledge was included.
• In Senior Civics, choices and how they can change your life were discussed.
• A multicultural project was proposed to the teacher in Sociology class.
• The 2008 primary campaigns have been studied in Civics classes. Students expressed concern with fairness in reporting by the media.
• Students discussed the Iraq war, and sacrifices that soldiers are making for their family and country.
• Civics classes discussed citizenship and the privilege to vote.
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING

- During a lesson on elements of short stories concerning how writers develop their characters, a discussion on how individuals focus too much on appearances and physical traits occurred.
- Students discussed if having money, social status, etc. made people happier while reviewing *Great Expectations*.
- Students talked about the old adage, “Grass is always greener on the other side” during a discussion of “The Necklace.”
- After reading “Poison,” students discussed the poison of racism.

SCIENCE/AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

- Students watched a video on the hunting controversy and wrote an opinion piece on the validity of hunting. The video emphasized the need for outdoorsmen to use integrity in the field to protect the hunter’s image with the public.
- Citizenship was a topic emphasized in Earth Science classes on the subject of water conservation.
- During Nobel Prize week, a science teacher talked with his classes about Alfred Nobel and why he started the Nobel Peace Prize. It was a reaction to the use of his invention of dynamite for wartime use, rather than for peaceful construction projects.

STUDY SKILLS

- A daily “hero” lesson on a prominent American figure that included a brief discussion about the character traits that “hero” exhibited occurred in Study Skills class.
- Caring for others and giving of their time to help those in need was discussed on Valentine’s Day.

DRIVER EDUCATION

- Responsibility of drivers to carry car insurance
- Discussion of ways drivers can reduce the effects of vehicles on the environment
- Responsibility to drive safely and courteously – tailgating, “road rage”
- Drinking and Driving – Designated driver – DUI laws
- Driving on rural roads – Showing respect for slow-moving farm vehicles
• Showing respect for traffic laws – speed limit, no passing zones, etc.

**Adult Stakeholders**

The TCHS faculty understands the importance of unity and providing a safe, positive, caring work environment. There is a bond among the staff. They willingly cover classes for each other without expecting a return favor. Veteran teachers check in on new teachers, especially during the first few months, taking them under their wings. The Principal at TCHS believed that the Principal sets the tone for the school and must model what he or she expects from the staff and students. As a 33 year veteran educator/administrator, she considered her principal position at TCHS an honor. One of the most important lessons she learned in the position was that students will rise to the level of expectations set for them. Helping them to believe in their own self-worth and convincing them that we genuinely care about them was a priority throughout her career.

**Student Examples of Displaying Good Character 2007-2008**

Teachers were asked to document examples of students exhibiting the six character traits. The following is just a sampling of TCHS students “in action”:

• A student asked if he could type a composition for a physically handicapped peer.

• An upperclassman gave up her resource period to help a special needs student in parenting class take a test. This student had difficulty reading, so she read the test to her.

• One of the girls in Dance class gave up dancing with her regular partner to dance with a special education student because he did not have a partner that day.

• A student volunteered to help the teacher by hanging several students’ art work in the hall.

• One student always reminds her classmates of assignments and due dates in Ceramic class. The teacher stated that there are some forgetful students in there who greatly benefit from her reminders.

• A teacher witnessed a student holding a door open for a group of students to go up the stairs on their way to lunch. All the students were very polite and thanked him. This act of kindness made him last in the serving line.
• Several students turned in lost articles throughout the year. Some were quite valuable like cell phones, a wallet with a considerable amount of money in it, a watch, and a class ring.

• Many teachers provided examples of individuals volunteering to help students who had been absent catch up on their work.

• An example of fostering and encouraging responsibility, one teacher reported that he was caught up in a number of other things one day, and his media production class ran the broadcast on their own, by themselves.

• During hall duty in between classes, one teacher observed students being respectful and taking responsibility. Examples include watching students being very polite and waiting their turn to use the door to the stairs, holding the door for each other and for the teacher, taking turns at their crowded lockers, picking up trash while walking through the hall, and saying “excuse me” when unintentionally bumping into other students in the crowded hallway.

• Students had been coming in and out all day to the greenhouses. The sloppy weather resulted in muddy footprints in the halls. Several students took it upon themselves to clean up the mess.

• A teacher overheard several students discussing getting donations to buy a prom ticket for a classmate who couldn’t afford to purchase one. Several students chipped in and bought the ticket.

• Probably the greatest example of character occurred when a young boy in our community died as a result of a tragic accident. Knowing that he had been very interested in wrestling, one of the wrestlers on the High School team took it upon himself to take a varsity singlet (with the coach’s permission), had every team member sign it, and gave it to the boy’s parents as a tribute to his love of wrestling.

In Conclusion…

Tyler Consolidated High School is still on its journey. Staff members at TCHS conclusively say that the students and adult stakeholders have become better people. TCHS has engaged themselves and their students in considering and acting on the social and moral issues
that surround them. The staff and students invite you to visit TCHS in beautiful Tyler County, West Virginia. Come by and see us. You will be glad you did.
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Appendix I
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Integrating Effective Character Education Models into Rural Schools: Final Evaluation Report for Partnerships in Character Education Program Grant

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B. Executive Summary/Abstract

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools Partnerships in Character Education Program provided or currently provides funds to approximately fifty (50) experimental (or quasi-experimental) efforts that investigate the affects of character education in relation to academic achievement and other education-related variables. This study highlights the variability between baseline pretests and posttest measurements (collected at the end of the intervention implementation) of one such grant awarded to the West Virginia Department of Education to study the effective integration of character education models into rural schools. The participants from this study were recruited from eight rural schools selected through a matched random sampling technique. Four were randomly assigned to be control schools and 4 were assigned to develop and practice an intervention process model rich in character education. The original sample of student participants recruited at the middle and high school level consists of 151 males (42%) and 199 females (55%) for a combined N=366. The original sample of student participants recruited at the elementary level consist of 61 males (52%) and 56 females (48%) for a combined N=124. Parents and school faculty/staff also took part in the study. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) controlling for baseline assessments as well as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) identified several significant differences between the control and experimental schools. The results from student data identify statistically significant differences or positive outcomes for experimental schools in students' levels of character and positive perceptions of educators, school climate and academic achievement when comparing students from the intervention schools to control schools. The results from data collected on educators provided many statistically significant positive outcomes as well for educators in the intervention schools. In addition to this report, attached is a final qualitative analysis.
**Background and Purpose**

“Throughout history, character education has been the shared responsibility of parents, teachers and members of the community, who come together to support positive character development” (www.cetac.org, 2007). According to former United States Secretary of Education Rod Paige, “a culture of callousness…without role models… has led to a staggering achievement gap, poor health status, overweight students, crime, violence, teenage pregnancy, and tobacco and alcohol abuse,” and as a result “character education and civic engagement are two key components in the historic [efforts of the] No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education reform law” (www.ed.gov, 2007). Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, echoed such support that “Education at its best should expand the mind and build character” (www.cetac.org, 2007). The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools Partnerships in Character Education Program has provided funds to approximately fifty (50) experimental (or quasi-experimental) efforts that are investigating the affects of character education in relation to academic achievement and other education-related variables. This study highlights the intervention and research efforts of one such grant awarded to the West Virginia Department of Education to study the effective integration of character education models into rural schools.

More specifically, this quasi-experimental study’s final report provides quantitative findings related to an intervention that sought to integrate a character education framework (e.g., a hybrid process not based on a specific character education program) into the ethos of the schools’ climates and philosophies. Quantitative analysis is based upon the longitudinal assessment of school level data (e.g., academic achievement) as well numerous attitudinal variables measured through psychometrics adopted, adapted or developed for this study. The many measures utilized to assess this study provided a foundation for developing dimensions of character education. In addition to the factors
proposed by the U.S. Department of Education for GPRA accountability, this study utilizes numerous reliable and valid scales to more definitively assess the roles of each specific proposed dimension within the character education process. This study proposes that research should consider collapsing core measurements of character education into a limited number of dimensions (e.g., clusters). Furthermore, the results show that academic achievement shares a statistically significant relationship with numerous dimensions and variables. Before discussing the comprehensive results of the pretest/posttest data, let us first consider some challenges associated with defining the experimental stimulus (intervention) of character education, and the logic behind the dimensions explored within our research efforts.

A. Brief Description of Character Education Intervention

Despite how one defines or views character education, we all practice it to some degree by default (Corrigan, Grove, Vincent, Chapman, & Walls, 2007). Those of us who teach are role models, and our actions (good or bad) as teachers are scrutinized by our students. Classrooms and schools are moral/ethical climates, for better or worse. Students observe teachers and the greater school environment, and these observed individuals and influential environments theoretically impact character development and school climate. From within these moral climates are lessons, behaviors, and actions that children observe and contemplate adopting. If one is a teacher or administrator, one often is obligated to provide consequences (negative or positive) for whichever behavior a child decides to embrace. Social learning and reinforcement theories suggest that the future probability of a behavior will be influenced by such consequences (Bandura, 1977; Skinner, 1969). Therefore, social learning theories, as well as socio-cultural and other development theories, provide a foundational lens to see how character education is rooted within theory supporting the learning process and
development of the whole child and the behaviors one models. If we (the education process) are a large part of the youth’s day for a majority of the year, then we most likely play a contributing role in developing the behavior and character of the child, no matter if we claim to or realize that we practice character education or not. Therefore, one of our first efforts in the intervention was to share a more comprehensive definition of character education as a school reform process, not necessarily a program that promises to develop character.

There appears, however, to be more dimensions to character education than just developing character in our youth. The wide breadth of research suggests that character education provides a catalyst for systemic change on multiple components within an educational setting (or system). For instance, do you think a teacher will experience better success in a classroom that is rich with respect and responsibility, or one that is amassed in chaos and disrespect? Do you think children will be able to focus more in an environment where they feel they are safe and cared for or one where they are afraid and alone? Do you think children more often will model positive behavior when they are supported throughout the day by people that constantly/consistently practice kindness, fairness, and justice or by those engaged in less than respectful conduct? Answers to these somewhat rhetorical questions show how character education impacts classroom management, school climate, and professional development. The somewhat obvious answers to these rhetorical questions support hypotheses touted within character education. Furthermore, how many teachers set out on their career inspired to share the priceless knowledge of multiplying fractions or conjugating verbs? Many of us in the education field set out on this honorable profession to make a difference in a child’s life. Character education if approached correctly theoretically provides one with a process to more strategically continue pursuing such inspirational goals, and possibly increasing the instructional and
To some practitioners, however, character education often is perceived to consist of a few words (e.g., respect, responsibility) posted on a bulletin board or in the hallway. Character education to some rests on such positive character traits or elements to develop character, and is to be shared or taught directly to students as plug-in programs on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. With little to no evidence of effectiveness (http://www.eric.ed.gov, 2007), hundreds of companies are marketing expensive character education programs (similar to the above mentioned approach) to schools struggling to stay fiscally afloat. Unfortunately, to many of the rural-based teachers we have interviewed, this is one of the most significant shortcomings and/or challenges of character education today. According to Higgins-D’Alessandro and Power (2005), “The simplest answer [for this programmatic-based perspective] is that those educators who resurrected the term [character education] were focused on educational practice rather than research. Believing there was an urgent need for character education in the schools, they devoted themselves to establishing programs rather than exploring character as a theoretical or empirical construct” (in Lapsley & Power, p. 102). The possibility exists that some of these programs do compliment the instructional or developmental process. But to some teachers the marketing of such programs feeds a connotation that character education is a trendy, temporary thing that will go away soon. Our exploratory qualitative efforts also identified that others feel that character education should be the responsibility of a few teachers and/or the counselor. Additionally, some feel that such a direct approach to teaching character education traits, might not be as effective as an indirect approach. To some such programs appear to be the “flavor of the day” and another thing to put on one’s already overloaded plates and book shelves filled with unused programs from the past.
However, as our colleague Dr. Philip Fitch Vincent stated in the keynote address of the 2006 Character Education Partnership Annual Conference, “Character education is not another thing on your plate, it is your plate.” In other words, Vincent (this project’s lead consultant and trainer) views character education as a foundational model or conduit to compliment the character development process while simultaneously improving the school/learning climate, and increasing success of other educational efforts already underway within the schools (Vincent, Wangaard, & Weimer, 2004). The Child Development Project practiced a similar approach with success in their comprehensive, whole-school interventions to foster social, ethical, and intellectual development in students and caring communities of learners (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004). Therefore, the efforts that we hypothesized would work the best (especially for rural schools struggling with budget and staffing issues) are character education models that are fully integrated from dawn to dusk (e.g., from the classroom to the cafeteria to the playground, all day and everyday), and basically cost nothing.

Yet until recently, character education has historically been a practice; not a science (Berkowitz, 2002). And to many individuals, character education has been viewed as a product not a process. For some of the participating educators who agreed to take part in this study, before beginning the grant they assumed that developing character education included a shopping spree of prepackaged goodies for educators to purchase and use. For our research purposes we asked our participating schools to consider a broader definition or process of character education and to create experimental stimuli that focus on the creation and integration of more theoretically and scientifically-based character education models. We basically asked them to listen to the experts hired by the grant and complete a thorough review of the character education literature (i.e. professional development). We also requested that they investigate the wide variety of products available, physically or mentally
unwrap them, and consider which parts of the products could contribute to the new process they adopt (at little cost) for improving school climate, rules and procedures; as well as develop more thematic based instructional practices rich in moral lessons and applicable to the communities they serve. The uniquely designed, comprehensive, and intensive new character education processes adopted by each experimental school ideally should fit the needs of many rural schools and classrooms. Since one of our grant’s goals was to create a replicable model of character education for rural schools, the development phase (year one) of our grant challenged our participating educators to develop such process models not only grounded in educational philosophy, theory, and research; but also less reliant upon purchasing programs that many schools cannot afford (Note: See Methods section for more description on experimental intervention design).

B. Purpose of Study/ Rationale

Schools that are outperforming the norm in relation to meeting NCLB tend to follow three practices: 1) they require more hours of class time than typical public schools (e.g., time on task), 2) they strongly support teachers in an effort to enthusiastically treat instruction and lesson planning more like a science rather than an art, and 3) they make a conscious effort to guide behavior, and even values, of their students by teaching what they call character (Tough, 2006). According to Lickona and Davidson’s (2005) report on Smart and Good High Schools, character education is a promising practice in our schools. An informal survey of the thousands of educators who attend annual conferences sponsored by organizations such as Character Education Partnership, and schools that have been recognized as national schools of character would surely reiterate that many educators believe character education to be a promising practice. Centuries of educational philosophy and more recently developed theory also offer substance to the theoretical foundations and possible
efficacy of character education. But similar to many research efforts across numerous social or behavioral science endeavors that fall under what some might term a *pro-social education umbrella*, a body of definitive quantitative evidence gathered through sound experimental designs is still needed to support such continued *program use*. According to What Works Clearinghouse (www.whatworks.ed.gov, 2005), “The current nationwide emphasis on ensuring that all students and schools meet high standards has increased the demand for evidence of ‘what works’ in education.”

Due to the demands and expectations of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, such shortcomings related to a lack of reliable and valid quantitative evidence (collected through sound methodologies) threaten to affect the future funding of numerous federal lines of research and programmatic implementation. Therefore, to begin collecting data that possibly could offer evidence to the effectiveness of this grant’s character education process model intervention, the following research questions are proposed:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Are there significant differences between the control and intervention/experimental schools in regard to the amount of character education integrated being perceived and reported?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): While statistically controlling for baseline measurements, are there significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in behavioral reports?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): While considering baseline measurements, are there significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in academic achievement?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): While statistically controlling for baseline measurements, are there
significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in extracurricular activities?

Research Question 5 (RQ5): While statistically controlling for baseline measurements, are there significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in parental and community engagement (Dimension 2)?

Research Question 6 (RQ6): Are there significant differences after the first year of implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in faculty and administrative involvement?

Research Question 7 (RQ7): While statistically controlling for baseline measurements, are there significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in student and staff morale, school climate (Dimension 3), and other self-reported educational attitudes (Dimension 6)?

Research Question 8 (RQ8): While statistically controlling for baseline measurements, are there significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in self-reported levels of character (Dimension 1)?

Research Question 9 (RQ9): What are the relationships shared between the proposed dimensions of character education and academic achievement?

C. Goals and Objectives of the Grant

Educators from the WVDE along with Marshall University (MU) and West Virginia University (WVU) came together in early 2004 to build and submit a grant proposal to the United States Department of Education (USDOE). The grant team focused on character
education in West Virginia and in the proposal seven objectives were outlined as follows:

1. A resource manual for implementing character education will be created and disseminated to all experimental schools during the first three years of the grant implementation, and to all schools statewide during year four. Accomplished

2. A crosswalk between the West Virginia core content standards and the character education traits, such as respect, responsibility, justice and fairness, trustworthiness, caring, and citizenship, will be developed. Accomplished

3. By employing strict and rigorous scientific research methodology, this project will provide qualitative and quantitative findings that highlight the hypothesized effects gained through integrating additional character education efforts. (Note: This objective is the focus of this quantitative report.)

4. The proposed project will involve many stakeholders in the development and implementation of the character education program. Accomplished

5. The training sessions will provide opportunities for teachers and parents to be educated on the implementation of the proposed project. Accomplished

6. Technical and professional assistance will be provided to all LEA partners in the development and implementation of the character education program during the implementation years of the project and other interested LEAs will be provided assistance during the fourth year. Accomplished

7. The link between character education and academic achievement will be addressed in the
D. Outcome Measures: Proposed Dimensions for Determining Success of Character Education

At a research symposium sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, the lead author of this report served as the facilitator for the symposium. Outside evaluators of character education grants were asked to submit a list of the core measures that they were currently using for assessing the effectiveness of their character education experimental stimuli. Upon compiling the list submitted by more than 30 grantees, approximately 60 uniquely different core measures were identified. With so many evaluators using such a vast array of differing core measurements, the ability to compile and compare future findings will be challenging.

With a plethora of character education programs or process models at work in our schools and more than 60 core measurements at the federal level being used to assess quantitatively the possible effects of character-based education on academic achievement, one might say that research into character education is quite diverse. In fact, some might say that research efforts are too diverse. In order to collect a definitive body of evidence on the efficacy of character education, or possibly some day actually create a meta-analysis built upon effect sizes collected through reliable, valid, and sound measures and methods, numerous researchers would need to focus on a similar set of variables. Such efforts to compare or compile findings could be even more fruitful if the same reliable and validated variables were used to collect such data across numerous studies.

Unfortunately, to agree upon specific dimensions or scales that work across a majority of the on-going research efforts, or link the uniquely different state adopted metrics and standardized testing procedures does not appear to be possible at this juncture. To some degree each research project
demands a specific dimensional model that fits the focus of the individual studies, and at this point (especially with the elimination of www.cetac.org) there appears to be no sustainability plan for a single agency or catalyst capable of providing such a conduit between character education research efforts.

Yet when one peruses the decades of qualitative and quantitative research amassed on character education (or other related pro-social education fields such as moral education, civic education, socio-emotional, values-based, etc.), one begins to see a few thematic threads begin to surface. When researching new and uncharted waters, such thematic analysis is essential to determining which components are theoretically and qualitatively supported in order to focus quantitative efforts accordingly. Therefore, in order to help organize our on-going research efforts we completed a thorough qualitative analysis of our participating sample, and also consulted with character education specialists and fellow researchers to determine a rough outline of such thematic components. Upon reaching consensus we created a dimensional model that fits the identified components (e.g., clusters and/or dimensions) and the variables within them that we seek to measure with our federal grant research efforts.

Figure 1 (see below) highlights the dimensions and parts we addressed in this study and how they fit into categories of experimental stimuli, independent variables, covariates, and dependent variables. Please note we have fine-tuned our dimensional model since completing this study and details of our final dimensional model can be reviewed at www.mdedinc.com. Although the proposed thematic dimensions of this study’s dimensional model fall under the independent variables category in Figure 1, we have included the other components to assist in better visualizing how all of the parts might create a possible logic model in the future that might be better supported statistically.
when the evaluators of this project and other federally funded projects (4) are completed. In other words, we find it illogical to believe that by putting a character education intervention into place one will instantly see academic achievement increase. Therefore, our logic hypothesizes that the experimental stimulus theoretically could impact the dimensions resulting in *proximal* or short-term outcomes. These proximal outcomes (Dimensions 1-6) then possibly could create enough synergy over a period of time to ideally impact more *distal* outcomes related to academic achievement. However, before possibly claiming such hypothesized impacts, possible causal relationships, or providing quantitative evidence of a hierarchical linear model; the quasi-experimental process must first be completed, extensive data must be collected on the numerous variables and covariates addressed in Figure 1, and figured into the analyses. Therefore, to initiate such a process, the pretest/posttest data collected on our study’s sample was organized according to the dimensional model in Figure 1. Figure 1: A Multi-Dimensional Character Education Process Model
DEPENDENT VARIABLES
Intended Distal Outcome Measures
Such as: Adequate Yearly Progress, Student Achievement Scores, G.P.A., Behavior/Discipline Reports, & Attendance.

COVARIATES
(Confounding/Extraneous Variables that COULD Be Statistically Controlled/Accounted For)
Such as: Special Needs, Socio Economic Status (SES) Related Statistics, Previous or Ongoing Curriculum Programs/Initiatives, Crime Rates and Other Local Statistics, School Size, Class Size, and Special Circumstances (e.g. recent consolidation).

As character education progresses, more questions arise as to what is or is NOT character education, and more importantly, if effective, is effective character education that augments development the result of fully integrating of a unique comprehensive character education-based process model, or the implementation of a marketed character education program?

EXPERIMENTAL STIMULI
Character Education:
Type/Quality/Duration of Character Education

Furthermore, is character education more effective when taught, or taught directly or indirectly? Given that quantitative evidence of its efficacy is sporadic, tracking the type, quality, duration, and level of integration of character education is essential to defining and attributing possible impacts related to the experimental stimuli of character education.
At the bottom of Figure 1, one will find specifics regarding the experimental stimulus. When dealing with experimental or quasi-experimental designs, we feel it is essential to measure the type, quality, and duration of implementation or integration taking place. Such measurements are crucial to delineate the differences between the control/comparison samples and the experimental/intervention samples. Therefore, for example, in our studies we used a character education log that was completed by the teachers and administrators in all of our participating schools as one of the tools to quantitatively assess how much character education is being integrated into the curricula and school, what type of character education, and numerous other details. Additional variables relating to experimental stimuli specifics were collected at the school level, community level (parents), as well as individual efforts that were taking place within the classrooms. Furthermore, we collected such qualitative and quantitative insights from school staff, faculty, parents, and students for a multiple triangulation effect.

The next level (coming up from experimental stimulus in Figure 1) one finds six dimensions that are supported theoretically as well as through decades of qualitative and non-experimental based quantitative studies. These dimensions are hypothesized to experience change during a character education intervention. The original model's (Figure 1) dimensions consist of character development, community engagement, school climate, professional development, school leadership, and educational attitudes. Theoretically, when character education effectively is put into practice it is believed that children develop character (Berger, 2003; Lickona, 1991), the school climate improves (Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Vincent, Wangaard, & Weimer, 2004), teachers experience improvement in efficacy and instructional success (Grove & Schneider, 2006), leadership finds new direction (Williams & Taylor, 2003), and children embrace education with more positive attitudes (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). To measure such dimensions we utilized a number of scales. These scales will be further addressed in the Methods section. Note, however, that in order to show that change
does take place, one must use reliable and valid scales or measurements for each category so that quantitative evidence is observable in a meaningful fashion. This way we can feel more confident that we are consistently measuring the same thing over and over (e.g., reliability), and that we actually are measuring that which we say we are measuring (e.g., validity). We are currently completing a validation analysis on multiple data sets aimed at specifically addressing the issue of scale validation. If reviewers wish we can provide such data in the near future. The next two levels at the top of Figure 1 designate the need for controlling statistically for extraneous variables (covariates) and deciding upon dependent variables that suit the needs of one’s research focus. Covariates are an important part of this dimensional model, because before one can confidently state that character education was responsible for change, one must control for other measures that might erase such findings when added to the equation (e.g., Socioeconomic status (SES)). Given the homogenous nature of the control and experimental sample addressed in the midterm report covariates were determined to be unnecessary for the final analysis. In relation to the character education grants awarded through the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, such dependent variables are more aligned with showing how character education impacts academic achievement. Thus, the use of standardized test scores, grade point average (GPA), adequate yearly progress (AYP), and other related variables are expected and part of the process of this study.

Methods

A Study/Experimental Settings

Similar to many rural school settings across West Virginia, the participating schools are surrounded by a sometime surreal contrast of rich and poor, almost devoid of a middle class. One often will find new luxurious homes built in close proximity to poverty-ridden trailer parks or dilapidated residential structures. Traveling down twisting country roads that some “city folk” might consider labyrinth-like, beautiful Appalachian Mountains covered with endless hillsides of trees are
nestled beside desolate coal mining and mountain top removal operations painfully reminiscent of Dr. Seuss’ tales of the Lorax. Sometimes a school will be named after the small town, county, or township it sits within; often the schools are located strategically between numerous small townships so that they can service multiple students traveling from all directions. School consolidation is not uncommon to the region. Therefore, with long bus rides, free breakfast for Title I schools, and an exponential amount of effort put forth by all, the days in these rural outposts are quite long for parents, staff, and students.

Some of the participating schools are new and some are very old. Some are a little cleaner than others, and some have janitors that actually sing joyously in the hallways as they try to make an old school shine like new. Yet although, the schools might differ qualitatively in description, and in some categories differ slightly quantitatively (to be discussed shortly), they all seem equally to provide a home away from home; and unfortunately for some children a place that is much warmer and loving than the home they live in. All of the intervention efforts and data collection took place within the participating schools.

B. Description of Study Sample/Participants

The participants from this study were recruited from the randomly selected schools. Please note that consent rates obtained during the first year of the grant (project development phase) by the participating schools range from 75 to 98 percent participation and did experience a drop over the duration of the grant due mainly to transient nature of the demographic studied. Many of the communities researched experienced great economic downturn during the study and as a result many of the residents were forced to move elsewhere in order to find employment. Although, the complete sample of participants consists of parents, teachers, administrators/school staff, and students, the main focus of this final report is on student and staff baseline/posttest measurements.
The original sample of student participants at the middle and high school level consist of 151 males (42%) and 199 females (55%) for a combined N=366. The high school students at the year 2 baseline had recently begun 10th grade and the middle school students were starting 7th grade. The original sample of student participants at the elementary level consist of 61 males (52%) and 56 females (48%) for a combined N= 124 (note: 7 non reports). At the time of the year 2 baseline measurement the elementary students recently began 4th grade. Tables 1-2 below provide demographics for the final posttest student sample.

**Table 1: Breakdown of Middle & High school Student Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Total experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Total control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids</td>
<td>0 65 68 0</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>62 0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female (2)</td>
<td>33 35 0</td>
<td>68 36 0</td>
<td>45 81</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (1)</td>
<td>28 30 0</td>
<td>58 24 0</td>
<td>25 49</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special needs</td>
<td>2 0 57 60 0</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>49 0 0</td>
<td>50 99</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free lunch</td>
<td>2 0 28 28 0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>20 0 0</td>
<td>34 54</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>1 0 36 39 0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>40 0 0</td>
<td>20 60</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Breakdown of Elementary school Student Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Total experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Total control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids</td>
<td>0 11 0 21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11 0</td>
<td>46 0</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female (2)</td>
<td>3 0 5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6 16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (1)</td>
<td>4 0 9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5 22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special needs</td>
<td>2 0 8 17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9 0 36 0</td>
<td>45 70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free lunch</td>
<td>2 0 4 0 13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 0 8 0</td>
<td>9 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>1 0 6 0 11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5 0 24 0</td>
<td>29 46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student participants are uniquely diverse and challenged in West Virginia. Overall, West Virginia has a low minority rate when compared to other states. However, data show that the portion of the minorities live in impoverished conditions. The economic insecurity that haunts West
Virginian families is evident in West Virginia having the lowest median income (as reported by the Census Bureau for 2004), and one of the highest child poverty rates in the country. According to the West Virginia Department of Education, approximately 51% of the children in West Virginia qualify for free or reduced lunch. Furthermore, as of March 16, 2004 West Virginia had the highest rate of children with disabilities in the nation.

In addition to the economical, behavioral, and physical challenges faced by children in West Virginia, there also are environmental factors to consider in regard to the student participant. According to a Youth Risk Behavior Report collected in West Virginia in 2003 (collected on high school students) : 1) a total of 20.7% of students carried a weapon in the past 30 days; 2) a total of 9.3% of students attempted suicide in the past 12 months; 3) a total of 44.4% drank alcohol in the last 30 days, 4) a total of 52% of students have had sexual intercourse; and 5) a total of 29% of current high school students are smokers.

In the four counties we are studying approximately 10% of the births in the counties are to unmarried teens, 20% of births are to mothers with less than a 12th grade education, and dropout rates average about 17%. In the participating elementary schools 60% of the students receive free or reduced lunch and 21% are designated as having special needs. In the participating middle and high schools 53% of the students receive free or reduced lunch (50% of control and 56% of experimental school students) and 14% (14.7% of control and 13.1% of experimental school students) are designated as having special needs. Baseline cross tabulations of dichotomous variables categorizing experimental and control schools reported levels of students with special needs and SES challenges were quite homogeneous. To study the affect of character education on school systems experiencing such challenges and threats to child development, all of the student participants and their parents agreed to take part in the study by supporting the character efforts of the school, and agreeing to take an annual survey as well as provide access to personal data such as standardized test scores,
attendance, special needs, socioeconomic status, and other education-related statistics.

C. Character Education Intervention/ Experimental Stimuli

As discussed earlier, depending on how one defines character education will most likely impact the character education that one practices. Thus for this study we defined character education as a process; not a program, product, or a practice but more of an educational foundation supported by theory and approached as a science. Given that the level of character education practiced at both the control and experimental schools was determined by qualitative pretest analysis to be minimal at best at the beginning of the grant, a good part of the first year of the grant was dedicated to helping the experimental schools become educated on character education. To begin this process, character development teams (CDTs) similar to Lickona and Davidson’s ethical learning communities (ELCs) were formed at each experimental school. These teams consisted of teachers,Administrators, counselors, service personnel, parents, and community members. The CDTs were charged with researching and developing unique character education models for their specific schools. Once a school model of character education was created and agreed upon for the school-wide initiative by the service staff, teachers, and administrators, the teachers were then trained to integrate character education into the classroom. Thematic instruction was encouraged to be a part of all subjects in order to create more inspirational, moral-based applicable themes to learning. Furthermore, teachers were provided a publication that examined how a large number of state content standards crossed over to character education. The experimental participants were asked to wait until after the baseline measurements to begin implementing the newly designed models. The control participants were asked not to introduce anything new to the school or curriculum that was similar to character education for the first three years of the grant. The experimental and control schools (as well as the
CDT members in the experimental schools) were provided stipends for their participation in the study. The surveys completed by the participating educators have numerous questions that apply to assessing these intervention descriptions. A full qualitative analysis of the intervention took place at each school in order to further develop a Character Education Infusion scoring rubric to use for a more objective measurement of character education intervention implementation. Such an analysis provides greater detail and quantitative measurements of the specific efforts, similarities, and differences for future reports. Please note, as mentioned earlier, at the baseline selection and measurement of the project, the schools were determined to be quite homogeneous on many fronts.

**D. Description of Selection Process for Control and Experimental Schools**

The selection process for the participants in this quasi-experimental study began by selecting four rural counties from the fifty-five counties in West Virginia. Prior to selecting the four representative rural counties, however, all counties considered urban or more heavily populated (than the average rural county in West Virginia) were removed from the selection pool. This resulted in the removal of only four counties, given that West Virginia is predominantly rural and is the only state located completely within the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) territory. A purposive sampling procedure was then utilized to identify rural school systems that would: 1) be representative of the challenges experienced by rural school systems in West Virginia; 2) insure homogeneity of variance; 3) be willing to participate in this longitudinal study; and 4) provide enough participants to employ a matched random sampling selection of schools and an adequate number of students supporting statistical power.

Once the four counties were selected and secured, we then employed a matched random sampling technique to select the schools. Matched random sampling is a method of assigning
participants to groups in which pairs of participants are first matched on some characteristic and then individually assigned randomly to groups (Brown, Cozby, Kee, & Worden, 1999, p.371). As part of the selection process the schools were matched by grade (elementary, middle, and high schools), assigned a random number, and then randomly selected to be either an experimental or control group school. This approach allowed all schools in the four counties an equal chance of selection (by group designation), and an adequate number of participating schools affordable within the constraints of the grant award. The result was the selection of two middle schools (from a total of 6 middle schools in the four counties), two high schools (from a total of 6 high schools in the four counties), and four elementary schools (from a total of 19 elementary schools in the four counties). Thus, both the experimental and control samples consist of one high school, one middle school, and two elementary schools. Furthermore, a priori examination of the four counties chosen suggested that the counties are strongly similar to each other and representative of the average rural county in West Virginia. All of the schools selected met adequate yearly progress (AYP), but the experimental middle and high school was having challenges related to AYP. Additionally, at the initiation of this study all selected schools were assessed to be very similar in the amount of character education being utilized (experimental stimuli). Note that level of character education taking place at all of the schools was identified as minimal during the development phase. Beyond a few posters and following a state mandate to implement 20 minutes of character education based on “the pillars” approach, not much was taking place. As a control measure, all control schools agreed to not introduce any new programs or processes related or similar to character education until after the study was completed.

E. Description of How and When Outcomes were Measured (Procedures and Measures)

A multiple triangulation methodology guides this mixed methods research effort. Multiple
triangulation is defined as when the researchers combine in one investigation, multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data, and methodologies. Researchers triangulate by using different data sources to confirm one another (Gay & Airasian, 2003). During the first and last month of the school year (for the first 2 years), student participants completed a multiple scale survey. The measurements were taken twice a year in order to account for changes that might take place during the summer months away from the experimental settings. The first year of measurement (development year) however provided an opportunity to test scales and metrics. From these efforts a dimensional model approach was created and the survey was improved. Therefore, given that the first year’s measurements found the samples to be quite homogeneous, and with a more reliable and valid instrument created for use in year 2, the data analyzed in this report consists of a pretest collected in the first month (September, 06) of the 1st intervention year and posttest data collected in the last month (May, 08) of the last intervention year.

This was a multiple site collection process, and settings for the school’s data collection differ from place to place. However, the surveys for the pretest/posttest assessment were administered in either the cafeteria or auditorium by outside evaluators, and no school staff or teachers were present at the time. Furthermore, student identification numbers were used on the surveys and answer sheets to provide a greater level of confidentiality. Participants were asked to respond truthfully to the survey questions by reflecting on previous experiences relating to the past year in their neighborhood, community, and school. The surveys were administered in accordance with guidelines for research with human participants (American Psychological Association and the institutions involved). As part of an agreement with the West Virginia Department of Education, additional data were provided for indicators of academic achievement, special needs, and other academic related
statistics for use in analyses (e.g., behavioral reports). Thus, the student identification number also provides a mechanism to track the youth and their parents longitudinally in relation to character education and education related variables. Confidential code numbers also were assigned to participating educators and school staff for longitudinal assessment efforts.

The survey contains demographic questions that record the participant’s sex, age, involvement in community or school-related activities, and questions relating to television use, video games, homework, and family structure. Additional data was provided by the state and participating local school systems on academic achievement (standardized test scores, GPA), special needs, and free/reduced lunch (SES). In addition to the demographic questions, the survey used multiple questions and scales described in the following paragraphs. The scales on this survey were selected after several pilot runs administered during Phase 1 of the study. The scales are organized by the dimension they fall under in relation to Figure 1. See Tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 for the characteristics of all scales (See Tables 1-5 in Appendix).

**Measurements of Character (Dimension 1):**

*Concern for Others Scale (CFOS).* This 9-item Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure the level of concern that students have for others. Previous research utilizing this scale reports past internal reliabilities ranging from .78 to .81 (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item is “People should look after themselves and not try to solve other people’s problems.”
Assessment of Student Moral and Performance Character Scale (MORC & PERC). Both of these 12-item Likert-type scales (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) were adapted from a part of the Davidson & Khmelkov (2006) CREE assessment survey that focused on performance and moral character development. Reliabilities for these scales have been reported in the .80 ranges. A sample item for the moral character scale is “I admit if I do something wrong.” A sample item for the performance character scale is “I think about my school work and consider whether I need to work harder.”

Self-perceived Character Elements Scale (CHAR). We recently created this Likert-type scale by combining the most widely used character traits/values/virtues/elements (e.g. honesty, respect) that are touted throughout character education and collapsing them down to 19 one word items. For example, respondents can answer as to how much they understand the term “Diligence” on a scale from 1 to 5; with 1 being “I do not know what this is” to 3 being “I know what this is, I think about it often, and practice it occasionally” to 5 being “I know what this is, I think about it often, and practice it constantly.” These items will be studied through educational psychology theories that consider the process of learning going from cognitive to affective to behavioral. At this time no reliabilities or validity tests are available. Please note that this scale is considered too advanced for elementary students and therefore was only utilized in the middle/high school survey.

Misconduct at School (MS). This 4-item Likert-type scale (1 never to 5 ten plus times) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure the level of misconduct that students practice in school. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .74 to .79 (Battistich et al, 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000).
No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item is “Have you ever cheated on a test?”

Altruism Scale (ALT). This 9-item Likert-type scale (1 never to 5 ten plus times) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure the level of altruism that students practice in general. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .80 to .85 (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item is “Have you stood up for someone who was being picked on?”

Note: An additional measure for faculty/staff self-perceived levels of character education integration was configured by using 7 survey items (items 109-112 for faculty, 126-128 for staff) from the faculty/staff survey (see Appendix). This variable sought to provide a beginning measurement as to the amount of character education being implemented in the classrooms and school.

Measurements of Community Engagement (Dimension 2):

Interpersonal Community Engagement Scale (ICE). The ICE scale is a 20-item Likert-type scale that was developed to provide a measurement for the degree to which one is communicatively engaged within one’s community or neighborhood (Corrigan & Walls, 2007). For this study, participants were asked to consider the neighborhood in which they live and answer each item (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). The scale was designed to capture the level of community communication and involvement to better gauge the connection one feels to one’s neighborhood, and
to empirically measure if interpersonal community-based dynamics have a relationship to youth behaviors and educational attitudes. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .89 to .93, and some initial support for construct validity (Corrigan, 2004). A sample item is “My relationships with my neighbors have helped me to be a better person.”

Note: In addition to the ICE scale, involvement in community or school activities at the middle/high school level was measured by several 5-point Likert-type items. The questions asked the participant to “please indicate your level of activity in the following activities based upon your involvement with 1 being the least active and 5 being the most active.” The activities included (1) band, (2) church, (3) family, (4) school (extracurricular), (5) sports teams, (6) youth organizations, and (7) neighborhood.

Measurements of School Climate (Dimension 3):

Sense of School Community (SSAI & SSUP). Both of the 9-item Likert-type sub scales (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) were developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure a sense of school community. The SSAI focuses on the autonomy and influence experienced by the student participant, while SSUP focuses on school supportiveness. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .80 to .82 (Battistich et al, 1995). Numerous studies utilizing this scale offer support for the construct validity of this scale (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Battistich et al, 1995; Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1997; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). A sample item for SSAI is “Students help to decide what goes on at this school.” A sample item for SSUP is “Students at this school are willing to go out of their way to help someone.” Please note that these sub-scales were only used on the middle/high school survey.
Victimization at School (VICS). This 6-item Likert-type scale (1 never to 5 ten plus times) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure the level of victimization students experience at school. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .75 to .79 (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item is “Did someone threaten to hurt you but did not actually hurt you?”

Liking for School (LFS). This 6-item Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure how much students like their school. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .81 to .83 (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item is “My school is a fun place to be.” Please note that due to the length of the middle/high school survey, this scale was used only in the elementary survey.

Loneliness at School (LSS). This 8-item Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure how lonely students feel at their school. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .83 to .85 (Battistich et al., 1995). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item is “I don’t have anyone to hang around with at school.” Please note that due to the length of the middle/high school survey, this scale was used only in the elementary survey.

Measurements of Educational Attitudes (Dimension 6):
Student Motivation Scale (SMS). Brophy (1987) defined student motivation to learn as “a student tendency to find academic activities meaningful and worthwhile and to try to derive the intended academic benefits from them” (p. 205). This study used the Richmond (1990) Student Motivation Scale (SMS) to measure the state of a student’s motivation to learn, which is believed to be intrinsic. The scale consists of 5, five-step bi-polar adjectives (5-point semantic differential scale) with reported previous alpha coefficients of .94 and considerable evidence of construct validity (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994). Responses were given to “immediate feelings about school work.” Examples of the bi-polar adjectives are “motivated-unmotivated” and “interested-uninterested.” For this study, SMS also was used to identify the possible relationship between one’s level of engagement in the community and education-related views. Academic Self-Esteem (ASE). This 4-item Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was developed by the Developmental Studies Center to measure a student’s level of academic self-esteem. Research utilizing this scale reports internal reliabilities ranging from .82 to .84 (Battistich et al, 1995; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of this scale have been identified. A sample item is “I am doing a good job in school.”

Trust in Teachers (TTS) and Trust in Principals (TPS). The trust in teachers scale was originally a six item scale that measured the level of trust a student has in one’s teachers. Due to requests from one of the participating school systems, two negatively worded items were cut from the scale. Also, with permission from the Developmental Studies Center the trust in teachers then was adapted to also measure trust in principals. Research utilizing the trust in teachers scale (as a six item measure) reports internal reliabilities ranging from .75 to .84 (Battistich et al, 1995; Battistich,
Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000). No formal studies supporting the construct validity of the trust in teachers scale have been identified. The trust in principals’ scale is a new adaptation of the trust in teachers scale and will need further research to support construct validity. Both have been edited down to four item scales that measure the level of trust a student has for teachers or principals based upon a five point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. Sample items for these two scales are “The teachers in my classes really care about me” and “The principal in my school really cares about me.”

**Student Perceived Teacher Efficacy Scale (SPTES).** The SPTES is based on Milson’s (2003) Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument. SPTES consists of 24 statements on a five-point Likert-type scale adapted to measure a student’s perception of their teachers’ ability to teach and develop character, rather than teacher’s view of themselves. The original instrument has two scales: 12 items measuring personal teacher efficacy (PTE) and 12 items measuring general teacher efficacy (GTE). The CEEBI scales of PTE demonstrate alpha scores of .80 and GTE scales demonstrate alpha scores of .66. Bi-variate correlations between the scales have been significant and strong at .69. For the first test of the new scale all of the 24 items were rewritten to fit the student perceived view and will be considered in future efforts to factor analyze a more succinct measure. A sample item is “My teachers know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students’ character.” (Please note that Dimensions 4 and 5 are more related to data collected through or on teachers and administrators and will be discussed further in future reports related to the adult participants in the study.)

**F. Statistical Methods/Analyses**
The first part of the analyses focuses on assessing the reliabilities of the scales utilized for this study. The second part examines the similarities and/or possible significant differences between the students’ self-reported survey data from the control and experimental schools on pretests and posttests. Therefore, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) when possible was conducted for this final report utilizing the pretest scores as covariates. Please note that given the age difference between the elementary sample and middle/high school sample, a slightly different survey was administered to collect the data related to the six dimensions. Thus, for the assessment, the elementary and middle/high school students will be analyzed separately. Lastly, to begin considering the possible relationships between character, academic achievement, and educational-related variables, post hoc correlational analyses will be conducted. The initial baseline post hoc analysis was performed separately on the middle/high school sample and the elementary sample. Such an approach allowed us to go beyond examining differences between the control and experimental groups, and help to further (or more specifically) assess the relationships between proposed variables and the baseline homogeneity of the like age groups. Furthermore, such correlational analyses help us to plan for a more strategic use of predictors in a regression analyses planned for future post hoc analysis and/or investigation.

Results (Sub-sections A thru D)

Reliability (Coefficient Alpha) was computed for all of the scales discussed in the Methods section. Past and present reliabilities (as well as validity support) for each scale can be found in Tables 3-7. Most scales showed adequate reliability (.70 to .93) for the baseline and posttest measurements. However, a few of the scales utilized at the elementary level performed less reliably during pretests in comparison to the middle/high school data. Such results might suggest that a
couple of the scales utilized were not age level appropriate to the elementary students in grade 3 at the time of pretests. Furthermore, attrition in the elementary sample (specifically at our 2 experimental schools) has unfortunately led to even smaller numbers of participants, thus compromising the statistical power and validity of results for the elementary sample. Also, there were more than 3 principal turnovers that occurred in the elementary schools during the project. Therefore, special attention to the elementary results should be considered regarding major limitations based upon cell sizes, attrition and turn over. Please note that numerous tests of baseline homogeneity were performed on the sample in regard to the proposed dimensions and factors addressed within this report, and for the most part very few significant differences existed between the control and experimental schools at the beginning of this study. A copy of this baseline report was given to the PCEP in Spring 07, and is available upon request.

Research question one (RQ1) examined if there were significant differences at the time of the pretest and posttest between the control and experimental schools in relation to faculty (control $N=47$, experimental $N=83$) and staff (control $N=7$, experimental $N=22$) perceived levels of character education being integrated. Please note that the survey questions used for measuring character education integration can be reviewed in the appendix. The questions can be found on the staff survey on the last 3 pages. Composite variables were created in SPSS to determine mean scores by computing items 146, 147, 148, 150 and 151 together to determine the level of character education integration and for staff items 153, 154, 155, 156 and 157.

The following is an analysis of perceived character education being integrated at the time of year 2 assessment (baseline assessment). Utilizing a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), control ($M=10.49$, $SD=4.00$) and experimental groups ($M=12.90$, $SD=4.06$) in relation to faculty
perceptions of character education being integrated were found to be significantly different \([F(1, 127) = 10.70, p = .001, \eta^2 = .08]\), while staff perceptions of control \((M = 7.57, SD = 3.35)\) and experimental groups \((M = 8.68, SD = 2.53)\) did not differ significantly \([F(1, 26) = 10.70, p = .358, \eta^2 = .03]\). Although the ANOVA showed that the means of the faculty-perceived character education integration between control and experimental schools were significantly different, the effect size was small to modest. The partial Eta squared \((\eta^2)\) was just .08, which means that the factor by itself accounted for only 8% of the overall (effect + error) variance.

The following is an analysis of perceived character education being integrated at the time of the posttest. Utilizing a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), control \((M = 13.48, SD = 4.63)\) and experimental groups \((M = 16.13, SD = 3.63)\) in relation to faculty perceptions of character education being integrated were found to be significantly different \([F(1, 58) = 6.00, p = .017, \eta^2 = .09]\), while staff perceptions of control \((M = 14.30, SD = 5.42)\) and experimental groups \((M = 15.64, SD = 4.46)\) did not differ significantly \([F(1, 41) = .625, p = .434, \eta^2 = .02]\). Although the ANOVA showed that the means of the faculty-perceived character education integration between control and experimental schools were statistically significantly different, the effect size was small to modest. The partial Eta squared \((\eta^2)\) was just .09, which means that the factor by itself accounted for only 9% of the overall (effect + error) variance.

However, a cross tabulation on a dichotomous (yes or no) survey question (item 145) that asked whether or not the faculty or staff “practiced character education during the past school year” identified that 95% of the experimental faculty said yes compared to 57% of the control faculty and 92% of the experimental staff said yes compared to 41% of the control staff. Furthermore, what we have discovered in our grant projects we evaluate is that some educators think they are doing
Character Education by posting a few words on the bulletin board. Given the shortcomings of the assessments of character integration described above, we also utilized in the posttest a measure that assessed the character education framework we challenged our experimental schools to create. Items 107-143 (the Character Education Infusion Rubric) in the faculty/staff survey are the questions we utilized for this assessment to look more deeply if the character education framework integrated addressed quality of the framework, leadership involvement in framework, school climate, school belonging, curriculum integration of lessons, school vision, parent involvement and student involvement. This assessment is referred to as the Character Education Infusion Rubric and has shown the 8 subscale reliabilities ranging from .89-.96. Utilizing an ANOVA, control ($M = 111.77$, $SD = 28.66$) and experimental ($M = 143.76$, $SD = 21.26$) faculty/staff groups in relation to character education infusion rubric scores were found to be significantly different [$F(1, 79) = 33.05$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .30$]. Therefore it is evident that the experimental schools though similar in cursory examination of character education integration were fairly similar to control, however when measurement goes deeper to look at the level and quality of a framework being addressed the experimental schools were significantly different.

Research question two (RQ2), sought to examine if there were significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in relation to behavioral reports. However, once the midterm data were received from all schools, it became apparent that several schools (mainly the two control schools in the middle/high school sample, and nearly all of the elementary schools) did not report such formal data by code to the state agency. Also, at the mid-term assessment we determined that many of the schools statewide used different behavior codes to represent similar behavior incidents. Further qualitative investigation
showed that behavioral reports are not accurately reported by many principals. Therefore, although ANCOVAs (if performed) most likely would suggest major significant differences at the middle/high school level, a high probability exists that such measurements were not accurate as to the number of behavior incidents taking place. Thus we have not included this data due to bias, consistency issues and quality control. Verbal reports obtained through interviews with experimental middle/high schools suggest violent behavior such as fights dropped dramatically during the course of the grant.

Research Question 3 (RQ3), while statistically controlling for baseline measurements, examined if there are significant differences after the first year of implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in academic achievement. For this analysis, we utilized the Westest Scores (West Virginia’s standardized test) to assess academic achievement. Although these scores unfortunately are not designed or necessarily capable of providing longitudinal assessments representative of individual student achievement, they do provide the most reliable assessment of the success of each school at the two given testing times. Utilizing a Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), while controlling for 1st year baseline measurements of math scores, control ($M = 710.46, SD = 49.90$) and experimental groups ($M = 719.87, SD = 48.15$) in relation to mid-term math scores were found to be significantly different [$F(1, 283) = 11.88, p = .001, \eta^2 = .04$] at the middle high school level, while elementary control and experimental did not differ significantly [$F(1, 84) = 1.57, p = .213, \eta^2 = .02$]. Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for 1st year baseline measurements of reading scores, control and experimental groups in relation to midterm reading scores were found to not be significantly different [$F(1, 283) = .00, p = .973, \eta^2 = .00$] at the middle high school level, while elementary control and experimental also did not differ significantly [$F(1, 84) = .844, p = .361, \eta^2 = .01$]. Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for 1st
year baseline measurements of science scores, control and experimental groups in relation to midterm science scores were found to not be significantly different \( F(1, 283) = .28, p = .614, \eta^2 = .00 \) at the middle high school level. Note elementary students are not tested on science. Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for 1st year baseline measurements of social studies scores, control and experimental groups in relation to midterm social studies scores were found to not be significantly different \( F(1, 283) = .00, p = .973, \eta^2 = .00 \) at the middle high school level. Note elementary students are not tested on social studies. Therefore, the only significant differences identified in year 2 baseline was with the experimental middle/high school sample showing significantly higher math scores.

For the final posttest analysis of Westest scores, we performed an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The reason we did not perform an ANCOVA is because the Westest underwent a comprehensive restructuring for 2008/2009 to become more focused on critical thinking skills (referred to as Westest 2) and 2008/2009 served as the pilot run for this new state assessment. Utilizing an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), control \( (M = 690.88, SD = 38.31) \) and experimental groups \( (M = 708.82, SD = 46.61) \) in relation to mid-term math scores were found to be significantly different \( F(1, 115) = 11.25, p = .01, \eta^2 = .08 \) on total math scores as well as significantly different \( F(1, 114) = 10.06, p = .002, \eta^2 = .09 \) on total math proficiency scores at the middle high school level with the experimental schools scoring statistically higher, while elementary control \( (M = 681.73, SD = 32.30) \) and experimental \( (M = 684.15, SD = 25.74) \) did not differ significantly \( F(1, 74) = .016, p = .901, \eta^2 = .00 \). Utilizing an ANOVA, control \( (M = 677.50, SD = 41.19) \) and experimental \( (M = 689.11, SD = 28.05) \) groups in relation to total reading scores were found to not be significantly different \( F(1, 114) = 2.99, p = .087, \eta^2 = .03 \) at the middle high school level.
However, an ANOVA did identify a statistically significant difference \( F(1, 115) = 5.75, p = .01, \eta^2_p = .05 \) in relation to total reading proficiency scores with the experimental school scoring significantly higher, while elementary control \( (M = 661.80, SD = 27.05) \) and experimental \( (M = 669.69, SD = 30.89) \) did not differ significantly \( F(1, 74) = .796, p = .375, \eta^2_p = .01 \). Note that science and social studies scores were not provided for 2008/2009 Westest scores. Please note that no significant differences were identified at the elementary level between control and experimental schools in relation to GPA, but statistically significant differences \( F(1, 181) = 5.00, p = .01, \eta^2_p = .03 \) were identified at the middle school level in relation to GPA with the experimental middle/high school sample registering higher. Therefore, from pretest to posttest, though no significant increases were identified at the elementary level, the middle/high school experimental sample retained a significantly higher math performance while also becoming more proficient in reading as well as reporting significantly higher GPAs. See Tables 8a-9e for elementary school scores and Tables 11a and 12a-12e for middle/high school scores pertaining to academic achievement.

Research Question 4 (RQ4), while controlling for baseline measurements, examined if there are significant differences after the first year of implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in extracurricular activities. To measure the level of engagement in extracurricular activities, we computed a composite variable encompassing middle/high school students’ self-reported levels of activity in band, school activities, sports, volunteerism, and youth organizations. These activities were assessed using a Likert-type scale with 1 being not at all active to 5 being constantly active. Therefore the possible range of this score is 5 to 25. Note that after first year piloting of the elementary survey, measuring such activity at the elementary level did not seem relevant due to a lack of activities offered at the school or in the rural communities. Utilizing an
ANCOVA, while controlling for baseline measurements of extracurricular activities, control and experimental groups in relation to posttest extracurricular activities scores were found to not be significantly different \[F(1, 260) = 2.26, p = .133, \eta^2 = .09\] at the middle high school level.

Research Question 5 (RQ5), while controlling for baseline measurements, examined if there are significant differences after the first year of implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in parental and community engagement (Dimension 2). One scale used to measure this factor to measure a student connection to the community was the interpersonal community engagement scale. Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for baseline measurements of interpersonal community engagement, control and experimental groups in relation to posttest interpersonal community engagement scores were found to not be significantly different \[F(1, 251) = .955, p = .329, \eta^2 = .004\] at the middle high school level, while elementary control and experimental did not differ significantly \[F(1, 76) = .28, p = .597, \eta^2 = .004\]. Several other survey items from the character education infusion rubric were used to assess parent involvement in the school. Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for baseline parent involvement measures, control \((M = 8.16, SD = 2.35)\) and experimental groups \((M = 10.90, SD = 1.96)\) in relation to educators’ perceptions of parent involvement in school were found to be significantly different \[F(1, 83) = 30.28, p = .001, \eta^2 = .27\]. Elementary schools were not assessed for parent involvement. See Tables 10j and 15k for more details pertaining to interpersonal community engagement.

Research Question 6 (RQ6), examined if there are significant differences between the control and experimental groups in regard to faculty and administrative involvement. As a result of numerous encouraged or mandated character education workshops, training sessions, and the high
activity of character development teams (teams of teachers within the experimental schools) it would qualitatively and quantitatively appear that an increase of faculty and administrative involvement has occurred and that experimental school faculty/administrative activity are more engaged than the control schools in relation to being involved in the character education integration and teacher efficacy. Note that a qualitative assessment of such activities is attached. Utilizing an ANOVA on data collected on faculty perceptions at the final posttest, control and experimental groups in relation to several factors measured by the Character Education (CE) Infusion Rubric were found to be significantly different (i.e., experimental schools significantly higher) on: multi-dimensional CE infusion \[F(1, 79) = 33.44, p = .001, \eta^2 = .297;\] Principal leadership \[F(1, 79) = 30.96, p = .001, \eta^2 = .282;\] and professional development \[F(1, 79) = 31.10, p = .001, \eta^2 = .282.\] Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for baseline measurements of student perceived teacher efficacy, control and experimental groups in relation to posttest teacher efficacy scores were found to be significantly different \[F(1, 246) = 11.25, p = .001, \eta^2 = .044\] at the middle/high school level (see Table 13o). Furthermore, RQ1 provides additional quantitative evidence that significantly more activity in regard to character education is taking place within the experimental schools.

Research Question 7 (RQ7), while controlling for baseline measurements, examined if there are significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in student and staff morale/school climate (see Methods section for breakdown of Dimension 3 School Climate measurements), and other self-reported educational attitudes (see Methods section for breakdown of Dimension 6 measurements).

Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for baseline measurements of Dimension 3 school
climate measurements, control and experimental groups in relation to posttest Dimension 3 scores were found to be significantly different at the middle high school level (according to student data) with experimental schools scoring higher in: Sense of School Community (SSAI- autonomy and influence) \[ F(1, 259) = 16.84, p= .001, \eta^2 = .06 \]; Sense of School Community (SSUP-supportiveness) \[ F(1, 258) = 14.94, p= .001, \eta^2 = .06 \]; as well as lower victimization in experimental schools \[ F(1, 256) = 4.158, p= .04, \eta^2 = .02 \] (see Tables 10e-g, 10i, 13k-l, and 15e-f). Note attrition in the elementary school sample severely challenged the ability to run any meaningful analysis, and ANCOVAs utilized to examine elementary control and experimental did not identify any significant differences in liking of the school. Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for baseline measurements of Dimension 3 school climate measurements, control and experimental groups in relation to posttest Dimension 3 scores were found to be significantly different according to faculty/staff data with experimental schools scoring higher in: Sense of School Community (SSAI-autonomy and influence) \[ F(1, 126) = 22.17, p= .001, \eta^2 = .15 \]; and Sense of School Community (SSUP-supportiveness) \[ F(1, 125) = 31.93, p= .001, \eta^2 = .203 \].

Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for baseline measurements of Dimension 6 measurements (student educational attitudes), control and experimental groups in relation to posttest Dimension 6 scores reported from the middle school student sample were found to be significantly different on trust in teachers with experimental schools reporting statistically significant higher scores \[ F(1, 258) = 8.26, p= .004, \eta^2 = .031 \] at the middle high school level, while elementary control and experimental did not differ significantly \[ F(1, 76) = .35, p= .556, \eta^2 = .005 \]. Analysis also did not identify any significant differences between the experimental and control schools on student motivation to learn or academic self-esteem. See Tables 10a-c, 10k, and 13b-d for more
Research Question 8 (RQ8), while controlling for baseline measurements of student character, examined if there are significant differences after the implementation between the control and experimental groups (of participating students) in levels of student character (Dimension 1). Utilizing an ANCOVA, while controlling for baseline measurements of Dimension 1 measurements, control and experimental groups in relation to posttest Dimension 1 middle/high school students levels were found to be significantly different with experimental school students reporting higher scores in Self-perceived Character Elements \( F(1, 255) = 6.39, p = .012, \eta^2 = .024 \) and lower in Misconduct \( F(1, 259) = 6.21, p = .013, \eta^2 = .023 \). Statistically significant differences were not identified in Concern for Others, Performance Character, Moral Character or Altruism in middle/high school students. Additionally, no significant differences were identified between the elementary samples besides control schools showing a slight statistical significant increase on Concern for Others \( F(1, 76) = 4.81, p = .031, \eta^2 = .059 \). See Tables 10h,l, and m as well as 13a,e, j, k, m and n. However, ANCOVAs performed on the faculty/staff data showed statistically significant increases for the experimental schools on: Character Elements \( F(1, 122) = 17.28, p = .001, \eta^2 = .124 \); Performance Character \( F(1, 123) = 28.37, p = .001, \eta^2 = .187 \); and Moral Character \( F(1, 123) = 15.41, p = .001, \eta^2 = .111 \). Please note that experimental school faculty/staff reported statistically significant higher scores on all variables measured except for Concern for Others. See Tables 15a, b, c and j.

As part of a post hoc analysis effort to go beyond accounting for pretest/posttest comparisons and to begin exploring how the components of the dimensional model work together and relate to academic achievement, research question nine (RQ9) examined the relationships shared between the
dimensions and academic achievement. These correlations were performed separately on the elementary and middle/high school samples in regard to each of the six dimensions and how they relate to academic achievement. Pearson correlations identified numerous significant relationships between academic achievement scores and the measurements or scales used to assess all of the proposed dimensions. Basically, the results from the correlational analyses offer support to the hypothesis that a multi-dimensional model of character education relates positively to academic achievement. Therefore, the post hoc analyses provide that when a student’s self-reported levels of character, community engagement, educational attitudes, as well as views of school climate increase, theoretically so will one’s academic achievement. See Tables 16A through 20A for the complete listings of the Pearson correlations and p-values.

Discussion (Sub-sections A thru G)

The results of the pretest assessment (provided for this grant's midterm report) highlighted that at the beginning of this grant’s character education intervention; for the most part the control and experimental schools were quite similar. Some significant differences from the final analysis that should catch one’s attention, however, are that the experimental schools’ middle/high students report significantly higher levels of: 1.) character in relation to cognition, affect and behavior, higher trust in teachers; 2.) school supportiveness and opportunity for autonomy and influence; 3) teacher efficacy; and 4.) lower levels of misconduct and victimization. Also, the middle/high school experimental schools achievement scores were significantly higher than the control schools in reading and math as well as GPA. Additionally, the experimental school faculty/staff report a higher level of character education framework infusion as well as statistically significant higher scores related to their perceptions of the students’ attitudes and character, community engagement, faculty
fidelity, school leadership and school climate. The experimental faculty/staff feel they now are implementing or integrating more character education than the control schools and in the experimental middle/high school students are scoring significantly higher on standardized reading and math achievement assessments. Also, staff and faculty at the experimental schools report significantly more parent involvement than that which the control schools are experiencing.

These differences did not exist at the time of baseline measurements. Though these results (due to limitations to be discussed shortly) do not suggest or come close to supporting a causal relationship between character education and increases in school climate, student character, faculty/staff morale or academic achievement, the results do document that statistically significant increases within numerous educational dimensions as well as achievement occurred during the grant in the middle/high school experimental schools. Also the attached qualitative report documents a difference in the attitudes and level of practice related to character education.

Post hoc correlation analyses provide reliable evidence that character, as well as the other proposed dimension of character education, are significantly and positively related to academic achievement. A positive relationship suggests that when one variable goes up or down the related variable goes up or down accordingly. Therefore, we gather from this sample and study that when one’s character is more positively self-perceived, one’s academic achievement shows higher levels of success. The question to be answered from future research on such grants, however, is whether or not the replication of intervention studies can provide causal evidence linked to increased levels of perceived character, school climate, community engagement, and educational attitudes to a level that does lead to increasing academic achievement. One such correlation result that we plan to keep a close eye on (but was not included in the results but outlined in table 9a) was the relationship
between the total middle/high school student scores for Dimensions 1, 2, 3, and 6 to student scores on the standardized social study test. Dimensions 1, 2, 3, and 6 were significantly related to the midterm social science scores ($r = .21$ to $0.37$, $p < .001$ to .02) and social studies scores were strongly related to the math, reading, and science. With such a strict focus on reading and math achievement scores in many school systems, such relationships are what we plan to study more closely through future post hoc analysis.

The data also highlight that there are a few limitations that should be addressed. Tables 3 through 6 illustrate that very few of the scales utilized within this study (and also within character education in general) have gone through a formal construct validation effort. Therefore, major efforts to perform validation studies to improve scales related to each dimension have been the focus of our (the evaluators) ongoing evaluation efforts on other grants and contracts. Also, the elementary sample provided a few challenges when it came to statistical power and cell sizes as well as principal turnover. Given the smaller populations associated with rural elementary schools and differing class sizes in the control and experimental samples, plus a great level of attrition due to many families having to move to larger cities to find work during the economic downturn that took place during this study, and a great amount of turnover in teacher staff and principals, the elementary sample did not produce very many results. It is also important to note that a change in project director took place in year 3 of the grant and left the grant without an official manager for several months to insure continued integration and support. Also, the shortcomings of the reported behavior codes will provide additional challenges to using behavior reports as GPRA measures.

**Summary**

With a heavy reliance upon standardized testing and accountability issues abound with
NCLB, one might consider the historically controversial debate relating to the normal distribution of the intelligence quotient (IQ). The theory that individual differences in intelligence are distributed in strict accordance with a normal distribution curve was proposed by Thorndike (1927), a leader during the earlier 1900’s in the field of educational measurement. However, others like Burt (1963) suggested that a strict focus on the normal distribution of IQ could lead to an underestimation of the number of gifted children within a school. Regardless, of which camp of thought one subscribes to, the mass of research does suggest that there is a wide variability of intelligence across children of like ages. Therefore, one might debate if a challenging curriculum and intensive instruction within a public setting can actually change IQ levels (e.g., intelligence) significantly, which ultimately lead to increased test scores.

The question remains as to what is the best way to increase academic success (e.g., standardized test scores) and which educational models could be more effective in achieving such goals. Past approaches have suggested that a significant increase in test scores and higher levels of learning could be captured through more demanding and strictly structured curricula and heavier testing. Yet some feel this approach is leading to creating better test takers and not necessarily more superior students or young citizens entering our workforce and preparing for the test of life. The Skinnerian-view would propose that we could increase motivation through positive reinforcement for learning to take place at a greater rate and deeper level. The verdict is still out on solving this conundrum, and discovering what is best for our society’s education system.

Yet from the qualitative findings of our research we have heard from third graders that say they are “too stressed.” Through numerous focus groups teachers, parents, and students have expressed concerns that there is “too much focus on high stakes testing.” One might wonder if the
not so proficient national scores (or inability to shrink the achievement gaps) are a reflection of such a lack of motivation due to a testing burnout effect. One thing for sure, for many who teach, it is very clear that not all of our students are going to become brain surgeons or rocket scientists. Many are predisposed and nurtured to perform several standard deviations below the genius level, and sometimes below average. Thus, the challenge is to prepare our students, no matter what one’s level of intelligence, to do the best that they can in the modern day world of standards-based and norm-referenced education while preparing to become an outstanding citizen.

With character education efforts, the hope lies within creating students who are responsible, diligent, and more motivated to learn the essential skills to meeting NCLB demands as well as becoming contributing members of society. Theoretically, children are more motivated to perform to their highest ability when they are inspired and feel a need to make one’s mentors proud. Theoretically, children can accomplish such goals more often in learning environments that offer a supportive, caring, and constructive avenue to academic success. If current efforts to increase proficiency rates across all children are falling short of expectations, is it possible for schools practicing integrated character education models to increase academic performance through enhancing a positive learning environment and increasing motivation to succeed? The results of this research project offer hope that such goals are possible. Future research into the efficacy of character education should closely examine this possibility.
References


Character Education (June, 2007) (www.eric.gov), Available at
Character education... Our shared responsibility (2007) (www.cetac.org), Available at


Psychology of Education, 4, 3-51.


Appendix A

TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th>Item Scale</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Alpha Reliabilities&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Validities&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Concern for Others Scale</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>9-45</td>
<td>Previous: .78-.81</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .68-.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moral Character</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>12-60</td>
<td>Previous: .80</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .59-.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Performance Character</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>12-60</td>
<td>Previous: .80</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .63-.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-Perceived Character Elements Scale</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>19-95</td>
<td>Previous: n/a</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .90-.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Misconduct at Scale</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>4-20</td>
<td>Previous: .74-.79</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .72-.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Altruism Scale</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>9-45</td>
<td>Previous: .80-.85</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .69-.83</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Note: Alpha Reliabilities refer to internal consistency of the scale (Coefficient Alpha).

<sup>b</sup>Note: Validities provide the types of validities (content, construct, predictive-criterion-related, concurrent-criterion-related) that have been reported.

<sup>c</sup>Note: The reliability coefficients designated with "c" represent alphas that were collected specifically on the elementary samples.
### TABLE 4

**Characteristics of Dimension 2 Scale Measuring Community Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th>Item Scale</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Alpha Reliabilities</th>
<th>Validities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Interpersonal Community Engagement</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>20-140</td>
<td>Previous: .93</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .85–.95</td>
<td>construct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Alpha Reliabilities refer to internal consistency of the scale (Coefficient Alpha).*

*Note: Validities provide the types of validities (content, construct, predictive-criterion-related, concurrent-criterion-related) that have been reported.*

*Note: The reliability coefficients designated with “c” represent alphas that were collected specifically on the elementary samples.*

### TABLE 5

**Characteristics of Dimension 3 Scales Measuring School Climate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th>Item Scale</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Alpha Reliabilities</th>
<th>Validities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sense of School Community (SSAI)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>9-45</td>
<td>Previous: .80–.82</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .71–.85</td>
<td>construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sense of School Community (SSUP)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>9-45</td>
<td>Previous: .80–.82</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .84–.94</td>
<td>construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Victimization at School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>6-30</td>
<td>Previous: .75–.79</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .80–.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Liking for School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>6-30</td>
<td>Previous: .81–.83</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .78–.81c</td>
<td>construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Loneliness at School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>8-40</td>
<td>Previous: .83–.85</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .83c</td>
<td>construct</td>
</tr>
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*Note: Alpha Reliabilities refer to internal consistency of the scale (Coefficient Alpha).*

*Note: Validities provide the types of validities (content, construct, predictive-criterion-related, concurrent-criterion-related) that have been reported.*

*Note: The reliability coefficients designated with “c” represent alphas that were collected specifically on the elementary samples.*
### TABLE 6

**Characteristics of Dimension 6 Scales Measuring Educational Attitudes**

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<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th>Item Scale</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Alpha Reliabilities&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Validities&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student Motivation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>5-25</td>
<td>Previous: .94</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .83&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;-.87</td>
<td>construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Academic Self-esteem</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>4-20</td>
<td>Previous: .82-.84</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .70&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;-.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Trust in Teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>4-20</td>
<td>Previous: .75-.84</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .74&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;-.88</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Trust in Principals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>4-20</td>
<td>Previous: .75-.84</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Present: .80&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;-.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Student Perceived Teacher Efficacy</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>24-120</td>
<td>Previous: .88-.91</td>
<td>content</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present: .88-.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<sup>a</sup>*Note: Alpha Reliabilities refer to internal consistency of the scale (Coefficient Alpha).*

<sup>b</sup>*Note: Validities provide the types of validities (content, construct, predictive-criterion-related, concurrent-criterion-related) that have been reported.*

<sup>c</sup>*Note: The reliability coefficients designated with "c" represent alphas that were collected specifically on the elementary samples.*
Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Student Midhi</th>
<th>Student Elem</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 06</td>
<td>Sp 08</td>
<td>F 06</td>
<td>Sp 08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character elements</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td>0.903</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance character</td>
<td>0.767</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td><strong>0.629</strong></td>
<td>0.812</td>
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<td>Moral character</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td><strong>0.588</strong></td>
<td>0.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic self esteem</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>0.813</td>
<td>0.717</td>
<td>0.811</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of school community</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td>0.893</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student autonomy and influence</td>
<td>0.824</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation to learn</td>
<td>0.783</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>0.828</td>
<td>0.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in teachers</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td>0.827</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust in principals</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>0.924</td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td>0.841</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern for others</td>
<td>0.805</td>
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<td>0.781</td>
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<td>Interpersonal community engagement</td>
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<td>0.851</td>
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<td>Misconduct</td>
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<td>0.809</td>
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<td>School liking</td>
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Table 8-A + B: Mean +/- SD test scores for control and experimental groups in participating Elementary schools

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Table 8-B: Mean +/- SD on total scale scores

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<td>8.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
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<td>8. ALTS</td>
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<td>9. VICS</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
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<td>46.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<td>13. MOC</td>
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<td>9.9</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1 = Academic self esteem; 2 = Trust in teachers; 3 = Trust in principals; 4 = Compassion for others; 5 = School liking; 6 = School loneliness; 7 = Misconduct; 8 = Altruism; 9 = Victimization; 10 = Interpersonal community engagement; 11 = Student motivation; 12 = Performance; 13 = Moral.

Table 9: Analysis of Covariance Summary for Academic Achievement in participating Elementary schools. (Note: Pretests collected in Fall 2006 are used as a baseline measurement and controlled for statistically as covariates in determining posttest Spring 2008 significant differences between experimental and control groups.)

Table 9-A: Total math scores for state achievement test

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Source</th>
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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest (Math)</td>
<td>36436.99</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>6.354</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>405.6</td>
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**p < 0.01

Table 9-B: Total math Proficiency scores for state achievement test

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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest (Math Prof)</td>
<td>34.89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34.89</td>
<td>64.6**</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>39.94</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>.540</td>
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**p < 0.01
### Table 9-C: Total reading scores for state achievement test

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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Reading)</td>
<td>12067.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12067.22</td>
<td>17.96**</td>
<td>.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>534.7</td>
<td>.796</td>
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<td>Error</td>
<td>49718.85</td>
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<td>671.9</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 9-D: Total reading proficiency scores for state achievement test

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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Reading Prof)</td>
<td>25.59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.59</td>
<td>68.3**</td>
<td>.483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.401</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 9-E: Total GPA scores

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<td>Pretest (GPA)</td>
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<td>.126</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.003</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 10: Analysis of Covariance Summary for Total Scales in participating Elementary schools. (Note: Pretests collected in Fall 2006 are used as a baseline measurement and controlled for statistically as covariates in determining posttest Spring 2008 significant differences between experimental and control groups.)

#### Table 10-A: Total scale for Academic Self Esteem

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Ass)</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.006</td>
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<td>Error</td>
<td>757.64</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>9.97</td>
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**p < 0.01

#### Table 10-B: Total scale for Trust in Teachers

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest (Tts)</td>
<td>87.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>87.67</td>
<td>4.91*</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1358.24</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>17.87</td>
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*p < 0.05
### Table 10-C: Total scale for Trust in Principals

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<td>9.59**</td>
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<td>7.07</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 10-D: Total scale for Compassion for Others

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<td>Pretest (Cfos)</td>
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<td>184.81</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>184.81</td>
<td>4.81*</td>
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<td>2921.4</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2921.4</td>
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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

### Table 10-E: Total scale for School Liking

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<td>Pretest (Lhs)</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 10-F: Total scale for School Isolation

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*p < 0.05

### Table 10-G: Total scale for Misconduct

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<td>Pretest (Mst)</td>
<td>185.97</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 10-H: Total scale for Altruism

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<td>Pretest (Alts)</td>
<td>831.78</td>
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<td>.052</td>
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<td>76</td>
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**p < 0.01
### Table 10-I: Total scale for Victimization

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<td>Pretest (Vic)</td>
<td>485.46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>485.46</td>
<td>15.7**</td>
<td>.171</td>
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<td>Method</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>.006</td>
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<td>Error</td>
<td>2354.39</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>30.98</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 10-J: Total scale for Interpersonal Community Engagement

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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Ice)</td>
<td>5939.71</td>
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<td>5939.71</td>
<td>28.81**</td>
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<td>Method</td>
<td>58.16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58.16</td>
<td>.282</td>
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<td>Error</td>
<td>15667.93</td>
<td>73</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 10-K: Total scale for Student Motivation

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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Smk)</td>
<td>14.41</td>
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<td>14.41</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>22.24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22.24</td>
<td>.745</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2268.92</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>29.85</td>
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### Table 10-L: Total scale for Performance characters

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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest (Perf)</td>
<td>1335.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1335.5</td>
<td>18.41**</td>
<td>.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>45.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45.35</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>5514.31</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72.56</td>
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</table>

**p < 0.01

### Table 10-M: Total scale for Moral characters

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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Morc)</td>
<td>1811.48</td>
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<td>1811.48</td>
<td>23.0**</td>
<td>.252</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>5985.26</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78.75</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 11: Mean +/- SD test scores for control and experimental groups in participating Middle & High schools

<table>
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<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
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<td>Control</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math Proficiency</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
<td>678</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Proficiency</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 11-B: Mean +/- SD on total scale scores

<table>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>SE</th>
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<td>9. VICS</td>
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<td>69.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. SMS</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
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Note. 1 = Academic self-esteem, 2 = Trust in teachers, 3 = Trust in principals, 4 = Compassion for others, 5 = Sense of school community, 6 = Student autonomy & influence, 7 = Misconduct, 8 = Altruism, 9 = Victimization, 10 = Interpersonal community engagement, 11 = Student motivation, 12 = Character, 13 = Performance, 14 = Moral, 15 = Teacher efficacy.

Table 12: Analysis of Covariance Summary for Academic Achievement in participating Middle & High schools.
(Note: Pretests collected in Fall 2000 are used as a baseline measurement and controlled for statistically as covariates in determining posttest Spring 2003 significant differences between experimental and control groups.)

Table 12-A: Total Math scores for state achievement test

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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Math)</td>
<td>76972.53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76972.53</td>
<td>66.84**</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>11586.67</td>
<td>10.06**</td>
<td>.081</td>
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<td>114</td>
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**p < 0.01

Table 12-B: Total Math Proficiency scores for state achievement test

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<td>Pretest (Math Prof)</td>
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<td>56.08</td>
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<td>.551</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4.46</td>
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**p < 0.01

Table 12-C: Total Reading scores for state achievement test

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<td>68293.04</td>
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**p < 0.01
Table 11-B: Mean +/- SD on total scale scores

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<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>SE</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>16.3</td>
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<td>68.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>74.3</td>
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</table>

Note: 1 = Academic self-esteem; 2 = Trust in teachers; 3 = Trust in principals; 4 = Compassion for others; 5 = Sense of school community; 6 = Student autonomy & influence; 7 = Misconduct; 8 = Altruism; 9 = Victimization; 10 = Interpersonal community engagement; 11 = Student motivation; 12 = Character; 13 = Performance; 14 = Moral; 15 = Teacher efficacy.

Table 12: Analysis of Covariance Summary for Academic Achievement in participating Middle & High schools.
(Note: Pretests collected in Fall 2006 are used as a baseline measurement and controlled for statistically as covariates in determining posttest Spring 2008 significant differences between experimental and control groups.)

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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Math)</td>
<td>76972.53</td>
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<td>76972.53</td>
<td>66.84**</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>11586.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11586.67</td>
<td>10.06**</td>
<td>.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>131275.9</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1151.5</td>
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**p < 0.01

Table 12-B: Total Math Proficiency scores for state achievement test

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>56.08</td>
<td>141.35**</td>
<td>.551</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>11.25**</td>
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**p < 0.01

Table 12-C: Total Reading scores for state achievement test

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<td>Pretest (Reading)</td>
<td>68293.04</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68293.04</td>
<td>102.53**</td>
<td>.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>1990.83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1990.83</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.026</td>
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**p < 0.01
### Table 12-D: Total Reading Proficiency scores for state achievement test

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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

### Table 12-E: Total GPA scores for state achievement test

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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

### Table 13: Analysis of Covariance Summary for Total Scales in participating Middle & High schools. (Note: Pretests collected in Fall 2000 are used as a baseline measurement and controlled for statistically as covariates in determining posttest Spring 2008 significant differences between experimental and control groups.)

#### Table 13-A: Total scale for Character elements

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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

#### Table 13-B: Total scale for Academic self esteem

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<th>F</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<td>.342</td>
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**p < 0.01

#### Table 13-C: Total scale for Trust in teachers

<table>
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<th>Sum of Squares</th>
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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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**p < 0.01

#### Table 13-D: Total scale for Trust in principals

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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 13-E: Total scale for Compassion for others</th>
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<td>Error</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Alts)</td>
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<td>Method</td>
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### Table 13-K: Total scale for Misconduct

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<td>1</td>
<td>67.05</td>
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<td>2797.53</td>
<td>259</td>
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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

### Table 13-L: Total scale for Victimization

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<td>Pretest (Vics)</td>
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<td>57.86**</td>
<td>.184</td>
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<td>84.28</td>
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<td>5189.01</td>
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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

### Table 13-M: Total scale for Performance characters

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<td>Pretest (Perf)</td>
<td>4580.68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4580.68</td>
<td>66.04**</td>
<td>.274</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>.784</td>
<td>.003</td>
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<td>Error</td>
<td>12114.91</td>
<td>254</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 13-N: Total scale for Moral characters

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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Morc)</td>
<td>3569.6</td>
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<td>78.24**</td>
<td>.244</td>
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<tr>
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<td>53.86</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.005</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 13-O: Total scale for Teacher efficacy

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<td>Pretest (Te)</td>
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<td>.172</td>
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<td>Method</td>
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<td>1912.65</td>
<td>11.25*</td>
<td>.044</td>
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<td>41833.9</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>170.06</td>
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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01
Table 14: Mean +/- SD test scores for control and experimental groups of Educators

<table>
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<td>Experimental</td>
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<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Char</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perf</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Morc</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ASE</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. SSUP</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SSAl</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SMS</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. TTS</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>9. TPS</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. COFS</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. ICE</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1 = Character; 2 = Performance; 3 = Moral; 4 = Academic self esteem; 5 = Sense of school community; 6 = Student autonomy & influence; 7 = Student motivation; 8 = Trust in teachers; 9 = Trust in principals; 10 = Compassion for others; 11 = Interpersonal community engagement.

Table 15: Analysis of Covariance Summary for Total Scales for Educators. (Note: Pretests collected in Spring 2007 are used as a baseline measurement and controlled for statistically as covariates in determining posttest Spring 2008 significant differences between experimental and control groups.)

### Table 15-A: Total scale for Character elements

<table>
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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<tr>
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<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>2177.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2177.15</td>
<td>17.3*</td>
<td>.124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>15370.12</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>126</td>
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</table>

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

### Table 15-B: Total scale for Performance character

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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Perf)</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>.113</td>
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<td>Method</td>
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<td>322.3</td>
<td>28.4**</td>
<td>.187</td>
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<td>2264.1</td>
<td>123</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 15-C: Total scale for Moral character

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<td>Pretest (Morc)</td>
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<td>.233</td>
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<tr>
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<td>429.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>429.6</td>
<td>15.4**</td>
<td>.111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>3428</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>27.9</td>
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**p < 0.01
**Table 15-D: Total scale for Academic self esteem**

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<tr>
<td>Pretest (Ase)</td>
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<td>.04</td>
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<tr>
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<td>70.6</td>
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<td>70.6</td>
<td>31.3**</td>
<td>.199</td>
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<td>284.1</td>
<td>126</td>
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*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

**Table 15-E: Total scale for Sense of school community**

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<tr>
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<td>442.4</td>
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<td>Error</td>
<td>1732.2</td>
<td>125</td>
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**p < 0.01

**Table 15-F: Total scale for Student autonomy & influence**

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<td>365.7</td>
<td>22.2**</td>
<td>.15</td>
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<td>Error</td>
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**p < 0.01

**Table 15-G: Total scale for Student motivation**

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<td>153.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>127</td>
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**p < 0.01

**Table 15-H: Total scale for Trust in teachers**

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**p < 0.01

**Table 15-I: Total scale for Trust in principles**

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<td>Error</td>
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**p < 0.01
### Table 15-J: Total scale for Compassion for others

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<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<td>Method</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.02</td>
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**p < 0.01

### Table 15-K: Total scale for Intrinsic community engagement

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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Error</td>
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**p < 0.01

Table 16A

**Pearson Correlations Between Middle/High School Students Academic Achievement and Self-reported Character (Dimension 1)**

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<th>2</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<td>1. WST</td>
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<td>.51**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>- .05</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. GPA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>- .25**</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<td>3. CFOS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>- .25**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. MCHAR</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
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<td>.27**</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. PCHAR</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>.51**</td>
<td>- .45**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
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<td>6. ECHAR</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>.11*</td>
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*p < .05, **p < .001
Table 16B

Pearson Correlations Between Elementary Students
Academic Achievement and Self-reported Character (Dimension 1)

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Table 17A

*Pearson Correlations Between Middle/High School Students Academic Achievement and Self-reported Community Engagement (Dimension 2)*

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Table 17B

**Pearson Correlations Between Elementary Students Academic Achievement and Self-reported Community Engagement (Dimension 2)**

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* p<.05, ** p<.001

Table 18A

**Pearson Correlations Between Middle/High School Academic Achievement and School Climate (Dimension 3)**

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*Note.* Dashes were used to avoid repeating the correlation twice on the table or to indicate that the correlation of an item with itself was not reported. Scales were abbreviated with the following acronyms: 1. WST= Westest (Standardized test score), 2. GPA= Grade point average, 3. SSAI= Sense of School Climate in Autonomy and Influence, 4. VICS= Victimization in School, 5. SSUP= Sense of School Climate in Supportiveness. Furthermore, anything that was at the .01 level was designated .001.

* p<.05, ** p<.001
Table 18B

Pearson Correlations Between Elementary School Academic Achievement and School Climate (Dimension 3)

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Note. Dashes were used to avoid repeating the correlation twice on the table or to indicate that the correlation of an item with itself was not reported. Scales were abbreviated with the following acronyms: 1. WST= Westest (Standardized test score), 2. GPA= Grade point average, 3. LFS= Liking for school, 4. VICS= Victimization in School, 5. LSS= Loneliness at School. Furthermore, anything that was at the .01 level was designated .05. *p<.05, **p<.001

Table 19A

Pearson Correlations Between Middle/High School Students Academic Achievement and Educational Attitudes (Dimension 6)

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Note. Dashes were used to avoid repeating the correlation twice on the table or to indicate that the correlation of an item with itself was not reported. Scales were abbreviated with the following acronyms: 1. WST = Westest (Standardized test score), 2. GPA = Grade point average, 3. SMS = Student Motivation, 4. ASSE = Academic Self-esteem, 5. TTS = Trust in Teachers, 6. TPS = Trust in Principles, 7. TEFF = Student Perceived Teacher Efficacy. Furthermore, anything that was at the .01 level was designated .05.

* p < .05, ** p < .001

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A Qualitative Analysis of West Virginia Experimental Character Education Schools

For many decades character education has followed an ebb and flow of research attention and practice under such monikers as civics, citizenship, moral education, ethics, and values education. Specifically naming “character” has proved difficult. However, “from the beginning and growth of the public school movement in the United States, character education has been a component – sometimes even the primary mission – of schools, sometime divisive, but ever present” (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004, p.19). Character education began in American public schools, starting as early as the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1642 with a focus on the Bible and Christian values (Vardin, 2003; McClellan, 1992). One of the best selling school books in the history of our American education system was the 19th century McGuffey Reader. McGuffey Readers instructed children to read while also stressing virtues such as honesty, hard work, kindness, courage, respect for others, charity, and thrift. The origins and differing nomenclature associated with character education, however, have caused much confusion and debate due to the changing of names every decade or so; as well as the perceived close semantic ties between morals, values and religious affiliation.

Yet for some who research and practice character education, it is less about religion and the emphasis on faith-based morals/values, and more about focusing on what it takes to ensure the development of the whole child no matter what one’s religious beliefs entail. As Damon (2005) points out, “It is an odd mark of our time that the first question people ask about character education is whether public schools should be doing it at all. The question is odd because it invites us to imagine that schooling …somehow could be arranged to play no role in the formation of a child’s
character.”
Research is inherently multi-method. The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, attempts to secure an in-depth understanding of certain phenomenon. A combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (Flick, 2002). As Howe (2004) notes, qualitative methods find a place in mixed-methods experimental designs.

The qualitative data outlined in this study was generated from a federally funded character education grant received by the West Virginia. State schools were invited to become implementation sites. The goal was to recruit schools that would give assurance that the following would occur: the majority of staff would participate and support the program; consenting students and staff would participate in survey assessments and focus groups/interviews; student attendance, achievement, and discipline data would be provided via confidential and anonymous access; and staff would commit to professional development both on and off-site. Eight schools that met the criteria were assigned to be one of four experimental and four control sites. Both experimental and control sites received funding, but only experimental sites received the intensive professional development and on-site support.

A collective case study on the experimental schools in West Virginia was completed during the spring and fall semesters of 2007 and the spring and fall semesters of 2008. Technically speaking this qualitative research was a multiple case-design. Loosely defined, a case is a bounded system and the case study tells a story about the interrelated elements within the organized whole. In other words, the school is described as a holistic entity that has different parts (administration, parents, students, teachers, etc.). Each case study describes how the system acts and operates within its environment by specifically looking at these multiple dimensions.
This research study details the qualitative research conducted at the four experimental schools. At each school the following means of data collection were utilized: 1) Administrator interviews, 2) Focus groups (parents, students, and teachers), and 3) Researcher observations. Interview guides for each focus group as well as the principal interviews were developed based on the multidimensional model. Focus group participants were selected by the Character Development Team at each of the schools. Observations began with a descriptive stage, followed by a more focused, then selective stage. The following question lists were utilized as a base for the focus group activities:

**First Year Focus Group Questions:**

Initial qualitative research focused on the school’s basic ideas on character and current attitudes toward school climate.

**Students:**
1. What is character? How would you describe a person who shows good character?
2. What do you like best about your school? Least?
3. Do you feel like you are connected to or are a valuable part of your school? Can you give me some examples?
4. Do you feel safe at school? How do you know you are safe?
5. How successful are you in school? Is it exciting and challenging? What parts of school challenge you the most?
6. Do you feel like you have much of a say in the kinds of things you learn? Can you give me any examples of how you get to determine what you study or learn about?
7. What about motivation? Do you feel motivated to do well here at school? What ways do your school or your teachers use to motivate you?
8. Do you ever feel stressed or lonely at school? What causes you to feel this way?
9. Do you trust your principal and teachers here at school? How have they developed this sense of trust? Could they encourage you to trust them more? How?
10. What can you tell me that is really good about your community? How do you show you are a person of good character in the community? Can you give me some examples?
11. Can you tell me anything about your community that doesn’t show good character? Are there ever any things that happen that keep people from developing good character in your community?
12. Who are some of your role models? You don’t have to say names, you can say my mom, my baseball coach, etc.
13. If you could design a lesson that you and your friends could do on developing character, what
1. What is character? How would you describe a person who shows good character?


3. What are some of the things that your community does to promote good character development in the children and youth?

4. Are there any things happening in the community that detract from good character development in the children and youth? Can you give me any examples?

5. How is your child’s school involved in the community?

6. Is this school a welcome place? Do you feel comfortable coming here? Tell me when and why you visit the school…for what reasons?

7. Can you talk a little bit about your notion of trust in the teachers and administrators at this school? Does it seem as if your children trust their teachers? How do you know?

8. Are there any safety issues at the school? Bullying?

9. What is your school doing for character development? Can you give me any examples of how they are attempting to develop character in your children?

10. Are there any things infused into the school curriculum to promote character development?

11. Are there any things inside the school that detract from character development in your children? Can you give me any examples?

12. Do you feel as if you have a say in the leadership of your school? Can you give me any examples? Do you have input into curricular issues? Which ones?

13. Will it take away from your children’s curriculum to add character education into their schedule? Why?

14. If you could design a lesson about character education for your children and their peers to complete, what would the topic be? What do you think are the most important facets of character?

15. Anything else you would like to share…?

Faculty:

1. What is character? How would you describe a person who shows good character?

2. What do you like best about your school? Least?

3. Do you feel like you are connected to or a valuable part of your school? Can you give me some examples?

4. Do you feel safe at school? How do you know you are safe?

5. Do you feel like you have much of a say in the kinds of things you teach? Can you give me any examples of how you have input to determine what you focus on in your classroom?

6. Are you involved in the leadership of your school? Can you give me specific examples?

7. What types of professional development are offered to you? Are there other types you would like to have?

8. How does the community interact with your school? Can you give me specific examples?

9. Are there opportunities for your students to engage in the community? Examples?

10. Would you say parents trust you as educators? What is the foundation of that trust and relationship? What about students…do they trust you?

11. What are your greatest challenges for getting trust from parents? Students?
12. Inside your school, do you see your students showing good character? Can you give me some examples?
13. Do you believe students are more stressed today than let’s say 10-15 years ago…before standards? What about teachers?
14. Anything else you would like to share…?
Principal:
1. What is character? How would you describe a person who shows good character?
2. What do you see as the strengths of your school? What areas would you like to improve?
3. How does your school interact with the community? Can you give me some specific examples?
4. What types of professional development do you provide for your teachers? Anything specifically designed to address character education?
5. How would you characterize your leadership style? Can you give me some examples of how teachers have a say in school decisions? Parents? Students?
6. What are your ideas for integrating character into the curriculum at your school?
7. Inside your school, do you see students showing good character? Can you give me some examples?
8. Do you believe students today are more stressed than let’s say 10-15 years ago…before standards? What about teachers? Administrators?
9. Would you say parents trust you and your teachers? What is the foundation of that trust and relationship? What about students…do they trust you?
10. What are your greatest challenges for getting trust from parents? Students?
11. Anything else you would like to share…?
Second Year Focus Group Questions:

Goals for the second year qualitative piece included the following: 1) describe the character education framework or process in the school, 2) determine how, and if, the framework is being infused into the school, 3) detail school, teacher, or student changes resulting from the framework, and 4) identify unique challenges to implementation. The following questions were used during the interviews/focus groups for each of the stakeholder groups. Changes in vocabulary and word choice were implemented for the student groups.

1. Describe (school’s name) character education framework or process? What does character education look like in your specific school?
2. To what extent is the framework or process being infused into the school climate and curriculum? Can you give examples?
4. How has character education been incorporated into the academic curriculum? Please cite examples.
5. Have you adjusted your instructional methods in order to support character education? Please cite examples.
6. Have you established curriculum review efforts or revisions based upon your school’s character education process? Please describe these efforts.
7. What have been your biggest challenges to implementation? Can they be solved? If so, how?
8. How has the character education framework changed behavior at your school? Please cite examples from student, teachers, staff, administration, and parents.
9. What leadership role has the administration played in the character education process? What role has the leadership team played? Cite specific examples.
10. Describe the character education professional development at your school. Please cite specifics (e.g., times, meetings, content).
11. To what extent is the community involved in the character education process? Please cite examples.

Third Year Focus Group Questions:

Final qualitative analysis directed attention toward the accomplishments of the grant, the idea of school change, and offered a chance for all stakeholders to reflect on the process. The following questions were used with each stakeholder group:

1. Describe your school’s best accomplishments as a result of being a part of the grant.
2. What were your biggest struggles?
3. Tell me how your students have changed.
4. Tell me how your teachers/staff have changed.
5. Tell me how your leadership has changed.
6. If a colleague from another school came to you and asked if their school should take the time and effort to be a part of the grant, what would you advise?
7. What advice would you give a principal and school that wanted to incorporate character education into their overall school philosophy and curriculum? How would you suggest they go about it? What are the three biggest keys to success?
8. Knowing what you know now, if you could go back and be asked again to be a part of the grant, would you still say yes? Explain. What would you do differently if you could do it all again?

9. How is your school going to continue the idea of character education?

Qualitative research implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not easily examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress how social experience is created and given meaning, and qualitative investigators think they can become closer to actual perspective through detailed interviewing and observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Qualitative researchers see the world in action, constantly changing and evolving. As cited by Flick (2002), “they are committed to an emic, idiographic, case-based position that directs attention to the specifics of particular cases (p. 227). Rich descriptions of the social world are valuable, and by utilizing this definition of qualitative research, the following four West Virginia schools are prepared.

**Talcott Elementary School**

Located in the heart of John Henry steel-driving country, Talcott Elementary School’s selection of the “SMART Train” as its character education theme connects perfectly to its small, rural Summers County location. Crossing over the mountain on approach to the school, one is met with a memorial to the legendary folk hero while train tracks snake through the adjoining countryside. Talcott’s faculty and students display a strong sense of this heritage and history. One teacher proudly admitted “we selected our theme to reflect our history” and one student mentioned “I like staying on track”. Set high on a hill above the quaint town of Talcott, West Virginia, the elementary school serves as an integral part of the community’s personality and lifestyle. Teachers
classified the surrounding community as “supportive,” “willing to help,” and “very involved when asked.” The school’s website stresses that the education at Talcott “is not limited to school activities, nor should it end when a child leaves school.”
The community’s support of the school can also be seen in the current construction project taking place on site. A new Talcott Elementary is being funded and built just behind the present school. While students did say they “didn’t like the playground being taken away,” they were “excited,” “happy,” and “can’t wait” until the new building is finished. One fifth grader hoped “we will be the first ones to graduate.” Construction was characterized as “slow and messy” by one teacher, but others stressed that “the new school will provide new opportunities for developing our kids” and “even more opportunities to prepare students for the future”. The timetable was “January or February 2010 for moving” according to the principal.

Talcott’s SMART (service, manners, attitude, responsibility, and trustworthiness) Train theme is physically visible in the school. Bulletin boards with “SMART Space” where kids can put up messages on character, and “Stay on Track” zones in school, community, and play, line the hallways. In addition, a clear focus on achievement is evidenced by a “data wall” devoted to state testing scores. The principal proudly highlighted that “all our scores are going up” and one teacher pointed out the data as “evidence of our commitment.” The overall quality of the character education framework was described by one teacher as “ingrained in what we do now” and another mentioned that “we don’t necessarily think about it anymore because it seems to just come naturally.”

Talcott students also seem to exemplify this embodiment of character. Teachers characterized students as “less egocentric,” “more aware of their actions,” and “able to step back and tell you what mistakes they make.” Observations of students during Student Council election speeches afforded a unique opportunity to hear the students themselves voice important leadership qualities. One 3rd grade student touted herself as someone who is “trustworthy, responsible, and faithful”. She concluded by stressing that she would “keep my promises and treat you like family.” Another young man running for president defined himself as “loyal, trustworthy, and determined.”
That same young man promised to “set a good example” and “stand up for what I believe in.” Students also detailed how there were “just a few students in each grade that don’t act with good character.” A teacher reiterated this idea when she stated that the biggest change associated with the grant was “in our children…they are just more polite to each other and there is a kindness that wasn’t there before.”

While students, teachers, and the principal offered numerous positive examples of character in action and the school visibly displayed an infusion of character education into the existing curriculum, there was a sense that years two and three were not as targeted. One teacher described it as a “lag” and another admitted there had been “a change in focus and a little less enthusiasm.” There was a measured sense of disappointment that “meetings with other schools haven’t happened and meetings at this school haven’t happened with as much regularity either.” The suggestion was made that the school “needed time to get together” and that the teachers “needed to do a service project in order to feel like we were making a difference too.” One teacher stressed the fact that “we have all the resources and information we need…what we need now is to be re-focused.” She further added that “We need more communication between all staff members because we’re all working toward one goal in character education.”

Final reflective thoughts on participation in the grant were brief from the students. One fourth-grader did comment that “I think it stopped a lot of the bad stuff at our school” and another mentioned “it has made people more nice or something like taught them how to share more.” However, making the direct connection between the grant and changes did prove difficult for a few students. One honestly admitted “I can’t remember when it started” and another said “I don’t know what you mean.”
Staff reflections were thoughtful and positive. One teacher documented that even though students may still hurt each other’s feelings, “now they are aware…don’t get me wrong, they’re not perfect. They may still hurt somebody’s feelings, but when they do, they realize they have while before they may have just overlooked it and gone on.” She even added that “They really take it to heart, and when you ask them to apologize or when they say, “I’ll apologize,” they mean it sincerely.” Another teacher also cited student change. She characterized the students as “really tolerant and accepting of other people’s ideas…and also a little less judgmental.” Teachers also mentioned that community members see our students as “polite…they open the door for people and the topic is making a difference.” Additionally, teachers cited classroom changes as a beneficial side of the grant process. One mentioned “I think we definitely do a lot of things that are in a discussion format…less paper and pencil and you sit by yourself and do this. It’s a lot of cooperative learning and a lot of our students know how to interact cooperatively and in a good way.” One teacher discussed how another teacher’s “5th graders come down and read to my kindergarten class, and they take that time to come and do that service for our class, and my students are so appreciative…they realize it’s not something that they have to do, but it’s something that they’re just doing to make them feel good.”

When asked what Talcott Elementary still needs to work on, even after the grant, teachers believe the community and parents still need more involvement in the school. One teacher stated “I think it’s probably been the hardest to get parents involved. We have had quite a bit of success with community involvement, but we’d like to see even more than we have accomplished.” Another agreed and added, “I think it is still our parental involvement. They’re receptive, they came out to our kick off, they support what we do, but yet they don’t come in.” The final pieces of advice given by
the staff were “for the students to learn as young as they can, you know, how to have good character and how to be a good citizen and how to give back and how to be nice and the basic core values that you should have through life.” They also suggested “getting together” and “integrating.” One teacher stressed “don’t view it as a whole separate program or as one more thing you have to do during the day…see how you can integrate it into everything that you do, and it doesn’t feel so overwhelming when you think of it like that.”

Ashford-Rumble Elementary School

Ashford-Rumble Elementary School was built as a direct result of a terrible fire that destroyed Rumble Grade School in 1961. According to the school’s website, this fire resulted in the "consolidation" of Ashford and Rumble Grade Schools and the construction of a new school facility to be named Ashford-Rumble Elementary School. The new school opened on April 17, 1963. Currently, Ashford-Rumble Elementary School serves approximately 140 students in grades 1-6, kindergarten and special education programs. Ashford-Rumble Elementary School provides a variety of educational programs and services to meet the needs of its students as well as meeting the needs of the community by offering community educational classes, several programs for recreation, and by opening its doors to numerous public organizations. Teachers at Ashford-Rumble characterize themselves as “extremely proud of our school and the various programs and services that our school provides our community” as well as “uniquely connected to the people who live here.” They cite “our Veteran’s Day Program as the best connection we make to the community.”
Ashford-Rumble’s “BRIDGE” title for its character education program shows the school’s natural and direct link to the small community of Ashford, West Virginia. Heading into town, one literally crosses over a bridge upon approaching the school, and one teacher cited the tenets of bravery, respect, integrity, diligence, guidance, and endurance as “fundamental traits we want to instill in our kids and in our community.” Students echoed this idea. One fourth grader stressed “Our school is nice and in a nice community.” Another mentioned “We trust that we can go outside without some person coming up and killing our teachers and taking us away.” The dangers in Ashford, according to one teacher, “are things like the poverty, the drug abuse, and the family situations.” She further added that “this is not a violent community.”

Most of the character education at Ashford-Rumble can be characterized as naturally occurring. Real and concrete evidence of student or parental input seems to be lacking. However, there did seem to be a sense that teachers felt as if parents were involved. One teacher stressed that “parents have an informal influence on what we do about character,” and another stated that “parents want to be involved, but just haven’t felt welcome.” A faculty member admitted that “We had a lot of parent resentment last year, a lot of anger, a lot of upset people because we had split grades.” She later added “With those gone, it’s more relaxed, happier. Teachers can do their job without that pressure. It’s a lot better this year.” Leadership and professional development were distinctly mentioned as the two areas of greatest concern and need for improvement at Ashford-Rumble Elementary School during the grant. Several administrative and teacher changes in the past three years resulted in, according to one teacher, “character education being put on the back burner.” While teachers stressed that the school’s leadership was “getting better,” “learning,” and “trying hard,” there had been no real professional development related to character education in the second
year. One teacher asserted that “I think the staff situation has been the biggest challenge…we’ve had such a huge turn over, almost 100 percent in the past four years including the principal. As far as implementing the grant, that’s been the biggest challenge.” Consequently, teacher assessment of the overall quality of the character education implementation was clearly mixed. Responses ranged from “we did a lot more last year” to “I’m not really sure what’s going on…I’m new here.”
Similarly, interviewee statements on multi-dimensional character education in the school showed areas for improvement. While teachers stressed their efforts to maximize character development in the students as “a large part of our job” and “something most of us do,” there was no formal mechanism for maximizing it in the adults, although one teacher mentioned “we’ve had to display much character when dealing with the unique challenges of our school.” Another teacher categorized the multi-dimensional approach as “an extension of good teaching, not a program or framework.”

From observations and interviews, it seems apparent that Ashford-Rumble’s greatest gains surface in their ability to informally integrate character education into the existing curriculum. Interviewed teachers cited character as “important,” “vital,” and “necessary,” and classroom observations yielded tangible evidence of implementation. Rooms were filled with character education posters, students received character slips and tiger bucks, and character traits of the month were explored. Teachers were making conscious efforts to include stories about character education into their reading programs, discuss life skills and life lessons in their classrooms, and “incentivize kids to work on solutions to problems within the scope of a classroom.” One teacher mentioned that she “tried daily to expose students to the character traits
and to help them learn how to be good people.” She further added “especially the ones who don’t receive that at home or who are lacking role models.”

In addition, student bonding to school seemed strong at Ashford-Rumble Elementary. This researcher’s simple walk down the hallway was greeted with smiles and friendly, as well as bashful, hellos. Observation of two physical education classes exemplified students’ appropriate treatment of peers as they moved to the square dance call of their teacher. As students took turns “honoring their partners,” they also showed respect to one another. The P.E. teacher admitted they “had been working diligently on the dance and their hard work was beginning to pay off.” In other classrooms, students respectfully addressed teachers and politely acknowledged peers by working cooperatively during games and learning groups. Ashford-Rumble even has a student led HOPE team as part of the school. Helping Other People Everywhere was described by a student as “the best place to show your character” and “you have to try out for it…only kids that are trustworthy and respectful get to be a part.” One teacher described Ashford-Rumble students as “some of the most well behaved and dependable, reliable, just all around good students that I’ve ever seen.” He further added that “I don’t know if it has anything to do with the grant, but they are an example of what you would want for pre-teen students, adolescent children.” Students, likewise, stressed that “I can trust my friends and classmates” and “I like our school and all of the kids here.” One student did admit, however, some students “can be a little difficult to handle” and “some students choose to have bad character.” Another added “some choose to backtalk to teachers.”

Final reflective thoughts by Ashford-Rumble students were simple and short. One student mentioned that she “couldn’t remember much about what they did last year” and another stated “I just moved here from a different school.” Staff reflections centered on the “difficulties with the
One staff member cited a lack of “professional development as the biggest disappointment from the grant.” Advice for future grant recipients suggested schools should “definitely have those roots in the elementary school, in the early grades.” One teacher stressed “it’s difficult to change children after they are 11, 12, 13-years old.” Another added, “If you want to do it, focus on K through 3 at first and get them going, and then move up the grades because I think it’s just really important in those lower grades.” She also stressed “It seems that it helped the students that are intermediate now that they had it early.”
Tyler Consolidated Middle and High School

Tyler Consolidated Middle and High School is nestled in the hills of rural Tyler County between the small communities of Middlebourne and Sistersville. Housed in the same facility, Tyler Middle is composed of grades six through eight and Tyler High includes grades nine through twelve. As documented on the school’s website, Tyler Consolidated “has become a lighthouse for all the communities in Tyler County,” and visits to the school heard teachers and students echo this sentiment. Having chosen the “Knights of the Round Table” as Tyler Consolidated High’s character education theme and the “Shining Knights” as Tyler Consolidated Middle’s character education theme, the combined school facility makes it logistically easier for all parties to sit down together. According to one teacher, Tyler’s unique school design affords “logical and easy means of collaboration among middle and high school staff.” Tyler Consolidated also reaches down to the local elementary school and partners a sports team with each of the elementary classrooms. High school student reactions to the program were “we like helping the little kids” and “it feels good when they look up to us.”

There is a clear sense of connectedness between the high, middle and elementary schools. However, Tyler Consolidated High’s principal stressed that “community involvement is our push this year.” During the fall the high school combined parent teacher conferences with their character education kick-off. As stated in the November issue of the Noble Knights’ News, “the goal of this very special day was to get the Tyler community to drive beyond the moat and see what is happening…” While staff, community, and parents combine efforts on character development teams, the high school principal admitted that she still needs “to try to get parents comfortable coming here.” The middle school principal agreed and cited community service examples as their strongest
attempts to involve the community in the school. Chief among these programs were “Coats for Kids,” canned food drives, spring clean up days at local parks, and Relay for Life activities. Both schools admitted the community involvement piece “is still evolving” and “something we hope to become better at…”

While the parent/community piece is a work in progress, Tyler Middle and High school teachers characterized their school-wide involvement in the character education framework as “systemic,” “what we’ve been doing anyway,” and one 1st year teacher remarked that “everyone on the team goes beyond the call of duty to model behavior”. The middle school principal proudly stated “we don’t need your money to do this…we’re going to do it anyway.” Numerous character education examples were displayed physically around Tyler Consolidated. While the school just marked its fifteenth anniversary this fall, its pristine condition suggests a much younger building. Teachers attributed this to “students having pride,” “being respectful,” and “really taking care of the facility.”

The leadership at both Tyler Consolidated Middle and High School is characterized by staff as “strong,” “efficient,” and “dedicated.” The middle school principal clearly sets high expectations and stated that “this school climate can’t be clinically created”. He stressed the importance of “kids seeing us getting along” and even admitted that “non-team players won’t fit in at our school.” One middle school teacher described the administration as “very helpful in explaining how character education works at this school” and characterized the staff as “simply awesome.” Tyler Consolidated High’s principal stressed that she “worked hard to model from the top down” and believed in “being visible and having a mushroom effect.” One teacher agreed by outlining how the principal does an “excellent job of leading by example” and doesn’t articulate
the vision “once and then forgets it.” Both principals admitted the need for additional and targeted professional development for their staffs. While the faculty is “on the same page and using the same vocabulary,” the high school principal stressed that more professional development needs to be done in the areas of involving the community and networking with outside school partners. One high school teacher agreed and added “Teachers have to get past the thing, well, here’s another program…that’s me too.” A colleague further stated, “We see it all the time. We see it every year. All right, let’s play along. They’re giving us some money so let’s see what we’re supposed to do with it.” Teachers noted that professional development can be “hot and cold” and “what we really want is something we don’t already know.” A concern was expressed by one teacher that “when we went to Charleston, most of what we attended… it was nothing new for us.”
Furthermore, teachers suggested that character education wasn’t something they “teach in isolation,” but simply “incorporated into our daily classes.” While Tyler Consolidated offers a different character trait each month, the school newsletter concludes that the ideas are “woven through the curriculum.” Teachers cited examples of “student recognition every grading period,” “letters sent home to parents,” and “incentives for good behavior” as tangible evidence of the character education framework. When asked if the grant helped with this, one teacher stated “It’s like we were doing this stuff before, but now it all falls under the same umbrella…we have a common language and we’re all working toward the same goal.”
Tyler Consolidated students stressed they “have a voice in our school” and had “teachers who listened to us”. According to the October 2007 issue of the Noble Knights’ News, “the newly appointed student character education team planned and presented the character education program to the TCMS student body” and this team, as cited by a faculty member, “meets regularly to discuss issues and plan events.” In addition, a peer mediation program is in place at the school that, according to one student, “allows us to solve our own differences.” Anecdotal remarks of teachers included “it seems like discipline referrals of students are lower this year,” and “students seem to be getting along better.” One 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher mentioned that “students are proud when their classmates are recognized” and categorized interactions in the hallways with students as “especially nice.” One student remarked about transferring to the school and “liking it a whole lot more than my last school” but also adding “they have high expectations for the way you act.” Another teacher added that “our students feel the need to hold themselves more responsible” and students feel “they should report issues that are dangerous or problems.”

Reflections on the grant process from Tyler Consolidated Middle and High were varied, diverse, and insightful. One high school teacher conceded that “maybe our approach in the beginning was a little too elementary with colors and banners.” She mentioned that a former student came back for a visit and asked if we were a middle school now.” She questioned if other high school students “had the same thoughts.” Another concern that surfaced with the high school teachers was the “elitism” the grant might have created. One teacher cited “mumblings” among the students who

were not a part of the student character education team. He stated hearing comments from
students like “great character education for the whole school” and “special lunch for only special
kids.” Another teacher cautioned that after year one, students were beginning to ask “what are we
going to get?” and “what’s our prize?” He simply added that “the kids weren’t like that before.”
Teachers discussed the difficulty of convincing students to “forget the monetary award and just
remember what they are supposed to do.” One teacher asked “how do we convince students it’s
about the good feeling and not the pizza party?” Despite the caveats, one teacher questioned, “Don’t
you think that the hope here is that we planted the seed?” She further added that “as human beings,
it’s our responsible, accountable, caring attitude to one another that counts, and I think that’s what
our goal is in this whole process.”

When asked what advice they would give other schools wanting to develop character
education programs, Tyler Consolidated Middle and High teachers stressed “concentrating on more
intrinsic value” and to focus on doing it for others.” One Tyler Consolidated High teacher strongly
claimed that students are “ready to make that emotional move…just give them a chance.” Other
suggestions included “involve the entire staff” and “don’t leave anyone out…not the cooks…not the
bus drivers…not the secretaries.” A staff member also encouraged schools to “stand back and take a
serious look at what they already have…they will be totally surprised how many program and
activities they have that already have character education.” She further stated “schools will have a
foundation they can build on so they don’t feel like they’re starting this thing from scratch.”

Overwhelmingly, the staff, students, and administration at Tyler believed character education
was worthwhile. While one middle school teacher agreed that “it took a while to get a couple of
people on board,” she also included that “once they did, I think they were very receptive and joined
in.” Another teacher said “our kids are better off because they have
teachers that are buying into it.” One administrator simply stated “it’s so important we would
have done it without the grant.” He added that “the teachers who teach character don’t do so for the money.”

**Conclusion**

Since school occupies close to a third of a child’s day, and research highlights that many parents do not necessarily have the time, resources, or abilities to raise a well-rounded child on their own, most would agree that a school *could* help in this developmental effort. As a result nearly every state in the U.S.A. either has legislation or policies in place that mandate or strongly encourage character education to be a part of the curriculum and instructional practice. With hundreds, if not thousands, of uniquely different approaches to character education being instituted, one could probably find an equal numbers of definitions for character education. Evidenced by its inclusion in current national policy and funded grants, many assert that high quality character education is not only effective at promoting the development of good character, but it is a promising approach to the prevention of a wide range of contemporary problems. Clearly, society still depends on and believes that schools have an obligation to answer the clarion call for the character development of our children. However, to accomplish this goal, “schools need to hit on all cylinders” and involve parents and communities in the charge (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

Despite how one defines or views character education, we all practice it to some degree by default. Those of us who teach are role models, and our actions (good or bad) as teachers are scrutinized by our students. Classrooms and schools are moral/ethical climates, for better or worse. Students observe teachers and the greater school environment, and these observed individuals and influential environments theoretically impact character development. From within these moral climates are behaviors and actions that children observe and contemplate adopting. If we (the
education process) are a large part of the youth’s day for a majority of the year, then we most likely play a contributing role in developing the behavior and character of the child, no matter if we claim to or realize that we practice character education or not.

To date, educators engaged in character education have focused more on implementation rather than evaluation and the field currently suffers greatly from having relatively few research findings. Character development approaches must be systematically developed, documented, and evaluated, and student and school differences must be considered.
Survey for Participating Faculty and Staff
(Please use a No. 2 pencil, and place your answers on the provided NCS sheet)

Thank you for taking part in this research. Your answers to the following survey questions are greatly appreciated. To assure your anonymity and that your answers will only be seen by the research evaluators of this project, we have provided you with a code number, survey, answer sheet, and envelope. Upon beginning the survey, please first place your code number on the survey (if it has not already been done). Also, please try not to fold your answer sheet and make sure to use a Number 2 pencil to fill in the bubbles adequately. After completing the survey, please insert your answer sheet and survey into the envelope, seal the envelope, remove the index card with your name and code, and place an “X” across the seal of the envelope. Please return all surveys within the next 24 hours to your school’s collection box. Please note that once your survey has been sealed in the envelope, there will be no visible marks that identify you on the envelope. Thank you again for your participation.

Code Number: __________________ (Note: please enter the 10 digit code number attached to your survey packet in the “identification number” section of the NCS answer sheet provided.)

Section 1

Using the following scale, please place the number that best describes the typical student’s (in your school) relationship to each of the words listed below. (Note: X is meant to represent students.)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X does not know what this is.</td>
<td>X knows</td>
<td>X knows</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>X knows what this is, but X does not think about it often.</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it occasionally.</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it often.</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it consistently.</td>
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<td>X knows what this is.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it occasionally.</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it often.</td>
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<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it often.</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it consistently.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it consistently.</td>
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1. Compassion
2. Courtesy
3. Tolerance
4. Honesty
5. Self-discipline
6. Diligence
7. Responsibility
8. Self-respect
9. Respect (for others)
10. Courage
11. Integrity
12. Perseverance
13. Empathy
14. Trust
15. Care (for others)
16. Fair
17. Sportsmanship
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X does not know what this is.</td>
<td>X knows what this is, but X does not think about it often, and X practices it occasionally</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it often</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it often</td>
<td>X knows what this is, X thinks about it often, and X practices it consistently</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Civility</td>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Forgiving</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to the typical student in your classroom/school by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) are undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and record your first impression and most honest answer. (Note: X represents the typical student in your classroom or school.)

1. Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) undecided (4) agree (5) strongly agree

1. When students are discouraged they do not give up.
2. People can count on X to do her/his part on a project.
3. X is responsible for her/his school supplies and being prepared for class.
4. X works with other students in order to help them and X does better in school.
5. X is responsible for her/his homework.
6. X is involved in setting her/his goals and achieving them.
7. X is organized and manages her/his time wisely.
8. X realizes that her/his goals might take awhile to accomplish and will wait patiently for that day.
9. X believes that some jobs or tasks require diligence and X works hard to do them well.
10. X treats teachers and school staff with respect.
11. X does the right thing no matter what other students think.
12. X does not cheat on tests or assignments.
13. X admits if he/she does something wrong.
14. X tries to exclude kids who are different than her/him from her/his life.
15. X notices that students, who are not part of the popular group, get picked on or excluded in her/his school.
16. X shares with others, even if they are not X’s friends.
17. X resolves conflict without fighting, insulting, or threatening others.
18. X tries to get her/his friends to follow the rules.
19. X does not care if her/his friends cheat.
20. When X sees someone being picked on, X tries to stop it.

Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to the typical student in your classroom/school by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) are
undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and record your first impression and most honest answer. (Note: \( X \) represents the typical student in your classroom or school.)

(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) undecided (4) agree (5) strongly agree

1. \( X \) tries to stop her/his friends from spreading rumors and gossip about others.
2. \( X \) is doing a good job in school.
3. \( X \) thinks he/she is a good student.
4. \( X \) is not a very good student.

Section 2

Please indicate in the space provided your agreement with each statement by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) are undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and record your first impression. Your honesty is greatly appreciated.

1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) undecided (4) agree (5) strongly agree

44. People care about each other in this school. 45. Students at this school don’t seem to like each other very well. 46. Students at this school just look out for themselves. 47. Students at this school are willing to go out of their way to help someone. 48. Students at this school work together to solve problems. 49. The students in this school don’t really care about each other. 50. Students at this school don’t get along together very well. 51. Students at this school are mean to each other. 52. Students help decide what they will work on in class. 53. Students at this school have little chance to have their ideas heard at this school. 54. Teachers and students plan things together at this school. 55. The teachers and students here usually decide together what the class rules will be. 56. Students at this school get to help plan special activities and events. 57. The principal and teachers really rule things here. 58. There is a student council here that gets to decide on some really important things. 59. Students help to decide what goes on at this school. 60. Students have a chance to start up their own clubs at this school.

Section 3
On the scales below, indicate your opinion of general student motivation to learn as a whole in your school. Numbers 1 and 5 indicate a very strong feeling. Numbers 2 and 4 indicate a strong feeling. Number 3 indicates you are undecided.

61. Unmotivated : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Motivated
63. Uninvolved : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Involved
64. Bored : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Excited
65. Look forward to it : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Dreading it

Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which you think the students (as a whole) in your school feel about the teachers (in general) in your school by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) are undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers.

1---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------5 1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) undecided (4) agree (5) strongly agree

66. Students feel safe and comfortable with the teachers in their classes. 

67. The teachers in their classes always try to be fair. 

68. The teachers in their classes always keep their promises. 

69. The teachers in their classes really care about the student.

Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which you think the students (as a whole) in your school feel about the principal in your school by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) are undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and record your first impression.

1---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------5

(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) undecided (4) agree (5) strongly agree

70. I feel safe and comfortable with the principal in my school. 

71. The principal in my school always tries to be fair. 

72. The principal in my school always keep his/her promises. 

73. The principal in my school really cares about me.

Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which you think the students (as a whole) in your school feel about others by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3)
are undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and record your first impression. 1--------------------------------------------------5 1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) undecided (4) agree (5) strongly agree

74. Most people who ask for help are just being lazy.
75. People should look after themselves and not try to solve other people’s problems. 76. I should take care of myself and let others take care of themselves. 77. People should work out their own problems by themselves.
78. A student has enough schoolwork to do without worrying about other students’ work. 79. Problems in other parts of the world are not my concern. 80. When I see someone having a problem, I want to help. 81. Everybody has enough problems of their own without worrying about other people’s problems. 82. When I hear about people who are sad or lonely, I want to do something to help.

Section 4
There are numerous forms of neighborhoods in our culture. Some neighborhood communities are comprised of many different individuals and households, while others are more rural and contain only a few neighbors. Therefore, neighbors are considered to be people who live next door, in the same building, across the street or yard, or even a block or two away. In considering the following statements, please think about the neighborhood or area in which you live. Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) are undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Some of the statements are similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly and record your first impression.

83. In general, I know my neighbors very well on a personal basis. 84. I feel a strong connection to the community where I live. 85. I do not know many neighbors. 86. Considering the residents in my community, I personally know most of them. 87. I communicate/interact a good amount with my neighbors. 88. I volunteer actively in my neighborhood. 89. I hardly ever take time to say hello to a neighbor. 90. I rely upon (need) my neighbors. 91. My neighbors rely upon (need) me. 92. I communicate quite frequently with my neighbors.

(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) undecided (4) agree (5) strongly agree
93. Most neighbors are strangers I do not talk to. 94. I feel my relationships with my neighbors are very valuable. 95. My relationships with my neighbors have helped me to be a better person. 96. I have many friendships with adults in my neighborhood. 97. I have many friendships with other teenagers in my neighborhood. 98. I feel alone in my neighborhood. 99. I have many places and friends to go to for help in my neighborhood. 100. The adults in my neighborhood serve as role models. 101. I feel at home in my neighborhood. 102. I do not feel a strong connection to the community where I live.

104. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   a. Less than high school
   b. High school
   c. Two years of college
   d. Bachelor's degree
   e. Graduate degree
105. What is your sex:  a. MALE or b. FEMALE
106. How active are the average parents in your school?
   a. Not at all Active
   b. Rarely Active
   c. Occasionally Active
   d. Regularly Active
   e. Constantly Active
107. Which of the following best describes your position at this school?
   a. Faculty
   b. Administrator
   c. Staff
   d. Counselor
   e. Other_____________________________

   NOTE: The following section is to be completed by FACULTY ONLY. Principals, counselors, and other staff involved with school-wide activities please skip to the question #125 on the survey and bubble sheet. Thank you.

108. Did you practice character education during the past school year?
   a. Yes
   b. No
108

*** If you are a teacher or school staff member and you answered “No” to question 108, then you have finished the survey. Thank you. See instructions on last page for protecting confidentiality. If you answered “Yes,” please continue on. You are almost done.

109. For the past school year, on average, approximately how many of the weeks per month did you practice character education with your students?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4
   e. 5

110. On the average during the past school year, approximately how many days per week did you practice character education with your students?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4
   e. 5

111. On the average during the past school year, approximately how many hours per day included some portion of character education?
   a. 1-2
   b. 3-4
   c. 5-6
   d. 7-8
   e. 9-10

112. On a scale from 0 to 100%, what percentage of your character education efforts was integrated into the existing curriculum during the past school year?
   a. 0-19%
   b. 20-39%
   c. 40-59%
   d. 60-79%
   e. 80-100%

Did you integrate character education into your curriculum during the past school year in the following subject(s)?
113. Language Arts
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not applicable

114. History
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not applicable

115. Math
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not applicable

116. Phys Ed
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not applicable

117. Reading
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not applicable

118. Science
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not applicable

119. On a scale from 0 to 100%, what percentage of the character education was presented through indirect instructional practices? (Note: Indirect instructional practice of character refers to when one teaches character education and does not tell the students that “we are now going to focus on character education”.)
   . 0-19%
   . 20-39%
   . 40-59%
   . 60-79%
   . 80-100%

120. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not effective at all and 5 being extremely effective), how effectively do you feel your character education instruction in the past school year was delivered?
121. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not received at all and 5 being extremely well received), how well do you feel your character education instruction in the past school year was received?

122. During the past school year, do you feel the time you spent on developing character education based curriculum took you less time, the same amount of time, or more time than it would have taken to develop other types of instructional approaches?
   a. Less time
   b. Same time
   c. More time

123. Which of the following terms best describes the impact of Character Education efforts on school culture:
   a. No impact on school culture
   b. Very little impact on school culture
   c. A little impact on school culture
   d. Some impact on school culture
   e. Great impact on school culture

124. Which of the following statements best describes the impact on Character Education efforts on student achievement:
   f. No impact on student achievement
   g. Very little impact on student achievement
   h. A little impact on student achievement
   i. Some impact on student achievement
   j. Great impact on student achievement

The following questions are for PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS, AND ADMINISTRATION STAFF involved in school-wide activities only. Teachers and staff, you have completed the survey. See instructions on last page for protecting confidentiality. Thank you very much for your continued participation. See instructions on last page for protecting confidentiality.

125. During the past school year, did your faculty implement any school-wide initiative to (i.e. not counting what teachers are doing in their classroom) practice character education?
   a. Yes
   b. No
126. On average during the past school year, approximately how many of the weeks per month did your school take part in school-wide character education efforts?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4
   e. 5

127. On the average during the past school year, how many days per week did your school take part in school-wide character education efforts?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4
   e. 5

128. On the average during the past school year, approximately how many hours per day included some portion of a school-wide character education effort?
   a. 1-2
   b. 3-4
   c. 5-6
   d. 7-8
   e. 9-10

129. On a scale of 0 to 100%, approximately what percentage of the character education (on a school-wide basis) in the past year was presented through indirect instructional practices? Note: Indirect instructional practice of character education refers to when one teaches character education without telling the students that “we are now going to focus on character education.”
   a. 0-19%
   b. 20-39%
   c. 40-59%
   d. 60-79%
   e. 80-100%
130. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not effective at all and 5 being extremely effective), how effective do you feel your character education activities were in the past year?

1----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------5
(1) not effective (2) somewhat ineffective (3) undecided (4) somewhat effective (5) extremely effective

131. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not received at all and 5 being extremely well received), how well do you feel your school-wide character education activities in the past year were received?

1----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------5
(1) not received at all (2) a little (3) undecided (4) somewhat received (5) extremely well received

132. Do you thing the past year’s character education efforts contributed to an improved school culture and an enhancement to overall student achievement?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Thank you very much for completing this survey and assisting us with this research. Please insert your answer sheet and survey into the envelope, seal the envelope, and place an “X” across the seal of the envelope. Please return all surveys within the next 24 hours to your school’s collection box. Please note that once your survey has been sealed in the envelope, there will be no visible marks that identify you on the envelope. Thank you again for your participation.
Middle and High School Student Survey
(Please use a No. 2 pencil, and place your answers on the provided NCS sheet)

For office use only Student Name (last name first): ______________________________
Student ID Number: ______________________ S. N. Categorization: ______________________

Thank you for taking part in this research. Your answers to the following survey questions are greatly appreciated. To assure your answers are kept confidential and that your answers will only be seen by the research evaluators of this project, we have provided you with a code number, survey, and prepared answer sheet. Please try not to fold your answer sheet and make sure to use a Number 2 pencil to fill in the bubbles adequately. After completing the survey, please turn over your answer sheet and survey and wait for one of the survey administrators to collect it. Please note that once the answer sheet and survey have been collected, that only the researchers of this study will see your answers. We would like for you to feel comfortable with the fact that your parents, teachers, and principal will not see your answers, and that you can answer these questions with complete honesty. Thank you again for your participation. Please read each section’s directions carefully and give your honest opinion. If you do not have enough knowledge of a particular item to give a rating, leave it blank. Please record your answer on the NCS Answer Sheet with a No. 2 pencil.

Section 1

Using the following scale, please place the number that best describes your relationship to each of words listed below.

1. Compassion
2. Courtesy
3. Tolerance
4. Honesty
5. Self-discipline
6. Diligence
7. Responsibility
8. Self-respect
9. Respect (for others)
10. Courage
11. Integrity
12. Perseverance
13. Empathy
1. Care (for others)
2. Fair
3. Sportsmanship
4. Civility
5. Forgiving

Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) are undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and record your first impression and most honest answer.

1. I do not know what this is.
2. I know what this is, but I do not think about it often.
3. I know what this is, I think about it often, and I practice it occasionally.
4. I know what this is, I think about it often, and I practice it often.
5. I know what this is, I think about it often, and I practice it consistently.

14. Trust

1. I don’t do very well in school.
2. I am doing a good job in school.
3. I think I’m a good student.
4. I am not a very good student.
5. I feel safe and comfortable with the teachers in my classes.
6. The teachers in my classes always try to be fair.
7. The teachers in my classes always keep their promises.
8. The teachers in my classes really care about me.
9. I feel safe and comfortable with the principal in my school.
10. The principal in my school always tries to be fair.
11. The principal in my school always keeps his/her promises.
12. The principal in my school really cares about me.
13. Most people who ask for help are just being lazy.
14. People should look after themselves and not try to solve other people’s problems.
15. I should take care of myself and let others take care of themselves.
16. People should work out their own problems by themselves.
17. A student has enough schoolwork to do without worrying about other students’ work.
18. Problems in other parts of the world are not my concern.
19. When I see someone having a problem, I want to help.
20. Everybody has enough problems of their own without worrying about other people’s problems.
21. When I hear about people who are sad or lonely, I want to do something to help.
22. People care about each other in this school.
23. Students at this school don’t seem to like each other very well.
24. Students at this school just look out for themselves.
25. Students at this school are willing to go out of their way to help someone.
1. Students at this school work together to solve problems.
2. The students in this school don’t really care about each other.
3. Students at this school don’t get along together very well.
4. Students at this school are mean to each other.
5. When I’m having a problem, some other student at this school will try to help me.
6. Students help decide what they will work on in class.
7. Students at this school have little chance to have their ideas heard.
8. Teachers and students plan things together at this school.
9. The teachers and students here usually decide together what the class rules will be.
10. Students at this school get to help plan special activities and events.
11. The principal and teachers really rule things here.
12. There is a student council here that gets to decide on some really important things.
13. Students help to decide what goes on at this school.
14. Students have a chance to start up their own clubs at this school.
15. My teachers are usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with the students.
16. My teachers do not seem to be able to help students who have been exposed to negative influences at home.
17. I am confident in my teacher’s ability to be a good role model.
18. My teachers do not help students become more courteous.
19. My teachers have effectively modeled the trait of being respectful to others.
20. My teachers are usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.
21. My teachers know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students’ character.
22. I am not sure that my teachers can teach the students to be honest.
23. When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks.
24. Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students’ social interaction.
25. My teachers are able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.
26. If my parents notice that I am more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.
27. Some students have become more respectful because teachers at our school have promoted respect.
28. When there is a student who lies regularly, my teachers can usually convince him/her to stop lying.
   If students at my school are inconsiderate it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait.
29. If responsibility is not encouraged in a child’s home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.
30. My teachers often find it difficult to persuade students that respect for others is important.
31. When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.
1. My teachers will be able to influence the character of students because they are a good role model.
2. Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.
3. My teacher sometimes doesn’t know what to do to help students become more compassionate.
4. Teachers cannot be blamed for dishonesty.
5. My teachers are continually finding better ways to develop the character of this school’s students.
6. Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students’ level of responsibility outside of school.

Please read the below paragraph before completing the next questions.

There are numerous forms of neighborhoods in our culture. Some neighborhood communities are comprised of many different individuals and households, while others are more rural and contain only a few neighbors. Therefore, neighbors are considered to be people who live next door, in the same building, across the street or yard, or even a block or two away. In considering the following statements, please think about the neighborhood or area in which you live. Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) are undecided, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Some of the statements are similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly and record your first impression.

1. In general, I know my neighbors very well on a personal basis.
2. I feel a strong connection to the community where I live.
3. I do not know many neighbors.
4. Considering the residents in my community, I personally know most of them.
5. I communicate/interact a good amount with my neighbors.
6. I volunteer actively in my neighborhood.
7. I hardly ever take time to say hello to a neighbor.
8. I rely upon (need) my neighbors.
9. My neighbors rely upon (need) me.
10. I communicate quite frequently with my neighbors.
11. Most neighbors are strangers I do not talk to.
12. I feel my relationships with my neighbors are very valuable.
13. My relationships with my neighbors have helped me to be a better person.
14. I have many friendships with adults in my neighborhood.
15. I have many friendships with other teenagers in my neighborhood.
16. I feel alone in my neighborhood.
17. I have many places and friends to go to for help in my neighborhood.
Section 1

1. The adults in my neighborhood serve as role models.
2. I feel at home in my neighborhood.
3. I do not feel a strong connection to the community where I live.

Section 2

Please select which number for each of the below questions best represents your immediate “feelings” about school work. Numbers 1 and 5 indicate a very strong feeling. Numbers 2 and 4 indicate a strong feeling. Number 3 indicates you are undecided.

Section 3

Please indicate which statement applies to you by marking: (1) never, (2) once or twice, (3) 3 to 5 times, (4) 6 to 9 times, or (5) 10 or more times. Work quickly and record your first impression.

During the past year, about how often...

1. Have you disobeyed school rules?
2. Have you ever cheated on a test?
3. Have you shown disrespect for teachers?
4. Have you skipped school without an excuse?
5. Have you helped or gotten help for someone who was hurt?
6. Have you stood up for someone who was being picked on?
7. Have you comforted someone who was hurt or feeling sad?
8. Have you donated money, toys, clothes, or other things to charity?
9. Have you shared your lunch with someone who didn’t have any?
10. Have you helped a classmate with homework?
11. Have you tried hard not to hurt someone’s feelings?
12. Have you offered to look after a neighbor’s pets or small children, without being paid for it?
13. Helped carry things for someone you didn’t know?
1. Did someone make fun of you, call you names, or insult you?
2. Did someone damage something of yours on purpose?
3. Did someone steal something from your desk or locker?
4. Did someone take money or things from you by using force or by threatening to hurt you?
5. Did someone threaten to hurt you but did not actually hurt you?
6. Did someone physically attack you?

Section 4

1. Sex: 1. MALE or 2. FEMALE
3. Please indicate how active your parents are in your neighborhood with 1 being the least active and 5 being the most active:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all active</td>
<td>Rarely active</td>
<td>Occasionally active</td>
<td>Regularly Active</td>
<td>Constantly active</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the following scale, please indicate your level of activity in the following activities based upon your involvement with 1 being the least active and 5 being the most active:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all active</td>
<td>Rarely active</td>
<td>Occasionally active</td>
<td>Regularly Active</td>
<td>Constantly active</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Band?
2. School (Extra Curricular activities)?
3. Neighborhood?
4. Church?
5. Sports teams?
6. Volunteering?
7. Family?
8. Youth organizations?
9. Please indicate how much time you spend on a normal day playing video games.
1. I do not play video games
2. Less than one hour
3. 1 to 2 hours
4. 3 to 4 hours
5. More than 4 hours

139. Please indicate how much time you spend on a normal day watching television.

1. I do not watch television
2. Less than one hour
3. 1 to 2 hours
4. 3 to 4 hours
5. More than 4 hours

140. Please indicate how much of the time you spend on a normal day watching television is supervised by your parents or guardian.

1. I do not watch television with my parents or guardian
2. Less than one hour
3. 1 to 2 hours
4. 3 to 4 hours
5. More than 4 hours

141. Please indicate how much time you spend on a normal day with your parents or guardian.

1. I do not get to spend time with my parents or guardian.
2. Less than one hour
3. 1 to 2 hours
4. 3 to 4 hours
5. More than 4 hours

142. Please indicate how much of the time that you spend on a normal day with your parents or guardian is spent helping you with schoolwork.

1. My parents or guardian do not help me with my schoolwork.
2. Less than one hour
3. 1 to 2 hours
4. 3 to 4 hours
5. More than 4 hours

143. Which one of these best describes your family?

1. I live with my two parents.
2. I live with two parents, one of them is my step parent.
3. I live with one of my parents.
4. I sometimes live with my mom and sometimes with my dad.
5. I live with foster parents, or relatives.
6. Other: Please explain ______________________________ (If other then leave question #132 blank on your answer sheet and fill in the answer on this survey.)
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING THIS SURVEY!
Elementary Student Survey

For office use only
Student ID Number: ______________________
S. N. Categorization: _________________________

1. Please circle your sex: MALE or FEMALE

2. Home room teacher: __________________________

Section 1
For each of the following questions, please place an “X” over the face that best describes how you feel in response to the statement. Basically, a frown face means you disagree, a straight face means you are undecided or neutral, and a smiley face means you agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Frown (1)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Smile (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think winning the lottery would be very nice.</td>
<td>☻☻☻</td>
<td>☻☻☻</td>
<td>☻☻☻</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:
1. I think winning the lottery would be very nice. ☻☻☻

There are no right or wrong answers. Don’t think too long about it, just mark how you feel & record your first impression. Your teachers and principal will not see your answers. No one else will be allowed to see this and we will not use your names. It’s confidential. If we begin to read the next question, and you are not done, please raise your hand and we will be GLAD to give you more time.

1. I don’t do very well in school.

2. I am doing a good job in school.

3. I think I’m a good student.

4. I am not a very good student.
5. Please leave this question blank.

6. I feel safe and comfortable with the teachers in my classes.

7. The teachers in my classes always try to be fair.

8. Please leave this question blank.

9. The teachers in my classes always keep their promises.

10. The teachers in my classes really care about me.

11. Please leave this question blank.

12. I feel safe and comfortable with the principal.

13. The principal in my school always tries to be fair.

14. Please leave this question blank.

15. The principal in my school always keeps his/her promises.

16. The principal in my school really cares about me.

17. Most people who ask for help are just being lazy.

18. People should look out for themselves and not be nosy about other people’s problems.

19. I should take care of myself and let others take care of themselves.

20. People should work out their own problems by themselves. ** Please ** STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **

21. You have enough schoolwork to do without worrying about other students’ work.

22. Problems in other parts of the world are not my concern.

23. When I see someone having a problem, I want to help.
24. Everybody has enough problems of their own without worrying about other people’s problems.

25. When I hear about people who are sad or lonely, I want to do something to help.

26. I have lots of friends at school.

27. I’m lonely at school.

28. I don’t have anyone to hang around with at school.

29. I feel alone at school.

30. It’s hard to get other kids in school to like me.

31. It’s hard for me to make friends at school.

32. I don’t have any friends at school.

33. I have nobody to talk to at school.

34. My school is a fun place to be. ** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **

35. I’m bored in school.

36. I enjoy what I do in school.

37. I hate being in school.

38. I like my school.

39. What we do in school is a waste of time.

** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **
** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **
Section 2

Please circle the number that most honestly answers the question. Work quickly and record your first impression. During the past year, about how often…

1. Have you disobeyed school rules? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
2. Have you ever cheated on a test? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
3. Have you shown disrespect for teachers? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
4. Have you missed school without an excuse? (aka playing hooky) 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
5. Have you helped or gotten help for someone who was hurt? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
6. Have you stood up for someone who was being picked on? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
7. Have you comforted someone who was hurt or feeling sad? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
12. Have you helped a neighbor, without being paid for it?
   0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+

8. Have you (or your parents) given or donated money, toys, clothes, or other things to people in need (charity)? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
9. Have you shared your lunch with someone who didn’t have any? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+

10. Have you helped a classmate with homework? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+

11. Have you tried hard NOT to hurt someone’s feelings?
   0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+ ** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **

13. Have you helped carry things for someone you didn’t know? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+

14. Did someone make fun of you, call you names, or insult you? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+

15. Did someone damage something of yours on purpose? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+

16. Did someone steal something from your desk or locker? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
17. Did someone try to bully you for money or things by using force or by threatening to hurt you? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+
18. Did someone threaten to hurt you but did not actually hurt you? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+

19. Did someone physically attack (aka hit, punch,…) you? 0 times 1 to 2 times 3 to 5 times 6 to 9 times 10+

** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **
Section 3

There are numerous forms of neighborhoods in our culture. Some neighborhood communities are comprised of many different individuals and households, while others are more rural and contain only a few neighbors. Therefore, neighbors are considered to be people who live next door, in the same building, across the street or yard, or even a block or two away.

For each of the following questions, please place an “X” over the face that best describes how you feel in response to the statement. Basically, a frown face means you disagree, a straight face means you are undecided or neutral, and a smiley face means you agree. There are no right or wrong answers. Some of the statements are similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly and record your first impression.

1) disagree (3) undecided (5) agree

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1. In general, I know my neighbors very well on a personal basis.

2. I feel a strong connection to the community where I live.

3. I do not know many neighbors.

4. Considering the residents/people in my community, I personally know most of them.

5. I communicate/interact/talk a good amount with my neighbors.

** Please **STOP** and do not turn the page until instructed. **

6. I volunteer actively in my neighborhood.
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7. I hardly ever take time to say hello to a neighbor.
8. I rely upon (need) my neighbors.
9. My neighbors rely upon (need) me.
10. I communicate quite frequently with my neighbors.
11. Most neighbors are strangers I do not talk to.
12. I feel my friendships/relationships with my neighbors are very valuable.
13. My friendships/relationships with my neighbors have helped me to be a better person.
14. I have many friendships with adults in my neighborhood.
15. I have many friendships with other kids in my neighborhood.
16. I feel alone in my neighborhood.
** Please **STOP** and do not turn the page until instructed. **
17. I have many places and friends to go to for help in my neighborhood.

18. The adults in my neighborhood serve as role models.

19. I feel at home in my neighborhood.

20. I do not feel a strong connection to the community where I live.

** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **
Section 4

Place an “X” over the number in the space between the colons that represent your immediate “feelings” about school work. Mark only one “X” for each comparison on the scale that seems to be most characteristic of your opinions.

Put this Example on the chalkboard: Sad : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Happy

1. Motivated/ Wanting to do it : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Unmotivated/ NOT wanting to do it
2. Interested : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Uninterested
4. Excited : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Bored
5. Dreading it : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : Look forward to it

** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **
Section 5

2. Please circle how active your parents are in your neighborhood. Not at all Rarely Occasionally Regularly Constantly Active Active Active Active
3. Please circle how active your parents are in your school. Not at all Rarely Occasionally Regularly Constantly Active Active Active Active
4. Please circle how much time you spend on a normal day playing video games. No time Less than 1 hour 1 to 2 hours 3 to 4 hours more than 4 hours
5. Please indicate how much time you spend on a normal day watching television. No time Less than 1 hour 1 to 2 hours 3 to 4 hours more than 4 hours
6. Please indicate how much time you spend on a normal day watching television supervised by your parents or guardian. No time Less than 1 hour 1 to 2 hours 3 to 4 hours more than 4 hours
7. Please indicate how much time you spend on a normal day with your parents or guardian. No time Less than 1 hour 1 to 2 hours 3 to 4 hours more than 4 hours

** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **
8. Please indicate how much of the time that you spend on a normal day with your parents or guardian is spent helping you with schoolwork. No time Less than 1 hour 1 to 2 hours 3 to 4 hours more than 4 hours

9. Which one of these best describes your family? Circle the most accurate answer.

1. I live with my two parents.
2. I live with two parents, one of them is my step parent.
3. I live with one of my parents.
4. I sometimes live with my mom and sometimes with my dad.
5. I live with foster parents, or relatives.
6. I live with my grandparents.
7. Other: Please explain________________________________________

10. What words come to mind when you think of someone with good character?

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

11. Name three people that you want to be more like?

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

** Please STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **
Section 6
For each of the following questions, please place an “X” over the face that best describes how you feel in response to the statement. Basically, a frown face means you disagree, a straight face means you are undecided or neutral, and a smiley face means you agree. There are no right or wrong answers. Some of the statements are similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly and record your first impression.

1. I can be counted on to do my part for the team/group.
2. I try to get out of doing things that are difficult or boring.
3. I spend extra time working to improve my weaknesses.
4. I continue trying hard, even when things are not going well.
5. I forget to bring what is needed for class.
6. I work with another student to help him or her do better on an assignment, without letting them copy my work.
7. I forget to do my homework.
8. I think about my school work and consider whether I need to work harder.
9. I talk to a teacher to find out if I'm doing well in my school work.
10. I run out of time to do my assignments well. ** Please

STOP and do not turn the page until instructed. **
11. I give up watching TV or hanging out with friends to study for a test or do an assignment for school.

12. I am willing to redo a school assignment to make it better.

13. I treat teachers and school staff with respect.

14. I do the right thing no matter what other students think.

15. I do not cheat on tests or assignments.

16. I admit if I do something wrong.

17. I try to exclude kids who are different than me from my life.

18. I notice that students, who are not part of the popular group, get picked on or excluded in my school.

19. I share with others, even if they are not my friends.

20. I resolve conflict without fighting, insulting, or threatening others.

21. I try to get my friends to follow the rules.

22. I do not care if my friends cheat.

23. When I see someone being picked on, I try to stop it.

24. I try to stop my friends from spreading rumors and gossip about others.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING THIS SURVEY!