



Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

2019 BONNER CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOLS

ALPINE VISTA

Tulare City School District

2975 Alpine Ave, Tulare, CA 93274

Terri Martindale, Principal

Alpine Vista promotes core ethical values as the basis for good behavior. It is important that American public schools become involved with developing character of students because it is not always taught at home. We need to prepare new leaders of tomorrow to enter the workforce. We are molding leaders needing to be ready to help and work in a global economy. We have made massive progress in achieving these goals. Annually we participate in Mock the Vote. Our seventh and eighth grade social studies teachers review the election process, discuss local issues, have students pick sides on each proposition, and hold Mock Elections.

Wednesdays, we have Family Time, where one classroom will visit another classroom and complete cooperative projects while learning the 8 Habits. Our staff also takes pride in the family atmosphere we have established using The Leader in Me, building our relationships at school. We use The Leader in Me curriculum to teach how to behave and become a leader. Every classroom has jobs giving students leadership opportunities to grow. Another example of family time, classrooms worked together to create posters in recognition of our Veteran's Day Car Show. Students also have Leader in Me Clubs in the classroom where taking the lead in their learning and synergizing to discover answers to their own difficult questions.

Our school ensures a clean, secure and psychologically healthy learning environment in several ways. First of all, we have students volunteering their time during lunches to help custodians clean up tables and floors in the cafeteria. After our Halloween Carnival, we had a massive amount of parents and students who stayed several hours after the event to clean up the school in preparation for the next school day. We have a Golden Plunger award given to the cleanest classroom in each one of our 6 wings. Students are thinking win-win as they clean up after themselves and helping out custodians.

We keep our school safe through many means. Parents are diverted to the front office where we utilize cameras and a buzz in system. All gates remain locked, manned by a teacher when used, and monitored via camera throughout the day providing the highest level of safety. Teachers have all attended Active Shooter Training, where the Tulare Police Department came in and taught our teachers how to handle a dangerous situation on campus.

Adults at Alpine Vista School promote and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect daily. For example, we use The Leader in Me workbooks to teach the 8 Habits as a whole class, in centers, workstations, and in small groups. Teachers discuss their lives and how they are using the habits during family time, whole class instruction, and class meetings. When a student makes a mistake, a few actions will follow. Teachers use this opportunity as a learning experience to discuss mistakes made and how they can use the habits to reflect.

Alpine Vista provides students opportunities for civic learning and service learning projects tied to curriculum. As a school, we give back to Food Link by joining our neighboring high school's Harvesting Hope project. Through this charitable program, Food Link has received over a hundred-thousand pounds of food. It is wonderful to see families head out to pick corn, oranges, and other food ready to be harvested in fields and backyards of families within the community. As a district, we are United for Good. Our students give back to the community in other meaningful ways as well. Our AVID students run Kids Day selling newspapers to support Valley Children's Hospital. We also collect Pennies for Patients to raise money for this importance cause. One of our classes on campus is California Junior Scholarship Federation (CJSF). Students learn to give back in many ways and document hours of charity.

Teachers promote social competencies and behaviors through our school matrix. We created a matrix of expected behaviors on the playground, office, cafeteria, hallways, and other crucial areas where behaviors are taught using the PBIS method.

It is clearly evident Alpine Vista School has a lot to offer our students and community. Character Counts and The Leader in Me has transformed our school, producing students that are prepared to tackle the needs of tomorrow. Our campus atmosphere is welcoming and productive. Character development is not just alive, but thriving in a time desperately needing leaders to stand up and take charge.

GRANT MIDDLE SCHOOL
Kings Canyon Unified School District
360 Northeast Ave, Reedley, CA 93654
Sharon Matsuzaki, Principal

Education for democracy is at the core for our public schools. Describe why American public should involve themselves with developing the character of their students.

It is important for the- future of our democracy to teach children to build acceptance and tolerance and for students to know it's important to be good caring people. Our students are our future, therefore to create the society we want to live in, we need to teach now what we want to see later. In these rapidly changing times our American family culture is different than it looked years ago. Schools used to be a support to parents who took the role of teaching children wrong from right, character virtues and morals. Now, not only are we looked to as being the responsible party to do that teaching, we are met with resistance when we attempt to correct behavior with consequences and discipline.

However, it does not mean we can give up. We try and save students from bad choices because many students lack positive role models in their lives. Having self value and

knowing one has a responsibility to the community can boost revenues and avoid overcrowding in prisons.

The goals at Grant Middle School are for our students to be:

Responsible, Respectful, Resourceful, good citizens, well rounded individuals, critical thinkers, life long learners, charitable, empathetic, college and career ready, leaders, and have knowledge of their role as a good citizen in a democracy. All students will visit at least one college campus every year, maintain a GPA of 2.0 or above, and not receive any Ds or Fs in core classes. As a school site our goal is to achieve Platinum status for PBIS, at a minimum, maintain our gold status for a third year. We also have a goal to reduce our suspension rate by 15%. (Currently we are on track to meet that goal as we have a 37% decrease so far this 2018-2019 school year.) This will hopefully increase our level on CA Dashboard moving us off of red to orange or yellow status. Our intended goal for our CA Dashboard is to reduce the number of chronic absenteeism- currently 4% and to move from yellow status to green.

We focus on amendments and basic human rights in all areas of ELNHistory. Studying Refugees - responsibilities of citizens, human suffering, disabilities. Studying Constitution- Jim Crow, Civil Rights i.e. voting- community and school pride of ownership, community standards and positive participation and contributions. Social worker teaches "Second Step" social skills curriculum to all six grade students once a week for Tier one behavior support. This 2018-2019 year piloting the "Time To Teach" curriculum which are behavior plans to encourage high expectations and winning classroom behavior.

We have several clubs such as: MESA, Anti-Bullying Champions (ABC), Student Council, leadership, Block G (Academic and Behavioral Honor Society), GATE, Chess Club. Team sports include - staff vs. students, After School Program, intramural sports, battle of the books, oral interpretation, band.

At Grant Middle School we demand people treat each other with respect. We model this behavior including adult to adult, student to adult, adult to student and student to student. Since respect is our first character value, we emphasize it in all we do including respect for facilities and materials. We have a fenced campus with positive PBIS messages posted around campus, murals, and marquee to make an inviting learning environment. Lessons have been created to teach each core value at the beginning of each year and are revisited as necessary throughout the year. Schoolwide assemblies and rallies highlight our core values and reinforce our message and expectations. Adult supervision is provided before and after school, as well as breaks and lunch. Students rise to the expectations of keeping the campus clean. We set expectations that everyone cleans up after themselves to support our amazing custodial staff. Full time social worker and part time school psychologist are on site to assist with student issues. Part time campus assistant to monitor restrooms, cafeteria, and hallways. Anti bullying club to promote safe environment for all students. Adults talk with students about their interests as well as topics within curriculum and take time to answer questions that are personal, and based on curriculum.

How do students at your school contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others and the community? Our symphonic band plays at retirement homes and for the community. They also fundraise to take a trip to Disneyland to record their music in a Disney recording studio. Our Block G students provide community service as a way to earn their Block G points. Our eighth grade students attend the Civil War Reenactment at Kearney Park. Campus tours are given to incoming students or transfer students by Block G students. Our

sixth grade students attend a 3 day ecology unit for Scicon at Hartland camp. We also participate in Read to Succeed and we fundraise and provide celebrations such as carnivals and holiday grams. Our students worked with our campus assistant to create a float for Reedley Fiesta Parade to promote reading. After School Program provides opportunities for students to explore new learning through field trips to the Exploratorium Museum, Wonder Valley Resort, STEAM workshops, and Fresno Art Museum.

JOHN F. KENNEDY JR. HIGH SCHOOL

Hanford Elementary School District

1000 E Florinda St, Hanford, CA 93230

Rick Johnston, Principal

JFK Jr. High School places premium value on character education and its impact on the development of the students we serve. To this staff and entire school team character education is not just something that's taught. Character education is practiced, visible, felt, and real throughout everything we do here at JFK. Simply put, character education is something that is engrained in our culture and climate as a school. The staff at John F. Kennedy has worked diligently to improve their practices and teaching of character education. We accomplish this through, daily interactions with students, the use of district provided materials and focusing on teaching the six pillars of character trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship whenever opportunities present themselves. The staff and students daily goal is to model what good character looks like. Our motto this year as a school is the three B's which mean: ***"Be kind, Be Positive, Be a Knight."*** Over the past 13 years, character education has been developed into a cornerstone of how we build the culture and climate of the school. A change in mindset of how we view discipline to a mindset where, character education, prevention and reinforcement has led to many healthy successes for our staff and most importantly our students. Attendance has gone up annually and we have had measurable success in bringing down the number of classroom and campus disruptions. These successes show up as well in the number of suspensions and expulsions decreasing. We understand to get that "best hope" of a quality education they must strive to be here and want to be here. JFK Jr. High is proof that character education matters, it must be practiced and it does heavily contribute to the creation of a successful school culture and climate.

Most of our students come from difficult homes and socioeconomically challenged backgrounds. Some of our students face dysfunctional environments at home where character education is not being taught, modeled or reinforced. Social media, media and entertainment often send negative messages to our students that affect their ideas on character and what it is (the difference between right and wrong if you will). At JFK we counteract all these negative influences by teaching our students the importance of having good moral character. We feel that these vital lessons in character that we have intertwined into our culture will not only help them succeed academically but can also help them succeed in life as well. These adolescent students are naturally impressionable, curious and possess a strong desire to understand the world around them.

John F. Kennedy staff has established a culture and climate where students and parents are proud to be Knights! We did this by focusing on the Josephson's Institute 6 pillars of Character. Our main focus is always on respect, responsibility, and caring. However, we've

found that as we developed these three pillars the other three naturally came into focus (trustworthiness, fairness, citizenship) and were easily taught and implemented as well. Over time, our goals have evolved into the following:

- Teachers and Staff at JFK will strive to take advantage of every teachable moment with students when it comes to quality character education. We will strive to be role models and not only teach character but display it in our actions as well.
- Continue to teach district provided character education called Life Skills and connect it to the things we already do in the realm of character education.
- Our Vice-Principal, Learning Director and School Counselor will continue to focus on our most at-risk students through our Leadership and Character Intervention Program, Academic-Counseling, Mediation and Peer Mediation Program. They will provide these students with extra character learning opportunities, counseling, incentives and support that in turn will promote a pathway for success for them in school and beyond.
- Continue to focus on the established principles of character implemented and stressed by our Stand for the Silent Class (Anti-Bullying) that is offered 6th & 7th periods as part of our school's curriculum.
- Continue to focus on the established principles of character implemented and stressed by our Community Leadership Class offered 6th & 7th periods as part of our school's curriculum.
- Continue to focus on the established principles of character implemented and stressed by our Multi-Cultural Club.

John F. Kennedy Junior High School contributes to our school and our community in a variety of ways. This is our responsibility. We must teach more than curriculum to the students we serve. This responsibility of ours to our kids is vital to their future and the future of the community we serve. Students here know the meaning of helping others and you can see it in their smiles that they feel "it is better to give than receive." They accomplish this through volunteer work, presentations to feeder elementary schools, presentations to peers and staff on site, building responsibility and accountability to one another within a club/class and enjoying/experiencing the positive impact they have on our school and their community. Above and beyond the off campus work, these students are the spark plug for a culture and climate on campus that is fun, energetic, connected, and meaningful. Everything from movie nights, dances, rallies lunch & brunch time games to Red Ribbon Week activities these students help create an atmosphere where kids want to be and feel safe being here.

Examples opportunities our kids take advantage of in our community to serve are as follows but are not limited to these only:

- Recycling and community clean up. Local parks, community centers, nursing homes, assisted living homes, homeless shelters, battered women and children's shelters, SPCA
- Volunteer work at all the above as well.
- Charity Band (Mrs. Schofield and Ms. Broussard) performances on holidays, Christmas caroling, holiday decorating
- Community Garden work
- Volunteering for Veteran Memorial events
- Canned Food Drives

- Hygiene material drives for homeless
- Plastic bag drive to weave sleeping mats for homeless
- Elementary presentations for incoming students (Character building/Community Building)
- Local Native American Pow Wow celebrations
- Local Community Cultural Fairs
- Art Contributions to murals painted throughout the community
- Salvation Army food baskets
- Kings food pantry donations

KINGS CANYON MIDDLE SCHOOL
Fresno Unified School District
5117 E Tulare Ave, Fresno, CA 93727
Edith Navarro, Principal

As a comprehensive middle school in a high-risk urban community; Kings Canyon Middle School embodies the belief that character education is at the base of all disciplines; taught and modeled. Kings Canyon Middle School is a diverse campus in southeast Fresno. A review of the school demographics give indication of the challenge: 100% of students eligible for Free/Reduced lunch; approximately 30% of students designated as English Learners; an ethnically diverse student population of Hispanic and Hmong, combined with smaller populations of African-American, Laotian and Anglo groups. With these challenges, the entire staff of the school considers it our obligation and our opportunity to serve as a positive influence in the development of young people who will possess academic skills as well as social and moral competence.

Our guidelines for success are called E5 and are referenced every morning during announcements and are posted for student review in every classroom. The E5 code has become an important facet of the educational process for students and teachers alike at the school and has given rise to additional closely aligned efforts to address character and individual responsibility. The code offers students five simple personal standards:

- When you are in public, act in a polite manner
- Always obey and respect your teachers and other adults
- Take care of the school
- Don't be a bully and don't tolerate bullying by others
- If you know something bad is going on, tell an adult

The E5 campaign has remained strong over the past 10 years and serves as the base for all character/behavioral conversations.

Character education is addressed throughout curriculum and grade levels giving all students equal access to learning the shared core values of our school. Each week students and staff engage in advisory lessons that are centered on topics such as anti-bullying, building positive relationships, and supporting students becoming self-advocates by creating personal goals related to grades, attendance and behavior. All students also participate in a bi-weekly instructional program called Accelerated Learning (PLUS).

The importance of a safe and inviting learning environment is actively promoted. Through the E5 code, students are encouraged to “Take care of the school”. Members of the Student Leadership class regularly decorate the school with encouraging posters; glass display cases have been added to the central hallway to highlight student work and achievements; and each teacher has a personal display case which is also used to foster character advancements.

Kings Canyon staff provides all students with opportunities to develop citizenship skills, using the community as a classroom by engaging the community in providing resources and support. Many clubs make connections with the community such as Wyldlife, Horticulture, AVID, JDA, leadership, and Men’s/Women’s Alliance. Kings Canyon students partner with the community through Tree Fresno, Rotary lunches, having special guest Coffee Hour speakers, participating in meetings with Senator Vidak and other community members, competing in the Fresno Fair Art and other exhibits throughout the year, taking field trips to Fresno State, Fresno Pacific, Fresno City College, UC Santa Cruz, Monterey Bay Aquarium, and Sacramento.

The many clubs on campus have become service oriented such as the agricultural club which has done all the landscaping throughout the campus. Students have participated, in charity efforts including Pennies for Patients (cancer fundraising), supporting Valley Children’s Hospital, a jog-a-thon to raise money for the March of Dimes and last month a canned food drive for needy families.

Our site is committed to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of all of our students. Respect and tolerance is the norm at Kings Canyon. Students are respected for their uniqueness human and their individual gifts they bring to our classrooms every day.

LOS TULES MIDDLE SCHOOL
Tulare City School District
801 W Gail Ave, Tulare, CA 93274
Mark Thompson, Vice Principal

Children model the behaviors and values that are modeled to them. With the family unit depreciating rapidly and divorces rising, the role models that children once looked to for guidance in ethical behavior, upstanding morals and exemplary character are fading. The questions still remains, “If not us, who? If not now, when?” At Los Tules we believe, it must be us; it must be now.

Los Tules has developed a mantra: “**Tigers earn their S.T.R.I.P.E.S.**” The acronym **S.T.R.I.P.E.S.** stands for **Self- Confident; Tenacious; Respectful; Innovative; Persistent; Extraordinary; Strong.** The goal is for students to “become” the **S.T.R.I.P.E.S.** and model the character traits daily. When students show their **S.T.R.I.P.E.S.**, we believe they will develop into not only well-rounded students but productive members of society and our community. Besides implementing our **S.T.R.I.P.E.S** philosophy, Los Tules has also made strides towards meeting this goal of promoting ethical values and good character as evidenced by the implementation of our school-wide PBIS initiative. PBIS is a systematic framework for teaching positive behavioral expectations.

Keeping character development, a priority for our school community requires continual ***monitoring of our progress***. Progress is verified through a dramatically improved school environment. Our suspension levels and disciplinary actions have decreased in the office as we focus on corrective and positive behavior strategies rather than negative disciplines. Our commitment to character development never wavers.

Character education has been **infused** into our everyday teaching strategies through strategic planning school wide as well as classroom instruction. Students are engaged in candid conversations and instructional practices regarding character traits and are encouraged to be **open-minded** in their thinking and behaviors in and out of the classroom with a **respect for other cultures and perspectives**.

Over the past couple of years, we have also made it a priority to ensure we have a **clean and secure learning environment** that fosters student learning both physically and psychologically.

Physically:

- Updated roofing and painting to promote school value and worth
- New fencing and a fully gated campus with a secured entrance and bell system.
- Lunchtime recycling program with a focus on composting and trash recycling.
- College banners strategically placed in the arbor areas
- Banners with inspirational quotes campus wide
- Banners displaying the **S.T.R.I.P.E.S.** acronym

Psychologically:

- Small groups with counseling for similar needs
- On site psychologist
- On site SST meetings to brainstorm and support specific student needs
- On site lunchtime chaplains to support positive behaviors
- Shared SRO officers on middle school campuses in the district.
- Full-time Campus Life Mentors who meet with at-risk students

Community service continues to be a priority for Los Tule Middle School. Students actively participate in a number of valuable community service projects designed to promote social development while fostering the principles of character development and strengthening community partnerships. The school has become a major contributor to Children's Hospital of Central California, having sold thousands special edition "Kid's Day" newspapers. In addition to its school-wide support of Children's Hospital, Los Tules staff and students routinely ***volunteer to participate in civic service activities*** and make charitable contributions.

REYBURN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL
Clovis Unified School District
2901 N De Wolf Ave, Clovis, CA 93619
Kevin Kerney, Principal

In today's rapidly evolving society, now more than ever, it is crucial that public schools take a stance and provide consistent, equitable, and applicable character education and civic learning.

Reyburn Intermediate takes pride in the fact that our diverse population is celebrated, all the while bridging the gap between home, community and school. When a school can honor the diverse backgrounds that come onto their campus, and yet still hold onto their own core values and high standards, the result is something we call Pack Pride.

The mission of Reagan Educational Center is to graduate students who possess the background knowledge, academic skills, and technological expertise they will need to become lifelong learners, productive workers, and civic-minded community members. We also believe participation in school activities builds stronger relationships, improves self-esteem, and develops the skills students need to prepare them to meet future challenges in college and the workforce.

One of the ways our school measures progress towards our goal of preparing students for future challenges in both college and the workforce is monitoring behavior and suspensions. Reyburn Intermediate is home to over 1,400 students, and negative behavior is handled with the utmost care and importance. For the small population of students who are not reaching their full potential and who may be lacking in character and civic education, they can be placed in our **Opportunities Program**. Opportunities is a self-contained alternative setting for students returning from an alternative education setting, or Reyburn students who could benefit from intense intervention support.

In addition to Digital Citizenship, Reyburn Intermediate is in the process of training educators in **Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT)**. CRT is a component of AVID, but it can be infused into any classroom and in any subject. The use of Culturally Relevant Teaching creates a climate and culture of inclusiveness and sense of belonging for many of our students. CRT embodies our mission of building strong relationships and improving self-esteem through lessons and activities that create a classroom of understanding and acceptance.

Staff members participate around campus in **Timberwolf Territory**. Timberwolf Territory is a staff led activity, which is as simple as having a bright green sign on your door and opening your office/classroom during lunch. The vision behind Timberwolf Territory is to have willing staff members open their spaces up for students while at lunch to provide a safe, comfortable, and supportive environment for students who may need or prefer an alternative to the traditional lunch period. Wolfpack staff make sure they take care of each other, in addition to the students.

The **Leadership Class** at Reyburn allows our students to impact not only the lives of students on our campus but within the community as well. Students in Leadership class pair up with students in our Functional Life Skills class and mentor them through daily duties such as **Office Recyclable Pick-Up**. The leadership students who accompany our disabled students learn the value of civic action through compassion, patience, and accountability. Money earned from collecting recyclables goes towards the Functional Life Skills class field trips and social activities. The leadership class also actively participates in events benefiting the community such as; **Toys for Tots, Coats for Kids, Kids Day Newspaper, and Light the Night Event**.

SCANDANAVIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District
3216 N Sierra Vista Ave, Fresno, CA 93726
Julie Ellis, Principal

Marian Wright Edelman states, “Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.” This quote embodies why we at Scandinavian Middle School believe American public schools should involve themselves in developing character education and civic learning for their students. If the hope of our nation is to continue to grow, develop, and improve communities and lives of our citizens, it starts with developing conscious, knowledgeable, willing citizens with strong character. The goal of our site is to develop positive citizens who are willing and able to pour back into the community from which they were raised, and work to improve the quality of life within its boundaries.

Our school has made noticeable progress towards our goal of creating productive, knowledgeable, skilled, and kind citizens. We have seen significant improvement in suspension data as well as district survey data from staff and students. In comparison to the survey our students completed last year, our students this year feel closer to one another, happier, more connected on campus, safer, and more cared for by staff. Likewise, our staff feel that our school site is safer and our students more respectful. Also, our suspensions have dropped by 17% from last year, showing that our students are demonstrating more positive behavior on campus. At our school site we measure and monitor progress towards our character and civic education goals by utilizing surveys to get feedback from students and staff as well as monitoring school-wide behavior data.

Character and civic education are at the core of Scandinavian’s core beliefs. Our school strives to instill citizenship skills that will translate into success in the community. Several programs are in place that promote these values into every student every day.

Scandinavian ensures a clean, secure, and psychologically healthy learning environment through three key avenues: school-wide implementation of classroom structures, a robust student support center, and campus beautification efforts from both staff and students.

At the heart of every adult-to-student interaction is a genuine sense of responsibility as being a key contributor to the overall growth of students. Our teachers are committed to promoting both academic and social-emotional learning, in and out of the classroom setting. As a result, we have collaboratively developed intentional practices to teach and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect.

Scandinavian students also have opportunities to participate in civic learning and service-learning projects throughout the year. These opportunities are linked to various curricula across disciplines.

WEB Leadership (Where Everyone Belongs) has contributed in a variety of ways to the school, and the community. WEB has actively partnered with Valley Dream Center, a local nonprofit organization, in a monthly food drive where any person from the community is welcome to receive free produce and packaged food. In this service project, leadership helps with bagging

produce, interacting with other adult volunteers and assisting the elderly with loading food onto their personal carts. Through this active leadership, we have been able to extend the opportunity to other classes including the special education class, to support inclusion of all students with the Alliance classes.

SEQUOIA MIDDLE SCHOOL
Fresno Unified School District
4050 E Hamilton Ave, Fresno, CA 93702
Matt Ward, Principal

An essential goal of Sequoia Middle School is to teach, model, practice, and celebrate an intense character education program. This directly supports Fresno Unified School District's mission of "Preparing College and Career Ready Graduates." This mission is anchored in four goals and includes excelling in reading and math, engaging students in the arts, activities, and athletics, character and competencies for workplace success, and staying on target to graduate. Through our site commitment to these goals and the principles taught and reinforced through **Character Counts!**, we strive to develop, strengthen and encourage core ethical values that can be seen in and out of the classroom. Ultimately, we want students equipped to **Live Their Purpose** while they are Lumberjacks and beyond.

Goals we set early on include improving classroom behavior and attendance and reducing D and F grades. Our classroom referral data has improved dramatically. In 2015-16, there were 1098 classroom referrals and last year there were 478. We believe this is the result of our focused work around character education, engagement opportunities and CHAMPs implementation.

Our Language Arts Department infuses character education through extensive units of study. These units require students to read closely and comprehend complex material to determine relevant evidence to support their claims and evaluations. Through these lessons, teachers model appropriate academic discourse helping students to respectfully disagree with ideas and not people during classroom discussions. In these ways, students are guided through complex academic and ethical matters that elude simple answers to build content knowledge alongside the pillars of **Responsibility**, **Respect** and **Citizenship**.

Having a secure and psychologically safe and caring school requires an explicit and intentional way to address bullying. Our Safe and Civil Schools Team and Student Leadership helped develop the Kindness Campaign to promote student participation, communication and relationship building. Students wrote messages of kindness to students during lunchtime and a chain of kindness acts was displayed and wrapped around our cafeteria. Our principal shares examples of kindness during the morning announcements and our Lumberjacks often make efforts to reach out to other students during lunch that are sitting or walking alone.

Sequoia promotes ongoing relationship building with students through Stones in the River. Like stones in the river that can get overlooked because they are washed over by water, each teacher selects five students to invite to lunch that they would like to build a stronger relationship with. In October, we held our second Stones in the River luncheon. Teachers have shared how

this time has really made a difference not only in behavior but in effort and participation as well. We are planning another Stones in the River luncheon in the spring to increase the sense of belonging with more of our students. This effort promotes **Trustworthiness**, **Respect**, and **Caring** and its impact can be seen in and out of the classroom.

Another goal of our program is to teach our students that caring and sharing have rewards deeper than receiving. Last year, one of our 8th grade students heard about the tragic earthquake in Mexico and began a fundraising campaign to collect money for those affected. Daisy Gonzalez raised more than \$600 for the Red Cross. This effort inspired Daisy to start a Community Service Club at Sequoia, so more students can feel the pride that comes with **Caring** and **Citizenship**.

Sequoia Middle School is a **Community of Scholars**. Together we have the charge to model and exhibit all the **Character Counts!** virtues. We know that success has no finish line and we have not rested on our achievements but continue to evaluate, plan for improvements and implement positive changes to our various programs with the ultimate goal of providing challenging and comprehensive academic and character education to help students **Live Their Purpose** every day.

WASHINGTON ACADEMIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

1705 10th St, Sanger, CA 93657

Leo Castillo, Principal

Character education is an integral part of American schools, ensuring that there is a safe, respectful, and caring learning environment where student potential is maximized and guided to be well-rounded individuals. WAMS staff, parents, and students are committed to maintaining a positive and safe school culture where rigorous and relevant learning takes place. Students are explicitly taught pro-social skills through the use of the Second Step social emotional curriculum and our Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) model. Our PBIS model is a tiered support system which teaches, scaffolds, and rewards desired behaviors.

The WAMS Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) and PBIS teams meet monthly to review data centered on student behavior. MTSS reviews students with both academic and behavioral support needs. Both teams review data regarding behavior, where PBIS will delve deeper into the behavioral side of our systems by review of current expectations for settings, overview of behavioral supports for specific students, staff feedback, merits, Second-step lessons taught in our advisory classes, and attendance review with monthly and trimester rewards.

WAMS character education program continues to achieve its goals each year. Our goals are measured by the following tools: 1.) Parent Surveys – Each year our parents are presented with a survey, which allows parents to rate our school and provide feedback. This feedback reflects our parents' satisfaction with our school's character education program, 2.) Attendance – The importance of students being at school every day, allowing access to both academic and social experiences, 3.) Staff Surveys – each year our staff participates in a survey. This survey gathers the staff's opinions on our school environment

and information to guide our goal of continual improvement. These surveys support the core values of our school, 4.) School Safety Survey – Yearly our staff completes a School Safety Survey. Answers to survey questions provide information regarding the safety of our campus and systems that we have in place to address issues of concern, 5.) District-Wide Student Information System (Powerschool) – through this system we have been able to track student discipline and referrals, 6.) California Healthy Kids Survey, data obtained from this survey guides us in creation of our site goals to further improvement and measure progress in student-school connectedness and safety.

When walking onto WAMS' campus, the feeling that greets you is one of community, safety and pride. Teachers are professionally dressed, friendly, and welcoming. Students are uniformly dressed, polite, and happy. Parents are welcomed and feel comfortable on campus. WAMS is clean and well maintained. WAMS logos and behavioral expectations are visible throughout the campus. Students proudly wear WAMS logos on clothing. There is a sense of pride among students and staff. Awards are prominently displayed throughout campus proclaiming WAMS' history of achievement.

The WAMS staff has worked to integrate character education into the academic curriculum as well as athletic and co-curricular activities. In PE classes, teachers strive to develop sportsmanship among students by encouraging one another and teaching that we all have various strengths and challenges and all benefit from words of encouragement. It is an ongoing process and shows as our students work together in teams.

We also strive to ensure a safe learning environment for our students through the dedicated adults who reward students when they make the right decisions and intervene when assistance or guidance is needed. Students have the opportunity to earn paper or electronic merits for demonstrating good character and meeting our behavioral expectations in and out of the classroom. Opportunities for earning these may be through exhibiting effort in class or assignments, helping others in need, or by being positive role models. All staff members are participants in awarding merits which lends to the overall positive climate and student's well-being on campus.

The staff at WAMS believes students who are engaged in enrichment and extracurricular opportunities will apply those positive character choices both in and out of the classroom. This year WAMS has participated in a number of activities within our community and all students are encouraged to join in our efforts.

Our Student Body leadership team in conjunction with our Community of Caring class are a big part of building a culture where we unite and give back to our community. Our students work in conjunction with several local non-profits in community food drives, Toys for Tots, Pennies for Patients, Coats for Kids, Kid's Day Newspaper for Children's Hospital, box-tops for education. Other fun community building activities include "Muffins with Mom" "Donuts with Dad" and several family movie nights.