



Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

2001 BONNER CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Alta Sierra Intermediate School (1191 students, Grades 7,8) Clovis, CA

Alta Sierra Intermediate (ASI) staff knows that it is important to help students become productive citizens who value diversity and who treat others with dignity and respect. This begins with a staff who understands the importance of “practicing what you preach.” Through words and actions, tolerance, respect, and fairness are modeled on a daily basis in the classroom, over the morning announcements, and through the many activities that are carried out each day across campus. All staff understand that the intermediate school years are critical in the process of helping young people become responsible adults.

[Our] 7th grade students were shown clips from videos generating discussions related to perseverance, positive attitude, hate crimes, peer pressure, self-confidence, developing talents, dealing with conflicts, showing respect for others' differences, criminal issues, individuality, self-expression, anger management, sensitivity, stereotypes, friendship, humor, and popularity. Of the 282 students who completed an evaluation, ... 80% rated the activity within the good-to-excellent range. Student comments regarding what was most helpful to them included, “Learning about how to solve difficult situations. Learning to be more nice. It helps you deal with these kinds of problems. I liked the lawyers coming and talking about stuff they experienced. I enjoyed seeing how movies related to our lives. We all got to talk and we had someone listen to us. It gave us a chance to interact with a whole bunch of different kinds of peers. It showed us how to feel good about ourselves even though we are different or not popular. That you should just ignore mean, rude, bullies and that it gives you a different view at the kids that get made fun of a lot.”

Cherry Avenue Middle School (543 students, Grades 6,7,8) Tulare, CA

Walk onto the Cherry Avenue Middle School campus, and you will quickly notice six painted, taller-than-life wooden pillars in the quad that tout: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. They constantly, but gently, remind those nearby what we believe: everyone's character counts.

Cherry Avenue has a vision statement that was developed by parents, students, classified, certificated, and administrative staff members. It was approved by the School Site

Council/Bilingual Advisory Committee and is found in the comprehensive school plan. It reads in part: The vision of the Cherry Avenue Middle School community is to provide a safe atmosphere for the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral and ethical development of each student. Students are provided a variety of instructional practices that provide the tools, atmosphere and motivation to encourage high academic achievement. The staff is committed to providing intervention for all students in need, as well as making sure that all students have equal access to the services of the student support team.

Walk down the center hallway and you will be surrounded by Character Counts! posters, student-made signs about bullies not being welcome, and the request for everyone to practice random acts of kindness.

**Clark Intermediate School (1285 students, Grades 7,8)
Clovis, CA**

It is the responsibility of Clark Intermediate School and its school community to establish an educational direction that focuses on the development of positive character and values. The approach of character development at Clark involves the ambiance created by the curriculum and the programs, including all areas of mind, body and spirit. The Sparthenian model has been adopted at Clark, with character development permeating its every concept.

An important school goal is to develop individuals who, through their actions and conduct, exhibit certain qualities perceived by the school and community to be positive traits of character. At Clark, students are taught principles of honesty, responsibility, and perseverance, while encouraged to be self-respecting, considerate, and courteous to others. This is done on an everyday basis and is supported by academic block class activities and elective classes such as health science, leadership, and peer counseling as well as the multicultural committee.

Clark Intermediate promotes student improvement through strong curricular and co-curricular areas. Clark Intermediate has a school goal of 97% student co-curricular participation. The goal was reached this past year with 98% of the students participating in co-curricular activities. This participation may include school clubs, athletic teams, performing arts programs, cheerleading or academic competitions. It is the district and school philosophy that involvement and interaction will foster interpersonal relationships and skills resulting in positive personal development.

**Divisadero Middle School (776 students, Grades 7,8)
Visalia, CA**

It is the intent of Divisadero Middle School to provide activities and instruction to all students and to try, whenever possible in whatever manner possible, to promote interaction among students of different socio-economic, ethnic, or academic backgrounds. We have modified after-school activities in such a manner as to make them accessible to all students. Students are eligible to go based on grades, behavior, attendance, citizenship, etc. Some activity eligibility is based solely on one or two criteria while others encompass the entire range of expectations. We have also provided free transportation and the opportunity for no-cost admission to activities for all of our students.

Divisadero Middle School makes it a priority for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others, and to the community. Our school has a wide variety of opportunities for our students to contribute. Three of the most visible avenues for contribution are through Leadership, Student Government and Art Services. These three organizations are the heart of our campus.

Leadership, comprised of 60-80 students per year, is designed to teach the qualities, characteristics and strategies of exceptional leaders.[Those students] are responsible for planning and executing campus-wide activities, running the student store, finding ways in which other students can be engaged in student activities, locating avenues by which the community may be served and initiating activities for service. Student Government, which involves up to 100 students per year, is responsible for promoting school-wide communication of ideas; for finding timely, equitable solutions to site-based problems; and for monitoring the legal and ethical use of student funds. Finally Art Services (60-80 students) provides the public announcement and visual components for our school. Each month they supply the artwork, decorations and labor for our character value of the month, and they annually repaint the main corridor of our school with phrases and quotes that promote developing various aspects of character.

Green Acres Middle School (864 students, Grades 7,8) Visalia, CA

To promote and recognize good character, our school has created a Green Acres Character Counts! Hall of Fame. Students who actively display the character traits of the six pillars can be nominated by any school personnel. These student nominations are recognized on Character Counts! Mondays. They receive a Character Counts! certificate, a front-of-the-line pass, and their picture is taken and displayed in the Character Counts! Hall of Fame located in the office, as well as in the campus gazebo. These student nominations are also forwarded to the Tulare County Office of Education along with their pictures, which are then sent to the Visalia Times-Delta for publication.

Banners announcing the Pillar of the Week fly daily on campus. Our character education school slogan, "Character counts...7 Days a Week" is displayed prominently on a banner flown below our school marquee. The slogan was the result of a contest in which each advisory class was asked to submit a slogan. The slogans were then voted on by the student body.

Kastner Intermediate School (1560 students, Grades 7,8) Clovis, CA

Before our students even attend Kastner, they find out what is expected of them as people of character. The Kastner video is shown to 6th grade incoming Kastner students every spring where the character pillars are addressed. Our fall new student/parent orientation also includes the video and what is expected from all of us in the Kastner community. A student/parent handbook, with a section on character education, is given out to students and parents during registration in August. The August W.E.B (Welcome EveryBody) orientation for incoming 7th graders, put on by ninety 8th grade W.E.B. leaders, stresses the Six Pillars of Character and

transition into intermediate school. The Kastner student planner, an organizer purchased by our parent club, is provided for every student to help organize his/her homework. Inside the planner, the six pillars of character are listed, along with a description of a person of character. Weekly parent newsletters include a section on character education written by the principal, and quotes or stories during our daily bulletins remind Kastner students and staff to be people of character.

**La Joya Middle School (900 students, Grades 7,8)
Visalia, CA**

Teachers are provided with questions or topics for discussion based on different character traits. The questions or topics for discussion focus on current events and issues that affect our students. La Joya students do a daily newscast, which is fed directly into each classroom on our campus as well as the library. During this broadcast a character quote is used. A specific time is designated weekly to discussion of the quote of the week. This becomes a mini lesson on a specific character trait. Teachers model appropriate character traits for students and expect respect for all within their classrooms.

**Live Oak Middle School (620 students, Grades 6,7,8)
Visalia, CA**

The first and probably most important activity we do to promote good character is that we all speak the same language. This is not a program! This is a lifestyle and that is probably THE most effective way we feel to impart these pillars of character. The entire staff and student body talks about character by using the terms of respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, fairness and citizenship—all day—EVERYDAY! This is a powerful tool.

We train selected students for peer mediation and have found it also a powerful tool for imparting good character both in the lives of the mediators and in those they help. Student mediators on campus have affected our entire school atmosphere as students become aware of ways to resolve conflicts that are positive and then begin using those techniques.

The school counselor trains every sixth grade class in conflict resolution.... The counselor trains students for leadership and each year they develop a project to carry out. Every project they have chosen highlights one or another of the pillars. One year they addressed the issue of bullying on campus—RESPECT. This year they are focusing on academics—RESPONSIBILITY.

**Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School (743 students, Grades 6,7,8)
Tulare, CA**

Student and parent support is a key factor in the success of our program. Prior to the first day of school, parents, students, community members, and the staff participate in an orientation assembly. School policies, student behaviors and responsibilities are discussed. The core ethical values are used as a model for expected student behavior. Academic school planners are given to every student. The planners contain several items supporting our character development program and are used as a tool to promote responsibility through daily use, recording assignments, homework to be completed and on-going communication with parents.... In addition, student-

parent handbooks are distributed the first day of school. The handbooks outline the numerous activities available to students.

We believe the most powerful method to foster the meaning of the pillars is to provide opportunities to observe and model ethical behaviors. Mulcahy's vision is to continue to strengthen our school culture where students are encouraged to further develop their core ethical qualities on their way to becoming positive, productive members of our community.

**Reyburn Intermediate School (1280 students, Grades 7,8)
Clovis, CA**

Reyburn Intermediate School prides itself on the conduct of its students. A well disciplined neat and clean atmosphere provides the best environment for students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities. Students are expected to observe high standards of conduct, to respect the property of others, and to comply with the regulations of the school. Each student is a representative of the school wherever he/she may be; and our students are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and courteous manners at all times. The staff at Reyburn, recognizing that Clovis is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic school district, believes it is the school's mission to provide a positive, harmonious environment in which respect for the diversity of the school community is promoted. In accordance with this aim, Reyburn will not tolerate behavior by students or staff that insults, degrades, or stereotypes any race, gender, handicap, physical condition, ethnic group, or religion. In an attempt to make sure all students feel connected to school, a concerted effort has been made to hire adult role models representative of the diverse student population at Reyburn. An African-American and a Hmong campus liaison are always present and available to hear the concerns of students, as is the Mexican-American psychologist, Mexican-American school nurse and a Hmong police officer.

**Steinbeck School (851 students, Grades K-8)
Fresno, CA**

Steinbeck School emphasizes the importance of students' contributions to their community and school, and has created many opportunities for students to contribute in meaningful ways. Steinbeck students participate each year in "Kids Day" selling newspapers to benefit Valley Children's Hospital. Every November students participate in the Holiday Joy Project. Students bring in used coats, canned goods and dry goods to be given to those less fortunate. This year Steinbeck students and their families donated a total of 456 coats and over 18,000 canned or dry goods. Steinbeck also participates each year in the Random Acts of Kindness Rally at Fresno City hall. This year our students are participating in the St. Jude Research Hospital's Math-a-Thon as our Random Act of Kindness service activity. Our goal is to raise \$1,000 for this cause. Previous schoolwide service projects include collecting \$2000 for the Leukemia Penny Drive, and donating wagons and quilts to Valley Children's Hospital. The Leadership time each month gives our students an opportunity to hear what other classes are doing to help their school and community.

Valley Oak Middle School (1159 students, Grades 7,8)
Visalia, CA

At Valley Oak we have a large population of special needs students. We are proud to mainstream these special students into many regular classes. There are also many students who serve as teacher assistants in the severely handicapped classes as well as our special day classes. Caring for the less fortunate promotes Caring, Respect, and good Citizenship.... With our All-American Day we recognize Asian and Hispanic cultures through various activities and demonstrations performed by the students. This promotes sensitivity and awareness among all students.