



Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

2004 BONNER CENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Burton Elementary School
Burton Elementary School District (608 Students, K-4)
Porterville, CA 93257
559-784-2401
Principal: Michelle Pengilly

Every Friday teachers and students gather at morning assemblies to honor students who have represented good character during the week. Students are given recognition by all students through applause and are given a candy treat “Hot Tamales” by the principal.

In addition, students are recognized monthly by classroom teachers who present a write-up honoring the student and the pillar of character they have modeled and their picture is taken and sent to the Wall of Character in the cafeteria. In the month of October student names are sent to the County for special recognition which involves receiving a pin, t-shirt and a school assembly honoring the great choice to model good character!

Character education is implemented at all grade levels and is woven into the curriculum and standards. CHARACTER COUNTS! is the heart of all disciplinary actions and solutions. The administration and teachers commonly refer to making good choices and remind students what pillar was not being followed when a poor choice is made. In addition, treats and special recognition are given to students and teachers when good choices are made.

CHARACTER COUNTS! runs deep at Burton Elementary.... Many classrooms take turns adopting different areas of the campus to keep clean and neat. Rewards aren't necessary when it comes to the beautification of our campus. Students respect the grounds they play on and take care of the grounds to keep them clean and safe for all. Students have also supported a recycling program to earn new lunch tables for the outside area. Every Tuesday students bring recyclables from home with help of their parents and help earn money towards the purchase of new equipment to build a better campus. So far the students have raised over \$2,500.

The Character Education program is inserted in the school handbook and distributed the first day of school so that all students and their families know what is expected. Teachers model good character at Burton Elementary, as well as the administration and all other personnel.

One of the most exciting projects the children of Burton elementary have participated in was Caps for Kids. The students gathered together to decorate new and old hats donated by students from the community. The hats were then sent to Valley Children's Hospital for children undergoing chemotherapy. Patients undergoing treatment received a new hat each time they went for treatment. The artistic ability was amazing and the joy of creating and giving was heart stopping. Many of our staff were brought to tears to see the amount of participation and the genuine care put into this great project!

[Top](#)

Cole Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (618 Students, K-6)
Clovis, CA 93612
559-327-6200
Principal: Ruth Di Santo

Students [at Cole] know a common language for behavior and clearly understand what is required to be a leader with character. The administration begins the year with an assembly where behavior goals are discussed and teachers review expectations. Students are also taught how to be good citizens through CHARACTER COUNTS!. Additional assemblies, classroom visits and announcements are made throughout the year reminding students that being a Cole Bulldog means respecting others. When students are observed demonstrating good character they are given a "Caught With Character" slip. Weekly drawings are held using these slips and students are recognized on Friday morning announcements.

Parents, community members, teachers, and students continually help to define goals, expectations, and values that will ensure student success and character development. The School Site Council (SSC), Staff Leadership Team, Student Leadership, Parent/Teacher Club (PTC), and School Assessment and Review Team (SART) provide input. Cole's weekly newsletter, Paw Prints, serves to inform and remind parents of the CHARACTER COUNTS! pillar being focused on during the current month. The newsletter highlights students from each class who are exemplars of that pillar. "Paw Prints" is also posted on Cole's web site.

Motivated by the Baldrige training process, teachers are guiding students to graph personal results data for their class work. This indicates strengths and weaknesses and encourages students to take more responsibility for their work and behavior.

At the beginning of the year classes write their mission statement. These statements explain what type of behavior is expected in the classroom and goals they will strive to attain while at school. The mission statement of one 3rd grade class states, "We are here to be the best that we can be. We want to make friends, help others, and improve in mind, body and spirit. We know that 'Character Counts'."

When staff members see a student exhibiting excellent character, the student is given a Caught with Character slip to be placed in a drawing. On Fridays, six names of students who were caught showing good character are drawn. These students are rewarded with a Cole Bulldog cup.

On the 2002-03 SART survey 98% of parents felt this program is a positive part of the educational program at Cole.

[Top](#)

Fort Washington Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (617 Students, K-6)
Clovis, CA 93720
559-327-6600
Principal: Debra Parra

The essence of Fort Washington's tradition of excellence lies in its adherence to certain core ethical values sustained over generations of Patriots. Values such as "being the best you can be in mind, body and spirit", have continually propelled our school toward high standards of quality in all areas of the educational experience. This year, Fort Washington maintains its mission statement, "to provide a safe learning environment in which all shareholders collaborate to ensure that students achieve their full potential in the development of mind, body and character." Goals were developed through student, faculty, and community feedback, gathered from community surveys and meetings, to provide the means through which we can realize our mission statement.

Our Library Media Center (LMC) houses a collection of children's literature, video and audio cassette tapes, and computer software with themes that target the six pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS!... Over the years, our GOOD DEED TICKETS have reinforced the value of random acts of kindness. Children "caught being good" enter their GOOD DEED TICKETS into a weekly raffle. Six children are randomly selected from the raffle bins and recognized over our Friday video announcements. In addition, our CHARACTER COUNTS! coordinator teaches an accelerated program for second and third grade students called, Exceptionally Capable Learners (ECL). For the past six years, character education has been the theme of her program providing young minds with lessons on all six pillars of character. To raise their level of awareness and acceptance of diversity, ECL students have enjoyed guest speakers, field trips to Native American cultural fairs, Japanese cultural demonstrations, and animal preserves.

Clovis West High School (CWHS) peer counselors serve our Patriots as volunteer readers and provide refusal skills to our fourth grade students. High school peer tutors provide recreational instruction to our students in grades 1-3 during our physical education period. ROP students receive training and an early look into their future careers in education by observing teachers and serving as reading "buddies" to our Patriots. For the past five years CWHS peer counselors have served our students through the Community of Readers volunteer program. All Community of Readers undergo a two-hour training seminar; they are then assigned to specific students with reading difficulties and provide 30-60 minutes of one-on-one support in reading fluency and comprehension.

In promoting healthy student behaviors and positive character traits, a PEER MEDIATION program is underway. One classroom teacher and our school psychologist teamed together to provide 8 weeks of peer mediation training to a select group of approximately 20 students in

grades 4-6. These peer mediators, otherwise known as FORT FRIENDS, can be identified by their visors, lanyards, and tags, and assist our adult lunchtime monitors four days a week. FORT FRIENDS help new students make adjustments, befriend isolated students, and help resolve minor conflicts on the yard. For those students experiencing emotional distress, our student assistance program (referred to as STAR) provides group support, facilitated by four trained staff members. Anger management, grief and loss, and study skills support groups are among the targeted needs.

[Top](#)

Jim Maples Academy
Burton School District (593 Students, 5th & 6th)
Porterville 93257
559-781-1658
Principal: Sharon Kamberg

The structure of Jim Maples Academy allows for students to remain in the same academy for two years with the same team of teachers. These teams allow teachers to build relationships with their students and help them feel like a member of the school community. The academies work together as a team to focus on the instructional strategies that meet all students' needs. The small schools within a school model has allowed teachers to reinforce the school rules and values in a much smaller setting while promoting the qualities of the CHARACTER COUNTS! curriculum.

In a school wide assembly at the beginning of the year students are provided information regarding the school rules including rewards and consequences. Expected behaviors and examples of how students can make good choices are reviewed. Role-plays and scenarios are used to reinforce this information. A second assembly is held at the beginning of the third trimester where students are reminded of their responsibilities on campus. Throughout these assemblies and in all disciplinary actions, students are reminded of their choice to show their true character through their daily actions.

A Perfect Patriot Party is held at the end of each trimester for students who consistently demonstrate strong character by not receiving a discipline referral or detention throughout the semester. Tony Cavanaugh from the county's Friday Night Live (FNL) office assists us with music and games during this celebration. During the party, students are reminded of their good choices and the character traits they portrayed during the trimester.

Character education is promoted at the classroom and school level. Each month our school focuses on one of the Character Pillars of Education. The pillar of the month is announced during the daily morning announcements. A small skit or role-play is used during the announcements to describe actions and/or behaviors that illustrate the pillar. At the end of the month each class has the opportunity to nominate two students to receive an award of recognition for displaying that character trait. The students are photographed and interviewed; this information, along with the students' picture, is then displayed in our cafeteria. Students are nominated annually for the Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! Award.

Our students have initiated a school beautification club (Nature Club), in which members pick up trash and help with visual improvements around campus.... JMA has a strong Peer Mediation program. Students apply, are interviewed and receive weekly training on how to assist peers in making good decisions.... Many student conflicts are solved without ever involving an adult.

JMA believes that by teaching our students about charity and having them participate in not only raising money for worthy causes but also participating in those causes teaches true character.

Parents and staff of the Jim Maples Academy work together to educate students. It is our goal that every student becomes a productive citizen. As adults, we know that this is a life long process.

[Top](#)

McKinley Elementary School
Central Unified School District (850 Students, K-6)
Fresno 93722
559-276-5235
Principal: Sheila Moynihan

Staff development [at McKinley Elementary School] has centered on promoting our school's core ethical values. FCOE Leadership Academy Coordinator, Mr. Jim Coiner, has provided our staff with leadership training, focusing on the teachers' roles in promoting strong ethical values. Mr. Don Reed, FCOE Dare to Dream facilitator, helped host a Parent Night for students in our Dare to Dream classes, emphasizing communication and leadership skills. Mr. Tim Richardson, principal at Herndon-Barstow School, presented an "anti-bullying" in-service which further reinforced our focus on core ethical values as well as provided strategies for conflict resolution and peer mediation.

The school's focus is on making a change in a students' behavior not merely providing a punitive measure. Student-staff behavioral discussions often revolve around the core values and how the misbehaving student could fail-forward. Failing forward is based on the idea that all people make mistakes. When a mistake is made students are taught to analyze why the mistake was made and how it could be prevented in the future.

All grade levels at McKinley Elementary School implement regular procedures and activities that promote character education. The daily morning announcements mark the official opening of school. This program, produced and broadcast by our sixth grade students, includes a variety of topics designed to reinforce and enhance character education. The "Tiger Paw High Five of the Day" segment recognizes McKinley students and staff who exemplify "going above and beyond" and or other positive character traits.... The program is concluded by the Principal or Vice-Principal who reads to the students the "Words of Wisdom" for the day. Through these short lessons given in a story format we strive to teach our students how to make the right choices and live ethical, principle-based lives.

Students in the intermediate grades are invited to become active in student council. All 4th-6th classrooms send two representatives to the student council meetings which are held twice per month.... This year the McKinley Student Council decided to commit their time and fund-raising efforts on behalf of several community service projects such as the Fresno Rescue Mission project in which students from Student Council and the Dare to Dream program donated hundreds of dollars in cash, clothing, food and toys to the Fresno Rescue Mission. The students met with Reverend Larry J. Arce, Chief Executive Officer of the Fresno Rescue Mission and toured the facility along with their teachers and parents.... Valuable discussions followed about making the right choices in life to prevent ending up in that situation.

This year student council, in participation with the Dare to Dream program students, committed to addressing the social problem of bullying at school. In October we viewed the video, Don't Laugh at Me and raised money to bring Merman Productions to our school to present three anti-bullying assemblies to our student body in grades 1-6.

[Top](#)

Miramonte Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (735 Students, K-6)
Fresno, CA
559-327-7400
Principal: David Bower

Character values are emphasized in the standards of behavior set forth in each classroom [at Miramonte]. These become manifest in the mission statement developed in each classroom. MRD (Make Right Decisions) is part of our school culture and common language at Miramonte.

Another phrase one will hear frequently is "Mustang manners are magnificent". Miramonte sets high standards for student behavior and places great emphasis on magnificent manners. "Manners" is a pillar Miramonte has added and is the first pillar we highlight each year. Mustangs are encouraged to be "kind, courteous and considerate". We are rewarded when students say "please" and "thank you" ever increasingly without being reminded.

Teachers weave character education into daily lessons. There is a shelf in our school's professional library dedicated in 1999 to a teacher who was killed in a car accident. This teacher was a founding member of our Character Education Committee and was exemplary in her classroom practices. The titles purchased in her memory include resource guides filled with character lessons teachers can use in their classrooms. In addition, there are numerous books for all grade levels that illustrate the different character pillars. After reading these books to the class, meaningful discussions take place regarding character lessons, examples of good character or character flaws. The Children's Book of Virtues is a book each teacher has been provided by the school. Other classroom activities include: essay writing focused on character values, role playing character traits, poster contests illustrating disability awareness and the different pillars.

When a child is sent to the office on a behavior referral the experience is not designed to be punitive. The goal is to be educational. It is about choices and how to apply what we are learning

about character qualities to our personal experiences and situations. Miramonte has small groups of students who meet once a week with our school psychologist or a specially trained MAP (Mustang Assistance program) teacher. The classroom teacher or administrator may refer students to MAP who need support and encouragement and a structure for discussing with their peers similar issues affecting them. In this safe environment students learn courtesy, friendship, loyalty and concern for others.

Twenty staff members act as Mentor Buddies and have adopted needy students to mentor during the year. Needy students are matched up with teachers who best can connect with them and provide nurturing, support and guidance.

At Miramonte we believe the foundation for all we do lies in a strong school-wide character development program. We have the opportunity to educate, model, practice, reinforce, reward, and celebrate the development of positive character traits. We are on a mission to promote high standards for personal and academic achievement enabling all students to become responsible, contributing members of society. Our challenge is to strengthen the character of young people today and thereby safeguard tomorrow for all.

[Top](#)

Nelson Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (595 Students, K-6)
Pinedale, CA
559-327-7600
Principal: W. Rich Smith

Character education has become an integral part of everyday life at Nelson. The Clovis Unified School District as a whole has adopted the Michael Josephson's CHARACTER COUNTS! school and work place program promoting character education... Nelson school recognizes that character education must be a joint effort between parents, staff, community and students themselves. "The shared mission of Nelson Elementary is to provide exemplary programs and services that align all resources to assure that each student achieves at her or his highest level academically and socially." Nelson's mission is the guiding force for implementation of school-wide goals and priorities. The school community's ultimate goal is to prepare individuals to become lifelong learners and contributing members of society by providing a quality educational program to a diverse population through exemplary curricular programs, co-curricular activities, and comprehensive services.

...From the custodian to the librarian, and from the instructional aides to the campus monitors, all those involved with Nelson students can relate to the core ethical values the "school community" holds in highest esteem. The staff is expected to model good character at all times observing the six pillars. Examples include: treat others as they would want to be treated themselves; be accountable for their actions; build a good reputation; being kind or compassionate and showing that they care; being open minded and listening to others; and, always doing their best.

CHARACTER COUNTS! vocabulary is used on a daily basis by teachers and students throughout the school day as employees tie character into “normal routines”. Examples include:

- Homework—teaches Responsibility
- Sharing in class—teaches Caring
- PE, sports and recess—teaches Fairness
- Classroom and school-wide rules—teaches Citizenship
- Returning lost items—teaches Trustworthiness
- Being kind to one another and adults—teaches Respect

Character curriculum taught at each grade level is targeted to the students’ level. As students move through the grade levels, the curriculum builds upon past knowledge and lessons. In a sense all that is learned about good character traits is culminated at our sixth grade camp trip to the Regional Learning Center in Sonora. Our final activity in Sonora is a “Ropes” course in which sixth grade students must be able to “work as a team” and be able to “trust” their fellow classmates. These relationships built through trust, caring, respect and fairness will last a lifetime.

Classrooms are assigned a weekly clean campus area that they are responsible to keep clean and a SART parent representative conducts a monthly clean campus inspection. Additionally, Nelson’s plant manager plays an important role in providing a suitable learning environment. His duties include checking the school grounds for graffiti, trash, and safety hazards before students come to school each day. But he also has another very special routine he has established to involve students. Each day during the lunch hour students can be found happily assisting Ed in cleanup of the cafeteria. He makes them feel special and gives treats too. Nelson is fortunate to have a dedicated plant supervisor who goes beyond the call of duty.

Nelson recognizes that the traditional family is changing. Character education is clearly the role of the school as well as the family. We have taken a progressive approach and have many programs as well as caring and dedicated staff that allows the Nelson family to promote positive student character development.... We respect those individual differences, and through character education make them our strengths. Our goal is to develop students of character that understand the importance of trust and pursue a life that makes them worthy of trust.

[Top](#)

Palm Elementary School
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District (757 Students, K-6)
Orosi, CA
559-528-4751
Principal: Roy Woods

Our Mission at Palm School is to:

- CHALLENGE and support students to meet or exceed State standards in the pursuit of academic excellence.

- PROMOTE and model responsibility and respectful behavior and take pride in our clean, well-maintained campus.
- PROVIDE a safe, supportive, stimulating learning environment, which promotes success, fairness and respect.

The implementation of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program this year at our school began slowly, but has quickly become an integral part of everything that we do. Staff and parents have reported a noticeable change in the culture of the school. Teachers report fewer discipline problems in the classroom, office discipline referrals have dropped measurably, and suspensions are down appreciably from previous years despite an increase in enrollment. The school now has a shared vision of behavior expectations and self-responsibility for students, staff, parents, and the administration. When dealing with behavior issues in the classroom, teachers are encouraged to utilize the pillars when communicating with students and parents. There are now higher and more consistent expectations for student conduct that are familiar to all within the school and community.

Teachers are at the forefront of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. They have selected a pillar of the month that ties in with their individual grade-level language arts program, and lessons are designed in a way that allows for the weaving of the pillar into the lesson. Students are encouraged to examine positive (and negative) character traits during discussion of stories and books. Many teachers also incorporate the pillars into their writing lessons, regularly completing character-themed writing assignments. Teachers are encouraged to make positive parent contacts whenever a student exhibits positive behavior or demonstrates character traits relating to the six pillars. Teachers often refer students to the principal for positive behavior so that the principal can make contact with the parents himself. Teachers are “making it cool to care” at Palm School.

Many 5th and 6th grade classrooms serve as mentors to kindergarten and first grade classes through our Book Buddies program. The older students pick up the younger ones from their class, walk them to the library to pick out a book they like, then sit and read the book with them. This program is designed to instill in the upper grade students a sense of trust and responsibility while they develop compassion and empathy for the younger students.

Our students are active participants in keeping the campus clean, organizing trashcan decorating contests and litter removal activities. A sense of pride in our clean and orderly campus and surrounding neighborhood is being developed through the Good Neighbor program initiated and adopted by the Student Council. Students organized a cleanup of the campus and the streets surrounding the school to demonstrate to the entire neighborhood that Palm students are kids of character and good neighbors. Fliers are designed and printed by the Student Council and placed on the doors of neighborhood houses notifying them of the clean-up and encouraging them to join in the cleanup. Activities supported by the staff, students, and parents are all geared toward exposing our students to the six pillars and developing character traits that related directly to respect of themselves and others.

We at Palm School strive to instill in our students the character traits that will enable them to do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

[Top](#)

Red Bank Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (557 Students, K-6)
Clovis, CA
559-327-7800
Principal: Kevin Peterson

Red Bank Elementary School reflects the educational philosophy of the Clovis Unified School District that each student shall be given an equal opportunity to reach his/her greatest mental, spiritual and physical potential. The philosophy that all students may become productive, contributing members of society is one that is adhered to by the Red Bank team through Clovis Unified School District's Character Counts! program and implementation of an interactive leadership system. This concept and expectation is continually and consistently promoted at Red Bank through verbal and written communication, awards presentations, teachers, staff and administrative role models and an extensive co-curricular program.

A comprehensive co-curricular program, including interscholastic competitions in: athletics, chorus, band, drama, oral interpretation, Science Olympiad, and a variety of poster and essay contests, is made available to students. Students are also encouraged to participate in student leadership and government. The activities are designed and administered to teach skills and provide a vehicle to develop positive character traits. Students are allowed to experience success and failure in many contexts, as well as address issues relating to values.

Embedded in the Red Bank Elementary School curriculum is a focus on the significance of reasoned oral and ethical choices. This is evident in daily lessons and curriculum. Students learn to evaluate situations and make positive and constructive decisions as they examine events. A greater understanding and tolerance of student diversity is manifested throughout the school language arts, writing, and social science curriculum. The integration of character education with district and California State Standards is a fun combination at Red Bank.

A clean, safe, secure learning environment is provided for all students at Red Bank. This is ensured through monthly safety drills, clean campus inspections and consistent enforcement of Zero Tolerance discipline. Students are reminded of behavior expectations and positive character traits at all school assemblies and rallies as well as within their classroom setting.

Red Bank Elementary provides students opportunities to be involved in community service efforts by such activities as: A Taste of Home, which was a community service effort organized by a sixth grade classroom in which other classrooms on campus contributed. This community service project filled shoe boxes with such items as: candy, beef jerky, razors and shaving cream, toothbrushes and toothpaste, coffee, cookies, stamps, writing material, a class letter and a class picture. These shoeboxes were delivered to KDUV FM radio station and then shipped to service men and women in Iraq.

A year-long community service project that the entire school is involved in benefits the Ronald McDonald House for Children's Hospital of Central California. [Also] Red Bank teachers, staff,

administration, students and community are involved in the American Cancer Society Clovis Relay for Life. A final example of community service/outreach efforts was the 2003-04 Red Bank Student Body Elections. Eighteen Clovis High Leadership students assisted in the voting for the elections by setting up and using voting booths provided by the Fresno County Elections Office.

It is a school-wide teamwork approach that has been most effective in promoting success with the efforts of the classroom teacher to impart positive values to students serving as an integral part of the educational process. It is the teacher's part as role model and motivator for success that is so essential to student development of character and values.

[Top](#)

Riverview Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (720 Students, K-6)
Fresno, CA
559-327-8600
Principal: Kristie Wiens

Instruction is the critical work of Riverview's educators in attaining the primary goal associated with student achievement. This goal is accomplished through relevant curriculum, alignment between what is taught and tested, teacher training focused on powerful lessons, and an instructional supervision model, which assures student-learning everyday in all classrooms, and appropriate assessments which guide instruction. The school staff supports the CHARACTER COUNTS! program which has been adopted as the model that integrates positive ethical values throughout the Riverview school community.

Prior to the opening of Riverview Elementary School in August 2002, the planning process included multiple meetings with parents, teachers, and students to define and discuss the vision for the school through which a strong emphasis on student achievement and character education evolved in creating a safe, positive school climate. Through these discussions, the elements of the school-wide program began to unfold, aligned with the CUSD adopted Josephson Institute of Ethics, CHARACTER COUNTS! program. It established a clear understanding of the pillars of character....

Riverview's themes are created and highlighted throughout each school year. Themes such as "Rams are Charging to Success, Quality Shines at Riverview, CHARACTER COUNTS! at Riverview, and Rams Rock!" are displayed in classrooms and referred to in assemblies, rallies, award ceremonies, announcements, and classroom activities....

The Riverview Educational Team encourages students to view the administration as another resource for help and as a further model of character education Riverview promotes. The principal visits each class periodically throughout the year to encourage ethical decision-making. The Riverview Rules are reinforced: Remember Character Counts, Always Your Personal Best, Meet Your Goals, Success For All. These rules guide children through the educational process and form the structure for all student interactions throughout the year.

Classroom environments provide opportunities for examination, discussion and reflection of the attributes of character. Students collaborate in the classroom on projects, assignments, and study sessions that afford them daily opportunities to practice appropriate interpersonal behavior.

Report cards provide an opportunity for teachers to evaluate a student's social and behavioral attitudes in grades K-6. Parents learn how their child is progressing in the areas of respect, self-control cooperation, playground behavior, and responsibility. Teachers assess needs for specific character related re-emphasis in their classroom.

Riverview students play active roles in influencing classroom and school policy. Students learn the fundamentals of student government through the Student Council. After candidates deliver speeches to the student body, students in grades 4-6 participate in an election process to elect seven officers each semester and classroom representatives are nominated by peers for each semester. The Student Council serves as a vehicle for students to understand parliamentary procedures of government and judicial meetings as well as to understand student governance, differences of opinion, and how to value the democratic process. Student Council has sponsored school-wide community service projects and activities such as Coats for Kids, Toys for Tots, Pennies for Patients, Ronald McDonald pull-tab collection, holiday food drives for Pinedale Elementary School, clean campus activities, Jog-A-Thon, Red Ribbon Week, Muffins With Mom, Donuts with Dad, Pizza Nights, Talent Show, and fun days such as Crazy Hair Day, Mismatch Day, Pajama Day, Twins Day.

[Top](#)

Saroyan Elementary School
Central Unified School District (756 Students, K-6)
Fresno, CA
559-276-3131
Principal: Amy Teeter

At the beginning of the year the Parent Club developed a time line for focusing on specific core values. Every month teachers select a student whose behavior is representative of that month's trait. Those students are featured in the monthly parent newsletter and receive a "Character Counts" pencil from PFC.

The development of our character counts program is representative of parents and staff working together. At Saroyan we acknowledge that character development is an ongoing process and before this school year comes to an end, we will begin developing a new time line for next year.

At Saroyan parents and students alike support our uniform dress code. We believe that our students sit a little straighter, help each other a little more often, and treat everyone with a higher degree of respect. Teachers use a variety of incentives that often encourage positive behaviors in our students. These include "Caught Being Good" tickets, popcorn parties, homework passes and ice cream parties, just to name a few. Classroom lessons feature "Star Students", allowing the student to bring items from home giving insight into who they are. We believe that this process fosters self-esteem. Multicultural activities promote a healthy respect for our diverse population.

Students and nearby neighbors help keep vandalism to a minimum. The few times that we've had graffiti, the staff has worked diligently to remove or cover up the mess as soon as possible. Because of an e-mail connection with the police officer at the neighboring Middle School, we were able to identify and discipline an offender. Just recently we have a Chaplain on campus, trained by the Sheriff's department, available to students and staff offering an additional set of eyes and ears.

Daily on our campus, students serve as cafeteria helpers, crossing guards and peer tutors. During any given week it is not uncommon to find an upper grade class paired with a primary class reading together. Students also serve as Student Council representatives and work together to play student activities throughout the year. They also approve expenditures of money generated from ice cream sales.

[Top](#)

Vandalia Elementary School
Porterville Unified School District (820 Students, K-6)
Porterville, CA
559-782-7260
Principal: Angel Valdez

As you turn right off 190 onto Plano, you will be entering CHARACTER COUNTS! Territory when you turn right onto College Ave. Near the corner you will begin to see evidence of our goals and standards at Vandalia School. The large sign near the corner introduces Vandalia School and shows the six pillars of Character Counts! As you move down the street you will notice signage on the ends of three buildings, on top of our buildings and our school marquee which all support CC! standards.

As visitors walk up to the office door they see a large glass display case that showcases our students, school achievements and students that show good character. This last year a student from Monache High, Adam Sanchez, painted a large mural covered with clear plastic. The mural shows a Vandalia Viking with the six pillars surrounding him. The students take great pride in sharing this mural with visitors and parents. We had a special program to dedicate and unveil the mural. The students still talk about it.

As you move to the outdoor hallways you will see road signs naming each hallway. You are greeted by Trustworthy Rd., Respect Blvd., Responsibility Dr., Fairness St., Caring Ave., and Citizenship Ave. These street signs promote the six pillars of good character. Visit our cafeteria and you will see pictures of the CHARACTER COUNTS! figures, students of the month on one wall; a wall of artwork done by our after-school program students and colorful banners that constantly remind our students that good character counts. You will also see pictures of students on the Wall of Fame. All of the above have given the school a common language. You hear students and staff both making statements about, "what good character you have!" "Teacher, he is not showing respect."

This is our third year in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and our staff is totally committed to the ideas of CC! We continue to in-service new staff and review with continuing staff.... We are working on building a strong program to promote and recognize good character.... As you visit our classrooms you will see work encouraging good character and hear words encouraging everyone to show good character. Each class has colorful posters of the six pillars, incentive packs, and bulletin board sets to be used during lessons that teach the theme of the month.

Staff integrates the pillar [of the month] wherever they find it—recognizing it in the classroom, while discussing a story’s characters, or on the playground, working in their groups and their daily lessons.

The staff and students of Vandalia are proud of the clean, secure learning environment our campus provides. We help to promote this with our Pride Patrol which each fourth through sixth grade class participates on a weekly basis. This insures that our school is clean and safe. Any problems are reported to the V.P. who then has the custodian take care of the problems that the Pride Patrol reports. We have started Safety Commissioners, who will patrol the halls and restrooms to help make our school feel safe.

Collaborative groups are seen working together in all our grade levels. You will see these groups working in all subject areas, but especially language arts, math, and science. You may see a third grade group working with pattern blocks to determine the perimeter of a shape, or a first grade group working on patterns with color tiles.... In science you will see fourth grad through sixth grade students working on science fair projects. We have a parent night for students and parents to work together, at school, on their science projects.

It is important for all children to learn to work as part of a group that values each other’s opinions. This is very important for growth of self-esteem. Self-esteem affects all areas of a child’s education whether it be academic or social growth. Our teachers strive to be very positive. We set high standards for our students.

While the first year of implementation was largely devoted to developing a clear understanding of the core ethical values of CC! and building a common vocabulary from which the staff, students and their parents could communicate, the last two years have marked a turning point where the community of Vandalia could put into practice what we have all learned about being people of good character.

As educators we teach character everyday; our students constantly watch to see if we are honest and fair, if we do what we say we will do. The staff of Vandalia realize that character development is a lifelong process for students of all ages. We believe that when we help our students to better comprehend and practice good character traits they are better prepared for success in school and throughout life.

[Top](#)

**Washington Elementary School
Hanford Elementary School District (551 Students, K-6)**

Hanford, CA
559-585-2322

Principal: Marcie Guthrie

A culture in which students take ownership of and responsibility for the positive, energetic, innovative atmosphere distinguishes Washington Elementary School.... Washington is a School Wide Program Title I school serving a diverse population.... Parental involvement is an important part of designing a comprehensive and thoughtful school culture. It is crucial that all families feel connected to their child's education. At parent conferences every teacher carefully reviews each child's performance based on benchmarks as they work towards meeting and exceeding state standards. This is a key opportunity to communicate with parents about where their child is in relation to attaining grade-level standards, and collaborate with them on individualized learning plans. This is done by providing standards-based report cards, copies of academic standards, district-wide performance assessments, and examples of student class work, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and samples of exemplar papers. Along with conferences, teachers communicate frequently with parents using daily assignment books, weekly progress reports, and regular classroom newsletters.

Parents and community members feel a part of the greater Washington culture. Consequently, all Washington events are consistently well attended. From Back to School Night in the fall to Open House in the spring and every event in between, parents show up consistently.

In 2002-2003 Washington initiated a Peer mediation program under the direction of and in partnership with California State University, Fresno Professor Dr. Pam Lane-Garon. Dr. Lane-Garon trained Washington using a well-proven model and handbook, *Building a Peaceful Community*. Peer mediation is a conflict resolution education model in which students are trained in communication and dispute resolution skills necessary to prevent altercations from escalating. These strategies also stress tolerance and appreciation of divergent views.... The peer mediation program is an example of service learning at Washington. Last year there were over 300 successful peer mediations. By-products of having a peer mediation program for the entire school culture are fairness, respect, responsibility and trustworthiness.

In 2002-2003, peer mediation reduced the number of escalated conflicts at Washington.... Another positive impact was the significant number of students who served as peer mediators in 2002-2003 and returned in 2003-2004 to continue their service. Currently, sixty Washington third through sixth grade students serve as peer mediators.

Actively teaching social skills is part of the Washington curriculum. By the end of September the Student Advocate trains all students using developmentally appropriate materials and videos on student safety and wellbeing. All students new to the school receive this training during monthly follow-up sessions. One issue in the training is bullying. There is evidence that this training has been successful as students are using the language when reporting discipline issues to adults, "Johnny is being a bully; he's calling me names."

In an effort to cultivate school spirit, in January 2004 all students were invited to participate in a flag contest. The winning entry will be made into a flag that will be flown below the California

State flag each day at Washington. The response to this competition was overwhelming and a panel of school staff and community members chose a winner.

[Top](#)

F.J. White Learning Center
Woodlake Union Elementary School District (543 Students, K-2)
Woodlake, CA
559-564-8021
Principal: Terrence Keller

F.J. White Learning Center is a kindergarten through second grade school of approximately 545 students in the Woodlake Union School District.... There are currently 10 classrooms for Kindergarten, 9 for first grade, and 10 for second grade. The CHARACTER COUNTS! program was added to the school student recognition program as a means to promote positive citizenship values and reinforce student behaviors epitomizing the pillars of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. Through the integration of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, the teachers and staff are able to promote the values that build self-esteem which “is at the heart of success.”

Teacher resources for character education ideas and lessons were purchased and made available for staff use. Teachers are encouraged to teach mini-lessons based on the theme each month.

Families of students and staff have been given opportunities to provide input regarding the school and its facilities and programs through various meetings, surveys and personal contacts by the principal. Suggestions by staff and parents led to the integration of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program into the existing student recognition program. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child’s education through service on various school committees, volunteering in the classroom and participation in activities such as “Second Cup of Coffee”, “Raisin Readers” (where students and their parents attend an evening reading night in the school library and receive information about the school’s reading program, read with their children and are treated to raisins) and Family Math nights. This year, parents will be invited to a “Reading Round Up” night in honor of Dr. Seuss’ birthday.

The staff works tirelessly to promote a positive school climate. Students and parents arriving on campus are greeted with a cheery “GOOD MORNING” by the school staff including the principal.... The facilitator of the school reading program contributes to the positive school climate by organizing events such as the “Eye Glass Club” for children who wear glasses, a year-end swim party for students who have demonstrated the pillar of “Responsibility” by completing their reading homework throughout the year, and a quarterly “Lunch With the principal” for those students completing their reading homework for the month.