



Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

2005 BONNER CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOLS

**Clark Intermediate School (1337 Students 7th-8th Grades)
Clovis Unified School District, Clovis, CA 93612
Tel: 559-327-1500
Principal: Mr. Carl Tomlinson**

Clark Intermediate has defined its core ethical values in terms of observable behavior by developing numerous programs to allow students to reach their greatest potential as tomorrow's leaders. By far, the most observable of these is the "Sparthenian" concept. This philosophy is a hybrid term based on the Ancient Greek City-states of Sparta and Athens. Sparta was well known for its athletic and physical might and Athens was famous for its academic and intellectual achievements. With this, Dr. Floyd B. Buchanan conceived the culmination of balance in Mind, Body and Spirit, when Clovis Unified was created in 1965. In the last 40 years, students in Clovis have exhibited these core ethical values on a daily basis both in and out of the classroom, becoming role models for neighboring schools and school districts. The Sparthenian concept truly challenges students to be the best they can be by excelling in academics, athletics and taking pride in our school and community.

Clark Intermediate School involves all families and instructional staff in the development process of promoting core ethical values by utilizing many media. All schools in CUSD rely on suggestions via feedback obtained by annual surveys. One of the most important of these surveys is the SART Committee or School Assessment Review Team. This committee meets monthly and includes members from the community, teaching staff, administration and student body. In these meetings, areas of concern and "brainstorming" sessions are held to address certain issues where needs or improvements to current programs can be developed. Input from these sessions is critical as schools are later rated in several categories on a final questionnaire at the end of the school year. These results are analyzed in-depth as data-driven statistics to help all schools in Clovis Unified recognize areas of strength and weakness in order to adapt and accept the needs of our ever-changing society, without losing sound traditional and educational foundations. Results of these surveys are published and clearly displayed on the district's website and hard copies are made available as well.

By far, the best way we address character education is the monthly seminars we hold. Every month, one pillar is addressed thematically on a special seminar schedule. Lessons with self-evaluation surveys, class discussion topics and writing activities are distributed to the entire student body of 1300 (+) via homeroom students. These activities are taken home and discussed

with parents, signed and returned to the school. The class with the highest percentage of returns is rewarded with a special whole-class treat and honored in the morning announcements and/or the school newspaper. Because this is a school activity, both grade levels have equal and fair opportunity to participate in Character Counts! education.

Clark has several ways to recognize students for their efforts to become model citizens of society. These include: The Character Counts! Award, Student of the Month, Block "C" for academic and athletic performance, Principal's Medallion, The Performing Arts Award, Athletic Sports Banquet, 8th Grade Appreciation, Bilingual Redesignation for English Learner Progress and Semester Academic Awards Night.

Clark has been involved in many civic community programs. This includes, but is not exclusive to: Valley Children's Volunteers, Poverello House, Coats-for-Kids, Clovis Rodeo, "Kids' Day" Newspapers sales, Disabled Awareness Day, School-Canned Food Drive and Elementary Peer Counselors. These collaborative projects are held annually and get students to become more involved in their community with goal-oriented service learning through supportive fieldwork.

By far our greatest success this year was the "Asian Tsunami Relief" Drive, which was held immediately after the devastation from the earthquake and tsunami in south Asia that left over 170,000 dead and even more homeless. Our student council and leadership class, who sold lollipops for a small fee and collected donations from the staff and students, spearheaded this thoughtful effort. Within one month, Clark Intermediate students and staff collected almost \$2,000.00 to be sent to the American Red Cross Relief Foundation. This money will be used to help the survivors of this terrible tragedy and gave the Clark community a better awareness and understanding that caring is a vital component to helping people both domestically and internationally.

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El Capitan Middle School (800 Students 7th-8th Grades)

Central Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93722

Tel: 559-276-5219

Principal: Mr. John Barber

To provide a healthy, nurturing, and stimulating school environment, El Capitan Middle School has agreed on core ethical values that we promote in a variety of ways. Our Student of the Month program has targeted values such as working together, sharing happiness, creative cooperation, and facing challenges just to name a few. The values are promoted daily throughout the school environment, and not just in the classroom. Classroom lessons, daily activities, and extra-curricular activities are structured around these core values.

Currently, parents, staff, and students have been working together in promoting ethical values through the "Parenting Partners" classes. Every Thursday, the "Parenting Partners" meet to build a vision for our students' success. Stakeholders learn to become contributors to the success of the

school and students. Parents learn how to positively engage the school and teachers, and become more involved in all aspects of their child's academic life.

Through the use of Staff Development time, the Safe School Committee, and the Discipline Committee, teachers have become very involved in the process of promoting core values. The El Capitan community has developed and implemented an assertive discipline model, which is firm, fair, and consistent. Behavior expectations are clearly stated and promoted within the school. The policy consists of a series of steps not to just hand out consequences, but rather to change the behavior through the use of counseling and parental involvement. To date, the policy has been very successful, drastically cutting down on the amount of disciplinary offenses taking place. Our attendance rate has fluctuated between 98 and 99 percent.

El Capitan Middle School implements intentional and proactive procedures and activities that promote character education. Every morning on the school-wide public address system, all staff and students recite the Pledge of Allegiance. "Words of Wisdom" are discussed by the Administration daily, and staff and teachers integrate these values into their lessons and journals discussing what the "Words of Wisdom" mean to them. Our Administrators also take special attention in teaching character education to our students. Vice Principals have gone into several classes that were having trouble getting along. After reading a story, whole class discussions are held about getting along, working together, and being nice to people from different backgrounds.

Staff and teachers constantly model goals and expectations, which include respect for others. If there is an issue of disrespect, it is handled in a firm, fair, and consistent manner. Students are given the opportunity to learn by their mistakes through a series of educational assignments. Our Responsibility Center, which houses students who have made poor choices, gives those students the necessary time and tools to reflect upon their behavior, and helps them develop solutions to the situation that occurred.

Recently, a family whose children attend McKinley Elementary School lost everything in a house fire. A call for help was made to the student body at El Capitan, and the response was staggering. Students brought food, clothing, toys, and other useful items so the family could rebuild.... Our English Learners are very involved in contributing to the school and community as well. They used their newfound English skills to write Christmas letters to U.S. soldiers in Iraq. Many thank-you cards and photos were sent to our students for their acts of generosity.

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Kastner Intermediate School (1360 Students 7th-8th Grades)
Clovis Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93720
Tel: 559-327-2606
Principal: Mr. Rick Gold

The mission of Kastner Intermediate School is to provide a safe, nurturing learning environment that promotes the values of CHARACTER COUNTS!, recognizes diversity, promotes respect,

and encourages students to strive for excellence. It is our aim to provide learning experiences that result in measurable growth for all students, help them to reach their potential in MIND, BODY, and SPIRIT, and prepare them to be productive citizens in our community. Goals were developed through student, staff, and community feedback, gathered from surveys and meetings. One specific goal was the continued implementation of CHARACTER COUNTS!

Although each department at Kastner is diligent in its efforts to include character education in its curriculum, the Physical Education Department has decided to make this one of their primary goals. Each semester, specific lessons are taught on the values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Recently, the physical education and athletic departments have incorporated new lessons specific to the terms sportsmanship and gamesmanship. Students learn that sportsmanship is the playing of the game to develop teamwork, respect for an opponent, and an appreciation for personal integrity. On the other hand, they learn that gamesmanship is an overwhelming drive to win at all cost. By incorporating sportsmanship into our character traits, we have seen fewer incidents of inappropriate behavior on the fields, courts, and pools where our teams compete.

Kastner has recently shifted the focus of its leadership program. In previous years, approximately fifty students a year were selected to participate in a leadership class that focused on school and community service. The program has been increased to include nearly one hundred students and focuses on the character traits of good leaders. Materials from CHARACTER COUNTS! and the Fresno County Office of Education's Leadership Academy are used to reinforce the importance of good character.

Kastner has strived to give every student group a voice on campus. Each fall students who are identified as being leaders of a group are asked to attend a workshop. Identified groups change each year but have included such groups as Hispanic Males, Skateboarders, Jocks, African American Females, etc.... The goal is to identify a minimum of ten students in each group and have them attend the workshop. At this workshop, community members who closely align with each group are invited to serve as facilitators. The students and facilitators work in affinity groups to identify issues on our campus that need to be addressed. After each group works together to identify the issues, they are asked to present their findings to the other groups. Once all issues have been shared, the entire group decides what are the five most important issues. With the assistance of the facilitators, the groups are then mixed and each of the mixed groups is asked to discuss and present solutions to the issues. The issues and the proposed solutions are then shared with the Kastner Administrative Team. Results are also shared with faculty members who are then able to address issues through instruction and classroom projects. This process promotes positive social development and group cohesion.

One of the most recent changes at Kastner has been the implementation of the "Thinking it Through" process used with students who are sent to the cluster office for disciplinary action. The process asks students to identify why they are in the office, what other choices they could have made, and to identify a character trait that was not followed. The form is used by the administrator as a tool to guide their discussion with the student.

Leadership Class. Two years ago, staff was very concerned about the decline in students demonstrating good choices while on campus. The solution was to expand the leadership class and to infuse additional character education into the curriculum. Four additional sections were added to the master schedule and the number of teachers instructing the class increased from one to five. This resulted in an additional one hundred students being trained as student leaders. In preparing the curriculum for this class, teachers participated in the Fresno County Office of Education's Leadership Academy and reviewed materials from the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. Students in the leadership class were encouraged to act as leaders on campus by practicing ethical decision making and encouraging other students to do the same.

Academic Letters. At the end of each six-week period, students who were earning a 3.5 or higher G.P.A., or who have demonstrated improvement in their grades from the previous reporting period, are sent a letter congratulating them on their accomplishments from their Learning Director. The letter contains references to how practicing the pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS! has enabled them to earn these types of grades and how continuing to practice these pillars will enable them accomplish much more in life.

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La Joya Middle School (1050 Students 7th-8th Grades)
Visalia Unified School District, Visalia, CA 93277
Tel: 559-730-7921
Principal: Ms. Mary Whitfield

It is the goal of La Joya Middle School Character Education Program to strengthen the character of the students by raising their consciousness and increasing their commitment to the principle that Character Counts! We want to involve students in the promotion of character at school, in the home, and in the community.

La Joya Middle School wishes to reward students and increase awareness through the monthly recognition program. La Joya recognizes students each month who have shown strengths in the individual pillars, which include Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship, as well as three additional areas, which include Teamwork, Leadership, and Creativity.

La Joya maintains a Character Education Committee that meets to generate ideas and modify existing programs so that we continue to meet our goal of a quality character education program. These ideas are expressed to the parents in many ways, including the La Joya Middle School Student/Parent handbook given to all La Joya students.

La Joya staff members do a daily newscast , which is fed directly into the first period advisory classrooms on the campus. Character quotes are often used in these newscasts. Weekly Character lessons are also broadcast into the first period advisory classrooms. Teachers model appropriate character traits for students and expect respect for all within their classrooms.

Citizenship grades are part of the progress report and report card system of feedback to the parents. Students who have more than one unsatisfactory citizenship grade are not allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities. Classroom rules model the Character Counts! traits.

The La Joya Middle School disciplinary system includes areas of improvement for character on the discipline referral. The administration also has access to Character Counts! contracts for students who need behavioral correction.

La Joya Middle School has many ways in which our students are recognized:

- Explorer of the Month- This is recognition given to eight students per month. Students are nominated by classroom teachers for the Character trait of the month (January- Caring). Since our school is organized into academic teams, each team chooses two students on their team who most exemplify the trait. These students are treated to a Limo lunch, which is paid for out of our student recognition budget.
- Character Education Awards- Every three months students who were recognized as Explorers of the Month and their parents are treated to a dessert reception at which time they receive an award for their promotion of the pillars of character. Each student is called up and the Principal, reads a compilation of nice comments provided by their teachers. This reception takes place in the evening.
- Character Counts! Award- The Character Counts! Award is presented to one eighth grade boy and one eighth grade girl who have demonstrated exemplary character over two years and who personify the qualities of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Other awards are as follows: Attendance awards, athletic awards, honor roll, high honors, Principal awards, and end of the year banner awards.

School administrators have developed weekly character lessons that are broadcast by television into the first period student advisory classes once a week. These lessons talk specifically about character traits. Each lesson gives examples of situations that students may encounter as well as proper responses for each situation. The lessons have discussion questions at the end that the teachers use to generate class discussions.

The school administration and department chairs created a school wide motto of “We CAN”. The CAN is an acronym for Character, Achievement, and No Failure. Students were introduced to this motto at the beginning of the school year in their advisory classes. Each advisory class participated in a spirit activity that required them to make a banner with the slogan We CAN on it. The banners were all displayed in the cafeteria for the school year. The banners were judged by members of the leadership class and the winning classes got prizes.

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Live Oak Middle School (739 Student 6th-8th Grades)
Tulare City Unified School District, Tulare, CA 93274
Tel: 559-685-7310
Principal: Ms. Paula Adair

“The Right Place at the Right Time” has been Live Oak’s school motto and driving inspiration since it was established in 1989. The well-being and development of the whole child are major focuses of every highly rigorous academic offering and myriad of social events available to students. The center of every lesson and event is character.

Inside the multipurpose room, a six-foot grizzly carving and a four by eight foot mural of a grizzly bear among live oak trees invite school spirit and a sense of pride in students. On the walls are banners of honor where responsible students’ names are displayed. Those there have achieved honor roll status academically. On the back wall are students’ names that are achieving million-word reader status. In this room students are honored monthly for their display of character at Live Oak, and parents and family members come to celebrate their achievement along with the entire student body. Each month is dedicated to a different pillar.

Formally and informally, staff chooses particular students to mentor. Daily conversations (as per Poverty by Ruby Payne and an in-service by Beatrice McGarvey from Classroom Instruction that Works) develop relationships that lead to students feeling they are supported. A team provides mentoring weekly, both socially and academically, to a group of fragile (ARI-Academic Review Intervention) students. Teachers take students as classroom aides in order to mentor them. At times, the school counselor selects specific students to work in the student store so they can be mentored. Modeling the 6 pillars of character is our greatest strength at Live Oak.

The beginning of the school year fifty-five students composed of 8th grade AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) and 8th grade Academic Review students received Effective Teens Leadership In Action Training from the Premier Company. This student achievement workshop uses Sean Covey’s The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, to assist teens in developing their personal leadership skills. Topics covered in the program are: responsibility for your life, defining your mission, prioritizing, attitude, listening, working together, and renewing yourself. As a follow-up to the workshop AVID students weekly utilize the Go Premier Agenda, which is a partner to the training and assists students in setting and achieving goals. All 8th grade language arts core classes read and discussed The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens the first few weeks of school. Live Oak treats every incoming student as a future success story. Student needs are realized and addressed from the very outset of the educational experience on the Live Oak campus.

Realizing that bullying is a problem in our society, Second Step, Violence Prevention education is provided by a team, including two teachers and the school counselor, in all sixth grade classrooms. As an extension of this process, the school counselor uses this curriculum in small group counseling, and in training 6th through 8th graders as Peer Mediators, to help provide conflict resolution. The behavior code is located in the Live Oak School Planner given to every student upon enrollment and used daily in class. Further, Character Counts! pillars are taught

throughout the school and students understand they are expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviors.

The 8th grade class gift committee is a strong entity on campus that promotes good citizenship and respect. This group raises funds and purchases a class gift presented to the school each year. Past gifts include a school flag, trophy case, six-foot Grizzly, "Home of the Grizzlies" sign, Grizzly mural and mascot costume. The committee raises funds on a fun activity called Buddy Days where teachers and 8th graders are auctioned off and then spend a day being a buddy to their purchaser.

The student Leadership Team, under the guidance of the school counselor, develops, as a final project, a Fifth Grade Academy to prepare incoming Grizzlies for their middle school experience. They organize tours, introduce teachers, put on skits of school rules and regulations for how to be a successful Grizzly, teach a dance and a cheer, and serve the participants dinner. During the student orientation, school Administration welcomes parents. This promotes caring, respect and good citizenship. Selected sixth and eighth grade students are trained as Peer Mediators and meet as needed with students to help resolve conflicts. The Volunteer Bureau is a student service club on campus open to all students. They work at parent conferences, sell donut holes and hot chocolate at Christmas time to raise money for Tulare community charities and participate in selling Kids Day newspapers to raise money for Children's Hospital in Fresno.

To make the celebration of good character more evident on campus, we have opted to hold monthly assemblies in celebration of good character rather than a luncheon that involved only the families and students. We hope to display role models of exemplary character and build the confidence of those who are making the efforts to live a life of integrity.

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Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School (1000 Students 7th-8th Grades)
Madera Unified School District, Madera, CA 93638
Tel: 559-674-4681
Principal: Mr. Robert Chavez

The community of Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School has agreed on the core ethical values it wished to promote: At MLK, we follow the six pillars of character in Character Counts! which are: Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Citizenship, Caring and Trustworthiness. After looking at various character educational programs, MLK reached consensus on Character Counts! Representatives of the school went to the local Board of Trustees that then officially approved the Character Counts! Program at MLK in 1997. All trustees were overwhelmingly in favor of not only using the CC! program during our advisory period but also in favor of infusing it throughout the curriculum during the instructional day. MLK remains the only school in Madera Unified that has a board-approved character education program. A committee comprised of school stakeholders meets every Friday morning to coordinate advisory/CC! activities.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School is intentional and proactive in addressing character education in the both the 7th and 8th grade levels through our advisement period, which takes place 20 minutes before first period each day. Character Counts! assemblies are held periodically for our students as well. Special guests have included: Holocaust survivors; Ruby Bridges (racial equity); Jeff Savage (author of over 130 books for MS age students) who writes of sports stars who are positive role models for young people. During Black History Month students are exposed to several special programs with guest speakers to acquaint students with role models (in addition to sports and music stars.) This year one of the editors on the King Papers Project from Stanford University spoke to use. (She is a Madera Unified Schools graduate.) Madera's local newspaper recently selected MLK for a photo/article on Black History Month. The Library Media Center sponsors a special Hispanic Heritage Luncheon in October for staff and students, and the students produce the food. The 7th and 8th grade students sign up for dishes, check out cookbooks, make the recipes at home, and then bring the dishes to the library. All Hispanic countries are included to stress the fact the Hispanic means more than just Mexico.

Teachers (and all staff) are cognizant of using good character in conversations with students and staff and try to be a good role model for those who do not have a positive person in their life. Many teachers give of their time to share positive lessons with other staff members and donate time to help at various school events, for the benefit of the students. The pillars of character are displayed in each classroom and are often used in lesson plans.

Many opportunities are provided for our students to behave morally. Among the best are:

- Tuesday, November 16, 2004, more than 4 million students at nearly 8,000 schools around the country participated in the 3rd annual "Mix It Up at Lunch" Day. Participants stepped out of their comfort zones to meet someone new. Many students at MLK participated in "Mix It Up at Lunch", as they also did last year. In a national survey, 70% of students named the cafeteria as the place where social boundaries are most clearly drawn at school. (www.mixitup.org)
- A select group of students participated in the 30-hour Famine Relief Project (an annual event) that will be held again at MLK this year on February 25-26, 2005. A special education video is first shown to students through their advisement class to brief them on Famine Relief and World Vision. MLK students will join more than one million teenagers in 21 countries to gather pledges through donors and sponsors to help the millions of starving and hurting children of the world. The MLK students will then go without food for 30 hours (while under adult supervision at MLK), so they can have a real taste of what hunger is like. During this time they engage in different activities in our school gymnasium. Afterwards, the money raised is sent in to World Vision. After 30 hours, a student can raise \$360, enough money to feed and provide necessary care to a child for a whole year.
- Students and staff participated in the annual canned food drive for the Madera Rescue Mission, which is located just a few blocks from our school. All advisory classes participated this year and collected over 1,000 cans of food. The staff and students also contributed toys and books to the children at the Mission. The director of the Mission is always invited to speak to staff and • students via our closed circuit television regarding the enormous need for food and shelter for Madera's homeless. Some of our students,

however, really cannot give canned food - as many of our MLK families actually eat holiday dinners (or other dinners) at the Mission themselves. Those students may make holiday cards and write cheerful letters to the children and to the adults at the Mission. Caring is our pillar for December every year.

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Mulcahy Middle School (569 Students 6th-8th Grades)
Tulare City School District, Tulare, CA 93274
Tel: 559-685-7250
Principal: Mr. John Pendleton

Named after long-time Tulare educator, Mrs. Alice G. Mulcahy, Mulcahy Middle School is dedicated to the principles of hard work, honesty, pride, and determination, all hallmarks of Mrs. Mulcahy and her family. Mrs. Mulcahy obtained her teaching credential in 1910 and over the next forty years established herself as an advocate for youth and a leading citizen of Tulare.

Prior to their first day of school, members of the school community 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 class assignments, homework to be completed, and on-going communication with parents. The planners are designed to provide students with easy access to reference materials i.e., CHARACTER COUNTS!, Mulcahy School History, School Vision Statement, and the Three-way School Pledge.

During the months of August and September, all students receive an introduction to the six pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS! In October, after conducting a school wide review, each student writes an essay that is tailored to specific writing genre while reinforcing core ethical values found within CHARACTER COUNTS! At the conclusion of this assignment, our school sponsors a CHARACTER COUNTS! Barbecue and Dance that all members of our school community are invited to attend. We believe the most powerful method to foster the meaning of the pillars is to provide opportunities to observe and model ethical behaviors. The Vision of Mulcahy Middle School is to prepare all students for high school and post-secondary education through a standards-based academic program that promotes strong ethical character, critical thinking skills and emotional physical well-being.

Teachers are encouraged to integrate the CHARACTER COUNTS! Philosophy into their lessons to further encourage and promote the progression of ethical decision-making. In addition to classroom instruction, we take advantage of every opportunity to recognize students exhibiting behaviors consistent with the pillars of character:

- CHARACTER COUNTS! Student of the Month Recognition Luncheons.

- Hosted by the staff to salute exemplary examples of student behavior.
- Tulare Advance Register - Job Well Done
- Highlights student achievement in the area of character development.
- CHARACTER COUNTS! Wall of Fame
- Showcases individuals, who through their actions, exhibit exemplary character.
- Tulare County “Kids of Character”
- Recognition of student achievement in the area of character development.
- Postcards of Praise
- To parents highlighting a student’s positive contribution or behavior.
- Mulcahy Pride T-Shirts
- To students demonstrating outstanding ethical decision-making and citizenship.
- Graduation Recognition
- CHARACTER COUNTS! lapel pins worn and students formally recognized.
- Academic Card of Excellence (A.C.E.)
- Recognizes students who achieve academic and behavioral excellence.

Since 1994, Mulcahy has become a major contributor to Children’s Hospital of Central California, having sold over 31,800 “Kid’s Day” newspapers. In addition to its school wide support of Children’s Hospital, Mulcahy offers several clubs that are committed to civic service and charitable contribution. Members of the California Junior Scholastic Federation (CJSF) have taken a leadership role on campus organizing coat and toy drives for neighborhood children. CJSF members also participate in “bell-ringing” for the Salvation Army during the Christmas season. The Student Council donated approximately 1,000 cans of food for local families during this holiday season. The Students Try Answers Not Drugs (STAND) club meets monthly and plans entertaining activities that promote school pride and drug-free alternatives. The After-School Tutoring Program utilizes student and staff tutors to provide assistance to students in all academic areas. And, Mulcahy has the prestigious honor of being an AVID School, Certified with Distinction.

As educators, we have attempted to gain a greater understanding of our students and their backgrounds. One example is our staff conducting a study on, A Framework for Understanding Poverty, by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D. The results of this study provide educators with a better understanding of the challenges our students and their families face. The knowledge gained through this study has enhanced our ability to further strengthen the innate qualities that we believe our students possess.

A new addition to our character development program is a conflict resolution system entitled, Second Step. This program is designed to provide our students with the conflict resolution skills necessary to uphold positive interaction with their peers and fellow members of the community. This program is currently being presented to our sixth grade students by our school counselor.

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Pixley Middle School (300 Students 6th-8th Grades)
Pixley Union School District, Pixley, CA 93256
Tel: 559-757-3131
Principal: Mr. Tony Luis

The community of Pixley is located in central California's San Joaquin Valley, one of the world's richest agricultural areas. However, agricultural job loss, low wages and lack of industry have combined to establish an unemployment rate of 21.3% for Pixley. Pixley is ethnically diverse, with 85.4% Hispanic, 3% African American, 10.4% Caucasian. 67% of students are English Language Learners.

Pixley Middle School continues its commitment to character as it completes the 8th year of a comprehensive character education program. The students, parents, staff and community work in a collaborative effort to raise the standard of core ethical values among the school and community of Pixley.

In September of 1997, The Pixley Union School District Board of Trustees signed a Resolution endorsing the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. A month later The Pixley Town Council proclaimed the Six Pillars of Character; Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship as the ethical values for Pixley to demonstrate and develop within the community organizations and the faith community of Pixley. Currently, Pixley is in the process of establishing a Chamber of Commerce, and the Character Counts! philosophy is at the foundation of this chamber.

The mission of Pixley School is for students to master grade level standards, develop character and become independent thinkers. Students demonstrate learning through on-going multiple assessments. Interventions and support are provided through a network of resources to achieve success.

Pixley Middle School strives to ensure a clean and secure learning environment free from drugs, alcohol, and violence and promote healthy student behaviors: Pixley Middle School begins every morning with the grounds staff surveying for school safety and appearance. All vandalism, graffiti or disruption occurring the night before is swiftly dealt with and repaired before school gates open. Pixley Middle School contracts with the Tulare County Office of Education CHOICES Department to provide safe school support and resources to the campus. Pixley Middle School students are well monitored for academic and social needs. The Pixley Collaborative Outreach Team meets weekly to case manage social and emotional needs of children and their families. The collaboration is comprised of School Administration, Healthy Start Staff, Tulare County Probation, Tulare Youth Service Bureau and Child Welfare Services.

Standards of behavior are upheld through classroom interventions and administrative interventions. One effective administrative intervention utilized is the 5-10-15 Behavior Plan. Teachers are supported through administrative support by an administrator conducting a parent/student/administrator conference upon the student receiving a 5th behavior referral. Referrals are reviewed at this time and a contract is signed by the student/parent/administrator that a change in behavior is expected and supported at The Pixley Middle School. Should the

student fail to meet the contract then upon the 10th behavior referral the student attends School Attendance/Behavior Review Board to formalize behavior expectations and suggest possible resources. Should this step not change the student's behavior, upon the 15th referral a move to the Community Day School is requested. Teachers are kept informed of this process for all of their students during the monthly middle school outreach sessions. The 5-10-15 Behavior Plan Process was established in 1998 when over 400 year-end behavior referrals from middle school students were tallied. To date, behavior referrals continue to decrease with 2003-2004 reporting fewer than 200 behavior referrals for middle school. This data clearly indicates the success that high moral expectations can have at a middle school.

The Pixley Middle School makes it a priority for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others and to the community: The opportunity to generate personal and civic responsibility takes various forms at the Pixley Middle School. All students are called for moral action as the Student Council sponsors drives during the year. Earlier this year over \$600 was donated for a student at Pixley Elementary School with Leukemia. Four girls raised \$150 during a Saturday "bake sale" for the student with Leukemia. This "bake sale" was fully conducted by 4 7th grade girls. The Pixley Middle School Student Council hosted a "Back to School" dance for middle school students and half of the donations were delivered to the American Cancer Society. Just recently, a Tsunami Relief Drive generated by the Student Council totaled over \$800. Every spring the community of Pixley participates in a community clean-up day where young and old pick-up trash, pull weeds and picnic together upon completion of clean-up efforts. In addition to positive moral actions, Pixley Middle School is first to address immoral actions as well. Currently, the 6th grade teaching staff is faced with the challenges of student honesty and trustworthiness. As a teaching team they have come together to research tools and strategies to address this behavior. Pixley Middle School staff firmly embrace the following phrase - "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing." - Edmund Burke. Taking action and addressing character is part of the moral responsibility at Pixley School.

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Reyburn Intermediate School (1492 Students 7th-8th Grades)

Clovis Unified School District, Clovis, CA 93719

Tel: 559-327-4670

Principal: Ms. Stacy Dunnycliff

Under the guidance of a dedicated, caring staff, Reyburn students experience daily that goals are achievable through proper preparation and good character. Student academic achievement, the number of referrals and suspensions, attendance, and the number of students at risk for retention are monitored closely to ascertain whether or not school-wide goals are being met in the area of character education. In order to re-enforce good character, Reyburn has a Random Acts of Kindness drawing every Friday. The number of students "caught" doing the right thing has increased since this program was established. The number of students earning the Timberwolf Way award and qualifying for CJSF has increased as well.

Each year the Administrative Leadership Team (ALT) revisits Reyburn's Vision, Mission, Beliefs, and Desired Student Exit Behaviors based on input from students, parents, staff, and the community. During weekly department and team meetings, teachers assess the school's progress towards goal attainment. The classified staff meets with the principal on a monthly basis to discuss ways to improve system-wide processes. A wide variety of parent committees meet monthly to promote continuous ongoing improvements. Reyburn's Vision Statement reflects the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders.

Throughout the year, orientations are conducted to keep parents informed regarding the educational program offered to students. A special Student Academic Profile Day is held during the year for student-led parent conferences. During these conferences, students take on a leadership role as they share their goals, plans for accomplishing their goals, and the progress they have made towards achieving their goals. The Student Human Relations Council, a committee made up of student leaders representing Reyburn's diverse student population, meets once a week to discuss ways to improve student relationships. This year the Human Relations Council is hosting four luncheons for parents. The purpose of the luncheons is for parents to hear "student voice" and to learn about the various ideas the Council has come up with to improve school climate. Parents are kept informed of school activities and events through the school newspaper, The Timberline, which is mailed home quarterly and via the Reyburn Web site. Students are kept informed through the student newspaper, Timber Talk, daily school bulletins, and classroom discussion regarding important events.

Since students do not necessarily transfer character concepts to their own life experiences, Reyburn's staff is dedicated to defining character and modeling its application. Seventh grade students are enrolled into a twelve-week Health and Wellness elective that emphasizes character and ethical decision-making. Physical Education teachers are trained in CHARACTER COUNTS! and incorporate character lessons on a weekly basis.

Reyburn Intermediate is truly the hub of the community it serves. Community partnerships have been established through the use of Reyburn's state of the art facilities by the City of Clovis, Parks and Recreation, church, adult school, and ROP. Reyburn Intermediate School's CHARACTER COUNTS! jazz choir performs skits and musical numbers based on the six pillars of character. The choir performs assemblies for elementary schools, retirement homes, and community events.

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, respect the property of others, and 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. Reyburn Intermediate is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic school that provides a positive, harmonious environment based on respect. 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 Hmong campus liaison are always present and available to hear the concerns of students and parents, as is an Hispanic psychologist and school nurse.

Through the “four schools within a school” interdisciplinary teams, students needing additional assistance are quickly identified. Reyburn’s Peer Counselors are trained to be good listeners for students needing someone to talk to. These students give up their lunch period one day a week to work with peers and to visit elementary schools. In addition, several members of the Reyburn staff have received Student Assistance training and are available to assist students with special problems. This helps teachers identify and channel potential situations involving drug abuse, depression, gang involvement, and child abuse/neglect to the correct agencies for additional assistance.

Reyburn Intermediate School believes that leaders are not born. Instead, Reyburn believes that leaders are the result of learning and practicing outstanding leadership skills. In the Leadership elective, students learn that good leaders have: self-control, a sense of fair play, the ability to make decisions and to plan, the courage to stand before their peers, a strong work ethic, and the ability to get along with others.

Reyburn Intermediate School encourages staff and students to be better today than they were yesterday. In keeping with this philosophy, Reyburn continues to follow an ongoing “Plan, Do, Study, Act” improvement cycle. Some things that are new to Reyburn are:

- A flag system to encourage student responsibility at lunchtime. The flag system is a five-day cycle. Students earn music on • Friday if they received no Red Flags or not more than one Yellow Flag during the week.
 - Green Flag = Grounds left in great condition.
 - Yellow Flag = Grounds somewhat messy. A warning has been issued. Two Yellow Flags are equal to 1 Red Flag.
 - Red Flag = Unsatisfactory. When students earn a Red Flag they lose the right to eat outside the cafeteria and are confined inside the cafeteria the next day
- This program has been extremely successful. Students like music and they do not like being confined in the cafeteria at lunchtime. Students are now policing their own trash. We have the cleanest grounds around!
- Reyburn is always looking for ways to tie real-life experiences into the learning process.. Mrs. Alfheim’s Academic Block Class adopted a soldier in Iraq in August. They sent pictures, letters, coffee, and a variety of other items to “their soldier”. Recently the soldier returned to the states on leave. He came to the classroom to meet the students. He brought slides, picture, artifacts, • Iraqi money, and lots of stories. In a sense, he brought the War on Terrorism into the classroom. The students will never forget • this experience, nor will the soldier ever forget the young Americans at home who took time to write and think about him.

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Rio Vista Middle School (1150 Students 7th-8th Grades)
Central Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93722
Tel: 559-276-3185
Principal: Mr. Chris Williams

Each morning as our students arrive at school they enter the Titan Tunnel and are welcomed with a high five, handshake or buddy hug from our school administrators and teachers. This welcoming tradition is so contagious that you will often find our custodial staff out and about greeting kids before their duty day begins. We want every student to walk onto our campus knowing they are “home away from home”. Seeing a familiar and smiling face each morning lets them know that they are entering into a safe and positive environment. At the end of each day our students are dismissed by our school principal who always ends the day with a positive note and reminding students, “Its always a great day to be a Titan.” Once again, all school administrators are out with the kids making sure they get to where they need to, safely.

We truly believe that at Rio Vista each and every administrator, teacher, instructional aide, food service worker, custodial personnel, secretary, librarian, and coach plays a significant role in the lives of our students. Respect is something that every student on our campus receives from each person they come into contact with. That is why we expect nothing less in return. Our discipline policy can be described in three words - firm, fair, and consistent. Our students are well aware that we are willing to do anything for them; however, they also know that we are passionate about keeping our school safe and positive and will not let any form of disciplinary issues take this vision away from us.

At Rio Vista we believe that our students spend more time with us then they do many times with their own families. This can also be due to the fact that we expect our students to be involved in at least two activities on our campus. Student activities can consist of sports, clubs, after school tutoring programs offered on our campus, participation in plays and musicals, volunteer time in the office or classroom. Many of these activities meet after the school day is complete. Because we see the majority of our students long after the school day is over we believe that it is our duty to instill core character values in these young adults.

Another exciting Character Counts! Program we have a Rio Vista requires that each of our students have a Character Counts! school agenda. Every Tuesday afternoon our students use their agendas to participate in a school wide quick write lead by our school principal. Our students are given a writing prompt over the school intercom and all students spend ten minutes exploring their knowledge of the Six Pillars by responding to the prompt. Teachers then discuss the responses given by their students. We ask our teachers to submit a few of their students’ responses to our school counselor who in turn publishes the writing samples in our school newspaper. This allows our parents and community members to see and read how our students are challenged to make decisions based upon the qualities of character as evidenced in the Six Pillars.

“Pursuing Victory With Honor” makes clear the philosophy that sports can best achieve its positive impact on participants and society when everyone plays to win. In fact, without the passionate pursuit of victory much of the enjoyment, as well as the educational and spiritual

value, of sports would be lost. Winning is important and trying to win is essential. Our athletes and coaches are governed by the following six core values and expectations.

Winning is important, but Honor is More Important. We believe quality sports programs should not trivialize or demonize either the desire to win or the importance of actually winning.

Ethics Is Essential to True Winning. We believe the best strategy to improve sports is not to de-emphasize winning but to more vigorously emphasize that adherence to ethical standards and sportsmanship in the honorable pursuit of victory is essential to • • winning in its true sense. It is one thing to be declared the winner, it is quite another to really win.

There is No True Victory Without Honor. We believe cheating and bad sportsmanship are simply not options.

Ethics and Sportsmanship Are Ground Rules. We believe coaches and athletes are committed to principles of ethics and sportsmanship as ground rules governing the pursuit of victory.

Benefits of Sports Come From the Competition, Not the Outcome. We believe quality amateur sports programs are based on the belief that the vital lessons and great value of sports are learned from the honorable pursuit of victory, from the competition itself rather than the outcome.

Sports as a Setting for Learning. We believe sports provide an extraordinary setting for learning.