



Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

2006 BONNER CENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Burton Elementary School

Burton Elementary School District

2375 W. Morton Ave.

Porterville, CA 93257

559-784-2401

Principal: Michelle Pengilly

During the past five years, Burton Elementary School's deep-rooted commitment to the Character Counts! Program has been evident in its academic, social, and extracurricular activities. The Burton educational team, along with parents and community members, has articulated the core values and principles they desire to see developed in the students. A common language is utilized that enables the students to connect the program traits with everyday actions and beliefs. Burton Elementary School believes that the values and associated traits of Character Counts! provide the kind of comprehensive character education that enables their students to not only be exemplary students but also productive and meaningful citizens of the community.

The team approach to character education found at Burton Elementary School has strengthened the school in other areas as well. This is evidenced in the success of school-based projects such as campus beautification, after school interventions, and overall academic achievement. Burton Elementary School is seen by parents, family members, and the community as a school devoted to the development of academic and moral intelligences in its student body.

Classrooms are adorned with visual aids implementing the pillars of Character Counts! and a common, student-friendly language is used to identify the characteristics of virtue in each pillar. Student assemblies recognize students for their random acts of kindness, their helpfulness, and display of good character. Each month students are recognized for exemplifying the characteristics of a chosen pillar and are honored by having their name and picture placed in honor among their peers. The monthly pillar is clearly displayed for the community to see on the school marquee and parents are encouraged to target the pillar at home.

During the time which Burton Elementary School has been involved with the Character Counts! Program, the program has been integrated into every facet of the school. This is evident by academic growth, a decrease in negative behavior situations, and an upsurge in student and family involvement in extracurricular activities.

Many Burton classes employ a democratic system of classroom government and students learn to have a voice in determining what is acceptable behavior in and outside of the classroom. They also help to articulate the discipline associated with poor decision making and define the desired rewards for exemplary behavior. Students working in cooperative groups are taught how to support one another, how to respectfully disagree without being insensitive, and how to acknowledge the value of each member's involvement. Burton students are taught that the classroom is a community and each member of the community is valued and honored. Students are given many opportunities to be leaders on the campus. This is evident in those students who give up precious recess time to tutor a classmate having difficulty, monitor the hallways for student safety, serve in the school library, help in lower grade level classrooms, or spend time with students unable to run and play on the playground with other schoolmates.

In addition to the curriculum, students from all grade levels are involved in campus beautification projects, nature learning experiences, recycling programs, and charity fundraisers. Students are able to see firsthand how their involvement and dedication can impact the world around them. From the release of butterflies carefully tended to in the classroom to the raising of money for a worthwhile cause, Burton students are actively engaged in good character development and this proactive approach to character education has been a strong factor in the success seen at school.

Many of the beneficial projects on campus are carried out by students, staff and family members working together. The students are not passive participants, but are engaged in the process. Students at Burton Elementary School have raised thousands of dollars over the past several years to benefit Pennies for Patients. Students have adopted a young person suffering from debilitating disease, such as leukemia, and have stood in the parking lot before school to raise money for the program. Many students have donated their snack or pencil money to a charitable fundraiser not to seek praise and recognition, but rather feel that sense of pleasure in knowing they have helped someone less fortunate. Students gain a sense of self-esteem when they are able to participate in such meaningful projects because they are empowered. They recognize that their efforts, however small or large, impact the world around them.

Burton Elementary School is a K-4 school nestled against the foothills at the gate of the Sequoia National Forest. Its student population is 580 students strong. The Character Counts! Program has been an instrument of change for the campus over the past several years, as greater strength and focus has emerged through its implementation. The program has been a significant part of the school environment and has helped to shape the mission of the school.

[Top](#)

Centerville Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (305 Students, K-6)
Sanger, CA 93657
559-787-2511
Principal: Lisa Houston

Centerville participates in the district Community of Caring program because we believe that self-esteem is critical to the development of the whole child. We became a “Community of Caring School” during the 2003-2004 school year. Community of Caring is a character-building program founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver.

Our school continually sponsors events that value the importance of families being involved in the school’s efforts to develop students of good character. Our big kick-off event to set the stage for the school year is an ice cream social that is free to all families in our school community. The staff, teachers, and PTA all worked together to create an environment that welcomes everyone. The purpose of the event is to develop our sense of community and to realize we all have a part in our children’s development as citizens. We continue this idea of community throughout the year, with activities such as: family nights, community service projects, campus beautification, rallies and assemblies.

Perhaps the most important part of our vision is that “committed people can change the world.” We are a community school. As the hub of the community, Centerville is a place where families and community members gather regularly to support, celebrate and honor the diverse achievements of all our children.

As a school site we concentrate on one value for a two-month period. Each classroom has grade level appropriate literature and videos that exemplify each of the five character traits. Each classroom teacher goes above and beyond the district-required activities to design and teach lessons that are appropriate for the needs of their individual classroom. Our student council plans activities for our weekly school meeting around the flagpole that unite our school as a Community of Caring. The activities range from songs, to skits, and even famous quotes that inspire us all to be better community members.

Centerville values healthy choices by providing quality school sports program for both boys and girls. It is not unusual to see the community enjoying our playgrounds, courts for basketball and open fields for soccer, football, and baseball on the weekends and evenings. Our campus in the country and we have no vandalism or graffiti. We show support for the people that need our facilities and they show respect for the school site. It is part of our community team concept.

Centerville students have adopted needy families in our community. This year, we are working closely with a family who lost their home due to fire. Last year, a class adopted a family for the holidays and later nominated them to a television show for home renovation. Currently we have a fifth grade class that has taken on the responsibility of a quarterly service-learning project. This project has the students go out into the community and help the elderly.

We at Centerville have also collected money for our local children’s hospital, hurricane and tsunami victims and participated in the “Dollars From Angels” campaign for the Chaffee Zoo. Other opportunities for collaborative projects including holiday food drives, Toys for Tots, Coats for Kids and periodic cleanup and tree plantings at our local China Creek Park. Fundraising events become community affairs and are strongly supported by staff, parents and community members.

[Top](#)

Fancher Creek Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (766 Students, K-6)
Fresno, CA 93727
559-327-6700
Principal: Rosie Rivera-Borjas

Fancher Creek's mission is "Building Dreams" to ensure every child the opportunity to "Dream, Dream Big and Make It Happen!" Our overall vision, "Building a Culture of Excellence", focuses on our mission. We will reach this goal by teaching to the standards, frameworks, and performance levels while providing support, guidance, and educational opportunities for our diverse population. Our mission is achieved through a true TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) partnership known as our Power Triad.

Our TEAM vision is built on the research-based Baldrige Core Values. These values emphasize partnership development that acknowledges the overall diversity of our students and community, are result oriented, and strive for continual learning and improvement. This partnership develops the school vision, goals, and priorities based upon the state standards and performance levels. The partners provide input into the Single School Plan and the Local Education Agency Plan. This collaboration reflects the entire community and sets goals and priorities and establishes standards to develop a well-rounded student in the areas of academic competence (mind), physical fitness (body), and positive character traits (spirit), the cornerstone of Clovis Unified School District's Sparthenian concept. This year's theme, "Raising the Bar", challenges every TEAM member of our Title 1 school to reach the next level of academic, physical, and character success.

We instill socially appropriate behavior by integrating outside sources into our curriculum. Ron Clark's The Essential 55 is used to teach and reinforce appropriate rules of etiquette, modeled by teachers. A school wide "Character Message of the Week", based on this and the "Pyramid of Success" from Coach John Wooden's Inch and Miles: The Journey to Success, is emailed out to the staff at the start of each week. Teachers explain, model and promote class discussion centered on these messages. Journal writing and role playing reinforce these lessons. These messages are broadcast by students at the daily flag salute, sent home in the weekly calendar, and reinforced during Fun Friday announcements.

Taking a proactive approach to instilling proper manners, the staff made it their goal for every student to learn the names of and properly greet all adults on staff. There is a concentrated effort to teach every student to make eye contact, speak in complete sentences, and respond appropriately when addressed. The third grade team led the way in instituting specific Essential 55 behaviors in their classrooms. This is manifested in how students answer phones, greet visitors to their classrooms, and interact with adults and each other in other rooms. Students are also expected to greet and thank cafeteria workers everyday, as well as be responsible for cleaning up after themselves and maintaining appropriate behavior during meals.

The Principal meets bi-monthly with the Student Relations Council, a diverse group of upper grade students who also serve as peer mediators. They meet to discuss any racial or discrimination problems that may be occurring on campus. This group visits primary classrooms to present skits on bullying and teasing. They also initiate discussions on peer relations and appropriate interactions in the upper grade classes.

Community connections and family relationships are strengthened by events and activities such as: Father/Daughter Dance, Muffins with Mom, Donuts with Dad, and Grandparents Luncheon. These connections are reinforced by various outreach activities that are initiated as a result of the collaboration of our Power Triad: Cash for Covers, Hurricane Katrina Relief Fundraising, community food drives, and presentations by community members. Our PTC reaches out through events that invite community participation including: Flapjacks for Jackets, Carnival, and Santa Shop. We encourage community volunteers and most classrooms have them, including parents for whom English is not their primary language.

[Top](#)

Francis J. White Learning Center
Woodlake Union Elementary School District (531 Students, K-2)
Woodlake, CA 93286
559-564-8021
Principal: J. Terrence Keller

F.J. Learning Center is a Kindergarten through second grade school of approximately 531 students in the Woodlake Union School District. The administration and staff of F.J. White believe that the primary years of a students' education are a vital time in a child's life to develop a sound academic foundation with important citizenship values such as self-respect and self esteem. When a child begins to develop self-esteem in kindergarten through second grade, that child has a greater chance to be successful as they grow older and mature. The staff believes a vital component of that process is that individual success should be encouraged, recognized and celebrated.

In order to successfully implement the process of building self-esteem and recognizing student achievement, the staff has used a recognition program called the "Tiger Cub of the Week" where students may be recognized for good decision making and improvement in their classrooms. That program is also enhanced with Student of the Month awards. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year an additional citizenship component was added to the second grade due to a partnership with the local Kiwanis Club. Each year the Kiwanis Club of Woodlake adopts the second grade in the form of support for classrooms and sponsorship participation on the school's annual celebration on Dr. Seuss' birthday.

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.

The pillars of Character Counts! are reinforced in the classroom through a variety of activities including daily recitation of the flag salute, mini lessons on the values promoted by Character Counts! and encouragement of positive behavior in the classroom and out on the playground by teachers and aides. The site principal also uses the pillars as part of discussions with students who may be referred to the office while he is visiting student break times.

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's staff including the principal. The school office celebrates student success and demonstration of the Character Counts! pillars by posting pictures of all "Students of the Month" in the front office along with pictures of school events and copies of newspaper articles about the school and students who have appeared in the Visalia Times-Delta's "CHARACTER COUNTS!" feature. 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, year end swim party for students who have demonstrated the pillar of Responsibility by completing their reading homework throughout the year, quarterly "Lunch with the Principal" for those students completing their reading homework for the month.

An example of the caring that is instilled in students came in the form of an idea submitted to the principal several years ago by a second grade student following the attacks on the World Trade buildings in New York. Students brought toys from home that were resold to students at the school. The money raised by that activity was presented to the American Red Cross for the funds of the victims and their families of that tragedy. The school has an ongoing partnership with the local Kiwanis Club with several staff members being a part of that organization.

The pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS! serve as important parts of that effort. A poster outside of the principal's office says, "Our School is a Great Place to Learn." Academics and positive traits like those in Character Counts! are stressed in a positive safe and nurturing environment.

James K. Polk Elementary School
Central Unified School District (600 students, K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93722
559-274-9780
Principal: Karen Garlick

In the summer of 2004, and before the school officially opened, our principal, Mrs. Garlick met with staff, the Parent-Faculty club, School Site Council and Community stakeholders to develop a mission statement that would embody the vision of this new school honed from the passion of people setting out together to develop the best school possible for our students. We researched the concept of a Professional Learning Community developed by Rick DuFour and let his work guide us in developing the mission statement. We were also influenced by the intense desire to create a school that would serve the needs of the students not only academically, but develop in

our students, leadership skills, and a strong character and civic responsibility. Out of this rich discussion and research came a mission statement that we live on a daily basis:

The mission of James K. Polk Elementary School, in partnership with families and the community, is to develop a professional learning community with high standards and expectations for all, providing a comprehensive educational program which values and is responsive to the individual, collectively empowering students with skills that manifest life-long learning, and fosters civic responsibility.

In order to live our mission statement, Polk Elementary set out to establish a forward thinking relationship with our Special Education Department. We implemented full inclusion at our school and currently include SDC students in grades 1-6th in our regular education classes with support from the SDC staff.

Polk's core ethical values are clearly set forth at the start of the school year to students, staff, parents, and the school community. They are articulated at Back to School Night during the assembly for parents. School-wide discipline assemblies are held at the beginning of the school year at each grade level for students in order to review our positive discipline system. Our discipline system has been strongly influenced by the Fresno County Office of Education's Leadership Academy developed by Jim Coiner and the Dare to Dream program developed by John Minkler and others. Our students are taught to fail-forward when they make a mistake. Success is built upon failure, if we analyze and learn from our mistakes. Therefore, our discipline philosophy is not punitive, but instead an opportunity for our students to learn.

Polk's Character Value of the Month is published in our student agendas with activities to facilitate student understanding and reflective thinking about the monthly character trait and its importance in developing a good citizen. The Character Value of the Month is also published and articles appear on student activities in The Polk Pioneer Press which is published weekly for the Polk community. Our Polk Pioneers of the Month are celebrated for their good character, accomplishments, and effort during a monthly luncheon sponsored by our Parent-Faculty Club. Students are selected by their teacher and fellow classmates to be recognized.

The Character Value of the Month is also the subject each morning of the Polk Morning Announcements. Students from the sixth grade classes produce this broadcast which includes special events of the day, birthdays, the weather report, cafeteria menu, the Words of Wisdom given by the principal, followed by the flag salute.

Miss Schindler's first grade class reinforces character education with character plays performed each year on Respect, Citizenship, and Character Counts!. In addition her class holds an appreciation circle at the close of each day to recall and state what happened in their day and what they appreciated. In Second grade, Mrs. Bergmann's class writes their Book of Virtues, describing how students put the character traits into practice. In Mrs. Yates classroom, second graders display their good deeds on a "Character Tree" for all to see and learn.

Students in grades four through sixth participate in Polk Student Body to foster leadership skills and decision-making. Student Council meetings are held twice per month. Elections are held at

the beginning of the year. Students go through a nomination process and campaign speeches are made before the election. Each class sends two representatives to student council.

Many opportunities exist at Polk for students to engage in moral actions. A prime example of this is a student leadership club, Dare to Dream, which is made up of twenty-five students from grades 4-6th who attend weekly meetings and participate in quarterly trainings at Scout Island hosted by the FCOE Dare to Dream trainers. Students learn the five stages of leadership. Under the motto, "You are what you practice." Students work on team-building, communication, and service learning. They learn the importance of respect, responsibility, and resourcefulness. Here the concept of failing-forward is explored in depth. Students in Dare to Dream adopt yearly service projects to better their school and community. This year in addition to an extensive recycling project, Polk Dare to Dreamers are on stand-by with the Fresno Police Department to clean up graffiti in our area. Plans have been made to assist the Fresno Rescue Mission and the Craycroft Center for abused children this year. Students will be touring the facility and bringing in donations of food, clothing, and toys in the spring. A major drive supports Polk students in earning the President's Volunteer Service award has been accomplished with Dare to Dream students making presentations in the classrooms to encourage students to participate. They are also honoring each student who donates fifty hours of service to their community with their photograph on a designated bulletin board.

Character education at Polk Elementary is embedded in the values and culture of the school. In living our mission statement, we strive daily to model professionalism, manners and morals. Our full inclusion model with an SDC program in grades 1-6 teaches our students tolerance and empathy for others. Respect, Responsibility and Resourcefulness, as well as the Five Stages of Leadership, and the concept of failing-forward are the foundation on which our school-wide philosophy of discipline is built.

Jefferson Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (377 Students, K-5)
Sanger, CA 93657
559-875-4591
Principal: Matt Navo

Jefferson Elementary has been a "Community of Caring" school since the 1996 school year. The program focuses on the five core values of Caring, Family, Respect, Trust and Responsibility and integrates these values throughout the core curriculum and along side school wide support programs.

There are several components to the Jefferson Community of Caring program that separates it from other similar programs and make it a valid character education program. The components are as follows: values across the curriculum, ongoing training and support for the staff, student forums, family and community involvement and service learning, all of which are driven by the coordinating committees action plan and site facilitators.

With the development of an action plan each year, the coordinating committee has been able to integrate character education through the school year. "Caught Caring" pencils and "Caught with

Character” tickets are given to students who demonstrate positive character traits. Once a month we have a Monday morning flag pole announcement with the entire school. We recite the flag salute and students are reminded of the value we are focusing on and informed of any upcoming Community of Caring or fun work activities. Trimester award assemblies are a time where reading, math and Community of Caring awards are given recognizing outstanding character and achievements of our students. We have a peer mediation program, where students work with other students to solve problems and differences. These students carry a clipboard, wear special shirts and keep a log of all conflict resolutions that are resolved. These are some examples of how we support our Community of Caring values.

Jefferson focuses on each of the values for two months, we then rotate each value into our school year. As a school we also introduced the Essential 55, published by Ron Clark, Disney Teacher of the Year. Everyday, we introduce one of the Essential Rules to our student body. Throughout the day students could be asked by any staff member what the essential rule of the day is for the day. Our custodian, food service and support personnel all take an active role in making sure students are asked daily about which rule they learned that day. One of the expectations is that every teacher works with each Community of Caring value and Essential 55 rule to integrate it into their core instruction.

The staff at Jefferson uses several activities to promote positive social development, group cohesion, caring and respect for others. We have a “Golden Broom” program where classrooms take turns being responsible ensuring that our campus is kept clean. Classrooms and students take an active role in this responsibility, and they take their responsibility quite seriously. The Rotary Vocational Lunch Brunch Program brings a local Rotary member to our campus each week to speak with students during their lunchtime. The Rotarian shares information about their career, education and character traits necessary to become a productive adult.

For the past five years we have had our fifth and sixth grade students participate in a series of Etiquette Classes provided by Cynthia Merrill’s School of Performing Arts. Cynthia Merrill teaches our students how to appropriately introduce themselves, how to behave in a job interview, the importance of manners, and how to interact appropriately with others in a dance situation.

Jefferson Elementary has become the heart of its community. Our staff and student body have many activities that connect our community needs with our school. Over the course of several years Jefferson students have sold Kid’s Day Editions of the Fresno Bee to help raise money for Valley Children’s Hospital. Every year our student body raises money and collects cans for the needy during Christmas Holiday. During the first year of implementation of our program, our students painted holiday decorations on the windows of a local grocery store. Our younger students passed out flowers to the store’s customers. Every year our community benefits from the Jefferson Family Christmas Caroling, one of our many family night events.

Our students raised money for the Fresno Chaffee Zoo donating over \$900.00. Our students sold candies for the Hurricane Katrina Victims raising over \$3000.00 for the Red Cross. However the most impressive service-learning event came after the events of September 11th, our kids and staff conducted a five-day drive for the Red Cross. Students’ brought in their change and bills;

often using what little money they had, to give to our cause. After one week, our students, families and staff raised over \$1443.05. This process was filled with small miracles and heartfelt examples of students giving what little they had to help others.

John Wash Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (249 Students, K-6)
Fresno, CA 93727
559-251-7543
Principal: Wesley Sever

Many of the activities sponsored by Community of Caring at John Wash Elementary target the families of our students. We have conducted family nights such as Meet the Principal night at our local pizza parlor to celebrate family and friendship, our Halloween Carnival, our Grandparents' Day, Barn Dances, Movie Nights, Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, a Family Talent Show Night with dinner, McFamily/McTeacher night at our local McDonald's, a staff, student, parent softball game and have celebrated Dr. Seuss's Birthday together. These events promote family, fun, and educational events such as our Drug Awareness Night where we had a detective speak to parents about drugs and the dangers of them. Children were also invited to attend with their parents.

We are fortunate to have an all school opening every morning on our blacktop. At these openings, the students are reminded of the character value of the month. We also come together at this time as a family when the principal asks, "Who's a Tiger?" and the students respond, "I'm a Tiger!" Monthly award assemblies are a time when reading and math awards are given. Each teacher gives a Student of the Month award where a student is recognized for embodying the value of the month in an outstanding fashion. Plaques are awarded to these children along with a pizza coupon, a Caught with Character pencil, a bracelet that has the five values printed on it, and a "Pass It On" t-shirt. This t-shirt has the five values printed on it along with a PIO printing on the back. We want each child to "pass on" these values to someone else in our John Wash family. Students are also given "180 Degree" awards. These are for students who have turned around completely in their behavior, or their schoolwork. These awards are extremely important. The principal also recognizes caring and responsible teachers or staff in handing out Life Saver candy for those who "saved his life" by helping him various responsibilities. These are given to staff members at our morning opening. This year we had Eugene Edgerson from the Harlem Globetrotters as an assembly speaker. He is one of the founders of the Globetrotters C.H.E.E.R. for Character program. C.H.E.E.R. is an acronym for Cooperation, Healthy mind and body, Effort, Enthusiasm, and Responsibility. He spoke on each of these values of character and gave examples of each. The entire school was mesmerized by his presentation.

Our Fourth, Fifth and Sixth grade students participate in a Peer Mediation program. Groups of four students roam the playground during recesses wearing yellow vests with value badges to try to solve any problems that students may have. In order to aid in solving problems, they often utilize the five core values with students. A "Brick Wall of Success" was implemented this year in the cafeteria. Any staff member who sees a student exemplify one of the values, writes the student's name on a "brick" and it is proudly displayed on the wall.

Our entire school community utilizes various activities to promote each of the values. Our student council has a Campus Beautification Commissioner. This person will assign a classroom to clean up the campus every Friday after lunch. The entire classroom goes out and cleans the campus picking up trash and putting away equipment that has been left out. This gives all students awareness of their responsibility as part of the John Wash “family”. The commissioner will then thank the classroom and make them aware of the good job they have done. The older students also buddy up with younger students to help them read.

For the past two years, our students have adopted a Make a Wish child and have exceeded their expected goals. Students have also sold hot cocoa and coffee in order to earn money for the Hurricane Katrina victims and also the tsunami victims. All of this done on their own accord. They are living the values. Our second grade class has taken towels and blankets to the SPCA for the animals. Our third grade class has taken blankets and sleeping bags to the Poverello House for the homeless during the winter season. The entire school decorated a Christmas tree with socks and mittens instead of ornaments to give to the Hannibal House in Sanger. Big Buddies and little Buddies paired together to sing Christmas carols to those elderly patients at the Armenian Home near our school. Letters were written by our fifth grade class to one of our school dads that were serving in Iraq in order to keep him informed of the activities at John Wash and to give him encouragement. He in turn sent us pictures of the letters that he hung on his wall in the barracks. When he was asked by one of his fellow soldiers, “Are those your children? He politely responded. “Yes, these are all my children.” This exemplifies the meaning of family and community at John Wash.

We believe that John Wash and its entire family of students, parents, staff and community is truly a Community of Caring.

[Top](#)

McKinley Elementary School
Central Unified School District (800 Students, K-6)
Fresno, CA 93722
559-276-5232
Principal: Eliseo Cuellar

A major component of McKinley’s character education is our “Character of the Month” program. On a monthly basis, two students are selected to be honored at a pizza luncheon celebration. Students are selected by their teachers, as “Character of the Month” and the “Most Improved” student in that classroom. A letter is sent home to each parent inviting them to also attend. These elections are also used by teachers to reinforce our core values.

Staff development has also centered on promoting our school’s core ethical values. In addition, each teacher is provided a lesson binder with various lesson plans that promote each of the virtues. The teachers are instructed to provide three lessons per month on each of the virtues.

Our positive discipline program is used to foster our core values and promote character education. The school’s focus is on making a change in a student’s behavior not merely

providing a punitive measure. Student-Staff behavioral discussion often revolves 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.

The McKinley Personal Responsibility Program provides for a reward at the end of each trimester in recognition of those students who have demonstrated appropriate personal responsibility.

All students will have a checklist outlining specific responsibilities, such as positive classroom behavior, playground behavior, homework, etc, which will be kept on file by their teacher to record any infractions throughout the trimester. At the start of each of the three trimesters, every student will have the potential to earn 2 points per day credit. Any student that accumulates 85 points or more per trimester will qualify for the award. Any office referral results in no points earned that day.

The staff at McKinley Elementary feels that students who have well-rounded educational experience are more likely to be the students who are successful later in life. To encourage students to strive to meet this goal, we are continuing our Block “M” program. The objective of this program is to award students who achieve academically, participate in service programs, compete in athletics, and participate in extra-curricular activities.

The McKinley Block “M” will not just be “given out”. It must be earned. It is our hope that all eligible students will give their best effort towards receiving this award. This is one way we can recognize extra effort and participation by our McKinley Tiger Students.

In October, 2005, McKinley students began a “Kash for Katrina” fundraiser to help the victims of the devastating hurricane in Louisiana and Mississippi. Our leadership student’s, bucket in hand, approached parents as they dropped off their students in the morning asking for donations. Our parents and students generously donated over \$450 to this worthy cause.

In March 2006, students participated in the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser benefiting the American Heart Association. This activity not only raises money for the American Heart Association, but promotes a healthy life style for our students. Every student who is physically able to participate in the school jumped rope and solicited pledge money based on their participation.

A “Character of the Month” student and a “Most Improved” student are selected from each classroom at the end of the month’s highlighted virtue. A formal award letter from the school is mailed to the home of the student inviting his or her parents to attend a luncheon in their honor. At the ceremony the student receives an award certificate, and a handshake from the administration. A photograph of the student is also displayed in the office.

One of our third grade teachers, Mrs. Melkonian, involves her class each year in a community service project. This year her class has been raising funds for the Alissa Ann Ruch Burn

Foundation. Their goal is to sponsor four children at a week-long burn camp for burn survivors, aptly called “Champ Camp”.

The students of McKinley have been involved in the Jump Rope for Heart community fundraiser and the Holiday Joy donation drive benefiting families in Central Unified School District. Student Council sponsors the Kid’s Day newspaper drive annually to assist Children’s Hospital of Central California. Students have been “touched” by their ability to make a difference in their community.

McKinley teams with our middle school, El Capitan, to provide cross age tutors for McKinley’s students. These seventh and eighth graders, which include many McKinley alumni, are assigned to McKinley students and provide much needed reinforcement to our at-risk students.

We make every effort to enable our students to contribute to the community through service-learning activities. We believe students are living our school mission statement in practicing self-reliance, responsibility and respectfulness, while striving for high academic achievement.

[Top](#)

Monte Vista Elementary School
Porterville Unified School District (537 Students, K – 6)
Porterville, Ca 93257
559-782-7350
Principal: Kim Silva

Each morning, swaying with the morning music, the student body president, vice president and our principal, Mrs. Woodley, greet the entire school with a smile over the television intercom announcements. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the students are reminded to have good character and the pillar of the month is stated. Special quotes or mottos are stated each day to challenge the students and to further enhance their need to have good character. Children who have been awarded with a “Caught Being Good” are announced every Tuesday. The first Friday of each month, teachers choose a child to represent the pillar of the month for their classroom. These students are “Grizzly of the Month”. They are rewarded with a beautiful certificate with their picture and their teacher’s quote about their character. They are also rewarded with a “Grizzly of the Month” badge and are the proud line leaders for the classroom for that entire month. Each week, a student is recognized for displaying a specific pillar of character. They receive a Character Counts! T-shirt, certificate and pencil.

Character Counts! Day is every Tuesday. Children are encouraged to wear their Character Counts! T-shirt. Students are reminded that good character is something they should present each and every day. A person of good character is trustworthy, respectful, caring, responsible, fair and shows good citizenship.

The staff integrates the monthly pillar whenever they find it necessary such as daily lessons, duty on the playground or activities outside, during field trips, or in the cafeteria. Teachers from each

classroom select a different child that portrays the Character Counts! pillar of the month. This student is rewarded with the distinguished “Grizzly of the Month.”

The “Grizzly of the Month” is also the line leader for the class the entire month. This student knows their job is important as they are to set a good example for others. The “Grizzly of the Month” is a person of character that shows others respect and is always on their best behavior. These students have the distinguished honor of having their name and teacher’s quote read aloud over the morning announcements by our principal, Mrs. Woodley.

The students of Monte Vista help donate food to the needy during Thanksgiving and Christmas by collecting and gathering food and then arranging it in beautiful food baskets. Student council also donates scholarships for students with needs. They have donated wrapped gifts to the women and children of the Porterville Women’s Shelter. Our school participates yearly in the Porterville Celebrates Reading. Our choir and orchestra students participate in performances around Porterville.

Student council supports school wide student activities to promote health and wellness such as dress up days, Red Ribbon week and Great American Smokeout. Lunch time activities such as basketball games, sponge races, tug of war, and other games, are guided by the students from the student council. Money raised by the student council is accounted for during monthly meetings and must be approved for activities by majority vote.

Collaborative groups are seen working together in all of our grade levels. The majority of our teachers participate in teaching an after school “at-risk” program for their students and several other teachers participate in the after school “Yes” Program which assists the children with their homework. In fourth through sixth grade, you will see students working together to get the science fair projects together. In second grade, you will see students changing classes for leveling or participating in singing and plays for an up coming presentation before the school. In fourth grade, you will see the students working together to build the perfect replica of a California Mission. In third grade, a dragon full of children roaming the hallways and classrooms, spreading good luck for a Chinese New Year. Third grade also sponsors a parent/student start party. Children learn astronomy using an inflatable planetarium and then during the night, parents and children come to school to enjoy star and planet activities, hot cocoa and cookies. Students and parents are then able to view the planets through large telescopes provided by Porterville College Smart Lab. Fifth grade students traveling to Yosemite for a weekend of hiking, camping, and learning about nature. Kindergarten children will be seen doing the Mother Goose Olympics. We believe it is important that the students learn to work as a part of a group that values each others’ opinions.

Our student council is also involved in peer mediation. Peer mediation is a program that the student council offers all students on campus if the student feels that they have a problem with another student on campus. Students encourage each other to have a good character and to peacefully solve their problem through conflict resolution. Peer mediation is supported by all students, parents, and staff.

Over the past five years, Monte Vista has implemented the Character Counts! program. With the endless enthusiasm of our staff, we continue to grow and embrace the core ethical values of each person on this campus. The Character Counts! program continues to be embedded in the culture of Monte Vista Elementary School. Everywhere students look, they are reminded that their character really does count.

The Character Counts! program has effected how and what the teacher teaches, how teachers present themselves and treat others, how we deal with and approach new problems, and also what we have come to expect from the students, parents and ourselves.

[Top](#)

Oak Grove Elementary School
Burton School District (600 Students, K-4)
Porterville, Ca 93257
559-784-0310
Principal: Mick Bishop

Oak Grove Elementary School is a modified traditional site with approximately 600 students. The school is located on the west side of Porterville in rural Tulare County, in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. Oak Grove serves students in preschool through fourth grade, and is one of six schools comprising the Burton School District. Most students are within walking distance of the school.

Oak Grove Elementary School staff and administrators sought a means to create a climate inside and outside the classroom setting that would support good citizenship and responsible behavior in elementary age students. We discovered that the Character Counts! program provides structure that assists our students in developing character traits that relate directly to themselves and others. The program focuses on promoting the six pillars of Character Counts!

Through the program our staff and students have come together to develop a more peaceful, safe, and comfortable school environment. As the program of Character Counts! has grown at our site, there has been an observable increase in student acceptance and respect for others. Teachers and parents have observed students sharing their talents, abilities and personal interest, which has led to an increase of positive behaviors at Oak Grove. Our character education program is used to communicate expectations between staff and students as well as student to student.

PTA continues to fund and advocate character education every year as well as to assist in expanding the program with the support of parents and teachers. In 2002 we commissioned a local artist and parent to design and build a Character Counts! monument. The monument is a hexagonal-shaped tower that depicts all six traits of Character Counts! students and parents painted ceramic tiles that symbolize each trait. The colorful monument is placed near our cafeteria. Purple benches were installed surrounding the monument so that teachers can bring their classes to teach the traits and reflect on the pillars. In our cafeteria, enthusiastic staff has

created captivating bulletin boards to reinforce each pillar. A school marquee broadcasts the trait of the month. Disciplinary measures also reflect that these traits are valued and provide the cornerstone of high expectations that administrators and staff support in the classroom, cafeteria and on the playground.

Teachers consistently encourage students to follow the six pillars of character during daily lessons and through gentle reminders and by modeling these character traits in all of their actions in the classroom, cafeteria and on the playground. Both are designed to meet individual and group needs. Teachers have been provided with a variety of techniques and strategies through staff development that meets the diverse needs of all students.

The students at Oak Grove School are active participants in the beautification of the campus. The California Conservation Core engineered and helped build the Oak Grove/ Cesar Chavez Garden. Our garden is a wonderful resource for our staff and students to work together and appreciate a meaningful, real outdoor classroom. Students willingly pick up trash during their recesses and encourage each other to keep the site free of litter. Since the character education program has become part of the campus philosophy, students have taken more pride in their school and there has been a decrease in graffiti and littering. The Student Council supports and monitors Wednesday Spirit Days. In participation with our PTA, Student Council promotes service-learning projects such as the Porterville Recycling Project, Christmas Canned Food Drive, Coats for the Needy, and Change for Jerrod Penic (a student with cystic fibrosis who needed a lung transplant). In the spring student council sponsors a walk-a-thon for community projects including a new Porterville Cancer Treatment Center. Also this fall student council raised money for Hurricane Katrina victims. Through these responsibilities students are provided opportunities to be role models and leaders, which encourages a sense of civic pride as well as preparation for leadership in middle school and throughout life. Students also bring in "Boxtops for Education" in order to create funds for field trips, assemblies, and Character Counts! curriculum. All of these activities create experiences for our students to exhibit their active school and community responsibility as well as respect for others.

Character education is the responsibility of all people and organizations dedicated to the betterment of their society--families, schools, churches, and the entire community. Children need to develop a set of values that they can build on and call on throughout their lives to guide their behavior and attitude. Our goal at Oak Grove is to continue working hand in hand with the community in developing morally conscious students.

[Top](#)

River Bluff Elementary School
Central Unified School District (764 students, K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93722
559-276-6001
Principal: Brett Wolfe

We include representation from all facets of the school community in the site decision-making process of creating and promoting River Bluff's vision of providing a comprehensive, quality

education through exemplary curricular programs, co-curricular services, and activities that foster lifelong learning.

Our core ethical values are the foundation for character development. As an official member of the Character Counts! coalition our school culture embodies the six pillars of character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship). A committee of stakeholders including administration, teachers, classified staff members, parents, students, and community members brainstormed, drafted, revised, and implemented our mission statement and core values.

Administration and staff collaborating on the Principal Advisory Committee (PAC) make decisions related to activities, assemblies, field trips, student incentive programs, and discipline policies fostering an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach to learning.

It was determined that our initial discipline system based on Personal Responsibility (PR) points was not as effective as we had hoped. Following analysis and research, PAC created a positive reward system (first-sixth) using RB tickets. Rather than taking away an unearned privilege when students' behavior is less than desirable, our current system provides positive reinforcement to students that are making good choices. Two RB tickets may be earned each day.

Character education is promoted on campus throughout the entire day. Our morning announcements conducted by our Associate Student Body president support our values and provide specific examples of behaviors that are aligned with our values. Students are reminded that "Falcons walk in the hallways, pick up trash, use equipment appropriately, etc." Teachers not only teach character traits, they model them on a daily basis. Opportunities for discussion of character occur regularly. For example, when first graders read Junie B. Jones they discuss respect and emphasize the importance of choosing their words wisely.

Our athletic program emphasizes Pursuing Victory With Honor. Students and parents are informed of our high expectations and sign an Athletic Code of Conduct Agreement. Our Girl's basketball team runs their laps together each day demonstration the responsibility they have to each other.

We believe developing character is the responsibility of the entire River Bluff community. The River Bluff community embraces the challenge of creating opportunities for moral action. We continuously strive to connect students to our school. With over twenty clubs/ activities available to students, we work to ensure everyone is connected to school.

The newest addition to our campus, Etiquette Club, builds chivalry and respect with our fifth and sixth grade students. The development and implementation of our student council is an example of how students get involved in collaborative projects and hands-on learning. Each semester students are elected to govern the student body. During their monthly meetings they discuss how they can work together to provide students with the best experience possible. Students participate in an annual Holiday Joy canned food drive. In response to Hurricane Katrina, they developed a fundraiser, Hurricane Helpers, and collected and donated over \$1,200 to the American Red

Cross. Additionally, we have a community service club whose sole purpose is service learning both on our campus and in the Fresno/ Clovis community. Service on campus includes landscape beautification and recycling. Students and their families donate one Saturday each month to serve in the larger community including the United Way Day of Caring, Poverello House, and the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life. At this year's Relay For Life we will have two teams combined of students, parents, and staff members illustrating our commitment as role models. Additional school-wide events that provide opportunities for students to contribute in meaningful ways include Denim Days, Pennies for Patients, and Coats for Kids.

Systems are created to provide opportunities for students to work through their problems together. For example, in Mrs. Mahoney's class she utilizes a peace path in the back of the room guiding students through a simulated mediation. Students are actively engaged in solving their problems while attending to not only the content of the incident, but the feelings involved. Mrs. Campos' class has a journal that provides an outlet for students to describe their concerns that are then addressed as needed. A large ball cart filled with playground equipment (displaying character traits and definitions) was purchased to create a safe playground environment. Ample equipment decreases the opportunity for altercations.

The River Bluff Community works diligently to promote our vision of providing a comprehensive, quality education through exemplary curricular programs, co-curricular services and activities that foster life-long learning.

[Top](#)

Roosevelt Elementary School
Central unified School District (565 students, K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93722
559-276-5257
Principal: Danny Teevens

"Make it a great day... or not. The choice is yours", is read proudly each morning on the announcements by a student in grade 3-6. This is the Roosevelt Roadrunner's daily bread shared by students for others in order to sustain compassion, trust, and acceptance on our campus. After each announcement student readers receive a Roosevelt pencil which states the school motto "Our Best 'til the Very End!" and highlights some of our student character opportunities.

Daily, our county autistic class, Circle Program, and our special education classes have students mainstreamed into regular education classes. These students, with special needs, are accepted with open arms, like a family member.

Twice, annually, we have an awards ceremony which includes the recognition of student involvement, service leadership, and self-discipline. Our students have the opportunity to earn dog tags for reading and comprehension, essential standards mastery, monthly writing based character traits, excellent attendance, Healthy Kids, Science Fair, History Day, band, sports, and volunteerism. Our volunteer service leadership award, Peer Assistance Leader (PAL) dog tag, is earned when students have decided a minimum of 50 hours in service for others on site or in the

community. Several students have earned this award for giving of their time in our library, sorting and cleaning books, assisting our cafeteria personnel with clean-up after lunch, or other service above and beyond expectation.

Student self-discipline during school is reflected when they earn the Radical Responsible Roadrunner (RRR) Award.

Each year all students in each grade level are involved in a Community Service project. Roosevelt's grade level teams dedicate student and staff efforts to promote and contribute to various diverse groups within the community. The goal is to act upon good intentions in order to help those who are less fortunate.

Our Student Council, also, arranges a school wide community service project each year. This year our student leaders have promoted two efforts. One of the efforts is a classroom competition in collecting 'pull-tabs' for a Ronald McDonald House in support of families who are in need of a residence while their child is in a local hospital. Also, they have raised \$2,463 for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Our first annual 6th Grade Leadership Academy took place this year following Christmas break. Each student and teacher in the 6th grade participated in a day-long leadership training at Scout Island, supported and conducted by our Fresno County Office of Education. Activities, discussion, and presentation, by Mr. Jim Coiner, outlines leadership skills which are intended to be learned, practiced, and modeled by our elder students.

For the past six years our After School Program in association with the County Office of Education has involved students in the Dare to Dream 'civic responsibility' leadership training. These students are being trained by our After School coordinator in order to promote good citizenship within each child.

From the hearts of staff, students, families, and our community compassion for others is modeled relentlessly. As mentioned, a great number of efforts are made to infuse character education into the fabric our student body with the help of many great people and programs. But, what is not stated is the immeasurable, daily, interaction and care provided by our staff and students for every person who encounters Roosevelt Elementary School. We believe the culture of this place is special indeed.

[Top](#)

Sanger Academy Charter School
Sanger Unified School District (510 students, K-8)
Sanger, Ca 93657
559-875-5562
Principal: Ken Garcia

Sanger Academy Charter School has implemented character education values through the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation's "Community of Caring".

In order to ensure that expectations for behavior at Sanger Academy is well-known by all students and community members, a parent/ student compact is signed prior to enrollment of each student. This compact notes that parents/ caregivers pledge to support the school's policies and high standards, while students pledge to have a positive attitude towards self, others, school and learning.

Students volunteer to keep grounds neat and clean, the on-site custodian encourages students by handing out rewards, and students are taught to respect all public and private areas. The school has visual reminders of values as each corridor and walkway has a value permanently displayed. You might find yourself walking on Responsibility Road, Respect Route, Trust Turnpike, or Family Freeway on your way to class. These continual reminders assist students in maintaining both the school environment and the core character values, along with the many other support programs offered on site.

Peer mediators serve our school on recess and lunch to help resolve student conflicts. Each mediator has been trained in conflict resolution that provides students with problem solving strategies as well as leadership and social skills that last into adulthood. Sanger Academy provides instruction to students through the nationally recognized program Second Step. This program teaches social skills, respect, and nonviolent alternatives. It has been successful in encouraging positive communication between students in a disagreement or at other emotional times, while teaching interpersonal communication skills and diplomacy to mediators.

This year each classroom is selecting a project for the school environment or community. A few of the projects have been: plastic grocery bags being collected to protect the environment in association with the Wal-Mart stores; change collected for Valley Children's Hospital and UMC burn center; stuffed toys for hospitalized children; food collected for the local food bank; and students visited a local convalescent home with favors and singing. Students, led by Student Government, also planned an all school "Family Movie Night" for all students, siblings and parents to attend.

[Top](#)

Santa Fe Elementary School
Porterville Unified School District (549 students, K-6)
Porterville, Ca 93257
559-782-6614
Principal: Angel Valdez

Santa Fe Elementary School Mission Statement: At Santa Fe we believe all students can learn. Our mission as a School Community of learners is to promote excellence in learning and instruction, which will empower students to become productive, creative and socially responsible individuals that demonstrate the six core values of Character Counts!

The school is situated on the south-east side of town. This area has been known as a "rough" area, with various social problems associated with the impoverished conditions many of our

families find themselves in. The unemployment rate in this community is estimated to be around fifteen percent. Many of our students have family members in jail and speak of it openly.

Santa Fe Elementary School's commitment to Good Character is evident in many ways. The six pillars of Character Counts!, Trustworthiness, Citizenship, Caring, Responsibility, Fairness and Respect, are posted on the buildings, in the classrooms and cafeteria. Each morning, after the flag salute, students recite the Character Counts! pledge. The principal gives an inspirational message and announces the named of students "caught" demonstrating good character. A Character Counts! Pillar is used as a theme each month to reinforce learning of that virtue. Character Counts! assemblies are held monthly to honor students best representing this particular pillar. Each month, every teacher nominates one student demonstrating great character to have lunch at McDonalds with the principal.

Besides seeing and hearing about the Character Counts! messages at our school, our students and parents see the Character Counts! pillars and inspirational messages daily in their student agendas. There are helpful hints for students and parents for learning as well as character building. Messages taught in the Pillars are reinforced as they are encountered in our social studies and literature units.

A "Friday Focus" (a newsletter from the principal) comes out weekly to list staff and students for noteworthy Character Counts! quotes or deeds. A monthly newsletter goes home to the families. In it are listed the Students of the Month and the Pillar of the Month. Students displaying good character are rewarded with a Character Counts! activity monthly.

The staff integrates the Pillar of the Month into the curriculum whenever possible, discussing a story's characters, identifying each desirable trait shown in students in the classroom or playground.

When students receive a Positive Referral from a staff member, besides having their name announced in the daily announcements, a copy is sent to their teacher and parents. This is to show parents how proud we are of their children and trust that this will encourage parents to continue to encourage good character at home.

Our students are provided opportunities to help others by serving as cafeteria helpers, cross-age tutors, and helping new students learn about our campus. Many teachers use "Book Buddies" as a way for students to help teach/ learn literacy.

Santa Fe students brought in canned goods for food baskets for needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Even though many families do not have a lot by many people's standards, our students are always willing to donate for those less fortunate.

Our Pride Patrol picks up trash and notifies staff of any safety issues or problems that need to be addressed.

[Top](#)

Vandalia Elementary School
Porterville Unified Schools (696 students, K-6)
Porterville, Ca 93257
559-782-7260
Principal: Lissa Lambie

Not only is Vandalia Elementary School the oldest in the community it also has one of the most diverse student ethnic populations. Seventeen percent of the students who attend Vandalia are Native American, from the Tulare River Indian Reservation, 13 miles away from Porterville. Sixty percent are Hispanic, 20% are white, and the remaining 3% are evenly distributed among African-American, Asian, and unspecified populations. Nearly 79% of Vandalia students are socio-economically disadvantaged and more than one-fourth of the students are English Learners.

Most Vandalia students live in poverty and start school far behind the average student. For many of our students, Vandalia is where they are fed, cared for, and learn the necessary academic skills needed to be economically independent as adults. It is also where they learn the core values essential to the development of character, which is truly how we view a life of success and what we hope to instill in every learner.

Each and every morning at Vandalia, our students recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Character Counts! pledge. As our Vice Principal, Mr. Longoria, reads the daily announcements, he reminds the school of the pillar of the week and reflects on it with words of wisdom, from Project Wisdom. He closes every morning with the words, "Make it a great day, or not. The choice is yours." It has become so ingrained in students that most of the children say it along with him each morning! A part of the announcements that has been added this year is a weekly Character Counts! student chosen by a certain teacher each week. Along with the weekly CC! student, Vandalia continues with the monthly CC! student chosen from each classroom. Mr. Longoria comes to each and every classroom to congratulate and present a certificate, bumper sticker, pencil, and folder. This year, three of our students were recognized in the Visalia Times Delta newspaper during October for National Character Counts! week.

Our Viking Pride is shown in many ways here at the school and in the community. This is our first year of having a cheer squad. The members of the squad have to work hard to show their good character here at school and when they are representing us in parades in town. Another way we show our pride is through wearing our school T-shirts on Fridays. Thursdays are reserved for wearing the Character Counts! T-shirts. The campus is flooded with proud, white T-shirt wearing students! Another way our pride is shown in our school is with Pride Patrol. Each week a 4th through 6th grade class is chosen to patrol the campus and help keep it clean. Any problems are reported to the custodian who then takes care of things quickly. We at Vandalia try to make our campus beautiful and safe for everyone.

Each teacher's program focuses on Respect and Responsibility. Students develop a sense of self-respect through very careful, systematic instruction designed to help them improve as readers. We believe the ultimate gift we can give our students is the ability to succeed and learn. As students' reading improves they move up to "higher" groups. Our reading program also promotes

responsibility. Students learn to be prepared and on time. They understand how critical it is to come to school every day and be on time, so that they can get the full impact of our EXCEL reading program. Likewise, in the past two years our teaching staff has gone from teaching and planning in isolation, to working collaboratively as grade level teams.

We raised funds to be donated to the Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina victims. Our student council worked with local service clubs at Thanksgiving to fix six food baskets for needy families. In November the student council asked all classrooms to donate non-perishable food items for the Porterville Women's Shelter. We filled 15 boxes. We also participated in the Porterville Literacy Fair and Porterville Celebrates Reading, sponsored by the Rotary Club.

As mentioned before, character education is constantly infused in our reading program. Students are encouraged to identify and discuss good (and "bad") character decisions in the stories. Teaching reading comprehension using character as a discussion point happens throughout the academic day, including Book Buddies. Many classes have developed a Book Buddy partnership, usually a primary classroom with an intermediate group. This provides a model for our younger students and demonstrates that education, especially reading is important. The younger children like to have the older children read to them and it is a great self-esteem booster for the older children, to have someone who looks up to them and respects them. Collaboration groups are seen working together in all our grade levels. You will see these groups working in all subject areas, but especially in language arts, math, and science.

As we evolve and grow in our character education program we have begun to make some changes. First of all, we are trying to de-emphasize the rewards system, and help the students learn to appreciate making good character decisions intrinsically, making good decisions because it is the right thing to do! This is a tough task to accomplish, but is beginning to take root.