



Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

2008 BONNER CENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Burton Elementary School
Burton School District (600 Students, Grades K-4)
Porterville, Ca 93257
559-784-2401
Principal: Mr. Phil Nava

Every Friday morning, student gathering are held to recognize and honor children modeling good character during the previous week. Parents are given monthly opportunities to write and share about a time they have “caught” their child demonstrating good character. In addition, the Parent Teacher Club offers school spirit days, which celebrates the pillar of the month.

In addition, students are recognized monthly by classroom teachers who present a write-up honoring the student and the pillar of character they have modeled. Each student has their picture taken and it is displayed on the Wall of Character in the cafeteria. In the month of October, student names are sent to the county for special recognition, which, involves receiving a pencil, a t-shirt and a farmable certificate. During a later school assembly each student is recognized and honored for the great choices used in modeling good character.

Many classrooms take turns adopting different areas of the campus to keep clean and neat. Rewards are not necessary when it comes to the beautification of our campus! Students respect the grounds they play on and take care of the grounds to keep them clean and safe for all. Students have also supported a recycling program to earn new lunch tables for the outside area! Every Tuesday students bring recycled items from home with the help of their parents to help earn money towards the purchases of new equipment to build a better campus. So far the students have collected over \$2,500.00 dollars.

One of the most exciting projects the children of Burton Elementary have participated in was Caps for Kids. The students gathered new and old hats to be decorated and donated by students and the community. The hats were then sent to Valley Children’s Hospital for children undergoing chemotherapy. Patients undergoing treatment received a new hat each time they went for treatment! The artistic ability was amazing and the joy of treating and giving was heart stopping!

Our most recent project involved adopting a family who had a child with leukemia. The students emailed the student, wrote letters and cards and collected money to help with costs. In the end,

the family lost their child, and our staff and students felt the loss. Our efforts continue today with a memorial fund and a conscientious outreach to those in similar situations.

Staff character is really making its mark as well! During the last few months, I have watched my staff alone, lend overwhelming support to one of our teachers and his student. Special efforts are being made to provide one of our students with prosthesis. Our little guy was born without hands and a leg. Special accommodations have been made for this youngster, and his class friends have seen the care and support being given. While seeing this happen students have been extremely empathetic and understanding. A community member and parent, who happens to work in the special effects section of the entertainment teachers has joined in the effort to make this prosthesis. In addition one of our local middle school teachers has joined in the effort, by having his science class student's work in the design of the prosthesis. All of this involvement in the humane effort will certainly enrich the understanding of character traits in all of our community.

[Top](#)

Cedarwood Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (698 Students, Grades K-6)
Clovis, Ca 93611
559-327-6000
Principal: Colin Hintergardt

When people and programs are focused and designed to accommodate all aspects of academic development, good things will happen. Cedarwood students learn and develop values and good character through important programs such as CHARACTER COUNTS!, Cedarwood Etiquette, Hawk Attitude, and No T/B (No Teasing/ Bullying.) When a joint effort is made between a community and a school, a strong feeling of ownership transpires. Cedarwood is a “family friendly” school that strongly believes that student performance is directly associated with family involvement. An early introduction to strong ethical and moral behavior will benefit students at school and serve their future with a value driven lifestyle. Every staff member understands his role in the implementation of a client centered instructional program that models community values, appreciates individual differences, and recognizes the significance of every person.

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Program began in the fall of 1998. Each year the six pillars are highlighted individually and discussed on morning announcements as well as in the classroom. In addition, one student from each primary class and two students from each upper grade class are awarded a CHARACTER COUNTS! certificate for their display of the monthly trait. The traits in this program include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Cedarwood has implemented its very own “No T/B” to help students recognize and avoid individual or group behaviors that can make a student feel unsafe or uncomfortable. The No T/B Council is comprised of a group of 6th grade students who meet with a teacher advisor to role play, review videos, and develop methods for dealing with teasing and bullying on campus. This

council is then used in peer counseling situations with kindergarten through sixth grade students. This program goes hand in hand with our Cedarwood Etiquette Program. Promoting appropriate behaviors in students is a key concern of the Cedarwood community. Thus, Cedarwood Etiquette was initiated to influence a student's behavior in all social situations and relationships.

Unfortunately, crime is a factor in most school communities. With this in mind, Cedarwood has implemented measures to keep our children safe on campus. The Safe School Plan is updated annually and addresses the procedures to be followed in the event of a crisis. Monthly safety drills are in practice to ensure appropriate response in an emergency situation. Our efforts to ensure a clean and safe learning environment are validated by parents in our school's annual parent SART surveys. Families in our community have yearly rated Cedarwood among the top three schools out of the thirty-one elementary schools in Clovis Unified.

To promote cohesion, our school nurse has implemented Kids' Club which is a program that targets students who deal with difficult emotional and social issues. This club is a non-threatening environment where kids feel free to share and make bonds with peers to help them outside the group. To promote wellness with all students, the school nurse has initiated Hawk Walk. This program targets 4th through 6th grade students. The goal of this program is for individuals to not only work on their health but to also encourage each other.

Sixth grade students participate in a Buddy Program with our Functional Skills class. This program has 6th grade students working with these special education students in class, on the playground, and during special events such as Special Olympics and Break the Barriers. Students from the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade classes work with primary students to assist in classroom work and during recess as a means to form friendships. A new physical education program called GAME DAY has been implemented at Cedarwood. This program not only teaches a healthy lifestyle but how to play fair and respect your teammates and opposing teams. Important life lessons on team work, good sportsmanship and importance of exercise is the purpose of this 100 minute weekly program. The CHARACTER COUNTS! pillars have been infused into the program to provide daily reinforcements through "Words of Wisdom." "Words of Wisdom" is the cool down segment of GAME DAY when teachers further discuss topics such as participation, nutrition, team building, and etiquette.

Our school motto is Pay It Forward. Pay It Forward is not just something we say or write about it, it is a behavior that is learned and passed on. A perfect example is our Cedarwood Student Council. Comprised of approximately forty students, this group is continually involved in modeling and promoting generosity to others in our community. An annual event for the council is collecting recyclables. Proceeds from this event are used to provide gifts for the Salvation Army Star Tree. Another example of Pay It Forward is our annual canned food and sock drive. The Student Council also collects and provides personal care items for the Marjorie Mason Center and the Poverello House. The student body also collected coins and donated the proceeds to the Fresno Fire Fighters Association which cares for burn victims. Each year the Parent Club in conjunction with the student body, plans a philanthropic event to benefit a family or local cause. Under the supervision of a staff member, our Litter Getter program was started by students several years ago as a means to help the custodial staff with general campus beautification.

[Top](#)

Centerville Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (255 students, grades K-6)
Sanger, Ca 93657
559-787-2511
Principal: Lisa Houston

Centerville (CV) School community has agreed on the core ethical values it wishes to promote through participating in the district Community of Caring (CoC) program as we believe that self-esteem is critical to the development of the whole child.

CV School and its staff are intentional and proactive in addressing character education at all grade levels as 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 CoC. The activities range from songs, to skits, and even famous quotes that inspire us to be better community members.

CV takes great pride in our school. Classrooms are responsible for choosing, planning and maintaining much of our landscaped and garden area. Local businesses provide financial support, plants and workers to assist us in maintaining our beautiful site. Plans have been drawn up to further enhance our landscaping. We will be installing sprinklers, benches and new playground equipment with the help of our community. Parents volunteer to help paint, maintaining our game fields, donate sand, weed gardens and develop new landscape areas. Our PTA has donated red (our school color) trashcans and has set aside money for future beautification projects. Each classroom has a designated area of campus to maintain and keep clean. It is important to note that in the next few months we will be doing extensive further work on our fields with community sponsors, and our parents and staff will contribute time and materials to help us provide a top quality and safe facility for our children.

Additional programs that instill solid character elements are Second Step, Friendship Club and Special Friends. Students in these programs are given opportunities to work through situations prompting positive behavior and responsible decision-making. Students are provided safe environments to self evaluate and peer problem solve. These opportunities lead to students making better social and behavioral choices in the future. Special Friends and Friendship Club are early intervention programs originally funded through the State Department of Mental Health. These programs provide services to our at-risk kindergarten through third-grade students.

CV makes it a priority for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others and to the community. Students have adopted needy families in our community, which reinforces our CoC values. CV is very proud of our success story with at-risk students, including a small

percentage of homeless that are living in tents and cars within our boundaries. We have collected money for our local children's hospital, fire, hurricane, and tsunami victims. Other opportunities to give have come through 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](#)

Fugman Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (527 Students, Grades K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93730
559-327-8700
Principal: Sharon Uyeno

In 1998, CUSD adopted a character education program based on William Bennett's book, *The Book of Virtues*, which is widely utilized today. Core ethical values are designated monthly and each classroom is involved in lessons and activities or discussions related to the following six pillars: trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness, caring, and citizenship which form the basis of good character. Fugman is committed to character development of these values referred to as "character traits." These traits are defined in terms of behaviors that can be observed in the life of the school.

Fugman community values good character with the six pillars displayed throughout the campus with the motto: Treat others the way you want to be treated. References to the pillars of character at all school wide events, assemblies, and award presentations. Fugman strives to effectively communicate and inform all stakeholders of character development through a variety of venues: site/classroom websites, Weekly Marlin Messenger, CUSD Today, Parent-Student Handbook, newsletters, School Accountability Report Card, School Site Plan, and flyers. From the first good morning greeting from the custodian or office manager to the afternoon farewell by the bus driver or crosswalk volunteer, respect and a positive environment are reflected in our behavioral expectations. Character Counts! is our cornerstone program at Fugman.

The school staff takes deliberate steps in developing character, drawing wherever possible on practices shown by research to be effective. All stakeholders take pride in maintaining a clean, safe, and well-managed learning environment free from drugs, alcohol, crime and violence. Grounds and buildings are maintained well with all repairs promptly attended to for safety. Each classroom monitors their assigned "clean up area" and Clean Campus Inspections are conducted by both parents and the Student Council Grounds Commissioner. A classroom numerical score is provided school wide on a weekly basis by the Commissioner.

All students (K-6) participate in Red Ribbon Week activities focused on "Just Say No to Drugs!" in October and receive instruction in "Too Good for Drugs," for grades K-5.

We have utilized the Character Counts! Program as a basis for all school wide positive discipline. Rules and expectations are clearly posted in classrooms. A school wide reward and consequence system is enforced. Teachers use positive reinforcement strategies such as spell outs, team points, individual incentive tickets, and marbles in the jar to encourage positive classroom behavior. Stakeholders are readily aware of our systematic multi-step discipline policy that aligns consequences directly to our Character Counts! system enabling efficiency and effectiveness with minimal loss of instructional time due to lack of disruptions on campus.

The school community acknowledges that students must learn by doing. To develop good character, students need numerous and varied service learning opportunities to apply values in everyday situations, interactions, discussions. For example, Student Council and Human Relations Council meet bi-weekly to identify and resolve issues among students using Character Counts!. They develop respect and trust for each other as they problem solve student relational issues. Human Relations Council focuses on the understanding of diversity and Character Counts!. They complete and analyze surveys to improve relations with peers on campus. Teachers trained to teach Bully Proofing Your School Program, report improvement in students' interpersonal communication skills and respect for each other's differences. Classroom meetings and student led forums address issues concerning friendships and inappropriate behaviors. Teachers facilitate using questioning strategies and relate behavior to the pillars of character. These student forums establish pledges which include character values and recite them prior to every meeting.

Fugman provides a comprehensive and varied co-curricular program. Students who participate establish a commitment and relationship to peers and adults. Their learning experiences strengthen character and promote self-esteem. For four consecutive years, 100% of Fugman students in grades 4-6 participated in a minimum of one co-curricular activity. These include athletics, choir, band, orchestra, Safety Marlins, History Day, Robotics, Destination Imagination, Science Fair, Library Monitor, Cafeteria Helper, Cross Age Tutor, Campus Beautification, Intramurals, Cheer, Drama, Art Contests and Essay Contests. Programs for recognition of student achievement and citizenship are designed so each student has the opportunity to be recognized.

School wide training of character values and curriculum is provided to each new teacher. Teaching guides and videos are available in the Library Media Center. All of our coaches center their teambuilding on the pillars of character. The athletic teams display character value mottos on their team shirts.

Fugman provides opportunities for students to apply the values we associate with good character. These activities provide opportunities for student action and character building. As Aristotle said, "when we do good things then we become good people."

[Top](#)

**Garfield Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (750 Students, Grades K- 6)**

Clovis, Ca 93619

559-327-6800

Principal: Jessica Mele

The Garfield Community agrees that the tenets of the school's core values are based on the belief that every child has access to a rigorous curriculum in a safe, positive environment where Character Counts! Good character is the foundation upon what our values are built upon and it is the basis of teamwork. According to John Maxwell in his book *The 17 Laws of Teamwork*, "Anytime you desire to build a team, you have to begin by building character in the individuals who make up the team."

Morning announcements include blurbs about good character. Every Friday students' names are drawn from a basket of Good Character Cubs and are awarded trips to the treasure drawer. Garfield's Health and Wellness coordinator meets with the teachers from every grade level helping them develop lessons that integrate positive character traits into classroom lessons. She is also responsible for validating the evidence files of our school programs such as DARE, Tobacco Prevention, and Game Day Physical Education Program. Two years ago Garfield's peer counselors developed and implemented a No-Teasing/ No Bullying policy that is strongly enforced. The peer counselors present lessons in every classroom and are available for students anytime.

Conflict resolution lessons provided by the Alta Sierra students to all of the fifth and sixth grade classrooms help students work out differences in a peaceful manner. Every October, the Health and Wellness Committee plans the Red Ribbon Week. This is a week-long celebration of what positive things our CUBS are doing to make their bodies healthy and drug-free. Awards are presented for good and healthy character posters, raps, and essays and are announced throughout the week. Refusal skills provided by the Buchanan High School Peer Counselors help our fourth graders say no to drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. Primary students create posters, write stories with morals, and role play.

For the last 13 years, Garfield parents, students, and staff have sponsored the Giving Tree in November and December by adopting different schools in the impoverished areas of Fresno and Clovis and providing gifts and food for the students and their families. This past year over 600 gifts of clothing and toys were collected, wrapped, and given. For the last two years in January and February, our Fellowship of Christian Athletes collected clothing and toiletries for the Marjorie Mason Center and presented them to the families living there. Grades 5-6 representatives from the Student Council served food this year at the Poverello House and came back to report how good they felt after seeing how many children would have gone hungry if the Poverello House did not provide meals.

Put-downs are never accepted. Students are taught to be kind, courteous, and considerate to each other as well as the adults on the campus. As a result, there has not been a single intentional physical incident at Garfield in three years. Because Garfield houses three classrooms of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students ranging in grades from pre-kindergarten to sixth grade the CUBS have become more aware of students with special needs. The deaf students are mainstreamed for part of their day and participate in all of the co-curricular programs such as: sports, Science Fair,

History Day, Destination Imagination, and Robotics. Deaf interpreters are provided to promote participation. The Garfield Special Education Center (GSEC) located on the Garfield Campus is also part of the school. The GSEC students in three classrooms are medically fragile and are not able to be integrated into the mainstream classes. To make all students feel included, students from the general education classrooms reverse mainstream into the GSEC classrooms helping with art, music, plays, and story reading. This has become a wonderful learning character building experience for our general education students. There is a waiting list for students to volunteer at the Center.

Upper grade students keep a personal responsibility (PR) card in their desks. If the (PR) card is maintained through positive behavior, the students then participate in a special event at the end of each quarter such as bingo for prizes, trips to John's Incredible Pizza, roller-skating, or a movie.

The Garfield staff set consequences for those students who exhibit poor examples of character. For example teachers ask their students, "What would have been a better choice?" The student has the opportunity to explain what they could have done to make a positive character and value demonstration and given the opportunity to correct the negative choice. If the student continues to make poor choices, then a peer counseling referral can be made. The Garfield Peer Counselors are part of the Human Relations Committee who meet on Wednesdays and have gone through a three-month certification through the Buchanan High School Peer Counseling Program.

Staff and parents of the Multi-Cultural IDAC Committee meet four times a year to plan and discuss ways for the Cubs to become more familiar with other cultures. In May of each year, everyone celebrates Passport to the Future. This is an accumulation of these cultural units of study. Musicians, speakers, and dancers are invited from other elementary and secondary schools to perform. A fashion show displaying clothing from 23 different countries was presented last year and was a huge hit. Plans this year will include an international food fair and a presentation of flags from other countries.

[Top](#)

Gibson Elementary School
Fresno Unified School District (413 Students, Grades K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93711
559-451-4500
Principal: Helen Cabe

The mission statement at Gibson Elementary is to provide excellence in education to all students, to promote success and greater student achievement through high expectations, and to develop responsible, contributing citizens. Promoting this mission statement, Gibson has adopted the character education program CHARACTER COUNTS!. The identified character traits can dramatically improve the ethical quality of our students' decision-making process and thus their

character and lives. In order for children to achieve at their highest level, we strongly feel emphasizing character to our students is a necessity both in and out of the classroom.

As you walk through our small campus, there are poles in the corridors painted with the six CHARACTER COUNTS! colors: Trustworthiness- blue, Respect- yellow, Responsibility- green, Fairness- orange, Caring- red, and Citizenship- purple.

These six traits are introduced and taught to our students every day during the school year. Each Wednesday, students and staff wear the specified color corresponding to the identified monthly trait. Teachers choose a student from their class whom they feel represents the specific monthly character trait. During lunch on this day, the selected students sit at the CHARACTER COUNTS! table. To highlight the specialness surrounding the CHARACTER COUNTS! table, the table is placed on the stage for the entire student body to view and it is colorfully decorated.

Fourth through sixth grade students are recognized for academic achievements during a school wide assembly for all those who have earned high honor, honor, or merit status. Each student is announced and stands on the stage as they receive their appropriate pin. A separate assembly honors those students who have perfect attendance with no tardies. At this time, the local Kiwanis Club donates bicycles to two lucky students that are drawn randomly at the end of each quarter.

The Block "G" Award is given out each semester to students in the fourth through sixth grade to recognize their academic and extracurricular achievements. The award is based on various achievements which include honor roll, citizenship, perfect attendance, sports, and extracurricular activities. Some of the activities that are offered at Gibson are student safety patrol, chorus, band, student council, fine arts faire, talent show, Geography Bee, and Peach Blossom.

Over the past few years, students have been given the opportunity to participate in after-school activities. These activities have included drama, dance, ceramics, sign language, cheerleading, science, cake decorating, and many others. The most interesting and widely attended activity is broadcast/ journalism.

On a weekly basis, students volunteer their recess time to help in the cafeteria and on the playground. Eight students assist the cafeteria staff by wiping down tables after lunch. It is such a coveted position that we have to rotate sign-ups every week. Our primary students donate their time by picking up trash on the school grounds during their lunch recess. The privilege for our fourth grade students is to pick up leaves that fall in the winter. Teachers choose eight different students on a weekly basis to rake and pick-up leaves around campus.

Our daily announcements are done by members of the Student Council. An officer is given the opportunity to announce for an entire week to the student body. We have a fall and spring Student Council in which students give speeches to the entire school to earn their vote. Having two different Student Councils during the year gives more students a chance to serve in office. This is a fun and exciting event for all participants that choose to run for office.

Gibson was also chosen to participate in the Schoolcents Program through Fashion Fair. As a part of that program, the school was able to donate twenty-six Holiday Buckets of food to needy families within Fresno Unified. Families donated food and other items to those that were in need. In February, we have our annual prescription eyeglass drive with the North Fresno Lions Club. The students are empowered to proactively recycle and build core values for all phases of their lives.

[Top](#)

Harold L. Woods Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (664 Students, Grades K-6)
Clovis, Ca 93619
559-327-8800
Principal: Tracy Smith

Harold L. Woods Elementary School believes that a curriculum in character is just as important as a curriculum in knowledge. We realize that we are not only cultivating the minds of students, but instilling morals and ethics that will aid them as lifelong learners. As a part of the Clovis Unified School District, Woods Elementary actively promotes the Character Counts! program.

One of the traits Woods Elementary has put increased focus on this year is respect. We have created “respect agreements” which encompass the following four areas: Student to Student, Student to Adult, Adult to Student, and Everyone to Woods. These respect agreements were created for the whole school, as well as individual classrooms, using input from all involved parties. Their purpose is to serve as a constant reminder of the proper way to treat others; being mindful of their emotions, property, and physical well-being.

We are aware of the growing diversity among students in public schools and the possible cultural barriers they may face. Instead of dealing with issues as they arise, Woods has begun educating students and staff alike in the areas of cultural diversity awareness.

This is an idea which we feel has taken character and citizenship to a new level. We are no longer focusing on the similarities of students to promote positive social development and group cohesion. Instead, we are recognizing the differences that make us all individuals. This way we are modeling the true meanings of fairness, equity, caring and respect for others. Students learn to appreciate the positive character traits in their peers and not base their opinions on physical characteristics.

Students, parents, and teachers recently participated in a school organized “multicultural assembly” to celebrate the many cultures represented at our school. Teachers have taken it upon themselves to incorporate multicultural themes into their daily lessons. We have had guest speakers address the school about the African culture, Chanukah, and Chinese New Year. All of which have been done to show students that understanding is done through education.

We use a reward system on campus for students who do good deeds; it is called “Random Acts of Kindness”. Every time a student is seen doing a good act or deed they are given an entry into a weekly drawing for their choice of a prize from our prize bin. Classes show their responsibility by having areas assigned to them to monitor for trash, we have students that volunteer to be greeters for newcomers to Woods Elementary School, and most impressively we have students who train to become peer mediators.

The peer mediator program is similar to the peer counseling programs at the intermediate and high school levels. Students go through a rigorous training in conflict resolution to assist their peers with problems they may be having. Students who are experiencing difficulties with another student or just want to talk to a peer about a situation are encouraged to meet with these mediators.

[Top](#)

Homan Elementary School
Fresno Unified School District (631 Students, Grades K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93705
559-457-2940
Principal: Suzanne Jones

At Homan, the staff made a commitment to learn about setting the stage and modeling excellent behaviors. Last summer, the principal and support coaches attended training for GESA (Generating Expectations for Student Achievement). The staff has embraced the GESA training and they strive to create an equitable approach to educational excellence.

There are several components to the Homan Community Character Counts! program that make it an exceptional educational program. The components are as follows: values across the curriculum, ongoing training, support for staff, peer mediation, and family and community involvement with service learning. Teachers have made the commitment to model core values and provide positive recognition for students. We have activities that promote student awards and parent involvement.

At Homan Elementary School character education is promoted on campus throughout the entire day. Our morning announcements include our values and support specific examples of behaviors that are aligned with our character education of excellence program. Students are reminded that caring students help keep the school clean and responsible students turn in their homework as well as we all respect others by keeping our hands and feet to ourselves. In addition to our character reminder we salute the flag to show respect for our country. 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. These are a few examples of how we support Character of Educational Excellence.

Our classified staff takes an active role in making sure students recognize the character value of the month. One of our expectations within the staff is that we model GESA (Generating Expectations for Student Achievement) everyday. Teachers have often given us feedback as to how they are able to implement a particular value into the core curriculum or writing lesson.

Our staff has made it a daily practice to teach our students right from wrong. Our school wide discipline policies reinforce that each student must treat one another with dignity and respect. We continue to strive to connect students to our school because creating students with excellent character will create productive citizens with a caring attitude for our Fresno community.

[Top](#)

Jackson Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (440 Students, Grades K-5)
Sanger, Ca 93657
559-875-5549
Principal: Brad Huebert

The mission of Jackson School is to help students become secure contributing members of our society. Our staff takes very seriously the need to explicitly teach character education on a daily basis. We have identified core ethical values as the basis of our character education program. Adopting a “direct instruction” method for our core curricular areas, our staff employ the same approach to character education at Jackson. The identified core ethical values are intentionally and comprehensively taught throughout the school’s environment daily. Jackson also encourages its students opportunities for positive moral action.

Jackson School bases its core ethical values on those from a National program, Community of Caring. These core values serve as the backbone of the program and for character development. There are five main core ethical values: respect, responsibility, trust, family, and caring. Each of the five values is highlighted monthly as a focus for students and community members. The order in which the core values are highlighted throughout the year have been discussed and decided on by the staff and student representatives and is revisited yearly.

In order for students to be successful in demonstrating character traits in the five core values, teachers and staff have weekly discussions with students about targeted behaviors and actions that positively demonstrate the core values. Bulletin boards are created in classrooms displaying outcomes of class discussions. The Principal interviews students in the cafeteria at lunch frequently about what the core value of the month looks like on campus and discusses opportunities to display said values. Kids are given a chance to respond on how they see the core value and what it means to them. Tips to parents for promoting core values at home are included in monthly newsletters sent home from the school. Small skits (5-10 minutes) are organized throughout the year by students and staff highlighting the core values and positive behavior and are shown schoolwide. All stakeholders are involved in the development process of character education at Jackson.

Each classroom on campus displays posters of the five core values in both English and Spanish. These signs are visited frequently by teachers during mini-lessons during the day. Class discussions often follow recesses, as teachers highlight behaviors from the playground that can be learning opportunities for all. Community of Caring Club organizes and promotes skits to be held during student lunch periods for all students, and are held at least three times per year. These skits promote the core value of the month and display common problems associated with student life and the positive choices that students can make based on the core values. Teachers and staff inform parents of behavior at school on a regular basis and reward students with weekly calls home for positive reasons. Jackson School also offers a monthly schoolwide assembly, called Flagpole, recognizing a student from each classroom for displaying qualities and characteristics of the focal core value of the month. Parents are invited to attend and behaviors are reinforced at the assembly. The physical campus also promotes the core values, as murals are painted all around the school emphasizing the core values.

In order for character education to be successful, the students must be given an opportunity to apply what they have learned, first in a structured environment, then released to perform the newly developed skill in practice with feedback to gauge success. Jackson School provides opportunities for students to do just this. Classroom practices include students learning how to properly answer the phone and greet guests who enter the room. Students also take an active role in helping to keep the campus clean and appealing. Many students volunteer daily to help pick up trash and events are scheduled through the Community of Caring Club to plant flowers, bushes, and trees around campus. Students are encouraged to apply their conflict resolution skills in real-life situations. Students are trained as peer mediators and aide on the playground and in classrooms in resolving problems and conflicts that arise between students. “Caught with Character” tickets help to reinforce positive behaviors.

[Top](#)

James K. Polk Elementary School
Central Unified School District (650 Students, Grades K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93722
559-274-9780
Principal: Karen Garlick

In naming the school after the 11th President, James Knox Polk, we hoped to tap into the American spirit and use our rich history to teach the core ethical values of our pioneering ancestors; ethical values that have made our country great! Our school is themed on the Westward Movement and California History, and we take every opportunity to directly teach the character traits embedded in the American West; from the Spanish and Mexican culture and values inherent in California and the South-west, to the heroism present on the frontier, and the risk-taking of President Polk, who in only one term of office, “... engineered the annexation of Texas, bluffed the British out of Oregon, waged war with Mexico to take California and New Mexico, enlarged the country’s land mass by a third and made the United States a continental nation.”

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. The benefits from full inclusion for our students, both regular education and SDC are truly amazing. A greater awareness has developed for the entire Polk community as we demonstrate daily that we all learn from each other, and we all have positive contributions to make. We practice the Response to Intervention Model, and meet monthly with our Intervention team to look at school-wide data to ensure student needs are being met.

We all have a family story to tell and write about! We celebrate our families' stories and adventures through writing, art, and oral interpretation. This year our sixth grade students entered the Martin Luther King, Jr. Speech, Essay and Art contest sponsored by the Fresno County Office of Education.

School-wide discipline assemblies are held during the first week of school for every class in order to review our positive discipline system. Developed collaboratively between our teachers and administration, it has been strongly influenced by Fresno County Office of Education's Leadership Academy developed by the late Jim Coiner and the Dare to Dream Program. Our students are taught to fail-forward when they make a mistake. Therefore, our philosophy of discipline is not punitive, but instead an opportunity for our students to learn. This discipline policy is published in our Parent-Student Handbook and in our Staff Handbook as well. At the end of each school year, our staff meets to review these policies and make changes as needed.

Activities to facilitate student understanding and reflective thinking about the monthly character trait and its importance in developing good citizens are provided monthly to teachers for use with their students. 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 selected by their classroom teacher for their character, accomplishments, and effort during a monthly luncheon sponsored by our Parent-Faculty Club. Our Pioneers of the Month receive a portrait certificate, a free pizza lunch, and a letter of commendation sent home from the principal specifically detailing why they were selected.

Our staff continually and consistently models morals and manners for our students. We think it is important to engage every student in a positive way as they begin their day. We are ambassadors for our school, and we recognize our words and body language must be positive to project a positive enthusiasm for learning and make students want to return excited to learn the next day.

A pro-active approach is taken by yard duty to engage students in conversation and activity. Loners on the playground are drawn into activities. Structured recess at morning break has been implemented by teachers in the upper grades to ensure that all students at recess are fully included.

Good character is fostered in the classroom by such activities as character plays, class meetings, compliments, and activities built around and the six pillars of Character Counts! In Mrs. Yates second grade classroom, students display their good deeds on a "Character Tree" for all to see and learn. Second graders learn such problem solving strategies as "Walk away," "Talk it out," "Make a deal," "Tell them to stop," "Wait and cool off," and "Apologize." According to Mrs.

Yates, “Given the opportunity for students to learn, practice, and articulate such skills in a classroom setting will assist them in developing intrinsic sense of taking the “high road” towards character building and becoming a person of positive solutions to problems in life.”

Students in grades four through sixth participate in the Polk Student Body Council to foster leadership skills, problem solving and decision-making. Student Council meetings are held twice monthly. Elections are held at the beginning of the year. Students go through the nomination process and campaign speeches as well as nomination speeches are made in the Election Assembly. Each upper grade classroom sends two classroom representatives to Student Council. Student council officers conduct the meetings using Robert’s Rules of Order. Suggestions and problem solving of school-wide issues are developed and brought forward to the principal. In this way Student Council acts as an advisory committee to the principal.

Through the Dare to Dream Program, 30 students in 4-6th grade develop leadership skills and participate in service learning. These students attend weekly meetings after school and attend training at Scout Island three times during the year. Dare to Dream trainers from the Fresno County Office of Education help our advisor in providing trainings and activities for these students. Students learn the five stages of leadership and the value of respect, responsibility, and resourcefulness. Under the motto, “You are what you practice,” students work on team-building, communication, and service to their community.

The Public Relations Committee was established last year as a primary student advisory council. Under the direction of Mr. Gurdeep Singh, third grade teacher, students in grades 1-3 meet at lunch time to discuss problems on the playground and in the cafeteria and possible solutions. In a recent meeting, students felt that students were playing around in the restroom and using an inappropriate noise level. This particular restroom shares a common wall with two classrooms, so loud voices impact the learning environment in those rooms. Students suggested that the yard duty person monitor the restroom more frequently. They presented a proposal to the principal and the change was implemented. Instead of rotating through every 10-15 minutes, yard duty now rotates through the restroom every 5 minutes. Students were also concerned about bullying in the primary grades and the use of inappropriate language on the yard. In order to address these issues, the Dare to Dream students are planning to role-model bullying scenarios to the classes along with solutions.

Polk has been very interested in the CSUF Peer Mediation Program under the leadership of Dr. Pamela Lane-Garon. This year the program is being implemented at Polk in grades 4-6th. Student from Fresno State come to our campus weekly to facilitate and role-model for our peer mediators.

[Top](#)

Jefferson Elementary School
Sanger Unified (365 students, Grades K-5)
Sanger, Ca 93657

559-875-4591

Principal: Cathy Padilla

Jefferson Elementary has been a “Community of Caring” school since the 1996 school year. There are several components to the Jefferson Community of Caring program that separate it from other similar programs and make it valid character education program. The components are as follows: values across the curriculum, ongoing training, and support for staff, family and community involvement and service learning, all of which are driven by the coordinating committees’ action plan and site facilitator. At Jefferson Elementary, initial implementation of the Community of Caring was facilitated by the staff’s willingness to implement and model these core values. From the beginning, staff members have worked to continue on going, in spite of lack of funding support, school awards for students who model core values, family night events and other activities to promote values not only with our students, but with their families and community. The five values are displayed in both English and Spanish in each classroom and office at Jefferson and our value banners are displayed in the cafeteria to remind everyone of our focus on character education.

“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 works activities. Trimester award assemblies are a time where reading, math, and Community of Caring awards are given recognizing outstanding character and academic achievements of our students. We have a peer mediation program, where students work with other students to solve problems and differences. We also have a special club that was initiated by a group of students that wanted to make a contribution to keeping the campus clean. They rake leaves, pick up trash, and sweep the sidewalks. The club grew from four students to twenty-five. 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. At our Monday morning flag pole we kickoff each value. During flagpole announcements, we utilize the opportunity for our school community to come together and emphasize the importance of developing good character. Our hope is that students leave with a sense of understanding about what is happening in our school, what the particular value means and how they can exemplify that value at school and in life. At one of our Community of Caring/ Funworks assemblies we might have students read about what “respect” is and examples of how you demonstrate respect toward others. As a school we also introduced the Essential 55, published by Ron Clark, Disney Teacher of The Year. Every week 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 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.

The Community of Caring program calls for service learning and is an integral part of our program. Over the course of several years Jefferson students have sold Kid’s Day Edition 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 the Christmas Holiday.

[Top](#)

John Wash Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (340 students, Grades K-6)
Sanger, Ca 93657
559-251-7543
Principal: Wesley Sever

John Wash Elementary became a "Community of Caring" school during the 2003-04 school year. The five components necessary for implementation of a successful character education program are outlined by Community of Caring as follows: values across the curriculum, ongoing training and support for staff, student forums, family and community involvement, and service learning. These are all driven by the action plan and site facilitator with guidance from the site administrator and district coordinator. At John Wash Elementary, initial implementation was facilitated by staff willingness to embrace their responsibility to model these values for our students. Teachers and staff were willing to work together to develop school activities, family nights, assemblies, and work these five core values into their curriculum; not as a separate character education program, but instead as a part of their students' daily lives. These values are shared throughout our families and community.

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 and at Blackbeards to celebrate family and friendship. Families are also included at our Halloween Carnival, our Grandparents' Day, Movie Nights, Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, a Family Talent Show Night with dinner, McFamily/ McTeacher night at our local McDonald's and Chuck E. Cheese a staff, student, parent softball game, and have celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday together. These events promote family, fun, and educational events.

A schoolwide assembly is held each month where students, staff, and parents participate. Awards are then given to those Students of the Month who exemplified a particular core value. These assemblies give the community an opportunity to come together and celebrate the importance of good character. An additional assembly is held 4 times per year with a guest DJ. All staff, students, and parents are invited. This person discusses the value of the month with the students and then plays games with the students, staff, and parents focusing on the particular value. Or goal is that students will leave each assembly with a greater understanding of what the particular value means and how to go and live that value throughout their lives.

Community of Caring encourages service learning as an important component of character education. For the past four years, our students have adopted a Make a Wish child and have exceeded their expected goals. In the past students have also sold hot chocolate and coffee in

order to earn money for the Hurricane Katrina victims and also the tsunami victims. This was done on their own accord. We also adopted one of our own families for Christmas collecting food and toys for them. Each grade level was assigned one child from that family. They brought toys and food so that one of our own “families” would not go without during this special time. We gathered so much food that we were able to give to another family as well, along with extra toys. Our students are living the values.

[Top](#)

Kratt Elementary School
Fresno Unified School District (536 Students, Grades K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93721
559-457-3595
Principal: Terri Bricker

We believe that Character Education improves the lives and academic success of Kratt students, so volunteer parents and teachers infuse Character Education instruction into every teachable moment. The Kratt leadership Team, The Character Education Committee, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the School Site Council (SSC) and the After School Enrichment and Safety Program (ASES) are united in forming an action plan which weaves character education in the curriculum. These committees meet each month and offer input into the School Site Plan. The action plan includes staff development with emphasis on teacher ethics training each month led by a CSUF university professor and Second Step training for teachers; Student Council, Student Body and family organized service learning activities; and values infused throughout the curriculum, evidenced by a behavior program and school rules based upon the six pillars, Character Counts! incentives (Character Counts! pencils and Character Trait of the month tickets). Student Bulldog Character Education Awards are presented each month in every classroom. Positive character incentives are also used by the Peer Mediator program at recess. A Traffic Patrol Leadership program before and after school and a Visual and Performing Arts Program utilize the six pillars as their basic framework. Students must demonstrate behavior following the six pillars, to be included in these programs.

Student editors, reporters, writers and organizers put together broadcasts four days each week, after visiting with real news broadcasters from Channel 47. Character Education traits are a frequent topic covered by our reporters. This year, students are reminded of the importance of responsibility and caring by their drama teacher, as they prepare and practice many weeks for the production, “Annie” which has been made possible through the teaching and donations of the Bonner Family Foundation and After School Program Grants.

Families instill a sense of continuity and tradition into the school, unifying us into a school family provides a safe haven and excellent environment for students to develop into strong, productive citizens. Parents volunteer in classrooms on a regular basis and participate in the PTA and School Site Council as they help our children succeed. The Kratt curriculum includes community partnerships with London Properties, Wal-Mart, Target, Kaiser Permanente, Office

Max, the East Fresno Rotary, Fresno Art Museum, California State University, Fresno (CSUF), National University, the Bonner Family Foundation, the Grizzlies, PG&E and the Fresno Philharmonic. Many adults from these community organizations joined us on “Read-a-thon Day” as they modeled by reading to students, and talked about their occupations and the traits students need to learn to become good citizens.

Third through sixth grade students are trained at CSUF by a professor to mediate social problems among their peers on the playground before difficulties grow into major infractions. Students wear Peer Mediator shirts, carry clipboards and keep track of the conflict resolutions that are settled amicably.

Students learn that one way they can grow to their maximum potential is by giving back to their community. Student Council members and their families are participating in school beautification projects by painting the six posts on our pavilion the colors of the six pillar character traits. Students are also developing a school recycling program with the help of Bullard High School Leadership students. Two outdoor patio reading areas furnished with tables, benches, and large concrete planters with flowers tended by students are being added to the campus this spring. These patios will also serve as peer mediator havens to solve problems.

Our goal is to provide a well-rounded, complete education with a focus on Character Education woven into the academic curriculum and our strong art curriculum. Strings, Band, Fourth Grade Recorders, an entire Third Grade Chorus, a Kratt Bulldog Chorus, Art and Drama classes develop proficiency in Language Arts and Performing Arts standards as we focus on the development of the “whole child”. The Artsmart Program sponsored by the Fresno Art Museum and Bonner Family Foundation has trained our teachers to infuse character education through art into the standards.

All teachers have been trained in the FUSD Character Education Program and use grant lesson binders that integrate the Houghton Mifflin Language Arts program with Character Counts! and Second Step Social Skills curriculum.

The emphasis on social skills from kindergarten to sixth grade is evident every year as teachers teach the grade level lessons in the Second Step components of Empathy, Impulse Control/ Problem Solving and Anger Management. Posters of these skills and strategies as well as Character Education books are evident throughout the school in classrooms, the front office, reading lab, cafeteria and library. Each teacher has a copy of The Essential 55, published by Ron Clark, the Disney Teacher of the Year. The essential rules are introduced to our students over the intercom and in the lunchroom. Students are “caught being good” as they practice these rules and are commended by receiving tickets.

[Top](#)

Lincoln Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (Grades K-5)

Sanger, Ca 93657
559-875-5541
Principal: Ketti Davis

“Be kind. Be responsible. Be the best that you can be. The choice is yours” Each day at Lincoln Elementary, students start their day with these words of wisdom. Student council members join the principal to conduct the daily announcements.

Students begin the school year learning about the behaviors associated with being a caring, respectful and trustworthy student. Students sign up to be members of the Community of Caring Club and get involved right away with planning events for the school year. Some events involve only the Lincoln community whereas others are city, county, or nation wide.

Grade level teams are responsible for different areas of the school and a member of Student Council is responsible for checking the campus and reporting which grade level teams are showing the most pride by keeping their area clean.

As expected, some students need more help than others in making positive, healthy choices. Two incredible programs are available for our primary students as a means to promote positive social development. Students needing one to one support are selected to participate in “Special Friends”, a program made possible through EHMI funds. If group interaction assistance is needed, students can be nominated to participate in “Friendship Club.” Participants learn techniques for controlling anger, communicating effectively with peers, and being responsible for oneself.

Lessons on caring, family respect, trust and responsibility are included in after school enrichment time and students continue to be held to the same standards of conduct as during the school day. A teacher liaison is available to help after-school program leaders with these activities and events.

[Top](#)

Lone Star Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (554 Students, Grades K-6)
Fresno, Ca 93725
559-268-8064
Principal: Dick Larimer

Community of Caring is a character building program centered around the five core values of Caring, Family, Respect, Responsibility and Trust. All of our staff and students strive to exhibit these values on a daily basis. Our Lone Star staff understands the vital importance of modeling these core values for our students, families and community members we serve.

Following our Community of Caring kick-off assembly at the beginning of the year, students are encouraged to sign pledge cards with their parents, “pledging to be a person of character”. We continue this idea of community throughout the year, with activities such as family nights, community service projects, campus beautification, rallies, assemblies and our annual Barn Dance. Each month, students collect items such as school supplies, warm clothing and food items to donate to needy families in the community. The staff, teachers, and PTA work together to ensure the success of these activities. Each month our staff including custodian, cafeteria workers, and office personnel, make a conscious effort to “catch” students demonstrating behavior during the school day identified as the core value of the month.

Although Lone Star is a rural school, tucked between fields of locally grown grape vineyards and almond orchards, we are a community school, serving an area of rapidly growing urban developments.

Lone Star has participated in the Fresno County Office of Education Wellness and Nutrition Program for the past three years. Its purpose is to expose students to local fruits and vegetables and help them make healthy choices in choosing a balanced diet. Each month local farmers provide the “Harvest of the Month” for the entire school. Fruits and vegetables grown locally, such as oranges, kiwi and broccoli are delivered to the school. Teachers incorporate not only the nutritional value of the food into their lessons, but healthy choices that students can make about their diet. Our Physical Education teacher also emphasizes a healthy life style through involvement with exercise and sports activities. She has initiated a Mileage Club where children voluntarily run track to accumulate miles before school and during recess. They earn a reward for every mile they complete, which they collect on a bracelet.

[Top](#)

Madison Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (466 Students, Grades K- 5)
Sanger, Ca 93657
559-875-4539
Principal: Karl Kesterke

Involving our parent community has been crucial to the achievements of our site. These efforts are strengthened through ongoing activities where the focus is placed on the family unit as it relates to student growth. Things like our family barn dance, Dad’s vs. Students football game, and our Muffins With Moms program, bring the families of our students into the process and provide a singular and cohesive message to our students, promoting our core values both in and out of class. The “Watch D.O.G.S.” (Dads of Great Students) program brings fathers, or father figures, onto our site for the day, helping in classrooms, monitoring the halls, helping at recess, eating lunch with the students, and provides an additional level of supervision and safety to our campus.

We begin each day with the morning bulletin announcements, which consist of pertinent information, student birthdays, and a reading from Project Wisdom, to reinforce the message that character counts. We have also participated in the Fresno County Health and Nutrition wellness program for the last 3 years. Each month, local farmers provide the “Harvest of the Month” to our students, further reinforcing good decision making as it relates to health and nutrition.

There are several programs on our campus designed to reinforce the core values of caring and respect for all students, including those considered to be “high risk”. These include, but are not limited to: the Friendship Club (primary grades), Second Step instruction, and Special Friends (primary grades). In addition, we feel that it is important for our students to develop a respectful and caring attitude toward their peers with special needs. Several of our upper-classmen provide help to both the staff and students in this class on a daily basis.

[Top](#)

Monte Vista Elementary School
Porterville Unified School District (560 Students, Grades K-6)
Porterville, Ca 93257
559-782-7350
Principal: Carol Woodley

We believe that learning must occur in a safe, disciplined, and positive environment. Students are guided by specific rules (be safe, be respectful, be responsible) and classroom expectations (we come to learn) that promote respect, cooperation, courtesy, and acceptance of others. Students know that their job everyday is to come to school to learn.

Monte Vista has the following School Mission Statement that was developed by parents, students, and staff.

Monte Vista’s purpose is to prepare all students to be life long, self-directed learners by forging a partnership with parents and community and by providing a strong academic core delivered through a safe, inviting, student-focused environment. Students are also prepared to develop a positive self-image and an appreciation for diversity which is demonstrated through positive social behavior and good character towards everyone.

Character Counts! day is every Tuesday. Children are encouraged to wear their Character Counts! 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.

During morning announcements, students are reminded of the pillar of the month and what it stands for. The pillar of the month is listed on our monthly school calendar that is sent home to parents. Our calendar is offered in both English and Spanish. The monthly pillar is described and tips for being a person of good character are provided so that staff, parents and children have an

opportunity to share these qualities with each other. These same items are also offered to teachers and other staff of Monte Vista on the weekly bulletin.

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 members coordinate noontime activities such as basketball tournaments, relay races, and obstacle courses. The student government representatives work together all year to provide fun, character and pride building activities for our campus. Student council supports school wide student activities to promote health and wellness such as dress up days, Red Ribbon week and Great American Smokeout. Our students take great "Grizzly" pride in being apart of such fun activities.

Monte Vista participates in a recycling program to encourage students to care for and protect their environment. Student council is in charge of collecting all plastics and cans and reporting this information to the "Trash for Cash" program. Money raised by this program goes directly to students. Students decide how this fund is spent such as student activities and schoolwide assemblies.

Our teachers strive to be positive and uplifting. The students' job at Monte Vista is to come to school every day to learn. The teachers' job is to make sure that the students have a positive, comforting atmosphere in which to learn and socialize. We take pride in our relationship with our students.

We continue to change and add new aspects of good character through assemblies, student activities, and parent involvement. Parent involvement is continually encouraged at our school. Over the last two years, our reading specialist, Mrs. Shirk, organized a Family Reading Night to promote reading and parent involvement. Teachers participate by reading a special book and doing a fun activity with the children and parents. An assembly called "Preserve to Victory" was brought to the school which talks to the children about people having disabilities and overcoming hardships.

Teachers have begun incorporating Character Counts! activities in their lesson plans. Character Counts! videos and lesson plan books such as "Good Ideas" are readily available to teachers for lessons. Our librarian shows a monthly video to students through the classroom video system which reflects our school's monthly pillar. We are always looking for new ideas to promote good character and safety on campus.

[Top](#)

Oak Grove Elementary School
Burton Unified School District (522 Students, Grades K-4)
Porterville, Ca 93257
559-784-0310
Principal: Treasure Weisenberger

Our mission at Oak Grove is to provide an atmosphere that nourishes self-esteem, fosters acceptance of others, and allows for academic success. At Oak Grove, we believe that every child can succeed. We are dedicated to providing quality instruction for all students, along with intervention support for those who may need additional assistance in meeting grade level standards.

In order to support classroom curriculum that addresses the Character Counts! attributes, books in both the fiction and non-fiction genres are provided in the library and readily accessible for classroom use. Videos that address values and good decision-making skills are also available for checkout in the school library. Teachers have been supplied with materials that include ideas for journal writing, quick writes, activities that connect to the core curriculum, as well as books for read-alouds and independent reading that addresses the pillar for each month. The pillar for each month is advertised in classroom newsletters, monthly Character Counts! assemblies, the marquee in front of the school, and in various communications to stakeholders.

Both the Character Counts! and Olweus Bullying Prevention programs provide students with specific behavioral guidelines, along with skills and strategies to deal with confrontational situations. As these programs have grown at our site, there has been an observable increase in student acceptance and respect of others. Our school community has been able to set higher expectations for appropriate behavior and there has been an observable reduction in negative student referrals to the office. Staff members use the Character Counts! pillar words when talking to students and parents about discipline issues so that everyone has a clear understanding of the high expectations for student behavior, along with a description of what positive behaviors look like.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer within the school setting and assist in modeling appropriate character so that students can see that these traits are applicable in community life as well as the school setting. Our Parent Teacher Organization is highly involved in daily school activities and sponsors Character Counts! medals for students, as well as character education school wide assemblies.

In 2003, we commissioned a local artist and parent to design and build a Character Counts! monument. The monument is a hexagonal tower that depicts all six traits of Character Counts!. This year, our PTA also funded the Primary Focus assembly in which young adults put on a very entertaining, yet educational presentation to teach the pillars of character.

Our students have learned about bullying behaviors through the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Our students now understand the various types of bullying and what they can do to stop bullying on our campus. Because of such programs, we have very few discipline referrals to the office.

This year, we decided to hold a spirit assembly on the first Wednesday of each month. Staff and students meet together on the blacktop wearing purple, which is our school color. The spirit assembly is lead by our principal, Mrs. Weisenberger, along with the help of third and fourth grade student council members. After saying the flag salute, we sing “Happy Birthday” to all of the students who have a birthday for that particular month as the principal gives each student a birthday pencil. Rewards are then given for random acts of kindness and perfect attendance.

A new enthusiasm and commitment to the Character Counts! program is also evident on our campus this year. We have doubled the amount of students who receive awards each month at our Character Counts! assemblies. Two students in each class, from preschool through fourth grade, receive an award and Character Counts! necklace for the focus pillar, and then the Oak Grove PTA takes a group picture of the students to be displayed in the cafeteria.

Under the leadership of our vice principal, a new cafeteria plan was developed to help maintain safety and order in our cafeteria. Students must use friendly voices in line, have respectful conversations at their tables, and clean up after themselves.

[Top](#)

Quail Lake Environmental Charter School
Sanger Unified School District (504 students, Grades K- 8)
Clovis, Ca 93619
559-292-1273
Principal: Chris Stilson

Quail Lake Environmental Charter School takes pride in giving out the “Block QL” award to any and all students that are well-rounded and demonstrate a philosophy of being their best in “Mind, Body, and Spirit” at all times. Our school is extremely high performing, but teachers and students know that academics are not the only ingredient to make them productive citizens later in life. They must become life-long learners, mentally and physically. Respect between students and staff is reflected in school policies and behavioral expectations at QL.

Character education is vital to our school’s environment and QL has embodied the district’s Community of Caring Program (CC). Students are expected to behave properly at all times, complete all schoolwork as assigned, and earn a “reward activity,” such as roller-skating or bowling. Students allowed to participate in the reward activity are those that exhibit appropriate character, behavior, and effort throughout the trimester as measured by classroom accountability reports. QL believes students should be rewarded not for doing what is expected of them, but for doing it well. Expectations and rigor are high at QL and students push themselves to succeed. While QL encourages high academic standards, it also clearly promotes specific moral and behavioral guidelines for its students. This is evidenced through the Character Education and Personal Responsibility (PR) Programs.

Since the inception of the PR program, along with assertive discipline models and the Peer Mediation Program, office referrals are almost non-existent, due to the fact that students are now self-governed. As a result of our many positive reinforcement models and declining trend of office referrals, school suspensions have gone down every year and no expulsions have occurred.

One unique model of QL is its “no cut” policy for sports. Rather than field just one team, teachers coach the “practice team” as adjunct duties to make sure the ALL students who wish to participate are given the chance to do so. This policy also extends to our students with a desire for civic education. All 4th- 8th grade students who want to participate in service to our school and community are invited to be part of the Service Learning Club. Rather than exclude an individual with the desire to serve, we include everyone who wants to participate. Our Service Learning Club made over 100 “pine cone turkeys” and delivered them to the Sanger Convalescent Home for Thanksgiving. They plan one service-learning project every month. These include knitting stocking hats for the homeless, care packages to Iraq, and so on. We are proud that our service club is a strong group of individuals working on the skills that will make them responsible and productive citizens in the community.

Staff and students reach out to the community and demonstrate empathy for those less fortunate by participating in our Make-a-Wish Campaign, Pennies for Patients, Holiday Joy Canned Food Drive, Coats for Kids, and Toys for Tots. The Garden Club has helped maintain the impressive Project Garden that beautifies the west side of the office. As the greenhouse and classroom gardens take shape, the goals for the 2008- 2009 school year include a Farmer’s Market to help support the club financially and the donation of some of the produce to our local Food Bank or Poverello House, whose missions are to feed the poor and homeless. QL has established partnerships with community-based resources and programs. One such partnership is the Make-a-Wish Foundation of Central California. Every year QL adopts a child from the Make-a-Wish foundation in an effort to help grant the wish of child with a life threatening illness. Our site was made aware of a 5th grade student from Wilson Elementary (SUSD) who was diagnosed with a brain tumor and needed financial assistance. A message was sent out asking that every student bring \$1.00 each (trying to raise approximately \$500.00). With one automated phone call, in a mere two days, our school raised over \$1,800.00!

[Top](#)

Reagan Elementary School
Sanger Unified School District (233 students, Grades K- 5)
Sanger, Ca 93657
559-875-6521
Principal: Matt Navo

Reagan Elementary opened its doors for the first time as a brand new Sanger elementary school this 2007/ 2008 school year and simultaneously opened as a strong “Community of Caring” school. There are several components to the Reagan Community of Caring program that separate it from other similar programs and make it a valid character education program. The components

are as follows: values across the curriculum, support for staff, student forums, family and community involvement, and service learning, all of which are driven by the coordinating committee's action plan and site facilitator. At Reagan Elementary, initial implementation of the Community of Caring was facilitated by the staff's willingness to implement and model these core values. From the beginning, staff members have worked to continue on going school awards for students who model core values, family night events and other activities to promote values not only with our students, but also with their families and community. The five values are displayed in both English and Spanish in each classroom and office at Reagan; our value banners are displayed in the cafeteria to remind everyone of our focus on character education.

Each day begins with a student council member reading over the intercom an excerpt from Project Wisdom which encourages all students to demonstrate good character throughout the day. That student also leads the entire school in the flag salute every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Students are also reminded of the value we are focusing on and informed of any upcoming Community of Caring or Fun Works activities. "Caught Caring" pencils and "Caught with Character" tickets are given by all the staff to students who demonstrate positive character traits throughout the day in the classroom, on the playground, in the library, and in the cafeteria. Each classroom displays a Community of Caring Chart which displays the students who have demonstrated each of the five values for each trimester. Monthly award assemblies and Trimester award assemblies are a time where reading, math, and Community of Caring awards are given recognizing outstanding character and academic achievements of our students. Students have the opportunity to achieve a bronze sticker, a silver ribbon, and a gold medallion for maintaining the five values throughout each trimester. We are in the process of initiating our peer mediation program, where students work with other students to solve problems and differences. Our good Sportsmanship medals are awarded at each sporting event by our athletes and cheerleaders to one member of an opposing team whom our students feel has demonstrated great character. These are some examples of how we support our Community of Caring values.

The Community of Caring program calls for service learning and is an integral part of our program. In the fall, our school collected money for the southern California fire victims. During our Happy Feet collection month we gathered socks and shoes for needy students. In November our caring Reagan community held a very successful food drive in which we provided five needy families the supplies for a Thanksgiving meal: two huge boxes of food with a frozen turkey for each family. In December we adopted three needy families and featured our first ever Caring Hands Christmas Tree in which "hands" with "wishes" of family members were displayed. Reagan students, parents, and staff chose "hands" and bought Christmas gifts for 33 needy family members. January is our Winter Wear Collection in which we are collecting jackets; February is our Food from the Heart canned food drive. Students will also be making valentines to be given to residents of the Sanger Convalescent Hospital. March is our Book Drive in conjunction with Read Across America. April is Seeds of Kindness month with a focus on random acts of kindness in which each class will be creating a journal/ scrapbook of their experiences to be shared. We will also be having a Community Service Saturday in which staff, students, and families will be planting spring flowers to beautify our school. This will be part of our Earth Day celebration. In May we will be making Shoeboxes for Soldiers.

[Top](#)

Red Bank Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (708 Students, Grades K-6)
Clovis, Ca 93619
559-327-7800
Principal: Kevin Peterson

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

Classrooms focused on being honest in making decisions as part of our two week Red Ribbon Week celebration. All of the students participated in the Too Good for Drugs educational program. This program emphasizes the values of honesty, courage, discipline, accountability, and making successful choices.

A series of tapes by Linda and Richard Eyre, Teaching Your Children Values are available for teachers to use within their classrooms. One tape is geared towards helping adults and the other is a dramatization about a little boy (Alexander) and his tortoise (Theo) internalizing valuable lessons for life. Inside/ Out A whole-person education approach to health and safety is also used in Red Bank classrooms. This program was provided by State Farm Insurance Companies. It includes a video and a series of lessons with activities for K-6 instruction.

Students learn to evaluate situations and make positive and constructive decisions as they examine events. A greater understanding and tolerance of student diversity is manifested throughout the school language arts, writing, and social science curriculum. The integration of character education with district and California State Standards is a fun combination at Red Bank.

Red Bank Elementary School provides students the opportunities for moral action and character development through total curriculum integration of character education. Red Bank Elementary provides students opportunities to be involved in community service efforts by such activities as: Adopting soldiers in Iraq and writing them letters as well as filling shoe boxes with items such as razors, beef jerky, soap, gum, candy, shaving cream and other items from home. These shoeboxes are then shipped to service men and women in Iraq. Annually Red Bank staff and students participate in the Fresno Bee sponsored Kids' Day.

Our third grade classes organize a community service project that raises funds for the Burn Foundation. Third grade classrooms sell goodies at lunch recess to raise money to help send a burn victim to Champ Camp.

Another community service project organized by a sixth grade class is Pennies for Scholarship. This community service project collects pennies and fund raises through a car wash during the year to provide a Clovis High School student, who is a former Red Bank student, with a scholarship.

A school-wide community service project benefits the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society- Pennies for Patients. Each classroom had a box to collect coins in. The collection lasts approximately a month. Red Bank teachers, staff, administration, students and community are involved, for the sixth year, in the American Cancer Society for community awareness, research and patient outreach. Red Bank has two teams comprised of staff members and friends that have been formed in Honor of Patty Negrete- a former Red Bank teacher who lost her battle with breast cancer. The Relay Teams, named Patty's Pals, have won fundraising, spirit and participation awards every year that they have been involved in the Relay. In addition to the two Patty's Pals teams, there are other Relay teams that have been formed by Red Bank parents, community members or students.

[Top](#)

Riverview Elementary School
Clovis Unified School District (649 Students, Grades K-6)
Fresno, Ca 92730
599-327-8600
Principal: Kristie Wiens

Instruction is the critical work of Riverview's educators in attaining the primary goal associated with student achievement. This goal is accomplished through relevant curriculum, alignment between what is taught and tested, teacher training focused on powerful lessons, and instructional supervision model, which assures student learning everyday in all classrooms, and appropriate assessments which guide instruction.

Riverview continues to integrate the CHARACTER COUNTS! pillars into the curriculum to develop students of character. Each staff member helps students develop self-confidence, exercise good decision-making, and establish patterns of behavior that display the values modeled in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. A student of character is one who lives by the six pillars by being a good person, someone to look up to and admire, thinking right and doing right, knowing the difference between right and wrong, setting a good example for others, and making the world a better place. Riverview's focus correlates with the district's aim to develop individuals who, through their actions and conduct, display ethical behavior considered to be positive examples of character.

Riverview staff members link the pillars to daily choices, a "common language" for everyone on campus, and infuse the pillars into the curriculum.

This process begins in September when teachers and the administrative team discuss the Parent/ Student Handbook in which rules and expected behavior are discussed. Teachers review and discuss the rules and expectations outlined in the handbook with students. The first month is dedicated to establishing the behavior climate of the classroom. This is reinforced through classroom visits from the administrative team, clear posting of school expectations, and the six pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS!

The principal visits each class periodically throughout the year to encourage ethical decision-making. The Riverview Rules are reinforced: Remember Character Counts!, Always personal best, Meet your goals, Success for all. These rules guide children through the educational process and form the structure for all student interactions throughout the school year.

Block R Exemplary Ram Award- Riverview's highest award is the Block R. It is awarded to students who display well-rounded achievement and participation in the Riverview academic, co-curricular, and community service activities. Students must earn points in the various categories to demonstrate their ability, dedication, and responsibility in earning this award. This requires long-term focus to plan and excel each semester. Each student receives a personalized plaque with gold medallions included for each semester. A special evening celebration is held in honor of the recipients.

Commitment to Character Award- A bi-weekly award is designed to recognize students from each class who exemplify the monthly pillar of CHARACTER COUNTS! The student recipients are acknowledged on the morning announcements, honored as a group, and then individually in their classroom, receiving a special certificate and CHARACTER COUNTS! pencil, bookmark, or button. Students' names are published in the school newsletter, "The Rams Report."

Ram of the Month- Students from each kindergarten class are recognized monthly for exemplifying pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS! Students are honored in their classrooms and receive a special certificate along with a Baskin Robbins gift certificate. Photos are taken and posted in each classroom. Students' names are published each month in the school's weekly newsletter, "The Rams Report."

Personal Responsibility Program (PRP)- Riverview students have the opportunity to earn the PRP award and to participate in a special quarterly celebration (i.e. swimming, bowling, skating, or movie party.) Students must have good classroom & playground behavior, complete their homework, be on time for school, respect school/ district rules, and always do their personal best. A majority of Riverview students earn this award several times throughout the year.

Cafeteria Star Program- The Cafeteria Star Program acknowledges aspects of a responsible school environment; each classroom works together as a team in the areas of cafeteria cleanliness and behavior each day to earn the highest rating of a star.

School Assemblies- A variety of assemblies throughout the year are chosen to promote the school goals as they pertain to the character traits. Paul Tracey's Character Assembly, Good Company Players Value Show, California State University sponsored assembly "Devin's Hurt", Sierra Chamber Opera Presentation of "Good Choices", and various Character Education

presentations to encourage class discussions and reflections on the important qualities of good character values.

Class Meetings- Teachers and students facilitate class meetings consistently to reflect on weekly classroom issues, concerns, and positives. Every classroom and grade level employs curricular strategies and classroom rules to prepare students to work and live together harmoniously.

United Nations of Riverview has developed over the past three years and includes students from grades 4-6 representing the diverse cultural groups at our school. Students along with their parents attend quarterly dinner meetings which include a multicultural presentation by parents and community members. (Examples: Hispanic Art Presentation with special Mayo Dancers, Power Point on Highlights from India, Chinese New Year Presentation along with special Chinese Fan Dancers, etc.)

Campus Beautification teamwork has become an integral part of school service at Riverview organized by the attendance secretary and health aide. Periodically throughout the school year students and their parents volunteer to plant flowers on the campus to keep Riverview looking beautiful.

Ram Team includes approximately 25 students who have been trained to serve on the peer conflict management team coordinated by the school nurse.

Game Day at the School Physical Education Program is being implemented for the first time this year which integrates physical fitness with the CHARACTER COUNTS! Pillars.

Character Counts! Awards Luncheon “Pursuing Victory with Honor” is a venue created with the opening of the new Clovis North Area last year. At the conclusion of each athletic season, Riverview selects two student athletes from each sport who exemplify the CHARACTER COUNTS! pillars to be honored at a Clovis North Area Character Counts! Awards Luncheon “Pursuing Victory with Honor.”

[Top](#)

Sanger Academy Charter School
Sanger Unified School District (520 Students, Grades K- 8)
Sanger, Ca 93657
559-875-5562
Principal: Ken Garcia

Sanger Academy Charter School’s (SACS) charter is based on the philosophy of educating the whole child by promoting core values of honesty, integrity, trust, and the pursuit of academic excellence. Because SACS is a charter school, students, parents and teachers, as stakeholders, have a commitment to uphold the standards of the charter through a signed compact agreement. The SACS compact is an agreement between school, parent, and student designed to optimize

the potential for the student's success. This document provides an accountability element for all stakeholders.

Several projects highlighting the positive character and community mindedness of SACS' students completed recently were: "Happy Feet" (a donation event raise shoes and socks for the needy); a canned food drive to benefit local homeless shelters; and "Pennies for Peru" to raise money for earthquake victims. In addition, SACS' students visit and perform at the local convalescent hospital and support the Central California Blood Center through local activities. Fresno County Office of Education operates a site for the students with severe handicaps on the campus of SACS and SACS' students play an integral role in the mainstreaming and social interaction of these peers. Students at SACS are respectful, committed, and civic minded.

When walking onto SACS campus, the feeling is one of professionalism and structure. Classes are orderly and focused on academic state standards. Teachers are professionally dressed, friendly, and welcoming. Students are uniformly dressed, polite, and happy. Parents are welcomed and feel comfortable on campus. SACS is clean and well maintained. Murals representing Community of Caring values and SACS logos are visible throughout the campus. Students proudly wear SACS logos on clothing and backpacks. There is a sense of pride among students and staff. Awards are prominently displayed in the office, and banners hang from aloft in the cafeteria proclaiming SACS' rich history of achievement.

Physical Education (PE) is a part of daily life as well as a subject taught at SACS. SACS is ahead of the health guidelines, having eliminated sugary snacks and soda from the campus and vending machines. "Los Tennis" is a physical education program developed by the SACS physical education teacher as a fun way to promote a healthy lifestyle and show that physical fitness is a way of life. Through the club, students come to school 40 minutes early for jump rope, walking, and friendship. Students proudly wear their pedometers to see how many feet they travel each day. On Fridays, students spiritedly wave flags and march the perimeter of SACS to show their commitment to a healthy lifestyle. SACS staff and students participate in the annual "Walk to School" to promote walking as a form of healthy transportation.

Professionalism is an expectation at SACS. Teachers are expected to approach their position with respect and students are expected to participate fully in their education. The grounds at SACS are always clean and inviting to students, community members, and staff. Graffiti is not tolerated and removal is a top priority. The principal and staff members, leading by example, promptly remove trash and litter. All members of the SACS family embrace a sense of ownership and responsibility. Visibility is an important practice embraced by all staff members at SACS. The principal and staff are highly visible on campus during all times of transition and socializing. Staff members can be found greeting students and families both before and after school, in hallways, the office, and classrooms.

In developing the social health of students, Associated Student Body (ASB) offers students the opportunity to collaborate with each other and take leadership positions. ASB is charged with many responsibilities including: daily announcements, rallies, and community service projects in collaboration with Community of Caring organizers (see Family and Community Partnerships section). The Peer Mediation Program is another student organization where students are trained

in conflict management and mediation. Peer mediators receive training in the specific skills needed to solve problems and learn how to work with fellow students who are engaged in a dispute. Teachers coordinate both programs as an adjunct duty.

Diversity is fostered and celebrated at SACS. During Music and Art instruction students learn the cultural implications of Art and Music through projects such as “El Dia de los Muertos.”

All students at SACS are expected to participate in at least one activity either during the school day, or before or after school. This level of participation and representation is due to the support of both teachers and parents who devote their time to co-curricular programs, as well as to the students who do the work to be successful. Annually, SACS teachers compete in Mud Volleyball to support the March of Dimes charity, and SACS hosts blood drives with the Central California Blood Bank.

SACS offers numerous co-curricular activities to inspire students in the practical application of what they learn: History Day, Science Fair, PTA Reflections, Science Olympiad, the JASON Project, Math-a-Thon, Los Tennis, Peach Blossom, Honor Band, Chess Club, Art Club, Spelling Bee, Talent Show, Young Author’s Faire and Student Government are available for student participation. PTA Reflections participation is very high, with 250 participants in 2007 competing in Art, Music Composition, Photography, Video, and Literature. Ongoing co-curricular programs also supporting classroom instruction include Jog-a-Thon and Reading Incentives.

[Top](#)

Sierra View Elementary School
Golden Valley Unified School District (355 Students, Grades K-6)
Madera, Ca 93636
559-645-1122
Principal: Scott Tefft

Students demonstrating outstanding character are recognized daily with Character Counts! Tickets and Character Bucks, during weekly Friday morning Character Announcements with weekly Panther of the Week awards, and at trimester awards with CHARACTER COUNTS! Student of the Month awards. Photos in the office proudly display Monthly Character Counts! award winners, while banners in the gymnasium and a student generated/ painted mural on the outside of Sierra View’s 700 wing proudly display the six pillars of Character Counts! and communicate Sierra View’s commitment to these core values! At the end of the school year the Character Counts! Student of the Year award recognizes the student chosen by their peers as being the one individual who has best epitomized all the Pillars of Character throughout the year. The recipient is recognized in front of their peers, family, and community members at a year-end awards ceremony and is given a trophy and other prizes.

While maintaining high expectations and standards, a strong emphasis is placed on infusing character education into all curricular areas. Under the guidance of a dedicated, caring staff, Sierra View 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.

Sierra View also has weekly Character Counts! electives each Friday. The electives include instruction in Ceramics/ Pottery, Puppetry, Art, Tessellations, Crime Lab, Leather Working, and Fossils. Students earn this privilege by exemplifying all the pillars of Character by behavior referrals or office referrals during the week.

A weekly student generated newsletter highlights Character Counts! and keeps the community informed. The Sierra View Student Council, a committee made up of elected student leaders representing Sierra View Student Council, a committee made up of elected student leaders representing Sierra View's diverse student population, meets once a week to discuss ways to improve student relationships, school wide systems, and to plan and implement community service projects. This year the Sierra View Student Council coordinated a Holiday Food Drive and The Coats for Kids Program.

A school-wide code of behavior is clearly spelled out to staff and students and is consistent from classroom to classroom. At Sierra View the culture of Character and enthusiasm permeates all we do and supports the school wide vision of "Making the World a Better Place One Child at a Time." Excellence in Virtue and Character begins with organization and planning. A first day of school assembly that focuses on Sierra View's Core Values, Character, and Virtue, helps set the tone and communicate expectations for the entire year.

Students are recognized for a number of character achievements. Students are awarded for their Responsibility in attending school on a regular basis. Perfect Attendance certificates are awarded to those students achieving "perfect attendance". The highly coveted "Student of the Month" or "Character Counts!" award is given to the students displaying outstanding character.

Sierra View School believes that leaders are not born. Instead, Sierra View believes that leaders are the result of learning and practicing outstanding leadership skills. In the Student Council, 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. The Student Council is responsible for: planning school fund raising, organizing special events, planning incentive/ recognition programs for students, Character Counts! rallies, coordinating the Clean Campus Program, and school-wide communication of ASB-sponsored events. Sierra View's staff works hard to promote positive social development and group cohesion. Really, it is embedded into nearly everything we do!

Analysis of novels and short stories often include character studies and the assessment of ethical choices that impact the theme of the literature. Students are encouraged to relate the lessons being studied to their own life experiences. Examples include Holes, Hatchet, Tuck Everlasting, The Outsiders, Where the Red Fern Grows.

Character education is infused throughout the day at Sierra View. Whether it's morning announcements to kick off the day, addressing choices while in the cafeteria or on the playground, talking with kids in the principal's office about Respect, Citizenship, or Trustworthiness in the wake of poor choices, rewarding kids with Character Bucks to be spent in the Character Counts! Store for positive choices, and so much more, Sierra View makes a significant effort to promote our core values in all we do.

[Top](#)

Teague Elementary School
Central Unified School District (698 Students, Grades K- 6)
Fresno, CA 93722
559-276-5260
Principal: Ann J. Chavez

Teague students live by the seven words that are present everywhere from awards to t-shirts to campus signage "Building Confidence, Building Character, and Building Community. It is these three areas that make for a well-rounded member of society. During the summer months our principal, Mrs. Ann J. Chavez, begins mailing out community newsletters that deal with all things from community expectations (homework, student behavior, and what is expected from everyone) to helpful parenting/ character tips and The Teague Student Effort Pledge. The night before school begins we host a Meet and Greet which takes the place of a traditional Back to School Night. During this evening each grade level has a booth setup with grade level materials, field trip calendars, supply needs and Teague's Student Effort Pledge. This pledge is reviewed with parents. Teachers and administrators answer any questions parents have. At the beginning of the new school year, Mrs. Chavez visits classrooms to talk with students about Teague's Student Effort Pledge. The pledge contains a Recognition Policy (Academic and Athletics), a Behavior Policy, Homework Policy, and a Home School Compact that outlines the role every community member has to support the student in their education. This time is spent making sure students are aware of the choices they have each day and the responsibility that comes with them. Mrs. Chavez displays all the awards a student can earn then describes what a student must do to be honored.

The highest honor and most difficult achievement that a student can earn at Teague is the Noble Knight Award. A student must earn an award from each area of the Awards Matrix to be eligible; high standards, positive citizenship and life-long learning. (Based upon Teague's School Mission). The student must also be in good standing with no suspensions or attendance issues. This award is a motivating factor in the choices kids make at Teague.

The 2 X 10 program is a way for all staff members to get to know many kids from all levels. For two minutes ten days in a row the staff member will find a child that they get to know. The daily conversations are about anything that helps the relationship develop. This one-on-one connection gives that student a comfortable face to go to in a time of need. The administration holds

“counseling” sessions with kids on a regular basis. During these sessions we explore life plans. During this time kids begin to explore what they want to be when they grow up.

At Teague character education is delivered before during and after school and by everyone the student comes in contact with. On any given day students are greeted by both administrators as they arrive on campus with a smile, a polite greeting, and their name. At Teague, the staff strives to learn every kid’s name and at least one thing about them. We greet them each morning and as part of the morning ritual, so that we build the trust and can be there to help start the day on the right foot.

The morning starts with Mrs. Chavez reading the morning announcements and reading a practical passage from the Project Wisdom program that we use. The message for each day asks a question of the student, provides a real life example, provides a simple explanation of how that fits into their life and then leaves them with “... the choice to is yours...” Teachers hold small informal discussion groups and use these messages for journal topics. Students are counseled during discipline incidents using these messages as a basis to begin the conversation.

Character Education is taught on a regular basis during the regular school day. One of the programs used is “Too Good for Drugs”. This program not only focuses on drug use prevention it also promotes character and good choices. During the mini-lessons students are given real life examples of dangerous situations and how they can be kept safe.

One of the most exciting programs that begun at Teague is the “Victory Medal”. This is a program that was started by Mrs. Chavez, the school principal, because she noticed the poor sportsmanship and win-at-any-cost attitude that has permeated even youth sports. She wanted a way for students to leave the field and everyone, including spectators, to leave feeling positive. Her idea was to have kids gather at the end of the game to present a medal to the opposition’s athlete who displayed positive sportsmanship throughout the contest. The idea took just a few minutes for coaches at Teague to agree and to meet with their teams and describe what character on the field looked like, felt like and sounded like. They also had a clear picture about who would not receive the award. Names such as Terrell Owens and Chad Johnson were the first names from the athletes’ mouths. As this program evolved, it quickly became the standard for all elementary and middle schools in our district. Families now leave on a positive note and not with the sting and embarrassment of defeat. Kids respect the game, the opponent, and the ref because they want to be recognized at the end of the game. Parents have commented that “sports have taken on a different meaning” and “my kid forgets the final score and only remembers who had that medal placed around their neck.” This award is not about the MVP but rather the Most Character Present.

Learn by doing is very important part of teaching character at Teague. Service learning projects like our Campus Cleanup days, Pollution Patrol or Library Helpers teach by action. Holiday Joy, The Sleeping Bag Project or The Center for Non-Violence collections have taught kids to look for ways to help others in the community. Many students thought only the “rich” could help, but learning that with 50 cents many kids could donate shampoo or toothpaste spoke volumes. Selling Kid’s Day Newspapers has been another service learning project that students at Teague

have been involved in. We collected “Coins for Katrina” during the hurricanes in New Orleans. Holiday Joy is another way we give back to the community.