



Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

2011 BONNER CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Edison Computech School (782 students; 7th - 8th grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93706
(559) 457-2640
Principal: Jeremy Ward

Computech's goals for character education include helping students become responsible, productive citizens in their school and neighborhood communities. This goal is enhanced when students feel like they are an integral part of their environment.

Classes [at Computech] begin with a schoolwide pledge of allegiance as a way of promoting patriotism and citizenship. Throughout the day, teachers greet students as they walk the halls between classes and enter the classrooms. Respectful interaction between students and their peers and between students and adults is modeled and expected.

As a result of our participation in the district's Safe and Civil program, we have made a concerted effort to promote positive behaviors that improve the atmosphere and the safety of the campus. At the beginning of the school year and again at the beginning of the second semester, students watch short videos demonstrating appropriate behavior in the hallways, in the cafeteria and in the bathrooms. Videos also focus on the negative results of cheating or tardiness and the positive results of respectful personal interactions. These videos are made by the students at Computech for the students at Computech. One video is shown each morning for one week. Each day, members of the faculty discuss the video with their classes and reinforce the message. As a result, we have noticed a dramatic improvement in behaviors both outside and inside the classroom.

Another practice of character education infused in our program is the earning of spirit points. Spirit points are awarded to first period classes resulting in a reward each semester for the winning class. Points are given weekly or wearing school colors on spirit day and given quarterly for club membership, playing on a sports team, and earning at least a 3.0 grade point average. Spirit point also can be earned by participating in special Friday activities and in games at rallies. The purpose of spirit points is to offer a way for students to be more involved and connected to school. Students who feel that they are a part of their school community do better in school and have a more positive self-image.

Every day of the week during the lunch period, there are activities available for student participation. These activities include physical activities musical activities, game rooms, drama and academic help. The activities offer safe places for students to spend time and give students a chance to become active participants in the school. Mondays are “Music Madness Mondays”. Various types of music, from appropriate present day to period music, are played in the quad. Tuesdays and Thursdays offer a game room where students can play board games, card games, dominoes, etc. There are classrooms open on these days where students can get help in math, English or history. Tuesday is also the day the chess club meets to learn more moves or to participate in tournaments. Wednesdays offer cooperative team activities. Every Friday the leadership class organizes a fun, competitive activity for students to participate in and earn spirit points for their first period class.

Some examples of how teachers encourage the development of good character can be seen in Core classes. In some of the 8th grade Core classes students are involved in the “Pay It Forward” project. Students are asked to do something for someone that is completely unexpected. Once completed they write a reflection on the circumstances they helped out with, how they felt after doing the unexpected helpful act, and what reaction they got from the people receiving the help. They also write personal letters of appreciation to someone close and deliver them.

Another project involves writing biographical book reports. Students read a book about a notable American. They then write a report about how this person exemplified the six character traits of Character Counts! and compare their own character to the person in the book. Also, students study children’s literature and determine the message conveyed by the story. They then write their own children’s books, bind them, and donate them to an elementary school in eastern Kentucky for use in the first and second grade classrooms. Seventh grade Core classes also infuse their curriculum with the discovery and analysis of good character. This is done through the evaluation of characters in literature and historical figures in their study of history. Resiliency of great historical figures is noted with discussions about what aided their success and greatness.

Our sports teams promote “Victory With honor”. Students are taught good sportsmanship, integrity, and the importance of congratulating your opponent after a game well played. The coaches encourage the development of problem-solving abilities, teamwork, and integrity, which are all qualities necessary to be a successful and productive person. After each game, the student athletes vote for a student on the opposing team who exemplifies the traits of good character through good sportsmanship. This allows the students to look for examples of good character within their peer groups and gives them something for which to strive.

Community service is another way character education is reinforced and is seen in a variety of ways at Computech. Service comes in acquiring donations of time money, and products. An example of a project that supports non-profit organizations through financial donations is Pennies for Patients. Students collect money to donate for leukemia and lymphoma research. Donations of time and donations of products come in many other forms.

[Top](#)

**Green Acres Middle School ((1,178 students; 7th - 8th grades)
Visalia Unified School District, Visalia, CA 93291
(559) 730-7673
Principal: Angela Sanchez**

The staff at Green Acres Middle School believes that developing character of students involves:

- Student success must be based on a partnership between home, school, and community.
- Student learning is directly linked to high expectations of students, staff and parents.
- Developing student character is essential to our democratic society.
- Each student must receive a core curriculum and technology based instruction. Additional assistance during or after school is essential for student success.
- A strong extracurricular and elective program is needed to promote the development of the well-rounded student.
- To continue to improve our school, we must strive to be innovative in our educational approach and practices. • People, as well as programs, make the difference in quality education. This is Green Acres strength.
- Students who are connected to their future do well in school.

Green Acres Middle School has developed its' character education program through the establishment of a CHARACTER COUNTS! committee and a site coordinator, assistant principal Adriane Ashford. A site handbook has been developed to give background on the Six Pillars of Character, an in-depth description of each pillar, and suggestion on how teachers may incorporate the six pillars into curricular lessons. Our program is reviewed and monitored for progress by our staff committee and Student Leadership class, as well as our parent/teacher/student organization.

One of our Principal's daily public address (P.A.) slogans is "Students of Character, Work Hard, Get Involved, and Do the Right Thing. Based on the Six Pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS!, these core values are displayed in every classroom and throughout the campus. They serve as daily reminders and guidelines for conduct at our school.

Green Acres character education program features a teacher handbook that is used to develop lessons into the core curriculum. Each of the Six Pillars of Character is developed and discussed throughout the year. While many lessons are given orally over the public address system, teachers use their CHARACTER COUNTS! handbook to expand and incorporate character traits into their daily lessons. Teachers may use the stories and situations found in weekly lessons as classroom free topics in their English classes.

To also recognize, as part of the already established Student of the Month program, teachers may nominate students who best emulate the character pillar of the month. Each month a CHARACTER COUNTS! pillar trait is highlighted, then the staff nominates students for recognition at the school wide "Student of the Month Breakfast".

A school must be equipped with services that provide for a safe and caring learning environment. This effort at Green Acres stems from the strong counseling department and the various issues

that arise during the course of a middle school day. Such topics as friendship problems, not getting along with parents, grieving, and violence are addressed through this department. In addition to the counseling efforts the entire Green Acres staff have support the anti-bullying program and participate in a program called W.E.B. – Where Everybody Belongs. These support systems result in a staff promoting equity and students practicing caring and respect for others.

It takes a sincere staff, that is not only trained, but one that models fairness, caring and respect for students in order to achieve a secure learning environment.

Besides our annual Christmas canned food drive, the students participate in a Thanksgiving food drive, and a gift exchange sponsored by one of our many clubs, Christians on Campus. Our students participate with and are recognized annually by our community service clubs for student achievement and service (Kiwanis and Rotary). Each year an area veteran is asked to participate in our school wide Memorial Day assembly. This assembly helps students understand the personal meaning of Memorial Day, and the contributions our military throughout history. International Week is also a highlight of the year that features various cultural groups and food contests on campus to promote an understanding of all facets of our community.

Green Acres Middle School is a 7-8 school in Visalia, California. It has a student population of 1178 students. 63% are Hispanic, 25% White, 6% Asian, and 3% African American. With this diverse student population, we derive our school motto – “Diversity is our Strength”. Our character education program has been active for the last fourteen years and we believe we are reaping the benefits on a daily basis. Our average attendance is 95% and our suspension rate is down. More importantly, we continue to see our students treat each other with civility and respect. A major contributor to this trend has been our participation in the Partnership for Character Education Program (PCEP) Federal Grant and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

[Top](#)

Rafer Johnson Jr. High School (456 students; 7th – 8th grades)
Kingsburg Elementary Charter District, Kingsburg, CA 93631
(559) 897-1091
Principal: Ruben Diaz

We believe that Character Education teaches students to work together for the good of a common goal. Seven years ago our administration, staff, and School Site Council chose to adopt the Character Counts program and the six core ethical values: Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Citizenship, Fairness, and Trustworthiness. We continue to acknowledge good student behavior and citizenship by rewarding those individuals who exemplify these positive characteristics on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. Along with the School Site Council, our staff and administration agreed to adopt the Six Pillars of Character and Rafer Johnson’s motto “Be the best that you can be” as our core value. Our gym displays six banners, each representing one of the six traits of character (see attached). Character Counts posters are visible in every classroom,

office and library. The Essential 55 (“Never settle for less than your best”) posters are also prominently displayed in classrooms. All of these are a daily reminder to students and faculty that our school believes in an atmosphere of positive attributes.

This year our school adopted a program sponsored by Fresno County Office of Education called Rachel’s Challenge. We held a school-wide assembly in September where every student heard the positive message of how to honor one another and recognize acts of kindness. The theme emphasized by the parents of Rachel Scott, the first student killed at Columbine, was “You just might start a chain reaction.” After the program we trained 36 seventh grade and 32 eighth grade students, who are involved in a leadership role of some type on campus, on how to be a positive influence in people’s lives. These students are now part of the Chain Link Club, and helped organize “Mix it up Day” in November. Prior to the assembly our entire school participated in daily lessons for five days. Lessons included, “Connection to Character” messages, and reading and responding to “My Ethics, My Code of Life” essay written by Rachel Scott. Students had discussions on how good character is formed, and completed lessons on respect, choices in life, and taking the initiative to do what is right.

Three years ago we adopted the Safe School Ambassador Program by recognizing the importance of having students provide leadership in setting the emotional climate on campus. This program helps to harness the power of positive student influence to make our campus a more safe and nurturing place. Ambassadors were part of organizing “Mix It up Day”. This nationally recognized day is where students were randomly organized into groups, not normally part of their social group, to help build student relationships. Each group had questions for students to answer, promoting conversation and acceptance of one another.

Teachers continually model fairness equity, good ethics and positive character traits. Writings and discussion of good character traits follow the English Language Arts (ELA) frameworks. The ELA department follows State Standards by teaching autobiographical writings of current or historical persons who exhibit positive character traits. Classes read a biography on Harriet Tubman, which elicits many discussions of fairness and responsibility that Harriet took on as the Conductor of the Underground Railroad. Students have a better understanding of what people have gone through for the freedom that we take advantage of today. Class discussions are frequent and reflect the six pillars of character. Cause and effect discussions in class, along with assignments, help reinforce healthy student behaviors and good decision-making skills. Problem solving discussions, that emphasize cooperation and sharing, rather than competing, help promote social development. Our ELA classes use ethical standards by having students define a character trait in writing poetry. Students also analyze a character’s transformation, write essays discussing positive attributes of successful students, and write narratives demonstrating qualities of characters and how they interact, create, conflict and transform.

Citizenship and responsibility are emphasized daily through classroom instruction. The Math framework states the curriculum is to “create and maintain a classroom environment that fosters a genuine understanding and confidence in all students...”. The importance of honesty on test taking is emphasized along with the respect of each other’s personal space, time, and need for working in a quiet environment.

Rafer Johnson teachers promote social development and group cohesion in various ways. Our Drama class role-plays different scenarios regarding various social situations, helping students learn positive ways of handling different group dynamics. The Yearbook class teaches media and print ethics along with proper work and job ethics which students are expected to use while composing the school yearbook.

In Science, students are learning the basic tools of courtesy that pave the way for success in any field of endeavor. Students practice shaking hands, looking someone in the eye, and giving a greeting upon entering class each day. During class students are asked to evaluate their own work first before turning it in so they develop the judgment skills necessary to produce quality work. Students work with partners and are coached in body language signals that encourage active participation and reflect active listening—all life skills that will be useful to them as adults. Students also learn teamwork in the laboratory by designing a lab group name using consensus techniques.

Our History classes emphasize character development by studying the character traits of past presidents. Discussions take place regarding slavery, wars, and women's suffrage. Other discussions focus on the development of our nation's values compared to those of other countries.

Our library/computer lab infuses character education and group cohesion by featuring monthly themes. Poetry Month, and Black History Month help students recognize and accept possible differences in each other.

Rafer Johnson Jr. High provides students opportunities for moral action in many meaningful ways. Students can be involved in various athletic teams after school, where fairness, teamwork and respect are emphasized. The P.E. curriculum is organized to meet the needs of all students by stressing fairness, honesty, teamwork and respect of others on a daily basis. Students are involved in goal setting activities, and self-asses their own academic and behavioral growth. By learning different cultural dances, such as Serbian, Greek American & Israeli, students learn an appreciation of different ethnical backgrounds & customs.

Since 2007 RJJH has implemented several new programs. Our 23 Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) are trained to help recognize and intervene when they see acts of bullying on campus. Records show that the SSA program has a positive impact on the attitudes of many students and the culture of our school. Two years ago we began the "Torch Award" program where students are honored each month for good citizenship as part of our Character Counts program. To earn a "Torch Award" students must "go above and beyond the basic standard" of showing good citizenship. The last three years we have hosted the "Champions for Today" assembly for our entire student body. The assembly features former NFL athletes who are trained to address life's issues. They discuss the importance of character and values, helping students make positive life changes. They talk about the importance of values such as honesty, caring and responsibility while explaining how they have been able to overcome problems in their lives through their personal experiences.

[Top](#)

Kings Canyon Middle School (890 students; 7th – 8th grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 253-6470
Principal: Clark Mello

Kings Canyon Middle School is a diverse campus in southeast Fresno. A review of the school demographics give indication of the challenge: 100% of students eligible for Free/Reduced lunch; approximately 30% of students designated as English Learners; an ethnically diverse student population of Hispanic and Hmong, combined with smaller populations of African-American, Laotian and Anglo groups. With these challenges, the entire staff of the school considers it our obligation and our opportunity to serve as a positive influence in the development of young people who will possess academic skills as well as social and moral competence.

In 2004, the school developed and implemented character education guidelines known as E5, or the Essential Five Behaviors, based on the book *The Essential 55* by Ron Clark. The E5 code has become an important facet of the educational process for students and teachers alike at the school and has given rise to additional closely aligned efforts to address character and individual responsibility. The code offers students five simple personal standards:

- When you are in public, act in a polite manner
- Always obey and respect your teachers and other adults
- Take care of the school
- Don't be a bully and don't tolerate bullying by others
- If you know something bad is going on, tell an adult
- In the years immediately following the introduction of E5, the suspension rate was reduced by 10% and the expulsion rate was reduced by 66%. During the current school year, Kings Canyon is on track to reduce suspensions by as much as an additional 50% over the previous year.

In 2008, Kings Canyon Middle School joined other Fresno Unified schools in a professional development effort titled Safe & Civil Schools. The committee integrated the new with the existing work and became known as the "E5 Alliance Team".

At selected intervals during the year, all Kings Canyon teachers teach E5 lessons in their classrooms. The original lessons provided by the E5 Alliance Team have been taught regularly for the past two years to address basic student needs such as personal courtesy, honesty, bullying prevention and care for the school environment. In 2010-11 the lessons were supplemented with additional topics to address other common daily school topics such as hallway behavior, the importance of homework and acceptable use policies for electronic devices.

In 2008, Kings Canyon Middle School implemented a continuing program known as "E5 Agents". In this effort, students are selected and then trained in means to empower others with positive behaviors. Students are taught how to counsel peers, intervene peacefully in potential

conflicts and encourage good decision-making. In this way, the E5 Agents influence the behavior of others throughout the school day. It is also significant that the E5 Agents accept their roles and responsibilities without public recognition or promise of reward. These students accept the task for intrinsic satisfaction, the knowledge they are doing something important and the reward of being involved with positive adult role models.

The importance of a safe and inviting learning environment is actively promoted. Through the E5 code, students are encouraged to “Take care of the school”. Members of the Student Leadership class regularly decorate the school with encouraging posters; glass display cases have been added to the central hallway to highlight student work and achievements; landscaping has been added throughout the campus. Student volunteers participate in recycling efforts.

During the 2009/10 school year, students originated the idea to fund raise for a local elementary school that had lost their playground equipment in a fire. Students raised approximately \$1000 to donate to the elementary school. During the summer of 2010, staff and student volunteers partnered with community faith-based organizations to plant needed shade trees on athletic fields and finish other campus landscaping projects. In addition, Kings Canyon students participate, or have participated, in other charity efforts including Pennies for Patients (cancer fundraising), relief to a school damaged by Hurricane Katrina, relief to Haitian earthquake victims, holiday food donations and visitations to community elder care facilities.

[Top](#)

Live Oak Middle School (738 students; 6th – 8th grades)
Tulare City School District, Tulare, CA 93274
(559) 685-7310
Principal: Tracey Jenkins

Our character education program is born out of concern for the Six Pillars of Character: Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Caring, Fairness, and Citizenship. These attributes originate from the national CHARACTER COUNTS! Office founded by Michael Josephson. His philosophy and framework for public school character education is built on the premise that character development comes from core ethical values that transcend political, cultural, socioeconomic and religious differences.

Every day begins with morning announcements that include a reminder of being people of good character. It is a way to start the day right thinking about how to spend the time we have. Live Oak Middle School supports students value of academics and good character through the curriculum and additional strategies such as student requested academic counseling, use of technology, monitoring attendance and grades, and high school, college and career planning. Additionally, all students on the honor roll are awarded an Academic Card of Excellence three times a year.

To ensure our staff is addressing all levels of students through equity and caring qualities, we provide two intervention class periods where the educator as well as a classroom aide provide daily mentoring both socially and academically, to a group of fragile students. The beginning of the school year, 160 students composed of 7th and 8th grade AVUD and Leadership students received Effective Teens Leadership in Action Training from the Premier Company. This student achievement workshop uses Sean Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens to assist teens in developing their personal leadership skills.

Student needs are realized and addressed from the beginning of the educational experience on the Live Oak campus. Resource teachers, special education teachers, as well as the counselor, school nurse and administrator monitor every incoming Grizzly. Special academic placement is made for both at-risk and high achieving students to ensure accommodations' are arranged for the particular needs of the student. Second Step, a violence prevention education program, is provided by all sixth grade teachers. As an extension of this process the school counselor uses this curriculum in small group counseling, and in training 6th through 8th graders as Peer Mediators to help provide conflict resolution.

Students are encouraged to grow socially, emotionally and physically through many activities that take place on the Live oak campus. Student Council members elected by their peers organize "Say Yes to Life" (anti-drug and alcohol) activities during Red Ribbon Week and throughout the year. They promote school spirit through noontime activities and dress-up days.

The WEB program is an eighth grade mentoring program where the WEB Leaders work throughout the school year with seventh grade students as well as with students trained in Peer Mediation to help the sixth, seventh and eighth grade students resolve conflicts. The student WEB Team, under the guidance of the school counselor, develops and hosts an end of summer seventh grade WEB Grizzly Social. At this event, incoming seventh grade students are introduced to their WEB Leader, play get-to-know-you games in small groups, learn dances, take school ours, and learn how to become a successful Grizzly. This promotes inclusion, caring, respect and good citizenship.

To expose our students to the importance of service learning and giving back to your community, the Live oak student body donates toys for less fortunate children in Tulare through the Toys for Kids program sponsored by the Tulare Police Department. They also organize an annual canned food drive. Further, for the last nine years, students at Live oak have created the Tulare Activity Directory as a Service learning project. The directory catalogs every club and event available to young people in the community and is used by many agencies throughout Tulare.

Since receiving the Virtues and Character Recognition Award in 2009, some program changes have been put into place at Live Oak Middle School. We are keenly aware of our needs in the area of character development and are committed to the task of improvement. Some of our efforts for enhancing character development include:

- Family Initiatives project (FIP), a new parent-training program initiated this year to support parent education and become successful role models for their children.
- Live Oak is a Six-year GEAR-Up middle school "On the Move" for 2010-2011.

[Top](#)

Los Tules Middle School (637 students; 6th – 8th grades)
Tulare City School District, Tulare, CA
(559) 687-3156
Principal: Gary Yentes

As our school mission declares, we are a school community where character is of utmost importance in developing the social and moral conscience of our students. Los Tules, though only eight years old, has presented itself as a leading middle school in California! 2010 Academic Performance Index of 743 has revealed an upper 10% ranking of the 18 middle schools in Tulare County. The rigorous academic program offered by a highly-qualified staff sets in motion the tone of a campus that not only holds academics in high regard for each individual child, yet also focuses on social and character development as these scholars continue their path into adulthood.

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Framework provides our school with the resources and character education goals for TEACHING our students character development. The six core ethical values are referred to through behavioral expectations as well as the curriculum alignment throughout the day. Along with teaching our students the difference between right and wrong, it is essential that our staff ENFORCE the thoughts and actions we expect through recognition and praise as well as discourage the bad behavior by imposing fair and consistent consequences. A complete character development cannot exist without ADVOCATING for character and encourage students to live up to the six pillars of character. Our students are referred to as scholars – our expectations are high and uncompromising when it comes to moral conduct. Lastly, we cannot expect our scholars to live up to these standards and walk alone. As Los Tules Middle School Staff, we dedicate ourselves to character development through MODELING these six pillars of character even when it is difficult. Current measurement of such an effort is brought to us by the participation of the Federal Partnership in Character Education Program through the Tulare County Office of Education. As a result, we have developed an implementation plan that includes the outlined TEAM approach for character development goals. Through this implementation plan components to monitor progress of stated character education goals are in place through pre and post surveys, focus groups and anecdotal stories shared by our school community.

Each morning begins with Ms. Avia LT's (Los Tules) Vice Principal, speaking to the students on the importance of being an LT scholar, yet a respectful member of the LT community. The school day begins with not only the flag salute, but the Character Counts pledge. Students understand the core principals of Character Counts and the staff continually reinforces the core standards. This sense of individual and school pride encompasses all academic and social functions held at Los Tules. To capture this moment of intrinsic advocacy, one can observe the morning announcements and know that at the time of saluting our American flag everyone whether in the classroom or walking across campus will stop – set their eyes on the school flag

pole – hand over heart and pledge their allegiance to their country. For the message of respecting self, others and their country is unequivocally an expectation for the LT community.

Teaching of these core ethical values exists through direct curriculum alignment from the art class where expression of these values is created through a collaborative assignment. This assignment enforces the need for LT scholars to apply these definitions of respecting others, working together, and doing your part in order to create the final art piece displayed on the art room walls. Other examples of curriculum alignment are evidenced through various genres in Language Arts. To extend a more intense focus of support for students, Los Tules has 54 students that are currently enrolled in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classes. Ms. Berg and Ms. Garcia have had extensive training in assisting our teens in the development of their personal leadership and academic goals. The 8th grade AVID uses Sean Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, to help students set and evaluate their goals.

The classroom day further emphasizes the importance of teaching character development through the elective program at Los Tules. A Leadership Wheel was created for an elective class in the 2010-2011 school year. This trimester-long class was designed to promote additional opportunities for students to discover ways to make good choices within and outside the school community.

Enforcing good character is often the most exciting part of a school's environment. For Los Tules, this is no exception. Enter into the multipurpose room at the beginning of a student recognition assembly and you will be delighted to hear upbeat music, students and staff greeting each other and see that honoring others is an important ingredient in life that can be fun and respectful all at the same time. Each month each staff member chooses students to be recognized at a monthly assembly based on their character and academic accomplishments and attendance. Our intent is to enforce and reward the exemplary character of LT scholars and build the confidence of those who are making the efforts to live a life of integrity.

Ensuring a secure, safe and caring learning environment involves all staff, students and parents of the Los Tules Middle School community. Modeling the pillar of citizenship is evident when you see that the classrooms are clean and orderly and provide a safe learning environment reflective of student work and current curriculum. We have a school cafeteria that provides students with a breakfast and lunch program and is used as a multipurpose facility for large-scale programs and meetings. The school library provides students with supplemental reading materials and provides additional educational resources. The school grounds are kept clean and well maintained for student play, recreation, and athletic activities. Our school community takes pride in our well-maintained buildings and landscaping.

Teaching students to serve is a very important concept at Los Tules Middle School. Volunteering and helping others not only exists on our LT campus, but is also an extension into our larger community. During the past four years Los Tules has selected the Madera Children's Hospital as their focus for service learning. Proceeds of items sold on campus such as school supplies of pencils, erasers, and school snacks such as beef jerky are dedicated to annual fundraising. Spring fundraising concludes with the Kid's Day Newspaper Sales. To date, Los Tules students have contributed over \$10,000 dollars to various charities.

Since winning the Bonner CHARACTER COUNTS! Award two years ago... we continue to honor scholars of character at our monthly Student of the Month Assemblies. Instead of teachers choosing an outstanding student from any of the pillars of character, we emphasize a pillar each month and teachers then choose a student from their class that most closely identify with that pillar. We also have added the Monthly Responsibility Certificate to our Student of the Month assemblies. Students are recognized if they have completed all their classroom work and homework for the month. Twice a year we also give out certificates for Honor Roll.

[Top](#)

Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School (660 students; 5th – 8th Grades)
Tulare City School District, Tulare, CA 93274
(559) 685-7250
Principal: Terri Slover

Named after long-time Tulare educator, Mrs. Alice G. Mulcahy, our school is dedicated to the principles of hard work, honesty, and community service--all hallmarks of Mrs. Mulcahy and her family. Our school motto: "Proud, Tough, Determined" represents members of our school community, past and present, who are proud of their family and school, tough enough to do what is right, and determined to be successful in life. We believe that our motto not only describes what a Mulcahy student is all about but also acts as the bridge to character education. The adoption of the CHARACTER COUNTS! philosophy and strategies meets our character education goals by complimenting the qualities of our students and the core values held by the Mulcahy family, and fostered by our school since 1958.

The teaching of character development begins prior to the first day of school where members of the school community including parents, students and the staff participate in an orientation assembly. School policies, student behaviors, and responsibilities are discussed. The core ethical values are used as a model for expected student behavior. Academic school planners are given to every student. The planners contain information supporting our character development program and are used as a tool to promote responsibility.

Enforcing core ethical values can be found throughout the campus in the form of a variety of visuals. Posters are displayed in every classroom depicting the Six Pillars of Character with descriptive phrases reinforcing behaviors. All rooms display signage that further supports strong ethical development through the "Big Three" (Proud, Tough, Determined) and The "Fantastic Four" (Dignity, Class, Poise, and Respect). Advocating for the character development of our students and informing the school community about the superior work being accomplished takes place through positive school-community activities, which occur each trimester. Activities include: Academic Awards, Academic Showcases, and Athletic Award. Additional annual activities include College Awareness Week, College: Making It Happen Night, and Cool Night. Continuing the TEAM approach, all students receive an introduction to the Six Pillars of Character during the months of August and September. In October, after conducting a school-wide review, each student constructs a Thinking Map that is tailored to reinforcing their

understanding of the core ethical values found within CHARACTER COUNTS! At the conclusion of this school-wide activity, all students who have successfully completed their assignment are invited (along with their parents) to attend the annual CHARACTER COUNTS! BBQ and Dance. Ultimately, our goal is that through this activity, students embrace the virtues of the program early on and that they conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the Six Pillars of Character. We believe however, the most powerful method in which to foster the true meaning of the Pillars is to provide students with the opportunity to observe and model ethical behavior on a daily basis. Our teacher-based, advisor/advisee program, has allowed for students and staff to develop a stronger relationship with each other. Teachers have become mentors and, as such, powerful models of strong ethical behavior.

Keeping character development a priority for our school community requires continual monitoring of our progress. ...we experienced a sharp decrease in suspensions and an attendance ratio over 96%. We have had numerous parents at our awards recognition assemblies for Honor Roll, CST performance, and Kids of Character awards sponsored by the Tulare County Office of Education. In addition to classroom instruction, we take advantage of every opportunity to recognize and enforce the behaviors of students that are consistent with the pillars of character:

- CHARACTER COUNTS! Trimester Student of the Month
- Tulare Advance Register – “Job Well Done”
- Stallions of the Month
- Tulare County “Kids of Character”
- Caught Being Good – Positive Notice Postcards
- Official Member Mulcahy Pride T-Shirts
- Graduation Recognition
- Mulcahy Merit Raffle

Since 1994, Mulcahy has become a major contributor to Children’s Hospital of Central California, having sold over 50,000 special edition “Kid’s Day” newspapers. Mulcahy students routinely volunteer to participate in civic service activities and make charitable contributions. Students and staff work together organizing and collecting food items to be donated to local aid agencies. Students also participate in “bell-ringing” for the Salvation Army during the Christmas season. Staff and students are proud of the fact that Mulcahy has been recognized as the top K-8 school participant in “bell-ringing” citywide for the past seven years. Mulcahy has the prestigious honor of being an AVID School Certified with Distinction. As a Nationally Recognized Program, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) teaches students how to prepare for college. Through AVID, the Mulcahy staff has focused on peer tutoring to develop a stronger sense of community, both academically and socially. It is our belief that by utilizing peer tutoring, we are able to teach our students the value of working collaboratively, making personal connections with members of the community, and capitalizing on our own personal strengths. CHARACTER COUNTS! has provided our school with a powerful program, which serves to enhance and strengthen the core ethical values and characteristics of the members of our school community. Last year, the Student Council inducted an individual(s) into its CHARACTER COUNTS! Hall of Fame. The inductee represented the qualities of citizenship and community service so valued by Mrs. Mulcahy. This award continues to serve as an inspiration and a challenge to our students to continue their efforts to strengthen their character

[Top](#)

Scandinavian Middle School (615 students; 7th – 8th grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93726
(559) 253-6510
Principal: Julie Goorabian-Raley

The mission of Scandinavian Middle School is proficiency for all students in each subject area, and development of strong character. We are committed to the Fresno Unified District Goals: All students will excel in reading, writing, and math; All students will engage in arts, activities, and athletics; All students will demonstrate the character and competencies for workplace success; and all students will stay in school on target to graduate.

In 2007 Scandinavian Middle School opened our doors to incoming 7th grade students with the WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) Program for the first time in FUSD. Scandinavian's WEB Program has become a model for FUSD. WEB is a national middle school transition program that helps incoming students feel more comfortable, connect with an eighth grade leader, and develop a positive attitude toward their new campus. It is built on the belief that students want to and can help other students succeed. The goals of this program are to increase student attendance, build strong character, and improve academic performance for all students. Positive results are evident. Scandinavian students are empowered to take ownership of their campus by not only hearing and seeing the possibilities but leading them. Other student leadership opportunities that promote caring, respect, responsibility, and good citizenship include Scandinavian Student Council, Peer Mediators, and The Interact Student Service Leadership Club sponsored through the East Fresno Rotary.

The Scandinavian Middle School culture and climate has been transformed by students taking ownership of their school and their education through experiences and opportunities that promote core ethical values and academic excellence in a safe, nurturing environment. Student achievement results, based on GPA, have shown significant improvement and we have experienced a significant decrease in suspensions, office referrals, and student conflicts on campus.

- Peer Mediation-- The Peer Mediation Program has emerged as a focal point in providing a secure and caring environment for students at Scandinavian Middle School. Students involved in a dispute agree to sit down with trained student peer mediators and work through the process of reconciliation, in a systematic, calm manner.
- Warrior Buck Program-- The program was started to provide incentives for students to make correct and conscience choices in life. The students are rewarded with "Warrior Bucks" for providing a good deed on campus.
- Sports-- The Scandinavian Middle School sports program follows the concept of TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More). Students are encouraged to become involved from the moment they are escorted around campus as sixth graders. Through their athletic experience, students gain valuable lessons, which build their character. They learn to

respect everyone associated with the game, no matter how small or large their contribution and to play by the rules and be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. They also come to understand that perseverance, self-discipline and accepting responsibility are essential for success.

- AVID-- Advancement Via Independent Determination (AVID) was designed for implementation at the middle school level to support students who have the potential to attend college. AVID targets the population of students who begin at average performance and lack support systems and mentors to advance academically and socially. The AVID program reinforces the six pillars of character through direct instruction, group interaction, and extension activities. Activities such as student leadership presentations, fieldtrips and tutorials reinforce and teach responsibility, trustworthiness, integrity and citizenship.
- Safe and Civil Schools-- Scandinavian Middle School is in its fourth year of participating in the Safe and Civil School Program offered by Fresno Unified School District and Dr. Randy Spricks. The goal of the program is to create a safe, civil, and productive school.
- BEP-- We are in the first year of implementing The Behavioral Education Program. BEP is a Tier 2 behavior modification intervention designed to help the 10-15% of students who fail to meet school-wide behavior expectations, but do not require the highest level of behavior support. Students are selected based on the level of referrals accrued in the office for disciplinary action. Students selected for this Behavior Education Program are required to get daily progress reports from all of the student's teachers. The students focus on all character virtues and are rated on the way that they carry out those virtues.
- Scandinavian Behavioral Intervention Program--The Behavioral Intervention Program, also new this year, is an on-campus program designed to bridge the gap between inappropriate student behavior and the positive behaviors expected of all students here at Scandinavian. Students who exhibit disruptive or defiant behaviors in or out of the classroom are given the opportunity to reflect on their decision-making processes in a classroom environment with teacher supervision. Students are required to complete a Character Journal every day to reflect on their actions.
- Just For kids Inc.--This year Scandinavian Middle School formed a new community partnership with Just for Kids, Inc. to target the needs of "at risk" students. It is a school-based prevention program with a mission to provide early intervention services to youth and their families. It is designed to reduce the number of school related problems, juvenile delinquency, substance and alcohol abuse, family dysfunction, and gang involvement. The program utilizes the tools of character development in Character Counts when initializing its wrap-around approach to family based intervention.
- WEB-- Since 2007, WEB students have provided services for volunteer projects such as the Kid's Day newspaper sales fundraiser for Valley Children's Hospital. This year WEB is working toward building servants' hearts in the lives of our leadership students. The goal is to learn to put others' needs before our own. A new event the students have become a part of is the Hinds Hospice Angel Babies Run. WEB students were able to reach out to those who have experienced the loss of their child. We cheered on the families as they walked the park with heavy hearts. We took pictures of them with the wooden Angel wings that displayed the name of their child. Our hearts grew bigger that day as we felt their pain and hugged strangers who needed comfort.

- Horticulture Club-- A successful community partnership began when the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA), in conjunction with Reedley College, developed a Career Pathways program at Scandinavian and Duncan Polytechnic. When it began, it was part of the After School Program and expanded to our school day. The program continues to focus on promoting the character competencies for workplace success and increased appreciation and awareness of the world around them. Students have led a campus beautification programs, planted garden areas, ecosystem and a composting systems. They have committed time to make their school and community a better place. As they plan for, nurture and maintain a garden, students learn to protect and value the environment.

[Top](#)

Sequoia Middle School (876 students; 7th – 8th grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA. 93702
(559) 457-3210
Principal: Katie Russell

Each and every person on the campus of Sequoia Middle School is a teacher of character.

Administrator, teacher, office staff, custodian, cook, parent volunteer, and student all contribute to the character of our campus. Through our site commitment to the principles taught and reinforced through Character Counts!, we strive to develop, strengthen and encourage ethical values that can be seen in and out of the classroom. We involve all students in the promotion of character at school, spilling into their homes, as well as the community as a whole. Sequoia includes students, families, community members and site staff in the development process of promoting core ethical values by utilizing several sources. We rely on information obtained from the California Healthy Kids survey, parent and staff surveys, as well as feedback from our Safe and Civil Schools Team as sources of relevant data. Additional committees meet monthly and include community members, teaching staff, and administration. In these meetings, areas of concern and brainstorming sessions are held to address issues where additions or improvements to current programs can be developed.

The consensus of our teams determined the study of character to be an integral part of our curriculum and paramount to the teaching of the whole child. In assessing our Character Counts! Program, we have also taken into account data from several sources to assess what changes or additions need to be planned and implemented. As summarized in our 2009-2010 California Healthy Kids Survey, 55.7% of students agree or strongly agree that they feel close to the people at this school. Also, 51.6% of students feel that there is a teacher or adult that really cares about them at school. Another interesting data point is that 72.3% of students believe there is a teacher or adult who believes they will be a success. However, this data proves there is more work to be done.

We have a yearlong school wide focus on celebrating diversity with a focus each quarter which includes class projects, school wide contests, assemblies and lunch activities. For example, next month we will have a school wide focus on black history. All month we have many different activities in honor of Black History Month including standards based classroom enrichment activities as well as an assembly, and student incentives for participation. Lessons based on Respect, Caring, and Fairness will be taught in every classroom as we connect the principles from Character Counts! to leaders in African American history. In addition to our Black History Month celebrations, we also devote learning to Hispanic and Asian heritages as these are the cultures our community represents.

- The Character Counts! Tickets continue to be one of our most powerful tools in reinforcing responsible choices and acts of kindness. Each morning during announcements, a quote is read illustrating the character trait of the month. We also have a Character Counts! bulletin board filled with quotes from notable authors, celebrities, and philosophers. Staff members are given tickets with the current pillar to hand out to students showing good character.
- Sequoia's Awesome Characters Pursuing Academics and Character (SAC PAC) celebrates multiple phases of success as a Lumberjack. Excellence in citizenship, grades, and attendance are rewarded on a quarterly basis. Students who have demonstrated good character, with no more than four tardies, no D's or F's, a minimum GPA of 2.0, and no administrative suspensions are celebrated through SAC PAC.
- Student of the Month is a long time tradition. Each month eight students, one from each department are acknowledged and honored by their teachers.
- Character Counts! Award is a prestigious award that we began in 2006. This award is presented to one eighth grade boy and girl who demonstrated exemplary character throughout the year.
- Assertive Discipline Model. As a staff we have developed and implemented an assertive discipline model. . As partners in education we meet and conference with parents on a regular basis to ensure more consistent behavior and clarity of expectations between school and home. We feel this policy is a main contributor to our decrease in referrals and suspensions.
- The Raise the Grade Challenge continues to be a strong factor in teaching, modeling, practicing, and celebrating goal setting and achievement. Students learn about their GPA and how to take responsible actions to raise their grades. One of our school wide PowerPoint lessons engages students in learning what makes up their grade and helps them learn how to calculate their own GPA. Every two to three weeks students write goals and an action plan in their agenda on how they can raise their grades.
- Junior Doctors' Academy was created to identify, educate and advance annual cohorts of disadvantaged students from middle school through college and health professional schools. Further reinforcement of Responsibility and Caring through JDA strengthens our students to become competitive applicants to advance to the esteemed Doctor's Academy program at Sunnyside High School.
- Our Safe and Civil Schools Team meets regularly to assess current actions, develop and implement positive policies and procedures to ensure continued safety for all members and visitors to Sequoia Middle School.

- Our Peer Mediation program connects Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Fairness, Respect, Caring and Citizenship as key components in taking on the role of peer mediator. It is the goal of our Peer Mediation Program to provide our students with tools to solve their own conflicts. Our program involves twenty to thirty students as mediators, who also serve as role models in the school on how to embody the pillars of character. One of our goals is to guide students toward finding responsible ways to resolve conflicts with each other.

[Top](#)

Tehipite Middle School (500 students; 7th – 8th grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93701
(550) 457-3420
Principal: Yvonne Zysling

Integral to education in the twenty-first century is the teaching of “good manners”, or as we know it today, “Character Education”. The teaching of virtues and character and the work of enhancing moral thinking and the positive behavior of students must be a priority on the public school campus. Tehipite Middle School is dedicated to involving students in worthwhile school activities, allowing students to test themselves and their belief system. Beyond “academic standards”, Tehipite students have the opportunity to develop their social awareness and the opportunity to practice appropriate social conduct. Tehipite Middle School teachers believe that an articulated, intentional, and proactive system of character education and the teaching of character expectations will ultimately lead to fewer discipline problems, less student to student conflict, and more productive interactions between students and between students and teachers. Tehipite is a place where diversity is valued, educational excellence and equity are expected, individual responsibility and participation by all is required, collaborative adult relationships are essential, and parents, students, and the community as a whole are vital partners. Tehipite staff members have identified the character traits of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship as values that are intertwined into every aspect of school life and are dedicated to recognizing and promoting these CHARACTER COUNTS! traits. Students are challenged daily to “Always have the Courage to try!”

Tehipite Middle School utilizes the vehicle of the Tehipite Civility Committee (TCC) to work proactively to assist students in making the transition from elementary school into grades 7 and 8. The TCC is made up of teachers, the Campus Culture Director, the School Social Worker (SSW), and administrative staff. The TCC meets every two weeks to plan events, examine and review program/practice, and coordinate responsibilities. The goal of the TCC is to promote a positive cultural environment in all aspects of school life.

In order to ascertain whether or not school-wide goals are being met in the area of character education, the TCC monitors data including daily referrals to the office, tardies to class, attendance, number of suspensions, student academic achievement, and academic preparedness. As students arrive at school each morning and walk through the gate, they are greeted by an

administrator and a dress code check is done. The school day begins with an advisory period during which time the bulletin is read and students participate in the flag salute. The Character Trait of the month is memorialized each day via quotes and information about the trait. Every Friday a “binder check, agenda check, and ‘goal card’ check” is conducted. This data is also reported out weekly. Each quarter the classrooms that have 100% participation are awarded a Pizza Lunch in their classroom.

Some examples of lessons that incorporate core values include:

- The Social Science Department organizes a school-wide Veteran’s Day Assembly to honor our country’s veterans; students make real life connections with the community and actively participate in classroom activities leading up to this event
- Mock elections and political debates in Social Studies classes familiarize students with the democratic process; student body elections & campaigns done via Social Studies class
- Cultural diversity and appreciation of ethnic groups is celebrated through units taught during Cinco De Mayo, Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Muslim Cultural Celebration, and Hmong New Year; the Mariachi class represents the cultural diversity of the student population, celebrates the Mexican culture, and incorporates students’ individual musical talents
- Science teachers emphasize integrity within the scientific process and the responsibility to perform accurate research; also teach the students to respect the research and findings of ALL scientists • A.V.I.D. (Advancement Via Individual Determination) students plant a community garden each season to learn about the different foods that are a part of the diverse student population; the garden harvest benefits the Tehipite community
- English classes use literary selections and writing assignments to support moral decision making and character analysis; 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 The Diary of Anne Frank, The Outsiders, The Human Family, The Rose that Grew from Concrete, Touching Spirit Bear, The “I have a Dream” speech/Dr. King and the “Yes we CAN” speech/Obama, etc.
- Cooperative learning activities are infused throughout the curriculum to foster collaborative spirit and approach to problem-solving
- The Leadership class promotes the character traits and gathers quotes and explanations for daily bulletin announcements; they organize Friday activities for students of all capabilities; the leadership curriculum addresses various cultural stereotypes in order to improve leadership skills and promote equality and understanding of peers; service learning is a requirement!• Students are recognized for academic responsibility during Honor Roll assemblies and the fall CST Recognition dinner; citizenship awards are presented to students with outstanding attendance

Tehipite teachers promote and model fairness, caring, and respect in the following ways:

- Build meaningful relationships and rapport with students and their families
- Acknowledge the needs of the students and their families and assist students and families outside of classroom time with social-emotional issues

- Give each student the time and attention required to learn, by name, by need
- Identify student weaknesses and re-teach for mastery of a concept; allow students to succeed academically in a variety of ways
- Treat all students with patience and understanding
- Listen to students with peer conflicts and serve as a mediator to defuse student conflicts
- Acknowledge and validate the cultures, religions, and languages of ALL students
- Celebrate student progress on a daily basis throughout the entire school year
- Create standards based lessons that reflect the lives and experiences of the students and their families

The character education program is an ever-evolving “work in progress” at Tehipite Middle School. As a staff, we continue to examine our practice and the systems we have in place to BEST meet the needs of students who navigate the ‘Belmont Corridor’ on a daily basis. We are ever mindful of the community we serve and the challenging neighborhoods in which our students live. On a daily basis our students contend with poverty, including evictions, unemployment, and 12% homelessness. The area generates 64% of the CPS contacts made in Fresno County. 49 registered sex offenders are in the immediate area and the neighborhood houses a large population of parolees. The crime rate within a one-mile radius is higher than any other area in the City of Fresno, thus our students are constantly exposed to graffiti, violence, drugs, gangs, vehicle theft, and crack prostitutes.

Tehipite students and staff are reminded daily to “Always have the courage to try!”; however, Courage...doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, “I will try again tomorrow.”

[Top](#)

Tioga Middle School (770 students; 7th – 8th grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93726
(559) 248-7280
Principal: Ray Avila

At Tioga Middle School our goals are to give education and experiences to students so they can develop good character virtues that will stay with them for a lifetime. Tioga is designed to foster and perpetuate the values necessary to maintain a free and democratic society and offer each student the educational opportunities to be a responsible and productive citizen. These goals have been determined because it is in the best interest of our students, and society as a whole, for us to teach and model character education. We believe it is our job to teach, guide, model and re-teach virtues and character traits to our students.

In the past three years Tioga has made great strides in improving and maintaining a safe and civil campus that produces citizens of great virtue. Our school has a peaceful climate and our students feel safe and cared for when they enter the gates each morning. We can measure our gains in many ways on our campus. Tioga has reduced the suspension and expulsion rates in a very

impressive way over the last three years. We have experienced a 93% decrease in expulsions and a 50% decrease in suspensions. We credit our staff for effectively teaching and modeling positive behavior, and our students for accepting high expectations and following through to keep themselves out of the office and in the classrooms learning. Our test scores have steadily increased over the past years and this too is attributed to the culture of our campus and the safe and secure learning environment that we have worked so hard to develop. Tioga's Healthy Kids surveys and our Parent surveys have shown a steady increase in the positive feelings that our campus brings to our families. Our kids state that they feel cared about, they know whom to talk to if they have a problem. They know that they are valued as a part of our school community. Parents state that they feel that the school is a safe place for their children. They also state that they feel welcomed on campus and that they are an important part of our school community.

Tioga fosters an intentional and comprehensive approach to its core values in all phases of school life. • In the Television Studio. Tioga Middle School's television studio and leadership class provides students with an opportunity to display talent, professionalism, and most of all, responsibility as they create news packages based on campus events. However, these qualities were not on display early in the year when two students decided to steal markers from the class. With thousands of dollars of high quality video and editing machines at the students' fingertips, trust and responsibility are not just words to guide but carry financial weight from our Micro Society budget. The class decided to write letters explaining the importance of trust along with their idea of what responsibility looks like in a studio environment. The following day, both students who made their mistake apologized to the class and returned the markers.

- In History Classes. Fresno Unified provided six character pillars that schools base many programs on. Teachers are also encouraged to show how these behaviors impact the students' lives. In the History classes, the most obvious characteristic, citizenship, is constantly taught, whether it's about the presidents or how American citizens can get involved in politics. We teach that the government is responsible to the American public and what happens when a government is irresponsible. We constantly ask students if certain cultures were treated fairly or with respect. We show what happens when people are proven trustworthy or when they show kindness and caring to their fellow American, like Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr., people who are discussed in hushed reverence for the work they did. Character education is a constant theme in our Tioga story where students are continually analyzing and emulating.
- In AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination). In the AVID classroom, students are taught, guided and evaluated through maintaining an organized binder, completing their agenda and taking Cornell Notes in their core classes without the prompting of their teacher. Through these requirements, students are able to grow in the area of being a responsible citizen.
- In the After-School Program. Students in the After-School Program know the importance of responsibility and prove this by completing and turning in their homework and attending one of our 15 homework\tutorial centers every day after school. Even our student-athletes must complete their work before heading off to practice. The After-School Program also offers a diverse range of enrichment activities that promote individuality, gives ownership of the school to students, and sparks learning among our students.

- In our School-Wide Environment. At Tioga, we take great pride in providing a safe and effective learning environment. Our high expectations are evident by the posters that are up around school in the form of the “Tioga Top Ten”:
 1. I will shoot for straight A’s and advanced test scores.
 2. I will attend school every day.
 3. I will be on time to all my classes.
 4. I will tell the truth and take responsibility for my actions.
 5. I will learn from my mistakes, not repeat them, and move on.
 6. I will start to prepare for college and carrier now.
 7. I will be in dress code every day.
 8. I will come to school with all my assignments, school supplies, and fully prepared to learn.
 9. Adults are in charge and here to support you.
 10. NO EXCUSES!

At Tioga students create a microcosm of the real world through the establishment of the on-campus “City of New Fresno.” This MicroSociety embodies all aspects of developing virtues in our students and provides them with the chance to lead and decide how our city will run. The students practice leadership and collegiality as they take on productive roles within our society. Teachers facilitate learning and community members are called upon to mentor students as they establish their ventures. Students have developed good manners through the lessons addressing good customer service skills. Students practice these skills through their interactions with the community volunteers and mentors.

[Top](#)

Wawona I.B. World Middle School (985 students; 6th – 8th grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93704
(559) 248-7310
Principal: Mike Darling

Wawona International Baccalaureate World School promotes a campus culture that is caring, engaging and supportive of instruction. Wawona I.B. World School promotes core ethical values as the basis for good character.

Wawona I.B. World School, as part of the Fresno Unified School District, supports the Character Counts! model of character education. We believe that character education happens every minute of every day. We promote the core ethical values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship as the basis of good character. We encourage ourselves to be I.B. Learners by being communicators, inquirers, balanced, caring, open-minded, reflective, knowledgeable, principled, risk-takers and thinkers.

America’s future is economics, technology, and global awareness. In today’s world our students must be prepared to show responsibility, trust and integrity. All phases of technology from

phones to the internet are concerned with the respect of others and good communication skills. Only through the awareness of others and of our part in society will our students learn how to be ready for careers of their own. The core values of character are a stepping off point for instruction in essential social behaviors such as manners, service learning, and tolerance.

The character education goals for Wawona were developed by the staff under the guidance of our Safe and Civil School Team. Our guidelines for success are called the W6 and are referenced every morning during announcements and are posted for student review in every classroom. They are specific rules—the W6—for being and doing your best at school and for job success in the future.

1. Be on time every day for every class.
2. Be courteous respectful and cooperative.
3. Adhere to the FUSD dress and grooming policy.
4. Be prepared with supplies and to fully participate in the learning environment
5. Don't be a bully and don't tolerate bullying.
6. If you know about a problem, see an adult.

Service Learning and caring for others in our community is measured by the logging of service hours. Students and staff log their time through reflection sheets that are collected by the Campus Culture/Activity Center. Students and staff are encouraged to donate their time and talents on and off of the school campus.

We start our school year, (since 2003), with a school wide program called Mission: Possible. All students are given the opportunity to learn and understand our school expectations. Special workshops are held for routine things like how to properly line up for the buses and, and how to walk on the right side of the hallway. Knowing these expectations help our students to be respectful and courteous.

Character education is addressed in each subject area as it pertains to the lessons taught. • In Physical Education the California State Standard #5 is a focus of our teaching and assessment. Students must “show responsibility” (5.6) in a physical education setting as well as, “express encouragement”, (5.4) and “demonstrate an acceptance of differences.”(5.3). The Physical Education Department models and teaches these standards strongly and consistently.

• Language Arts teachers use core literature and writing to encourage students to discover their inner character and character traits that authors want to portray in their stories. The teachers involve the students in discovering how to be better people and to be better members of our society through role-playing, scenarios and logic. This is our second year participating in a school-wide read. Our novel; *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis, follows the life a young girl in Afghanistan. It was powerful and intriguing to our students as they found out about how children in less fortunate countries live and survive. • Humanities Classes regularly provide forums for students to discuss matters of ethics, current events and social justice. Our I.B. format encourages the teachers to allow the students to be open-minded, balanced and reflective. The social studies classes sponsor our school wide Student Council Elections and with the assistance of the Music Department they introduced our “Peace Tree” in 2010.

- Science classes focus on the world as a place we must respect and protect. The environment is important and how we take care of it and each other is a lens through which our Science Department looks. They ask the students to discover and think about what is above and beyond the California State science requirements. Recycling, community gardens, and our use of energy and resources is researched and shared, so we can all do our part.

- The Leadership Elective class is made up of all grade levels and is part of the “elective wheel.” During the year almost 100 students were given the opportunity to take Leadership. Skill building and service are the foundations of the Leadership curriculum.

Wawona’s campus is clean and inviting to guests. Our school community, staff and students keep it that way. From the custodians to the Principal, from the athletes and the Functional Skills students, all are responsible for keeping the campus clean and secure.

Our cafeteria workers, office staff, and custodians all take the responsibility of modeling and expecting good behavior from our students. They wear “Spirit Shirts” and support the Campus Culture activities presented by the staff. They are important in the environment of our school and are respected by the school community. All of our school family are “teachers” who are role models, monitors, and mentors of our Wawona students. The Athletic Department promotes character education at every practice and game. The students and coaches sign a “Code of Conduct” and are taught that “Pursuing Victory with Honor” will be the Wawona Code. A Character Award medal is presented to someone on the opposing team at every home game. At the end of each sport’s season, each coach presents several students with awards for integrity and sportsmanship on the playing field.

We have donated time, money, and goods to Community Food Bank of Fresno, Dakota House, Coats for Kids, Valley Children’s Hospital Kid’s Day Newspaper sale, American Heart Association Hoops for Heart and Jump Rope for Heart. Our P.E. Department sponsored the A.H.A. activities as a way to donate and a way to promote lifelong fitness habits. We encourage our staff and students to join forces in Pennies for Patients (Leukemia Foundation) and the Special Olympics.

This year, 2011, we organized and sponsored our 5th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. We planned our “day on, not a day off,” for the MLK holiday and invited two other schools to join us. Dailey Elementary, Wawona Middle School, and Fresno High School, staff and students participated in a paint and clean-up at Storyland and Playland at Roeding Park. There were over 250 students and 100 adults working together to prepare the attractions for the spring opening.