



## Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

### **2014 BONNER CENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

**Biola Pershing Elementary School**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**4885 N. Biola Ave. Fresno, CA 93722**  
**Wendy Hernandez, Principal**

Our mission and vision is to create a “Five Star Culture” at our site that helps each and every student exceed beyond academic learning. The five characteristics were developed by our staff last year to create a rich learning environment with a foundation of our values. These traits are: Welcoming Environment, Professionalism, Inspirational Leadership, Innovative Thinking and Perseverance. Staff members understand that the most powerful method to teach these characteristics is by modeling. At staff meetings they recognize each other for exhibiting a Five Star Culture trait that they have observed. This exemplifies the professional learning community that we have created at Biola, as we believe in continuously improving our practice. The district guiding principles direct us as we support our children- “Every Student, Every Classroom, Every Day.” These principles are at the core of what we do

The Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) that we use at our site has been an important aspect of our Five Star Culture. Our Jag Four is: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe and Always Strive for Excellence. Students say that pledge every day as they are led by our student council president on the announcements.

Big ideas and universal concepts are at the forefront of lesson planning. Within these broad concepts are ethical issues and higher level thinking. Current events and ethical issues are discussed collaboratively in social studies, science and language arts. Current events about local, national and world issues are studied when reading periodicals. This provides opportunities for debates and discourse that can lead to better understanding of other perspectives and cultures. Students are also valuing evidence that is either spoken or written to make their interpretation of the meaning. One way we deepen this thinking is with a writing assignment for each of the character traits that are displayed in our cafeteria. Samples of student work and community recognition is also available for our public. These examples exhibit how important our values are to our school.

Last year, we created a partnership with the Fresno County Library housed in the Biola Pershing School library that is open on two evenings and on Saturday for our community to access library services. Patrons can check out either district or county library books and utilize the computers

that are available. This program has provided the support needed by our families to increase literacy and develop a love for learning. It also has impacted family time in a positive manner.

In our Jaguar Academy, we support students that need extra time to finish homework at morning recess or need time with an adult to modify behavior. If there is a problem between two students, they will come up with a resolution together. The academy is supported by our principal, an instructional aide and our school psychologist. After students complete Jaguar Academy, they will either create a written plan and/or present to lower grade students. This mentoring is helpful for students to see how they need to model appropriate behavior for the younger students.

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**Bud Rank Elementary School**  
**Clovis Unified School District**  
**3650 Powers Ave. Clovis, CA 93619**  
**Sylvia Borges, Principal**

Character education is crucial in the development of young people. It is important to develop the morals and values in children to help supplement the home life and prepare children for adulthood. To help prepare student to become an integral part of our society as adults, we must teach them the core values and help ingrain the good morals an high character to help them with their decision making. The students of today are the leaders of tomorrow. In order for our community and country to move in a positive direction, we must instill the ethical values in children today.

Throughout the year, we organize events through several themed weeks that emphasize character, safety, and academic safety: in September we celebrate Character Counts! week; Red Ribbon Week takes place in October; in January the focus is on Multi-Cultural Week; and, we have a Patriotic Week. In addition to the themed weeks, there are many events that promote character. Some events are based on quarterly or all-year goals. The Personal Responsibility program gives students the opportunity to earn the PR award. Students must have good classroom and playground behavior, complete their homework, respect school/district rules, and always do their personal best. A huge honor for fifth and sixth grade students is the Block R Award. This award is given to students in the fifth and sixth grade who display well-rounded achievement and participation in Bud Ran's academic, co-curricular, and community service activities. And, we are always trying to promote parent involvement on campus.

Bud Rank attributes the high student achievement to the connection the students feel to the school. Because of their involvement in multiple areas and sense of pride, students want to perform their best. And, for the past three years, 100% of Bud Rank students in grades 5-6 participated in a minimum of one co-curricular activity. The students of Bud Rank are offered several leadership roles. Twice a year there is a school-wide election for student council positions and classroom representatives for students in upper grades. Student council members and classroom representatives organize community service projects each semester and student leaders provide two-way feedback through surveys to promote positive student interaction on campus.

A positive learning environment of mutual respect among students and staff is embedded in Bud Ran's culture and reflected in our school mission. The Bud Rank community values character development and these values are communicated to all stakeholders and are embedded across our curriculum.

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**Cedarwood Elementary School**  
**Clovis Unified School District**  
**2851 Palo Alto, Clovis, CA 93611**  
**Teresa Barber, Principal**

Character education is critical in the public schools of America. More and more families are spending less time together as a unit which has made the role of public schools increasingly more important. We are no longer just here for building mastery in reading, writing and arithmetic, but also for developing competencies with technology and the variety of ethical issues that arise from those uses as well as a skill base which allows our society values to continue to be promoted.

The staff of Cedarwood believes that character education involves defining what this behavior looks like for the students and then giving them real opportunities to practice that character trait. Students are taught to make eye contact when speaking to someone. Students are taught that when they are asked how they are doing or how their weekend went, they should return the favor by asking the other person about how they are doing or how their weekend went. The Cedarwood staff recognizes these personal attributes as those which are displayed by individuals demonstrating self-confidence and social practices which are characteristics of successful individuals; individuals who have not only the ability to demonstrate academic success, but who also display the traits which identify themselves as people of character with an understanding of how important it is that we maintain an altruistic spirit, do our part to help others in need, and make our school a caring and generous place where all are welcome and where we work to support each other as we celebrate victories and work hard to improve the situations of others.

The character education at Cedarwood Elementary School is addressed at all grade levels and is infused throughout the curriculum as specific units. Historical figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the great female athlete Babe Didrikson demonstrated not only strong moral character, but the conviction to do what was right in the face of great controversy. There are many other opportunities to infuse positive character qualities through many of the books that we read with our students such as *Summer of the Monkeys* and *Where the Red Fern Grows*. In addition to curriculum opportunities, the Cedarwood Etiquette program (Hawk Attitude) promotes appropriate behavior in students, teaching them appropriate interaction with peers as well as adults. Our goal is to promote positive student behavior in social situations and relationships helping them to foster respect for others and confidence that they will keep with them through their teen and adult years.

Perhaps the most compassionate place on campus to witness volunteerism is in our Functional Skills and Autism classrooms. Students give of their recess time to be with our functional skills

students involving them in the regular life on the Cedarwood campus. This daily opportunity to participate in volunteerism not only builds new friendships and bonds, but is instrumental in breaking down misconceptions and ignorance.

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**Fairmont Elementary School**  
**Sanger Unified School District**  
**3095 N. Greenwood Ave. Sanger, CA 93657**  
**Jared Savage, Principal**

All teachers are trained and implement the Second Step curriculum, which is a federal and state approved program to meet the compliance requirement of Safe and Drug Free Schools (SFDS) to teach school wellness and healthy choices. Fairmont 7th and 8th grade students are trained by teachers to assist in the implementation of the Second Step curriculum for Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Students use discussions, role-plays, modeling, and coaching to help younger students learn how to solve interpersonal problems in prosocial ways and transfer these skills to their daily lives. Teachers supervise and act as facilitators in this powerful process.

In addition, the Fairmont school staff has been trained to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Through the program, Fairmont school has adopted an anti-bullying stance through clear definitions of bullying, parent meetings, student kick-off assembly and most importantly, bi-monthly class meetings that promote student discussion and positive student choices. The Olweus Bullying program has also addressed the need for a student-centered forum that allows the opportunity for students to express concerns while receiving appropriate guidance to resolve problems or actively intercede.

Fairmont School strongly encourages service learning and volunteerism as a source of moral action. Fairmont's Student Council, California Jr. Scholastic Federation (CJSF), and 4H have annually adopted needy families in our community by providing food, clothing and gifts, which reinforces our Community of Caring values. Students have opportunities to participate in outside school activities through the 4-H, Girl Scout, Cub Scout and Boy Scout groups that promote hands-on experiences and community service. Fairmont School also provides many opportunities for our families to volunteer and participate in school and community events.

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**Herndon Barstow Elementary School**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**6265 N. Grantland, Fresno, CA 93723**  
**Mrs. Leah Spate, Principal**

“Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike,” said Theodore Roosevelt. It’s recognition of this truth, this reality, that motivates teachers and staff at Herndon Barstow School to promote character, responsibility, and exemplary behavior in all students, every day, every week, every school year. It’s a recognition that every child is in the

most formative years of character development that keeps us emphasizing, teaching, and modeling good character. It's a recognition that the development of good character and ethical responsibility will not only benefit the individual child, but the entire school culture—that it will benefit that child's community as well as the future of the society. We have today, here and now, to instill in our students a sense of ethics, a sense of responsibility, a sense of power to make a positive difference both in the school society and ultimately in our society at large. A solid foundation in character and ethical responsibility can only serve to benefit our neighborhoods, communities, and our nation. Our students are our society. The character education and development are paramount to the success of all entities.

So how does a school create a culture of responsibility, morals, ethics, and character? It works through all staff as a team to lay a foundation of focused character education and attentiveness to moral and ethical behavior; good character is modeled by staff, that it might be demonstrated in behavior of students toward one another. Through student-teacher analysis of literary or historical figures in school curriculum, as well as through active classroom discussions of community service "why's" as well as "how's," Herndon Barstow seeks to expose students to ethical responsibility. Maintaining a positive school culture and climate is essential to our success; teaching character education and ethics at school equips our students to excel in being positive, productive members of society.

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Staff on campus can be seen and heard speaking to one another respectfully, assisting one another whenever possible, verbally choosing confidentiality over gossip, and picking up trash

that is not their own. How can we expect students to be fair and respectful of each other if we don't exhibit that at meetings and on campus? To promote greater reflection on personal character and behavior, teachers this year were videotaped behaving inappropriately, and the classroom students then were required to model the appropriate behavior through cheers, songs, chants, or door decorating competitions. Winners performed the cheers, songs, and chants during an awards assembly. Clearly, Herndon Barstow's behavioral intervention strategies serve to motivate and integrate the behaviors most desired in the HB school community.

During Herndon Barstow School's staff discussion we confirmed the belief that character, moral action, and ethical responsibility matter in our educational environment as much as academics do. Life and growth is about experiences and education, yes. But it's as much about people—valuing people, respecting self and others. What we do, what we teach, what we model, what we talk about, how we speak, how we care, how we serve, how we look out for one another, the choices we make and the behaviors we live out all affect the state of the greater community of which every student on our campus is a part. As we strive to develop character through academics, activities, assemblies, awards, behavior modification, building others up, and commitment to the community, we lay the foundational A B C's of good citizenship.

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**Houghton-Kearney School**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**8905 W. Kearney, Fresno, CA 93706**  
**Dave Holtermann, Principal**

The explicit teaching and infusing of character values into American schools is an essential part of what we can do to better our society now and for generations to come. This concept of character is one of the explicit core values for Central Unified and Houghton-Kearney School, and another reason we affirm the building of good character. An overarching goal we have is to have the students themselves see the benefits of living a virtuous life and maintain the already low number of improper decisions made by our students and replace the improper decisions that are made with appropriate and good ones. We want to promote students that are college, career and community ready, and contribute in a great way to the world we envision for our future.

We have made progress toward all of our goals in all areas. With the "Tiger PRIDE" PBIS system we have seen a reduction of the number of discipline incidents and suspensions each year, and the students are better able to identify how their actions show "Tiger PRIDE" as well. We measure this with data from the suspensions and class referrals along with anecdotal observations. Currently we are on track for less than half of the suspension days this year than last year which, is consistent with the downward trend we have observed for the past four years. Further evidence of our work with Character Education was that we were also awarded the Bronze Award by Fresno County Office of Education for our PBIS program.

In the classroom, cafeteria, playground, at assemblies and on the morning announcements we continually reinforce the meaning of positivity, responsibility, integrity, discipline, and excellence. Our Safe School Ambassadors are also given a very thorough training from Fresno

County trainers on how to mediate peer disputes and make good choices. Character is a learning point in almost every facet of our daily life at Houghton-Kearney.

Almost everything we do at Houghton-Kearney promotes pro-social behaviors for the H-K students and community. Houghton-Kearney is a model of what schools can be like when there is an intentional focus placed on character. The PBIS program is quickly becoming the signature program and touchstone for how things are done at H-K. At the staff meeting on January 15, 2014, where the elements of this award were discussed again, there was an express sense of accomplishment and pride as we outlined the work we have done together to help the students at Houghton-Kearney. We have set the foundation for a great learning environment and thank you in advance for consideration for the “Bonner Virtues and Character Recognition Award.”

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**Jackson Elementary School**  
**Sanger Unified School District**  
**1810 Third Street, Sanger, CA 93657**  
**Debra Santos, Principal**

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 employs 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 provides 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. All stakeholders are involved in the development process of character education at Jackson. The District has set in place the five core values, as taken from Community of Caring. Our Superintendent can often be quoted as saying, “Community of Caring is not a program, it is who we are and what we do.” This belief is the cornerstone for our entire district and sets the tone for all school sites. Jackson’s leadership team meets at the beginning of the year to discuss activities and events that promote and develop character education. The principal also meets with the Parent Teacher Organization to plan and shape events and services aimed at modeling and promoting the core ethical values identified. Student Council plans and discusses strategies to integrate character education at Jackson. Jackson also has a Community of Caring Club made up of students and staff advisors that meets regularly to develop possibilities for students to model positive behaviors associated with the five identified values.

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. In fact, during the first month of school, all teachers made an effort to contact their students' parents in order to establish lines of communication. Jackson School also offers a monthly school wide Flagpole assembly, 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. Last year students were educated on how to plant and water our new trees. Students were able to participate in the actual planting and deep watering of these trees and how to continue to care for them. 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.

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**Jefferson Elementary School**  
**Sanger Unified School District**  
**1110 Tucker Ave. Sanger, CA 93657**  
**Cathy Padilla, Principal**

The "Community of Caring" program has operated district wide since 2001 and includes all schools in the Sanger Unified School District. The program focuses on the five core values of Caring, Family, Respect, Trust and Responsibility, and integrates these values throughout the core curriculum and along side school wide support programs.

How do we monitor success of our program? A parent survey is sent home each spring to encourage feedback from our families. We share the results with our parents and staff and implement plans to improve. We also have a data base system that allows us to track student behavior/discipline by time of day, location, and grade level of students. This system allows us to track problem areas and make changes as needed.

Character Education is vital in our schools more now than ever before. We must not see it as merely a program to teach, but as values to live by for all students in America. We cannot assume that character education is taught in the homes of all children, therefore, it is imperative that we not leave such an important focus to chance.

We have a peer mediation program, where students work with other students to solve problems and differences. This year our new counselor has initiated a “Girl Power Club” in which 4th and 5th grade girls meet once a week at lunchtime. The focus is respect for self and 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 may 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. One of the expectations is that every teacher works with each Community of Caring value and Essential 55 rule to integrate it into their core instruction.

Service Learning is an important value in our community. Jefferson students had the opportunity to experience the power of community involvement at the local government level. Families had been expressing the need to repair a bridge that is across the street from the school. The bridge had been fenced off due to damages over the years. Those who live very close to the school had to walk several blocks around the fenced off bridge to get to the school. Through the efforts of many, the bridge has been repaired. Jefferson student council members were given the privilege of naming the new bridge. The student council read through the bylaws for naming the bridge and came up with 3 possibilities and asked the student body to vote to declare the winner. Through this process, students did research and learned many interesting facts about their community. Jefferson student body officers attended a city council meeting to give their recommendation for the new bridge. The recommendation is “Jefferson Path”. The first part of the name, “Jefferson,” refers to the school in the area. The second part, “Path,” refers to a pathway that leads to education.

As a staff, we discussed the components of this Bonner Award and what makes Jefferson a special place to be. Staff members addressed each criterion and identified a few highlights which included: Good sportsmanship on the athletic field, students identifying morals in fables read in the classroom, proudly showing respect and honor to our military veterans at our annual Veteran’s Day Tribute, and our Tiger Alumni Group of Middle School Students.....Once a Tiger, Always a Tiger. As a staff, we understand the importance of modeling core values in everything we do and say.

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**Liddell Elementary School**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**5455 W. Alluvial, Fresno, CA 93722**  
**Mrs. Melody Burriss, Principal**

Character education is an important area of emphasis for public schools in America. Schools are key in developing character in students through direct instruction and by maintaining high expectations for all students. By developing excellent character and academic proficiency concurrently, schools have the opportunity to contribute to the creation of productive, contributing members of our future society. Character education in schools is also proving to be an equalizer. The education they receive in school is consistently messaged and activities are

provided to take this learning to the highest cognitive level. Schools need to provide a strong and prevalent source of character education and development to ensure all children develop an enduring sense of character and social responsibility.

Character education begins the first week of school at Liddell Elementary. All students attend a rally where they learn/review the Lion Laws: Respect, Responsibility, and Ready to Learn, as well as our Stop, Walk, and Talk method for handling bullying and other conflicts. The rally explicitly teaches what to do and what not to do in areas of the school (cafeteria, hallways, bathroom, classroom, cafeteria, playground, etc.).

Liddell's staff and students work as a team to promote a clean and secure learning environment. We are intentional about maintaining high expectations for pride on our campus, both physically and psychologically. We reward students who go above and beyond to maintain our clean, safe campus. For example, students earn Lion Law tickets by demonstrating desired behaviors or by voluntarily performing a service to our school. Behaviors rewarded include but are not limited to: showing compassion to a classmate, performing campus beautification, showing extra care of equipment or facilities, encouraging a classmate to change behavior, modeling exemplary behavior, etc.

Liddell promotes social competencies and behaviors by maintaining high expectations for all students on campus. The Lion Laws, and the consistent implementation of them, are an integral part of that system. Adults model social behaviors by praising students, citing specific behaviors, or by correcting/redirecting student behavior in a positive manner. This provides the student with an opportunity to identify the desired behavior, while tying the behavior to the Lion Laws (school expectations).

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**Lincoln Elementary School**  
**Sanger Unified School District**  
**1700 14th Street, Sanger, CA 93657**  
**JoDee Marcellin, Principal**

The Lincoln staff does not assume good character is taught or reinforced outside of the school and takes on the responsibility of developing a systematic approach to embedding character education within the school through Community of Caring and Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). The staff believes the school has more access to character resources and curriculum than parents, which coupled with the amount of time students spend at school, Lincoln is the perfect opportunity for students to practice the character education skills they are

taught. All members of the Lincoln Family use opportunities in and out of the classroom as “teachable moments” for positive character through specific character education, prevention, intervention, and curriculum embedded activities. Everyone at Lincoln is looking for good character! Classrooms and individual students are also recognized for their attendance and reminded that being at school each day is an important responsibility that each Mighty Ram must take seriously. Students are expected to progress academically and in order to achieve this, each child must be ready to learn and be provided a safe learning environment full of caring people. In a world where many students face challenging situations that require practical social skills and strength in character, these daily announcements teach concepts such as integrity, respect, confidence, courage, honesty and diligence.

In order to ensure substantial progress towards the character education goals throughout the year, Lincoln created a PBIS Team. This team is comprised of representatives from primary & intermediate grades, support services, and a parent. This group meets monthly to determine progress in the area of character education and to ensure that the PBIS programs are being implemented and supported adequately through the analysis of schoolwide data. An additional component to the schoolwide system and one that ensures a purposeful and comprehensive approach to the core values is the Olweus Bully Prevention Program. Key rules to reducing incidence of bullying were identified using the schoolwide data and teachers now conduct scheduled weekly class meetings with their students to teach these rules. The meetings support positive behavior, teach the ways to identify a bully, what to do if being bullied, as well as what to do if you are a bystander that observes another student being bullied.

In addition to each teacher doing weekly class meetings to teach positive behavior and anti-bully, teachers embed character education throughout the curriculum at each grade level. Examples include, teachers incorporating the character traits in essays, classroom activities, behavior journal, the study of historical role models in science and history who demonstrate positive character, and the use of student collaboration groups in which RAMS expectations are reinforced.

It is a priority at Lincoln to provide students opportunities for moral action. 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. Events scheduled allow students to contribute in a meaningful way to the school, to others, and to the community. Some of the recent successful events include: Recycling Program; Can Food Drive; Coat/Shoe Collection for Needy Families; School Supply Collections; Pastries with Parents; Kids Day Newspaper Sales; Local Food Drive to help families.

In preparation to apply for this distinguished character education award, the Lincoln staff met to analyze behavior data and discuss the three criteria and their quality indicators for an exemplary character education program. Some of the highlights included increased use of character education and implementation across science and history, improved students collaboration and behavior in the classroom, an increased awareness of the expectations by all members of the Lincoln Family, increased incentives and recognitions (such as student and staff of the month) to reinforce expectations, and an increased awareness and partnership with parents.

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**Lone Star Elementary School  
Sanger Unified School District  
2617 S. Fowler, CA 93725  
Lori Welch, Principal**

In the classroom, Lone Star teachers infuse character education throughout all subject areas. They have access to Community of Caring Curriculum Binders with grade level specific lessons and activities for each value. During language arts instruction, opportunities abound for rich discussions and written responses related to character traits and moral dilemmas. For example, Dom Deluise's Charlie the Caterpillar, prompted an in depth discussion about respect, caring and bullying in one classroom as students reflected on how all of the characters in the book were cruel to Charlie because he was an "ugly caterpillar". In social studies, students learn about real life heroes and heroines such as Abraham Lincoln and Harriet Tubman.

Teachers are also trained in the Second Step, Quit It (grades K-2) and Olweus Anti-Bullying Programs (grades 3-6). Each week, classroom meetings are held featuring topics from these programs so that students have the opportunity to work through scenarios that prompt them to use positive problem-solving techniques. The meetings provide the students with all of the tools necessary to prevent bullying at Lone Star whether they are directly or indirectly involved.

Lone Star has several programs for at risk students in kindergarten through third grade that reinforce positive character development. Our Friendship Club and Special Friends programs, once funded through grants from the State Department of Mental Health, have made such a positive impact on students that Sanger Unified has maintained the programs even though funding has been cut. Through the guidance of a well trained and caring adult facilitator, students work in small groups to explore and role-play strategies for making responsible decisions along with positive and appropriate behavior choices. Students problem-solve with their peers and are encourage to self evaluate. These programs have been proven to be very successful, resulting in students making better social and behavioral choices in the future.

The teachers, staff and parents at Lone Star work collaboratively to model fairness, equity, caring and respect for others on a daily basis. As adults we know that our actions speak louder than words and that if we want our students to develop great character, we must demonstrate it. Students regularly see and hear adults on campus saying "please" and "thank you" and addressing each other as "Mr., Miss or Mrs." They see staff and parents listening to each other respectfully at meetings and working cooperatively to put on special events such as the school carnival.

The Lone Star Student Council provides students with many opportunities to demonstrate their leadership skills at school and within the community by organizing and being involved in numerous activities throughout the school year. Selected students in 4th-6th grade are trained in the Peer Mediation Program to learn skills to help resolve minor conflicts between students during recess. Peer Mediators can be found at recess time, wearing brightly colored vest and carrying clipboards modeling Community of Caring Values or at the Peace Tree on campus. The

4-H Club is very aware of the agricultural heritage of the Lone Star community and holds meetings and events at our site. They participate in the annual Fresno County Fair craft and livestock shows. In the spring, Girl Scouts meet with students in our LEAP after school program. Students become aware that there are many opportunities to express themselves and enjoy fine arts within their community.

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**Madison Elementary**  
**Sanger Unified School District**  
**2324 Cherry Ave, Sanger, CA 93657**  
**Stephanie Rodriguez, Principal**

With an ever changing society and the constant need to understand one another as we grow; we as an educational system must address the need to build up our students, teach them the elements of good character, and begin to foster children who are conscience of one another. “The American founders recognized that “educating for character” was essential to the success of a democratic society because a healthy democracy demands civic virtues, such as voluntary compliance with laws, respect for the rights of others, concern for the common good and participation in public life.” (Sojourner 2012) It is our duty to carry those beliefs through and at Madison Elementary we are continuing to build students who change society one good act at a time. The moral imperative of character education in schools cannot be denied. To teach children through a holistic lens, we must not only focus on academics, but also begin to show students the inner workings of society. Just as all negative behaviors are learned or taught, so are those that are good. “Caring for one another, a sense of community, respecting your peers and adults, being responsible for your actions, and trusting each other.” Foundations for which we must build our schools so that adults are interacting and modeling for students, and students are being shown how important their role in this world truly is. Their influence can reach beyond their schools, they can begin to change their community; and through the goals and programs set forth at Madison, they can begin to transform into students of character. Having our students all day we have the opportunity to infuse character education into all that we do. Students who believe in themselves and in one another and who see the value in good behavior and civic duty do better academically and socially. We must provide opportunities daily to allow students to exhibit these behaviors and then to go into the community to practice them.

At Madison, we have specific goals to ensure we are infusing character education into all that we do as well as making adequate progress towards those goals. The goals for the staff are first to continually learn and grow in our knowledge of character education and find new ways to engage in these new learning’s with our students and second to continue to monitor the social emotional growth of our students and ensure we address needs and gaps. The goals for the students of Madison Elementary are to develop a deep understanding of Respect, Achievement, Control and Effort (RACE) and know how each affects all that we do, In addition another goal is to continue to decrease referral rates both in and out of the classroom. We have put several measures in place to ensure that we effectively monitor our goals. Both sets of goals are ongoing and flexible and have been determined by the entire staff through our Community of Caring committee & staff meetings.

Each year our staff has a theme in which we envelop to promote the culture and vibe of the year. This year our motto is “Begin with the end in Mind.” (–S. Covey) Taking a step toward our goals we have taken on the book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (Stephen Covey), and to work toward our goal of developing ourselves to be better character educators we have decided to view our students with the end in mind. If we want them to become great citizens and people we must start now. Students are expected to know what it is to be a respectful friend at all times. We have also developed a behavior team that gathers each Monday to review data, discuss students, and plan our character education events and community outreach. Our site is committed to creating students who think with the end in mind, and in the next two sections, we will show what we have done to provide opportunities to grow people of extraordinary character. We feel that it is important for our students to develop a respectful and caring attitude toward their younger peers as many of our upper classmen tutor in primary classrooms to support student learning. Student collaboration is encouraged in the classroom to support engagement in the instructional process and to promote positive social interaction. Students work together as active participants in the learning process.

In our assessment centered society, the Madison community believes that positive test scores will be the byproduct of a solid educational plan that is based on a strong moral foundation. Our goal is to develop young people that leave Madison with the academic tools to be successful and a strong moral character that will enable them to make good choices for themselves and those around them. At our staff meeting we really highlighted how our goal of moving toward taking our learning to the students through character education which we feel is a vital modeling effort. It was the staff decision to move forward with the 7 habits curriculum, to continue to promote character education through our class meetings, and the main highlight of the meeting was centered around a quote made by a staff member who when asked, “How has this impacted our school?” He replied, “The impact of our RACE program and the building of character has created a level of trust and relationships that are believed by staff and students alike. This is who we are, and our foundation is the connections we have and the identity we have given our students, character education is our glue.” (R. Areyano, Madison Staff)

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**Madison Elementary**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**330 S. Brawley, Fresno, CA 93706**  
**Christine Pennington, Principal**

Madison serves a population with more than 90% of our students coming from poverty, and the challenges that are often associated with this demographic. The Madison staff believes that by teaching our young Warriors expectations in the form of the Warrior Way, and helping them connect to their dreams, the students will experience global success. We believe that our goal is beyond success at school, but ultimately resulting in success in life. Staff members met and identified areas of focus to create our goals. We work with all of the Character Counts pillars, emphasizing a character trait every month by having students write about it, and using it for the basis of our Warrior of the Month award. In addition to the pillars, Madison staff has developed school-wide behavior expectations that were born out of our district’s commitment to Positive

Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The specific expectations here at Madison are: Respect, Ready to Learn, Safe.

Madison Elementary has character education and positive behavior reinforcement woven into the fabric of the school. Direct character development is accomplished in whole-school gatherings. We have a Warrior Way hand signal of a 'W' to signify the student is following the Warrior Way. Teachers in each grade level use our Warrior Scenario weekly to have discussions and role play about character in each classroom. Monthly writing assignments are based on the character pillars. Students say Warrior Pledge every morning which also reinforces our character expectations.

We instill in our students a need to take pride in our campus as part of following our Warrior Way. Each classroom has been assigned a 'Warrior Pride' area to maintain. Classes pick up trash and sweep areas to demonstrate pride. Individual students also have opportunities to serve the school by picking up trash at recess. In return, they earn special pink tickets which go into a drawing for 'spinning the wheel' in the Principal's office on Fridays. Special prizes are connected to that opportunity.

The staff at Madison has been together for many years, and as a result, are incredibly respectful and supportive of one another, which serves as a wonderful example for our students. In addition, the staff regularly models positive reinforcement.

We have developed a systematic approach to clearly communicating and teaching our expectations. We reinforce positive behavior in a plethora of ways. We have a collaborative process of analyzing data and developing an action plans to provide for continuous improvement. We have a dynamic Tier 2 process for students who struggle with behavior. We provide multiple opportunities for our students to contribute to our school and community.

A signature program at our school is our Warriors in Training (WIT) program. Where some schools have punitive consequences during recess, we believe the first steps to success are to counsel a student and provide feedback to build a student's perspective of behavioral choices. WIT is designed to provide "retraining" to students either one on one or in small groups. This training includes discussion that is aligned directly to the student's poor choice. Students are able to discuss their choice and better understand why a rule or expectation exists.

Using the foundation of the behavior expectations known as the Warrior Way, systemic improvements have been instituted to ensure a culture of safety, learning and belonging here at Madison. The changes range from minor adjustments to major shifts that promote a positive environment that all of our students deserve.

As a result of our amazing team at Madison, our students are experiencing success both socially and academically. We are proud Warriors who are "Catching Our Dreams" each day!

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**McKinley Elementary School**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**4444 W. McKinley Ave, Fresno, CA 93722**  
**Colette Bolger, Principal**

It is the moral imperative of our schools that we teach all students the necessary social skills to prepare them for college, career, and community. At McKinley Elementary, we focus on developing the ability to have successful peer relationships, interact respectfully and responsibility with authority figures as well as peers, and leave McKinley civic minded, so they may contribute and give back to the community. Teaching students to be problem solvers and to think critically through a situation, while understanding other perspectives is crucial. Through Character Education we can agree on principles while valuing differences as we critically evaluate other viewpoints. The values students learn in school provides them the opportunity to practice problem solving social skills in the environment they spend the majority of their time. School parallels the social norms of the working environment and we need to teach students the necessary skills to get along with others in the work place. The surrounding neighborhood of McKinley Elementary has a lower socio economic level and higher incidents of crime, compared to other areas in Central Unified. McKinley Elementary School is a walk in school and students often bring conflicts from their neighborhood into school. We at McKinley see our school as a safe environment for our students and community. A place where everyone feels safe and has the ability to navigate through the complexities of life in an ethical, positive, virtuous way. It is important for students to be aware of their social responsibility through Character Education.

In addition, each semester we focus on specific grade levels to target areas of need through lessons providing in a small group setting, called PRIDE Packs. Character Education is infused throughout the subject areas and help students to make ethical connections. We utilized the G.A.T.E. Depth and Complexity Icons to teach multiple perspectives, ethics, rules, and patterns as one example of how we infuse character education across the disciplines. We take our students on PRIDE walks, discussing the positive behavioral expectations in all areas of the school. We hold assemblies and bring in outside community members to share the importance of social skills and positive behavior, such as the Kaiser Foundation, Peace Sign Presentation teaching our students about bullying and how to stop, think, and act in a bully situation. The 6th grade students mentor and teach primary grade students on positive social skills and model and role-play how to problem solve. Bully prevention lessons are taught throughout the school year that is linked to weekly P.R.I.D.E lessons. Students write how they will show PRIDE by reflecting on their own behavior with journal entries, class discussion, and class meetings. In literature and in history students conduct character analysis and relate the motives of the characters they learn about to their lives and the world beyond the school walls.

Students at McKinley Elementary are provided opportunities to contribute to the school, to others, and to the community through a partnership with Fresno State University Peer Mediators for students in grades 4-6. Students help one another to solve conflicts on the playground and it empowers students to become problem solvers. The McKinley Student Council members help to organize and attend community events that provide an opportunity to give back to their neighborhood. Our students support and work Holiday Joy Food Drive, Cross age tutors,

Campus Beautification before and after school to promote cleanliness and maintain the school grounds.

In order to complete this application, the McKinley staff met as a whole to discuss the criterion. The staff reviewed each of the questions and gave input as to what we had in place as a site. We discussed how much of a positive change in climate we had experienced over the last few years. We had an overabundance of input as to what we are doing to address each of these areas. The focus of the discussion was on how important it was to have a team working together to come up with ideas based on data, we worked in grade levels to answer the questions. We then shared out the ideas and had a discussion of the paradigm shift that has occurred as a result of the PBIS team helping the staff to shift to a teaching focus rather than a punitive system. We discussed how much we had implemented over the past few years and the success we have had. We also discussed how we are continually improving our school as we review data and add new components to the P.R.I.D.E. expectations. We believe that our students are full of P.R.I.D.E., and we are here to help them reach even higher than before.

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**Mountain View Elementary School  
Clovis Unified School District  
2002 E. Alluvial, Fresno, CA 93720  
Monica Everson, Principal**

We understand that the hopes of our nation rest on the shoulders of our youth and it's up to American schools to instill core ethical values that promote character within our students that will strengthen the child, the school, the community, and the future of our nation. The Mountain View Educational Team is committed to exemplifying the school's mission in supporting the individual needs of all students. This is evident in our mission statement: "We are the Mountain View Golden Bears, a united community of students, parents, families, and faculty. We are dedicated to ensuring the life-long-learning and success of every student in a safe, positive learning environment. We will accomplish this through teamwork, communication, and perseverance!"

A school-wide values program is incorporated into the monthly curriculum using the six pillars of the CHARACTER COUNTS program. These traits are integrated into language arts, history/social science, physical education, visual and performing arts. A school wide common language has developed as a result of CHARACTER COUNTS! Staff and students alike have developed the understanding that in order to build and maintain a culture where positive character traits flourish, we must demonstrate, model, and vocalize our core beliefs in character on a daily basis. Here at Mountain View we talk the talk and walk the walk! It's quite common to hear or see a student counseling a fellow student about breaking a pillar. As a matter of fact, I recently overheard a second grader in the hallway state to another student, "Cutting to the front of the line is not respectful to those around you! You're breaking one of our pillars!"

We've discovered something very valuable through the process of applying for the Virtues of Character Recognition Award. As we sat down as a staff to evaluate the practices, systems,

beliefs, and culture regarding character education at Mountain View, we realized that we are a school that cares tremendously about the wellbeing and success of our students and go above and beyond to make sure are students have the tools necessary to impact the world in a positive way. We can honestly say that we have a school culture that invites students to participate in their education and we give them the opportunity to get their hands dirty in the process. We found that there wasn't enough butcher paper in the room to list all the programs, practices, procedures, and monitoring mechanisms that ensure are students are safe, secure, socially competent, and willing participants in their school and community. After much debate, we decided that our school should be known for our KID NATION! Kid Nation allows our students to practice our school vision regarding great character by allowing them to actively engage the school and community. Kid Nation is governed by kids who are creatively finding ways to express themselves as a team for the benefit of their community and school. It allows them to be in the driver's seat making decisions that demonstrate the virtues and morals that we instill in them every day. We are proud of our students, community, staff, and school and can honestly say that at Mountain View we lead with "HEART, SPIRIT, AND PRIDE!"

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**Oak Grove Elementary School**  
**Burton School District**  
**1873 W. Mulberry, Porterville, CA 93257**  
**Crystal Milinich, Principal**

Oak Grove Elementary believes as a public education entity, it is our ethical and moral responsibility to provide not only the best possible curricular education that is aligned with state and Federal guidelines, but to participate in the ongoing development of the whole child: body, mind, and spirit. In promoting and fostering good character among students and staff, we affirm our belief in maintaining the dignity of self and others. It is through this belief system we seek to fulfill our obligation to help develop citizens who are honest, caring and productive members of our society as a whole. Our motto, Oak Grove Elementary School: Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow - A Galaxy of Possibilities, represents our belief that with teaching and modeling, we guide our students to a better tomorrow, where they truly have a galaxy of possibilities before them.

The purpose of character education at Oak Grove is simple. We believe when students learn a consistent set of universal values, and teachers model these values, behavior improves and educational focus soars. It is our goal to consistently model, teach, and elicit the six pillars of Character Counts from all of our students.

Weekly classroom meetings are a cultural norm at Oak Grove. Students know meetings happen in their classroom every Wednesday morning. Some topics are teacher generated and some topics are student generated. Each teacher completes a classroom meeting log summarizing the meeting's agenda and successes, along with any follow-up that is needed. These logs are electronically scanned and sent to all teachers to be used as a reference for curriculum resources. Teachers also weave character education throughout various areas of the curriculum. Part of Common Core requires students to work collaboratively in groups, speaking and listening

respectfully. This requires a constant practice of good character traits. You will find teachers using fictional and non-fictional pieces of literature in English language arts as well as writing lessons focused on character development. History and science is included with heroes of history and people of high ethical and moral value. Some lessons include art, music, and technology as venues for teaching character education. Last year, as one example, our 2nd grade team was awarded a monetary grant from the Burton Educational Foundation for their anti-bullying curriculum grant application. Teachers purchased literature specifically designed to teach positive character and anti-bullying behavior. Lessons were designed and taught with these materials.

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**Oraze Elementary School**  
**Clovis Unified School District**  
**3468 N. Armstrong, Fresno, CA 93727**  
**Suzi Erickson, Principal**

It is important for schools in America to teach character education. Students spend the majority of the school day with teachers, staff, and peers. It is our goal to produce well behaved, responsible, and productive citizens. There is a correlation between a student's education and their behavior. When teachers provide a positive learning environment at school, students are more likely to demonstrate the core traits of good character.

Oraze students and teachers also follow the BEARCAT Personal Responsibility Program for grades K-6, designed to encourage students to demonstrate responsibility and good character in the classroom, on the playground, and at home. Students who meet the criteria in demonstrating responsibility are rewarded each quarter with a fun activity or special privilege. At the beginning of the school year, the administrative team and staff at Oraze agree to make Character Education a priority. Within the first days of school we conduct a Character Counts! Assembly at which our administrative team speaks to the student body about the student expectations and responsibilities using the S.O.S. acronym (Take care of: Self, Others, School). We review our school rules and expectations; the six pillars of character, and model age appropriate examples of positive character. This assembly is repeated during the second semester to remind students.

This year we were fortunate to have Retro Bill come and promote the importance of a maintaining a positive attitude. His challenge for all students and staff to "Turn On Your Positive Channel Today" continues to resonate on our campus. Alexis O'Neill, award-winning author of The Recess Queen, visited our campus to share her story about a campus bully who made school-life miserable for her classmates. At the conclusion of Ms. O'Neill's presentation, all Oraze staff and students signed a banner pledging to be bully free. This banner is proudly displayed in our library to remind students of their pledge.

Oraze's Human Relations Council is comprised of 4th through 6th grade students who meet twice a month to discuss ways to continuously promote an atmosphere of harmony and fairness on our campus. Topics of discussion include bullying, fair treatment, multicultural awareness, and Character Counts! The Human Relation Council also promotes community involvement by

committing to a service project, as generated by student discussions (i.e. Coats for Kids, Food Drive).

At Orazo, we provide students with many opportunities to get involved in community-based projects. Students participate in Kids Day, a program where students, parent volunteers, and school staff sell special edition newspapers put out by the Fresno Bee to raise money for Children's Hospital Central California. This project also allows our students to acquire a sense of empathy for those children who are ill and in need. Other projects our students participate in Pennies for Patients (also benefiting Children's Hospital Central California), Toys for Tots and Coats for Kids.

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**Pleasant Elementary School**  
**Tulare City School District**  
**1855 W. Pleasant, Tulare, CA 93274**  
**David Freitas, Principal**

Our job as educators is to prepare students to become productive members of society. Since character education teaches the habits of thoughts and actions that help people live and work together effectively, character education must be an integral part of educating students. The new Common Core State Standards reflect the realization that collaboration is an imperative for students and staff. In today's global economy, students must learn to accept others from varying backgrounds, cultures, skill sets, and customs in order for the collaboration to be effective. Character education is vital in preparing the students for our increasingly global society.

Character education is initially taught in separate units, ensuring that all students understand the pillar that is being introduced. Each month the school focuses on a different pillar of character. Teachers then integrate the pillar into daily activities. Each content area provides opportunities to reinforce a pillar of character. For example, a lesson on Rosa Parks gives the students real-life examples of civic responsibility. A science lesson allows students to practice pillars of character, such as fairness during a science experiment. The pillars of character are also part of daily classroom management. For instance, the pillar of responsibility is reinforced through completing homework, the pillar of respect is reinforced through interactions with staff and students, or the pillar of citizenship is reinforced through maintaining the school and classroom environment. Because character is also vital on the playground, Pleasant has newly implemented a Noon-Time Sports League. The program emphasizes fair play, cooperation among peers of different skill levels, and learning how to accept defeat and victory gracefully.

Pleasant Elementary has started our Pleasant Choir as a way to further infuse our school atmosphere with activities that are enjoyable, but also character building. The staff realized that some of our students do not enjoy athletics, and Pleasant Choir was a chance to involve those students in an extracurricular activity that reinforces responsibility, respect, and trustworthiness. Pleasant was also fortunate enough to be the recipient of a Lowe's grant giving us the financial support to start the Pleasant Garden Club. This club was instated to give those students interested in nature a chance to learn about plants and reinforce character traits as they did so.

Students contribute to Pleasant elementary by volunteering for peer tutoring, recycling paper and cans, helping in the library, picking up trash, weeding in the garden, watering plants, donating box tops for the Box Tops for Education program, soda codes for the My coke Rewards program...helping teachers during lunch or after school. Students are provided these opportunities to allow them to experience the benefits and gratification of helping others. We hope they also come to realize the importance of standing behind a project or idea—even if it means giving up recess or snack money for a day.

Pleasant elementary staff has realized the importance of character education even more with a switch to Common Core Standards. The focus in the classroom has shifted from independent competitive activities to collaborative projects that foster character building. Pleasant staff has always promoted good character inside and outside of the classroom but our focus began with classroom activities. We have recently taken more effort to expand these activities from within the classroom to outside.

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**Polk Elementary School**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**2195 N. Polk, Fresno, CA 93722**  
**Geoff Garratt, Principal**

Students need to and benefit from learning how to live pleasantly in society. Part of what the school has historically done is to develop in students both the intellectual and the moral virtues as we work to build the leaders of tomorrow. Character education refers to helping students acquire virtues that will help them live positive lives. Central Unified School District shares in this belief that this is a critical component in education. This is embedded in who we are as an organization. As students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge and apply that knowledge across all content areas within the common core, it is imperative for them to be able to make choices that are based on their character that create a future of success as well. This is an essential component for the future of our American democracy. Future generations must be equipped with and demonstrate daily choices that are grounded and guided by quality character traits. As our students take on leadership roles in our communities, our democracy will only continue to be as strong as the character of those who it is comprised of, our current students.

As staff we hold ourselves accountable, and administrators ensure that students and staff are recognized for modeling these traits at an exemplar level. Our staff has been trained on and models active supervision in all settings. As a staff, we have been trained to have consistent behavior management systems in class. The Pioneer staff understands the difference between minor and major behaviors, and how to respond when they occur to promote behavior change. The following are ways that we ensure and promote fairness, equity, caring, and respect: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)-Strive for Five; “Caught You Being Good” tickets given out in all settings on a daily basis; “Compliment” charts in each classroom to track classroom compliments received; Weekly Positive communication home; Stop/Walk/Talk Bully Prevention (School wide tactic students use when something another student is doing bothers them); Club 350 (Recognizes students for CST proficiency with a Club 350 T-Shirt and other

incentives); Messaging and communicating to parents (importance of character development); Including behavior education in bi-monthly staff professional development.

Polk Elementary School places our focus on both academics and behavior utilizing the response to intervention model for both. We believe in teaching behaviors and character similar to how we teach academics in all settings. We also work closely with the CSUF Peer Mediation Program under the leadership of Karen DeVoogd. This program has been implemented at Polk in grades 4-6th. "Peer mediation provides the students an opportunity to solve problems peacefully with the assistance from their own peers, while developing their leadership skills", Mr. Shergill, Polk Teacher and Peer Mediator Facilitator.

The Polk Elementary School staff has been involved from the beginning of the year preparing for the Bonner Award application. As a staff, we believe and are committed to teaching and modeling behavior, character, and helping students acquire the virtues or moral habits that will help them individually live good lives. Our Pioneers are taught the necessary skills to become productive, contributing members of their communities now and in their futures. On November 6, 2013 our staff went through the process of collaborating on the criterion. During that process staff provided evidence that met the various criterion.

A signature program at Polk Elementary is our Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program. Facilitation of the program by our Guidance Instructional Advisor, Dr. Jessica Yergat has led us as a staff to create a culture that Strives for 5. When Pioneers Strive for 5, they are Being Respectful, Safe, Striving for Excellence, Working Peacefully and Following Directions. Polk has been recognized by the Fresno County Office of Education as a Silver Medal School for PBIS. Polk is proud to be a model school, and we are visited by other schools throughout the valley during the year.

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**Quail Lake Elementary School**  
**Sanger Unified School District**  
**4087 N. Quail Lake Drive, Clovis, CA 93619**  
**Amy Williams, Principal**

Character education is vital to American public schools. At Quail Lake Environmental Charter School, we are eager and equipped to take on this task. Our students will need to navigate a global community with varying points of views and values. Our goal is that students grow into adult citizens that are firmly grounded in their own values and have the strength of character to be able to stand by those values even when it is not the easy or popular choice. American public schools create a common experience for our children and future citizens; skills of intellect is part of the responsibility public school must provide our learners. The other half of public education is to teach and cultivate strong moral character demonstrated through high behavioral expectations.

Quail Lake's character education goals are delineated in our Falcon B.E.S.T. expectations. We monitor our goals through a variety of indicators including: student and staff recognition (weekly

and monthly awards, Character Counts, Teal Feather, Student of the Month award, Block QL), community feedback (Coffee Club, Word on the Street, Parent Survey), staff involvement (Falcon Buddy), and behavioral data (Power school Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (P.B.I.S.) reports).

Quail Lake's "Falcon Buddy's" program was initiated recognizing that we have students that need that extra support for a variety of reasons. Each staff member has at least one "Falcon Buddy" in which, they connect with and check up on their academic standing as well as to build a partnership and connection with their student, so that each student knows they are valued and appreciated. The direction on how to be a "Falcon Buddy" is simple: be a positive role model, let your buddy know how valued they are as a member of this school and that the choices they make are important. This relationship facilitates each student's path to success.

Quail Lake embeds character education through curriculum, daily expectations, and student and staff recognition. All students receive direct instruction on character education through Second Step and Olweus curriculum; these instructional programs are designed to teach students pro-social behaviors that cultivate our community of character traits; caring, responsibility, trust, respect, family and also empathy. In addition, staff uses text and lessons to enhance and generalize students understanding of our community of caring values. For example, 6th grade chooses to read and complete a unit around *The Watsons Go To Birmingham*, by Christopher Paul Curtis. This book tackles topics such as bullying and Civil Rights. Another example is our 2nd grade use of "bucket fillers". This concept is based on a story that students have read, discussed and completed extension activities from. The "bucket filler" concept promotes the value of respect; when you show someone respect, and kindness, you "fill their bucket"; however when you are disrespectful and mean, you empty their buckets and make them and yourself feel bad.

Quail Lake provides opportunities for students to engage in moral actions by contributing to each other's learning and growth as well as causes in the community. As a K-8 school we want older students to serve as examples and models for younger students. This involves a strong commitment from our student leaders and teachers to organize and promote opportunities for cross age activities and mentoring. Our student leaders lead our rallies, teach social skills lessons in primary classes, and lead community events such as Make-A-Wish in which the Quail Lake student body raised over \$3,000 towards a child's wish. Student leaders take on the responsibility of manning a table in which students would drop donations into a drive bucket each morning. Each grade level supported these efforts by setting their own classroom goals. Student leaders also organized Quail Lake's participation in the Macy's Believe program. Student leaders encouraged all students to arrive at 7:00 a.m. to volunteer their time to write to Santa in which for every letter written, Macy's donates a dollar to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

In addition, 8th grade students at Quail Lake participate in an annual Service Learning Project, in which they research non-profit organizations to compare and contrast. This research project culminates with the students selecting one of the organizations to volunteer their time. Our most prominent and recognized student and community service project is our Community Rose Garden this garden is maintained by students and parents outside of the school day. It is a wealth of opportunity for growth and beauty, both educationally and spiritually.

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**Red Bank Elementary School  
Clovis Unified School District  
1454 Locan Ave, Clovis, CA 93619  
Kevin Peterson, Principal**

The goals for Red Bank Elementary School in Character Education is to promote character and educate students in order to help mold them into caring, contributing members of society that hold the well being of their community as a high priority. These goals were determined by Red Bank Elementary adopting the agreed upon and articulated core ethical values through the “Character Counts” educational framework.

A comprehensive co-curricular program, including interscholastic competitions in: athletics, choir, band, drama, Oral Interpretation, Art club, along with opportunities to participate in a variety of poster and essay contests, is made available to students. Students are also encouraged to participate in student leadership and government opportunities at Red Bank. All of these programs are designed 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. At sporting events “Athletes of Character” from the opposing team are recognized and awarded a certificate at the end of each A Team game. These athletes are selected by displaying good sportsmanlike conduct and playing with character.

Embedded in the Red Bank Elementary School curriculum is a focus on the significance of reasoned oral and ethical choices which promote fairness, equity, caring and respect for others. This is evident in daily lessons and curriculum in each classroom. 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 state standards is a fun combination at Red Bank.

Red Bank Elementary promotes pro-social competencies and behaviors by providing students opportunities to be involved in community service efforts with such activities as: K-Kids community beautification projects, Student Leadership food drive for needy families, Coats for Kids clothing drive, Pull for Ronald McDonald Charity, Valley Children’s Kid’s Day sales, Toys for Tots, Armed forces pen pals, Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF, Pennies for Patient’s collections, our 4th grade Technology Recycling project, and numerous classroom community projects.

A final example of community service/out reach efforts is the partnership Red Bank holds with the Clovis High School. ROP students come to campus to assist teachers in classrooms which builds the high school student skills and provides mentors for our struggling students. Red Bank students in grade 5 attend a Clovis High Mosaic Assembly during the year in order to build appreciation for diversity and cultural awareness and to break down stereotypes in our community. Our band articulates with the other CHS area elementary, middle and high school programs and has an evening concert to entertain our community. CHS athletic teams invite our

athletes to all home games as their guests. Each program also establishes a youth night each sports season where our student/athletes are showcased.

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**River Bluff Elementary School  
Central Unified School District  
6150 W. Palo Alto, Fresno, CA 93722  
Mrs. Michelle Bergmann**

In our society, character education cannot be minimized. It is evident from news reports filled with the tragic events taking place all over our country, that there is a lack of morality. Thus infusing character education into the California Common Core State Standards allows educators to build ethical and critical thinkers capable of evaluating sources and evidence and making informed decisions.

The focus on developing strong character traits within our students also places emphasis on the importance of a climate of high expectations. At monthly meetings the staff discusses the environment of the school and whether or not we need to make any adjustments in the programs or curriculum that we are currently utilizing in order to maintain a positive learning environment. This has helped us hold ourselves accountable for our goals and has ensured that all staff including custodian, yard duty, cafeteria, librarian, teachers, and administration are all part of the implementation. We have committed to monitoring our implementation of character education and behavior in every staff meeting.

Character education is a culmination of stand along lessons as well as the many opportunities within Social Studies and literature studies involving character topics. Students are encouraged to identify and discuss good (and “bad”) character decisions in the stories. Our first teachers read the story the Recess Queen and discuss bullying on the playground. Students think critically and describe how the characters respond to major events and challenges. Our 5th graders are studying the American Revolution, the novel Johnny Tremain is integrated into the lessons. Students discuss civic responsibility, courage, while evaluating governance. Teaching reading comprehension using character as a discussion point happens throughout the academic day, including literature circles, writing, and Reading Buddies. Many classes have developed a Reading Buddy partnership, usually a primary classroom with an intermediate group. This provides a model for our younger students and demonstrates that education, especially reading is important. The younger children like reading to the older children and it is a great self-esteem booster for the older children, to have someone who looks up to them and respects them.

We think it is important to engage every student in a positive way as they being their day. The end of the day is also important with all staff in front of the school conversing with parents as we safely return our students to their families. We are ambassadors of our school, and we recognize our words and body language must positively project an enthusiasm for learning and motivate our students to want to return to school, excited to learn the next day.

To further promote character expectations, River Bluff has been very interested in the CSU Fresno Peer Mediation Program. This year the program is being implemented at River Bluff in grades 4-6th. Fifteen of our fourth, fifth and sixth grade students had the opportunity to be trained in the program. Our peer mediators go through rigorous training in conflict resolution to assist their peers with problems they may be having. The mediators are trained on listening, respecting, and gaining trust of their fellow students so when a situation arises they can insert themselves into the conflict and facilitate settlement of it peacefully. Students who are experiencing difficulties with another student or just want to talk to a peer about a situation are encouraged to meet with a mediator. Students have the opportunity to explain what they could have done to make a positive difference and are given the opportunity to correct their negative choice. If a student continues to make poor choices, then a peer counseling referral can be made. The Peer Mediator program has been implemented to promote peaceful environments among students. As pairs, the mediators work with their peers to find solutions to their conflicts. This has been greatly embraced by staff and students. Although this program is in its inaugural year, we feel it benefits our students by empowering them to solve problems, while guiding them along the way. We look forward to realizing the full potential of this program in the coming years.

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**Sanger Academy Charter School  
Sanger Unified School District  
2207 9th Street, Sanger, CA 93657  
Mrs. Christy Platt, Principal**

Community of Caring is a character-building program that encourages community service and promotes interpersonal and social values. Classrooms and students participate in service learning projects as well as fundraisers for charities throughout the year. The Community of Caring core values are integral at SACS and visible throughout the city of Sanger. SACS promotes these values through visual reminders such as postings in classrooms, murals in hallways and bulletin boards in the cafeteria.

The Associated Student Body (ASB) offers students the opportunity to collaborate with each other and take leadership positions. ASB has many responsibilities including: school announcements, rallies, and community service projects in collaboration with Community of Caring organizers. Our Peer Mediation Program has trained students in conflict management and mediation. Peer Mediators have received training in the specific skills needed to solve problems and learn how to work with fellow students who are engaged in a dispute. These skills are also emphasized through our OLWEUS classroom meetings and lessons.

To promote acceptance of cultural diversity, SACS' teachers infuse character development with their content instruction. For example, during Music and Art instruction, students learn the cultural implications of Art and Music through projects such as "El Dia de los Muertos." In preparation for "El Dia de los Muertos," art students create life like paper mache' calacas dolls with death masks to display in the cafeteria, the art studio, and on campus. They eat pan dulce,

special sweet bread made to commemorate the day, and learn about the Mexican culture. SACS' artists display work throughout the community, and our musicians perform in various venues.

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**Saroyan Elementary School**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**5650 W. Escalon, Fresno, CA 93722**  
**Brad Edmunds, Principal**

We are all aware of the tragic events that have occurred in our Nation and in the world in the past few years. Now more than ever it is our moral obligation to provide our students with a solid foundation of character, virtues and patriotism that will ensure the survival of our Great Nation. William Saroyan said, "Nothing has ever been more sure-fire than truth and integrity. We at Saroyan Elementary School embrace this principle and endeavor daily to model this to our students. In addition in Central Unified and at Saroyan Elementary School we embrace our Guiding Principles, and central to these principles is the moral imperative that we prepare our students to be college, career, and community ready. This means that not only must we equip them with the academic skills to be successful, but we also must partner with our parents and community to provide them with character and virtues that will enable them contribute back to their community and the world. It is our moral calling to prepare our students to be not only academically successful, but also with American Character and Virtues that will keep our Nation strong and vibrant. We do not take this call to serve lightly at Saroyan, we strive daily to prepare our students with the skills and values that will need to give back to our community and Nation, skills and values that are American and are rooted in something higher than ourselves.

At Saroyan Elementary School it is expected that every day, our Stallion Students are RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, READY, and SAFE! (TripleRs). All four of Triple Rs Expectations are valued at Saroyan and during each quarter of the year we recognize each one of our Triple Rs expectations, but by far the expectation that has the biggest impact on campus is Respect! This is why it is the first quarter focus expectation because we want to set the tone for the rest of the year. This year classrooms made video, posters, skits, and we even had a flash mob at recess perform to the Aretha Franklin's hit RESPECT. Respect is modeled by staff throughout the school by staff on a daily basis, and this Winter the staff and administration developed and signed their own Respect agreement on how Administration respecting teachers and staff, teachers, staff respecting administration, staff respecting staff, and administration and staff respecting community. This same activity will be done in each classroom for students to teacher, teacher to student, student to student, and students to school facilities. This agreement is signed by all parties and is the Respect contract that holds us all accountable to each other. Each day in the daily announcements the leadership students read quotes that reinforce our Triple Rs Expectations. In an effort to raise staff and student awareness of bullying situations both groups participated in the Olewus Bully Circle process activity.

At our staff meeting on November 20, 2013 the staff participated in a process activity that involved the Bonner Application Criterion. The staff was divided into groups of three or four, and randomly selected one of the three criterions. The team then brainstormed the questions that

were included in this area. Each group then shared out with the whole staff what they came up with and their posters were posted in the staff meeting room. In January we did a gallery walk process activity where staff was able to further discuss and comment on the three areas.

There has been an increase in staff buy-in to building character development as evidenced by the embedding of character development in the student lessons in the classrooms. In addition, our campus wide assemblies are promoting positive character development and students have the opportunity to reflect on these activities, which deepens their understanding and increases the likelihood that they will put these strategies into practice in their daily lives. Our progress with the PBIS program was recognized last year with the awarding of the Bronze Award. Our Student Leadership Team is more of an integral part of modeling expectations to the rest of the Stallion students.

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**Steinbeck Elementary School  
Central Unified School District  
3550 N. Milburn, Fresno, CA 93722  
Tami Boatright, Principal**

Throughout history, parents, teachers, and community members have shared the responsibility to support character development of students. Character education teaches habits of thought and action that help people live together as friends, families, communities, and nations. Character education enables students in a school to understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values such as citizenship, responsibility for self and others, respect, trustworthiness, caring, and fairness. According to Martin Luther King, Jr., “Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the true goal of education.” Core values are the hallmark of safe, healthy, and informed communities that are the foundation of our society. Our school was named after John Steinbeck, a Nobel Prize recipient for literature. In his acceptance speech in Stockholm (1962), he said, “the writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit—for gallantry in defeat, for courage, compassion and love.” At Steinbeck Elementary, there is a commitment to making character education an integral part of the educational process while recognizing and celebrating our student’s “greatness of heart and spirit.”

We are a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) school. Discipline at Steinbeck is not punitive, but is instead used as an opportunity for students to learn and practice social behaviors and expectations. A school site PBIS team consisting of teachers, administration and other staff members meets monthly to analyze discipline data and put strategies in place to increase positive behavior on campus. Three key expectations are in place school-wide and were developed with input from the entire staff. These expectations are for students to always remain Respectful, Responsible, and Safe.

Steinbeck’s Character Value of the Month is discussed daily in classrooms and morning announcements. The Character Value of the Month is discussed in the monthly edition of the Shark Bites school newsletter. Each month students write an essay or poem according to a John

Steinbeck quote and aligned with that month's character trait. Selected pieces of writing from each classroom are posted inside a paper frame on a hallway bulletin board for all students to read on their way to the cafeteria for breakfast and lunch. Our Students' of the Month are selected by their classroom teacher for their character, accomplishments, and effort and recognized. Two students from each classroom are recognized at a special Student of the Month ceremony where their teachers share their reasons for selecting those students. The room is always full of parents for this monthly event. At the beginning of the school year, all staff signed "Our Staff's Promise," which encompasses our commitment to holding one another accountable, working as a collaborative team, and doing whatever it takes to ensure student success in college, career, and community while maintaining the tenets of character education as vital elements to student growth and development.

In true John Steinbeck nature according to his belief in the powerful right "to give voice" to all people, Steinbeck Elementary elected their first Student Council Heroes this year. Elections were held at the start of the school year. Interested students went through the nomination process, campaigned at school, and then wrote and delivered campaign speeches at the Election Assembly. Classrooms also send a student senator to Student Council. Student council officers conduct bi-monthly meetings. Suggestions and problem solving of school-wide issues are developed and brought forward to the Guidance Instructional Advisor (GIA) and principal. In this way, leadership skills are being fostered, and students are practicing problem solving and decision making while serving as an advisory committee to site administration.

Staff was engaged in the discussion of each criterion prior to this application being written. This was a valuable activity as it allowed time for reflection on all that has been accomplished at Steinbeck and brainstorm ideas for areas of growth. We are on a continuous journey on the cycle of improvement; regularly surveying and gathering data on our current state of being, planning for character growth opportunities, and providing support, instruction, and encouragement along the way.

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**Sundale Elementary School**  
**Sundale Union School District**  
**13990 Ave. 240, Tulare, CA 93274**  
**Cindy Gist, Principal**

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us." Honing the character of students ignites the candle of potential success one will have in their lifetime. Character education in the public school system provides greater opportunities for student achievement; in addition, it defines a road map of core ethical values to embrace in the public education system. Through providing character education in public schools, it provides a complimentary climate to support good character as well as productive citizens in our community. As a staff member said, "It is important to teach to the heart, not just the head." By teaching the importance of a strong character, we are helping to build morals and integrity.

CHARACTER COUNTS! has become institutionalized at Sundale School. With very little staff turnover, a majority of our staff have been here since the start of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Program. We can attest to the fact that our students have a deep level of understanding of the pillars and use of the character language. Our staff has witnessed student interaction on the playground of students saying, “that isn’t very respectful”. When new students come to Sundale that may not understand our efforts, we hear our current students correct and encourage with, “that isn’t the Sundale way”. The expectation is now being put on the students from their peers, not just the staff.

Curriculum integration is evidenced through various resources at Sundale School. There are lessons which have been collected by teachers throughout the years and now included in the library resource materials for all staff to use. A visit to the library provides guests with the visual pillar of the month bulletin board, books aligned with the pillar of the month as well as Accelerated Reader Resources aligned with the pillar of the month. CHARACTER COUNTS! resources are also included in the process in moving towards Common Core State Standards.

Parents, school board members, staff and students work long hours to make their campus a better learning environment. Family workdays on the weekends with the school board hosting the dinner to the World Ag Expo food booth fundraiser, contributions are strong. Funding is provided for the 8th grade trip, the fine arts department and student scholarships, these activities work to help make Sundale a unique school and community. Our Dad’s Club hosts an annual car show. The money raised is used to put on the Annual Daddy/Daughter Dance and to provide extra activities at the Harvest Carnival. Sundale’s PTO also plays a vital role in providing for our students. The annual Walk-A-Thon is their only fundraiser that contributes to grade level field trips, curriculum, enrichment activities, projects which keep the campus environment looking nice. In addition, the Mustang Campus is virtually divided in order for each classroom to take additional ownership and responsibility for their designated clean-up areas. This additional responsibility allows for beautification projects and promotes good citizenship and pride in our School.

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**Teague Elementary School**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**4725 N. Polk Ave, Fresno, CA 93722**  
**Ron Pack, Principal**

It is critically important for all schools to integrate character education in order to produce citizens who are educated and critical thinkers in order for our democracy to continue and thrive. Teague, in its commitment to serve as an impact-maker in its community, recognizes the importance of teaching the whole child. This includes building a healthy, positive, and engaging learning environment for students to flourish academically, socially, and emotionally. This challenge is more than a responsibility but rather a moral imperative.

The number of students suspended for the 2012-2013 school year was fifteen, and progress toward the goal will be measured in the number of students this school year receiving

suspensions. Achieving the goal will involve several tactics. First, Teague follows a proactive approach with PBIS that includes establishing and communicating schoolwide expectations. Second, the emphasis of character education and its integration both into the curriculum and as stand-alone lessons help enhance moral values which lead to wiser decisions. Third, a concerted

In kindergarten, teachers place focus on students' personal behavior. They teach about the pillars of character, and students reflect with the question, "Are you in charge of your behavior?" In first grade, literacy centers have students taking leadership roles so they may learn to be responsible, cooperative citizens in their classroom communities. In addition, role-playing occurs and scenarios are acted out that allow observing students to serve as problem solvers. Second grade has students participate in bully circle activities with them acting out different roles and writing reflective pieces. This allows for various points of view to be experienced and learned from so students understand the role everyone plays when bullying occurs and the feelings and emotions involved. Third grade begins each day making the Teague pledge stating that each student will show Teague's 3B's in order to make the day a successful one. In fourth grade, teachers constantly model appropriate character, reinforce students with verbal praise, and offer students weekly certificates that recognize demonstrations of positive character. Fifth grade has a focus on individual student behavior and choices as well as common courtesy. This can be seen in an essay students wrote about a bully lesson where they chose two roles to reflect on as well as their continuing progress with Expect Respect lessons. In sixth grade, writing provides opportunities for students to address respect and responsibility and teachers help highlight examples and non-examples of different character traits as they arise in text. Every grade has a designated block of thirty minutes once a week for character education with a splash of literacy. These lessons, which come from instructional sources such as GoLeaps, offer students a routine opportunity to learn about ethical values and good character while also providing an infusion of writing every week along with speaking, listening, and often reading. During this block, students may reflect on their learning and growth moving forward from the lesson, or they might brainstorm on paper or whiteboards thoughts and ideas related to ethics and values.

Teachers and yard duty staff make sure to move frequently, interact with students, and scan to identify needs. It is a point of emphasis at monthly yard duty meetings and has worked effectively to reduce and eliminate opportunities for dangerous activities to occur. Creating a psychologically healthy and caring environment for all students is a must at Teague.

Teague's Peer Mediator team consisting of fourth through sixth grade students walk the playground providing support for individuals and groups of students experiencing social conflict. These mediators, who have been trained at Fresno State and are supported by a staff member, provide each party involved a voice and help them arrive at a peaceful resolution where everyone comes out a winner.

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**Valley Prep Academy Charter  
Fresno Unified School District  
4221 N. Hughes, CA 93705  
Shelly Lether, Principal**

The goal of Valley Preparatory Academy is to see each student develop the essential qualities valuable and common to our society and to use those qualities to impact positively his or her personal life and community. These traits are taught through *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* by Stephen Covey. Within these principles are embedded the character traits of trustworthiness, empathy, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, honesty, courage, diligence, and integrity. Our core values TRUSTWORTHINESS, EMPATHY, CITIZENSHIP, and DILIGENCE represent the overarching themes of our character program. Our motto is “Character is our keystone.”

Character Education at Valley Preparatory Academy begins in the morning when an administrator and or other staff person greets the students at the gate with a “good morning” handshake. When students line up for breakfast in the morning, they are greeted by name by the kitchen crew, and after they have lined up for class to begin, are greeted again at the classroom door with a “good morning” handshake from the classroom teacher. This communicates to the students “You are important and worth the time to receive eye contact, a smile and a respectful human touch.” As the day progresses, character education is taught by using formal instructional lessons and is also infused throughout the curriculum.

The entire staff and volunteers are encouraged to be positive when interacting with students, parents and other staff members. When a student must be disciplined, being positive and restorative is essential to teaching and modeling respectful behavior to a student. Making things right and active listening are a part of this peace-making process.

Last year, Valley Preparatory Academy also started Leadership Council that consists of parents, staff, administration, and students that meet bi-monthly. Events, finances, field-trips, curriculum and fundraisers are some of the items that are generally on the agenda. The principal, Mrs. Shelly Lether, also facilitates a monthly event known as “Breakfast with Mrs. Lether” where parents are informed of important decisions, events, or issues. Sometimes students will make presentations about service learning projects or any other extraordinary lesson learned in the classroom. Parents are also able to voice concerns at this meetings. These meetings, along with a Phone-Reach system that sends school-wide messages and a monthly school newsletter are all new ways in which Valley Preparatory is partnering with families.

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**Webster Elementary School**  
**Golden Valley Unified School District**  
**36477 Ruth Ace, Madera, CA 93638**  
**Michael Diaz, Principal**

Our nation’s schools within the bounds of our country, have become the melting pot of the world and with it, a responsibility to model and teach excellent character within each student. It is important that character education become part of American school system to give children the foundation to be law abiding and productive citizens. Character education is infused through our curriculum specifically within language arts and social studies. Our teachers have been very creative in recognizing and having the students demonstrate good character in story reviews,

plays, and video clips. During social studies lessons, traits are recognized through historical characters like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Teachers will have the students explain which pillars the historical figures are emulating by their actions and words.

Our staff is the most important link to our student's quality of character. They exemplify each character trait by their behavior, their actions, and teachable moments on a day-to-day basis. Teachers promote the golden rule and modeling respect, to the point of how we address each other at the professional level. Students also participate in the spirit of our school by wearing their favorite Webster Wear on every Friday.

Our staff met together on a professional development day to discuss the character education program of our school and its criterion. The teachers were broken into small groups to discuss the attributes which encompass our program. I observed the pillar of character traits within our staff, responsibility and respect, as they worked together to discuss the importance of our programs at Webster Elementary. The teachers were interactive and gave each other positive feedback and input during their discussions. Each team had a key speaker to present the small group's responses to the criterion.

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**White Elementary School**  
**Selma Unified School District**  
**2001 Mitchell Ave, Selma, CA 93662**  
**Sandra Aguilera, Principal**

In 2008, the Character Education Partnership (CEP), defined character broadly as "human excellence," comprised of all the virtues that enable us to "be our best and do our best." This concept of character encompasses moral virtues such as honesty, compassion, empathy, and trustworthiness. At the same time, character also includes performance virtues such as effort, diligence and perseverance. Taken together, they make us morally inclined to do the right thing and to do our best work in all areas of our lives. We must be intentional, proactive, and comprehensive in our work to encourage the development of good character in our young people.

Schools today face enormous challenges in educating all of the young people in their charge. In addition to providing youth with basic academic knowledge and skills, and promoting their character development, schools have increasingly been called upon to play a primary role in helping to solve a variety of social problems among youth. In these challenging times, it is a shared responsibility of the parents, teachers, and members of the community, to come together to support positive development. This time in school is an opportunity to explain and reinforce the core values upon which character is formed. Schools that embrace character education become places people want to be because they bring out the best in everyone.

The Eric White School mission, which was developed by the whole staff, is the following: We will work together to provide a respectful, responsible, safe, and positive school where all

students can reach their full academic and social potential for lifelong success. Eric White staff believes that it is our responsibility to teach and continue to foster good character so that students can become successful adults.

Eric White Elementary School makes it a priority for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school, to others, and to the community by having students who are in 5th and 6th grade, Leadership Club, accept responsibilities and practice a willingness to help whenever, and wherever it's possible. Leadership students also serve as "hall monitors" by being visible during transition times for students. They encourage students to follow the hallway expectations and notify the office of students showing exemplary behavior. This year, leadership was asked to mentor/read to students with severe disabilities. They have shown caring, responsibility, and a sense of pride in helping our special day class. Also this year, our whole school helped our community during the holiday season by having a canned food drive for needy families. The food drive was led by leadership, but the contributions were schoolwide.

One of the ways our school promotes social competencies and behaviors is through the implementation of a variety of cooperative learning strategies in the classrooms. All teachers are trained in the use of Kagan Strategies. Some of the strategies that are used throughout the day in the classrooms are Pair Share, Round Robin, A/B Partners, and so forth. The goal of using Kagan Strategies is to allow students many opportunities to work collaboratively with others. Our staff knows that teamwork is important in any career. Students are taught the proper academic language of how to ask a question, offer a suggestion, and how to be a good listener. By conversing with one another, students are not only self-monitoring their own learning, but are giving back to their peers and are learning how to be a team player, in preparation for college and their future career.

During our December 17th staff meeting, one of our agenda items was our "Character Education Discussion", where we discussed as a team, the importance of Character Education in schools, the Character Education at Eric White, as well as student contributions and opportunities for moral action. Through this discussion, we discovered that deeply rooted in our objectives, were the desires to create productive and responsible citizens in society, and to decrease behavior issues that would in turn benefit the neighborhoods and city of Selma by helping to reduce crime rates. We also revisited our Character Education goals, which included teaching students to be responsible, respectful, safe, and positive, in order to reduce the amount of physical contact incidents, and to continue to acknowledge students that were being great role models because of exemplary behavior. During our discussion we also realized that teamwork played a key role in the success of our Character Education Program at Eric White, and that it takes each and every staff member working together, to have a successful program. One teacher stated, with enthusiasm that, "We are a positive system, not a punitive system!" and our entire team agreed. We have come a long way, but we have come together.