



## Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

### **2015 Bonner Center Middle Schools**

#### **ABRAHAM LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Selma Unified School District**

**1239 Nelson Blvd.**

**Selma, CA 93662**

**Mr. Wayne Dixon, Principal**

The Character Education goals of Abraham Lincoln Middle School are as follows: (1) All students and staff will be treated with dignity and respect. (2) We will maintain a clean, safe campus at all times. (3) The District and School Vision and Mission statements encompass Character. (4) We will develop and continually improve upon a culture which supports a Professional Learning Community. (5) The Six Pillars of Character (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship) will be embedded in the curriculum. (6) Students will learn the importance of values, ethics, and developing their moral compass to give them the foundation they need to make good decisions in life and become responsible, productive citizens. (7) Students will develop and use critical thinking skills to make; well-informed decisions, understand consequences, promote an atmosphere of caring, tolerance, and support of each other, embrace diversity and encourage positive change. (8) Students will develop their anger-management skills, learn self-control, and be accountable for their words, actions, and attitudes. (9) Students will learn the importance of volunteerism and giving back to their community. (10) Students will understand the importance of an education, work to the best of their abilities, and continually challenge themselves to build character, determination, and a see-it-through attitude.

These goals were chosen as they embody not only the "Character Counts" program we use at our school site, but we believe these goals will help our students develop into individuals who understand the importance of the core ethical values taught at ALMS and embrace them through life. goals, but the process is in constant flux to stay current with the times and resources available. The management staff reviews data such as tardies, absences, discipline, suspensions, expulsions, and School Attendance Review Board information to assess the Character Education program on the campus. We look for trends to be proactive with our decision making policies, and review our findings with the staff at regularly scheduled meetings to address any issues and hold ourselves accountable for our goals. We ensure that all staff, including custodians, yard duty staff, librarians, etc. are all promoting the Character Counts core ethical values.

The administration and staff at Abraham Lincoln Middle School understands the importance of Character Education being embedded in the daily life of our students. Every class has the rules and behavior expectations posted. Classrooms have posters and quotes of the Character Education pillars, the importance of honesty, being ethical, trustworthy. We have an honesty policy about homework and plagiarism. Teachers take the time to work with students who act out or have behavior issues to

Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports was implemented last year and ALMS received the Bronze Award for implementing the program with fidelity. PBIS meshes with Character Education in which it stresses core values. ALMS adopted the acronym SOAR as our mascot is the ALMS Eagle and it stands for Self-Control, Optimistic, Ambitious, and Responsible. Posters are installed in all classrooms with the SOAR traits and departments customized their posters to meet the expectations of their classrooms.

Abraham Lincoln Middle School takes great pride in our clean, safe campus. All staff reports any issues or concerns immediately so they can be addressed. Two full time and four part-time janitors work from 6:00 AM until 10:00 PM maintaining the campus. A grounds crew and maintenance crew are also on a rotation schedule to maintain the campus in working order

A discipline policy is in place and enforced. All staff have class rules posted, students receive a planner for their binders with the school rules, policies, and procedures on it for their daily viewing, assemblies are held twice a year to review the school policies, procedures, and expectations, and all staff are equipped with the proper documentation when discipline is necessary. The cafeteria staff provides healthy, nutritious meals to over 1000 students daily giving them many choices through offering meals in the main cafeteria, several food kiosks, and a snack bar.

Teachers work with students within the classroom to promote positive behavior, and modeling the behavior which is expected from their students. Having regular reflection time at staff meetings helps staff work together to brainstorm strategies, support one another, and continue to improve on the school's Character Education goals and celebrate our successes. Abraham Lincoln Middle School has a commitment to Character Education and reinforces our goals daily. Students participate in: Student of the Month Award recognition. This includes a luncheon to recognize the honored students. Student of Character of the year- 1 boy and 1 girl are chosen from the 8th grade class who exhibits the Character Counts characteristics.

Staff has attended professional development training for the Character Counts Program, the Positive Action program, and most recently the PBIS Program which involves all staff and also a PBIS Team who attend PBIS meetings through Fresno County Office of Education throughout the school year.

**EL CAPITAN MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**4443 W. Weldon**  
**Fresno, CA 93722**  
**Mr. Jeff Wimp, Principal**

The mission of El Capitan Middle School is to prepare all students to contribute meaningfully in college, career, and community. WE are committed to the Central Unified School District Guiding Principles: Every student can learn; Every student is prepared for success in college, career and community; Every student will engage in rigorous, relevant, standards-based instruction in every classroom every day to ensure student learning; and Character.

We utilize our campus wide expectation to SOAR to teach students how to act in a Safe manner, meet their Obligations to their community, set high marks for Achievement, and demonstrate a high level of Respect for others. We believe these values must be taught, modeled, and practiced in our work with students to provide experiences that promote positive growth and character development. In 2013 EL Capitan Middle School began the process of implementing our Positive Behavior Intervention System with the SOAR expectations.

Every student has an advisory classroom at the end of first period. Advisory teachers are responsible for meeting with each student one to two times per month. During these meetings, students are interviewed by their advisory using an academic advisory form. Advisors ask students about their academic, behavioral and emotional conditions. Students set goals for improvement and are rewarded when they reach them through SOAR Bucks and the point earning system. We believe that every child deserves a safe environment to learn. WE are committed to give every child the ability to alert us to any situation that may jeopardize that environment. Bully reports are available to students through their Advisory/Homeroom teacher as well as in the office.

At El Capitan, bullying is never tolerated. On a repeated basis students are made aware of our reporting process through morning announcements and teacher demonstrations during Advisory/Homeroom.

The SOAR Bucks program started this year to provide incentives for students to make correct and conscience choices in life. The students are rewarded with "SOAR Bucks" for providing a good deed on campus. EL Capitan Staff members nominate weekly Eagles of the Week and thank the student for making good choices. The student redeems the "SOAR Bucks" at the snack bar in the place of monetary amounts.

Students participate every November and December in Holiday Joy. Holiday Joy gives students the opportunity to help others by donating canned foods for families who are less fortunate. The El Capitan Middle School sports program follows the concept of TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More). The coaches are dedicated to facilitating the development of mind, body and spirit for all student athletes who pass through the Eagle

Sports Program. An athletic PE class is also offered to students who have demonstrated either a desire to be leaders or a need to develop leadership skills. The class teaches advanced athletic training, nutritional cooking classes, and gives students the opportunity work as peer tutors in PE classes at one of our feeder elementary schools. The Lego Robotics is an event where students make a robot and program it with a computer. Advancement Via Independent Determination (AVID) was designed for implementation at the middle school level to support students who have the potentials to attend college. AVID targets the population of students who being at average performance and lack support systems and mentors to advance academically and socially.

Our Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club and El Capitan have partnered with Live Again Fresno to serve our community. El Capitan's leadership class is made up of a combination of elected, appointed, and selected students. It is taught by our activities director and is responsible of developing our school culture and fostering school spirit. El Capitan offers multiple opportunities for students to broaden their social, emotional, and experiential knowledge through clubs on campus. Offerings include: Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Asian Club, College Club, Science Girls, Choir Club, and Band Club.

El Capitan Middle School is a work in progress. It is not perfect and it is not complete, but we live each day with an aspiration of continual improvement and a goal of students who leave well than they arrived. With that in mind we remember that every moment is an opportunity to change a life. Every moment is a teaching moment.

Our campus staff works tirelessly to make sure students have an inviting place to learn, but also have examples of their responsibility to keep that place inviting. Our support staff provides the one-on-one learning opportunities that so many students need and crave. Our administration labors to find new ways to reach students who are struggling with society's expectations. And, our amazing teachers differentiate their instruction, shifting to meet the needs of a varying population. It isn't a perfect machine working in tandem yet, but it's a beautiful thing to watch.

The most impressive thing about El Capitan is the people who fill it every day. WE come to school each day seeking an opportunity to make that day better than the one before. Our students come looking for a place to feel that they belong. In the end, its our job to make sure that all of them learn to SOAR.

**GLACIER POINT MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**4055 N. Bryan**  
**Fresno, CA 93723**  
**Eliseo Cuellar, Principal**

Since Glacier Point was first founded in 2011, we have established a pro-active approach to teaching behavior on campus. We began implementing Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS). Through PBIS the Glacier Point staff completed a matrix to identify the at-risk behaviors on campus as well as the desired behaviors in the various locations around campus. After reviewing the staffs' input, our PBIS Team came up with our behavioral expectations that we embedded into our school's motto of PAWS. Students and staff at Glacier Point will demonstrate their Personal Best (P), Act Responsibly (A), make Wise Choices (W), and Show Respect (S).

Through PAWS our staff is able to define what good character looks like. For example, "Personal best" means being engaged in the classroom and modeling positive behaviors; "Acting responsible" means coming to school on time, prepared, and ready to learn; making "Wise choices" means following directions and thinking first before we respond; and "Showing respect" means using kind and positive words.

The campus at Glacier Point has become more of a positive one since we first opened three years ago. Our staff has increased their usage of positive reinforcement in and out of the classroom. This shift has helped us to decrease our total suspensions from last year. At Glacier Point, we review our referrals monthly through the SWIS data management system. SWIS is the School-Wide Information System that we use to input and track behaviors. By utilizing this system we can pin point what misbehaviors are occurring, when they occur, as well as the specific locations. This allows us to make appropriate individualized student centered decisions within a timely manner.

At Glacier Point, we also believe in preparing students for the future. Students participate in a Career Cruising survey to find out more about occupations and professions that interest them. Then our 8th graders create professional portfolios, write cover letters, create resumes, collect their best work, etc and present them to professional community members in an interview type setting.

The PAWS expectations were taught in a series of direct instruction lessons during our Connect for Success period. The lessons were broken down based on the location. Therefore we had a lesson for the expectations in classroom, hallways, cafeteria, quad, bathroom/locker-room, library/computer lab, office, bus, and internet.

A few years ago we created a BAIT Team (Behavior Academic Intervention Team). This team meets weekly to review office discipline referrals and academic concerns so that we can provide the proper interventions to students in need. Another intervention we have on campus are academic mentors through Fresno States' Teaching Fellows Program. These

mentors meet with students weekly to review grades, missing assignments, etc. This program allows students to receive one-on-one guidance academically, behaviorally, and socially. Through our mentoring programs, we have been able to reduce suspensions and decrease the number of students with a 2.0 or below G.P.A.

Glacier Point is still a fairly new campus but the students and staff help to ensure that the campus stays looking that way. The school created a Safety Committee where the staff provides feedback in regards to how we can keep and maintain the safety of students and staff on campus. The school has also established:

- Positive classroom management
- Visitors/Parents must sign in and receive a badge prior to entering campus
- Secure & locked campus
- Visual cameras around campus
- Guidance & Instructional Counseling
- Counseling (anger management, peer relationships, grief, loss, etc)

Majority of the staff members at Glacier Point go above and beyond to instill good character in the students and within the school community. Many staff members have volunteered to advise clubs on campus either during lunch or after-school. We have an Anime Club, Book Club, Robotics Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club, Campus Life Club, and History Club. The teachers and staff freely give up their time to help students to get involved and take pride not only in their school, but in themselves.

The staff at Glacier Point help to promote a positive culture by greeting students at the door and by implementing positive reinforcement. The staff members are pro-active and catch students being good. Staff members reward students with PAWS Bucks for exhibiting the PAWS expectations. Students can take their PAWS Bucks to our Husky Hut where they can redeem their bucks for spirit items and school supplies.

The Glacier Point staff believes that we as educators can make a difference. We emphasize character development in order to help prepare students for college, career, and community. Through the Jr. Rotary Service Award we are promoting service to our community. Through Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), we established a behavioral matrix based on the needs of our students. We teach students to self-regulate their behavior by teaching them what the expectations are in different settings. We have become a pro-active community, rather than a reactive one. We believe that our students are the future leaders; therefore it is imperative that we continue to instill positive ethics and morals to help them become good citizens. We are proud of how far our school has come in four years and we look forward to continued success in the future.

**JOHN F. KENNEDY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**  
**Hanford Elementary School District**  
**1000 E. Florinda**  
**Hanford, CA 93230**  
**Mr. Jason Strickland**

John F. Kennedy Junior High School understands the importance of character education and its impact on young people for our future. Our staff comes to work every day knowing that today may be the day that their connection to a student may lead to something extraordinary. The entire school team knows and understands that character education is not just something that's taught. Character education must be practiced, it must be visible, it must be felt, and it must be real. Over the years, the staff at John F. Kennedy has refined their practice and teaching of character education. From teaching trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship, the staff and students strive to be visible models of what character education should look like. Over the course of the past 9 years, there has been a noticeable change in the culture and climate of the school; a shift in the focus of discipline to reinforcement, overall improvement in attendance and a significant decrease in classroom and campus disruptions.

We feel that teaching our students the importance of having good moral character is something that will last a lifetime. We recognize that adolescent students are so impressionable and we seek to use that desire to understand the world around them to teach good values and moral character.

The staff at John F. Kennedy wanted to create a culture and climate that students and parents would be proud of. The 6 pillars of Character as outlined by the Josephson's Institute is the basis for the character education teaching/learning at JFK. Although each is imperative to the next, we focus on respect, responsibility, and kindness. In these three areas we stress to students in a variety of ways. Our goals were:

- To develop a Humanitarian Club to teach community responsibility.
- To develop an Anti-Bullying Club.
- To develop a behavior modification class to help teach students self-discipline and responsibility to oneself.

These goals were determined based on our needs, desires, and resources. We backwards mapped what we wanted to provide, based on the resources we had available and the adults willing to take an active role. With high energy staff members, the goal of developing the above clubs/classes, came to fruition.

Character education and teaching is the basis of our daily work with students. We address weekly character education through the National Character Education Program called Character Counts!™ by having weekly quotes of the week for staff to emphasize with their students to promote good character. We also have monthly pillars of character that we emphasize throughout the week and provide incentives for students to use these pillars in a positive way that will gain them recognition and emphasize the importance of

the six pillars of character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, caring).

At JFK we stress community. Students are given a sense of “this school is their school”. We attempt to instill pride in our students by stressing the importance of cleaning up after themselves and keeping our campus looking clean and impressive year around. Students are given opportunities to earn incentives for maintaining a clean campus, but our overarching goal is to have students build intrinsic motivation to keep their campus clean because it is a reflection of them and their community.

As mentioned throughout, our students at John F. Kennedy Junior High School contribute to our school and our community in a variety of creative ways. We feel this is our responsibility. We have to teach more than curriculum. This work is important to the future of these students and the future, in general. Our students learn the value of helping others through volunteer work, presentations at surrounding elementary schools, presentations to peers at this school, being accountable to one another within the club/class, and witnessing the positive impact they have on our campus.

As a junior high school, we feel strongly that the lessons in virtue and character that we teach our students and that our staff model each day is a necessary part of public school curriculum. Our focus is to teach the entire child, and with that comes the need to teach each child to have a moral compass and to acknowledge their responsibilities to themselves, to others and to the community as a whole. We are proud of the work that we do and our staff and students are committed to upholding good character.

## **KINGS CANYON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Fresno Unified School District**

**5117 E. Tulare Ave**

**Fresno, CA 93727**

**Edith Navarro, Principal**

The character education goals for Kings Canyon were developed by the entire Kings Canyon /staff under the guidance of our Safe & Civil School Team and School Site Council back in 2004. These groups include certificated and classified staff, parent, students and administrators. Our guidelines for success are called E5 and are referenced every morning during announcements and are posted for student review in every classroom. This code offers students five simple personal standards: When you are in public, act in a polite manner, Always obey and respect your teachers and other adults, Take care of your school. Don't be a bully and don't tolerate bullying by others, If you know something bad is going on, tell an adult.

Character education is addressed throughout curriculum and grade levels giving all students equal access to learning the shared core values of our school. Each week students and staff engage in advisory lessons that are centered on topics such as anti-bullying, building positive relationships, and supporting students becoming self-advocates by creating personal goals related to grades, attendance and behavior.

As selected intervals during the year, all Kings Canyon teachers teach E5 lessons in their classrooms. The original lessons provided by the Safe & Civil Team have been updated and taught regularly for the past eight years to address basic student needs such as personal courtesy, honesty, bullying prevention and care for the school environment.

The importance of a safe living environment is actively promoted. Through the E5 code students are encouraged to "take care of the school". Members of the student leadership class regularly decorate the school with encouraging posters; glass display cases have been added to the central hallway to highlight student work and achievements; and each teacher has a personal display case which I also used to foster character advancements.

Every student at Kings Canyon wears a lanyard with an ID card and adheres to the Fresno Unified dress code to support career and college ready skills. The lanyard policy also keeps students safe as they are quickly identified as middle school students.

Kings Canyon staff provides all students with opportunities to develop citizenship skills, using the community as a classroom by engaging the community in providing resources and support. The many clubs on campus have become service orientated such as the agricultural club which has done all the landscaping throughout the campus. Students have participated, in charity efforts including Pennies for Patients (cancer fundraising), supporting Valley Children's hospital, a jog-a-thon to raise money for the March of Dimes and last month a canned food drive for needy families.

Our focus is to provide a multicultural lens or viewpoint in all teaching methods, materials, and curriculum to offer a diverse view of the world we live in order to create in our students a service minded awareness of how to give back to their communities. This commitment is evident in clubs and classes such as our Folklorico Dance, Ameri-Asian Club, Wyldlike, Girls Who Code, Men's & Women's Alliance, Native Language Speakers Spanish, and Spanish classes for A-G credit.

Our site is committed to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of all our students. Respect and tolerance is the norm at Kings Canyon. Students are respected for their uniqueness human and their individual gifts they bring to our classrooms everyday.

Kings Canyon is proud of our family and community reach out program. The use of School-Messenger, Edutext, and ATLAS provide our families 24-hour online access to student grades. Parents play an active role on our campus. Parents play an active role on our campus. Parents are involved in ELAC, School Site Committee, PTA, Parents' Coffee Hour, health fairs, computer technology training, Digital Citizenship, and GED classes offered on site by our teachers.

At Kings Canyon Middle School the staff takes great pride in having a positive campus culture that embodies the core values of Character Education. In exit surveys conducted with campus visitors, substitute teachers, district representatives, parents and community members it is regularly reported that students at Kings Canyon are respectful, caring, polite, and responsible. The positive culture on campus is a direct result of the time and energy invested by all staff members to develop meaningful relationships with students.

Kings Canyon Middle School is also proud of all the efforts of its staff to create opportunities for students to be engaged in co-curricular activities. WE are also proud of all the different ways we recognize students for their successes. Currently we have monthly awards given by teachers to students for exhibiting outstanding character. Our suspension rate is one of the lowest of all the middle schools in Fresno Unified. Staff actively looks at referrals and suspensions rates to ensure there are no areas of inequity in our restorative justice model to promote positive school behavior.

The development of character has become both a site and district focus. The accountability system for all schools in Fresno Unified changed with the CORE waiver given by the federal government to nine districts in California. Kings Canyon was selected as a high performing school and has since then partnered up with a low performing school in Oakland, California to mentor their teacher staff. This cross district collaboration led by Kings Canyon will have a viable impact on our state and in the future our country. Student of character become citizens of character and our core belief is that citizens of character then create a stronger American system.

**MULCAHY MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Tulare City School District**  
**1001 W. Sonora Ave**  
**Tulare, CA 93274**  
**Mr. Mark Thompson, Principal**

Since its opening in 1958, our school has provided students with an educational experience designed to prepare all students for high school and post-secondary education through a standards-based (Common Core) academic program that promotes the *development of strong ethical character, critical thinking skills, and emotional and physical well-being*. Mulcahy also prides itself on its rich ethnic diversity and strength in community involvement and relationships. Mulcahy has gone back to our original origins and adopted our original color scheme and school logo. Our updated school motto is: “**Stallion Pride**” which stands for *Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Empowerment*.

The adoption of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Philosophy and strategies meets our *character education goals* by complimenting the qualities of our students and the core values held by the Mulcahy family, and fostered by our school since 1958. Mulcahy Middle School is dedicated to strengthening young people through an educational program, the foundation of which is based on a blend of academic and *moral and ethical development*. The school community has embraced the core ethical values of *responsibility, respect, trustworthiness, caring, fairness, and citizenship for our character education goal*.

The **instruction** of character development begins prior to the first day of school where members of the school community including parents, students, and the staff participate in an orientation assembly. School policies, student behaviors, and responsibilities are discussed.

**Enforcing** core ethical values and school goals can be found throughout the campus in the form of a variety of visuals. **Character Education Goals** are determined by staff and students. This past summer we engaged our staff in development meeting where teams discussed our **current data and school evidence** that helped to drive our focus for character development concentration in the following school year. **Advocating** for the character development of our students and informing the school community about the superior work being accomplished takes place through positive school-community activities, which occur each trimester. Activities include: Academic Awards, and Athletic Award. Additional annual activities include a new annual Career Fair and College: Making it Happen Night. We believe however, the most powerful method in which to foster the true meaning of the Pillars and our school adopted “Stallion Pride” is to provide students with opportunity to observe and **model** ethical behavior on a daily basis.

Character development is the foundation upon which the Mulcahy school community is based. Teachers are encouraged to integrate the CHARACTER COUNTS! Philosophy into their lessons and **instruction** to further encourage and promote the progression of

ethical decision-making. Examples of character education curriculum and instruction in classrooms include: Student Created Public Service Announcements, PRIDE pamphlets, Empowerment Projects.

Mulcahy has the prestigious honor of being an **AVID School Certified with Distinction**. As a Nationally Recognized Program, AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) teaches students how to prepare for college. Through AVID, the Mulcahy staff has focused on peer tutoring to develop a stronger sense of community, both academically and socially.

Mulcahy staff strives to **promote and model** fairness, equity, and the similar traits we explicitly teach and model for our students Stallion Pride. Some of the opportunities we take to recognize and model these behaviors are listed: CHARACTER COUNTS!, Stallions of the Month, Tulare County “Kids of Character”, Caught being Good, Graduation Recognition/Scholarships, Mulcahy PRIDE Raffles, and Peer Tutors.

We have also made it a priority to ensure we have a **clean and secure learning environment** that fosters student learning both physically and psychologically: Updated roofing and painting to promote school value and worth, new fencing and a fully gated campus with a secured entrance and bell system, lunchtime recycling program with a focus on composting and trash recycling. Psychologically: small groups with counseling for similar needs, Onsite psychologist, On site SST meetings to brainstorm and support specific student needs, on site lunchtime chaplains to support positive behaviors and shared SRO officers on middle school campuses in the district.

Students actively participate in a number of valuable community service projects designed to promote social development while fostering the principles of character development and strengthening community partnerships. In addition to its school-wide support of Children’s Hospital, Mulcahy students routinely ***volunteer to participate in civix service activities*** and make charitable contributions. Students and staff work together organizing and promoting multiple community contributions.

As a result of our School Faculty Meeting to discuss character education, it is evident to our staff that we have a focused direction of providing students with opportunities for moral action. It has been an empowering opportunity for all of us to see how kindness and generosity promote moral action beyond what is expected. Mulcahy Middle School promotes core ethical and character beliefs through the base of our instruction; therefore, continuing to promote the initial beliefs of Alice G. Mulcahy as being dedicated to hard work, honesty, and community service as well as creating an environment for the good of others not only for today, but for the future of our students and community.

**RIO VISITA MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Central Unified School District**  
**6240 W. Palo Alto**  
**Fresno, CA 93722**  
**Mr. Joe Bracamonte, Principal**

The character education goals for Rio Vista Middle School are concrete and specific. All of the staff and students at Rio Vista know our goals and refer to them as “Fantastic Four”. The Fantastic Four are: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be There Be Ready, and Following Directions. The goals were determined in a collaborative effort by the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Team that regularly meets on our campus to continuously improve our efforts to promote good character at our school. Input was given by all staff members as well.

Rio Vista’s progress has been steady as we work toward our goals. The PBIS team, which consists of an administrator, several teachers, school psychologist, and classified staff members meets monthly. The team monitors behavior by collecting data and entering the data in the School Wide Information System (SWISS). Reports are analyzed to look for trends as well as areas to intervene to promote more successful choices for all students. For those students who demonstrate high levels of character consistently, Rio Vista promotes awards and public recognition of the examples they are setting for other students.

Character education begins the first week of school at Rio Vista Middle School. All students attend a rally where they learn/review the Fantastic Four in the gym, where our Pillars of Characters banners hang. Students also participate in campus walks during PE classes to review appropriate behaviors and expectations for various locations on our campus. Teachers and students agree upon mutual classroom expectations and behavior connected to respect thus giving students ‘buy in’. Respect Agreements are displayed in classrooms and referred to throughout the year.

Character education is also infused within the core curriculum. Teachers teach core ethical values through their academic subjects. ELA teachers integrate character into their content through academic integrity issues, such as, use of sources and academic honesty. Through character analysis they support or defend character’s motives and actions. Through our Social Studies classes, students discuss ethical issues and how our history guides moral choices. Rio Vista continues to implement the AVID program. This program helps students learn to become responsible for their own learning and prepares student for success in college.

Rio Vista’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 in our campus, both physically and psychologically. School grounds and classrooms are kept clean and well maintained to provide a safe learning environment and to model the pillar of citizenship. . Behaviors rewarded include but are not limited to: showing compassion to a classmate, performing campus beautification, showing extra care.

Rio Vista administers a Healthy Kids Survey each year. The school utilizes information from the survey to address students' perceptions of safety on campus. Our School Safety Plan is updated annually to ensure that all students and staff have a safe working environment. We have created 'Bully Reports' for students to complete and turn in if they feel they are being bullied. Administration receives the reports. Besides resolving the situation, reports are analyzed for patterns that can be extinguished school wide through bully awareness activities.

Staff members take advantage of daily opportunities to practice core values in the context of relationships and classroom work. Our theme this year is 'Making Connections'. Staff members are establishing relationships with students through clubs, cross-age tutoring, mediating conflicts and helping others. Teachers and staff maintain communication with parents, which promotes a team approach to character development in our students to prepare them for adulthood and society.

Students and families are encouraged in various ways to contribute to school, others, and the community. Pennies for Patients, Student Council, Holiday Joy, Toys for Tots, Service Learning Project, Cross Age Tutoring, Kid's Day Paper, Kindness Week, and Pursuing Victory with Honor.

Rio Vista staff has 'buy in' with our character development plan and goals. Staff has set goals this year to connect with students whenever and however possible. More teachers are active in clubs and school activities this year. Rio Vista is a place where character expectations are high and clear. Our goal is to be a campus where every student takes pride in the culture of our school, and can assist any new students or teachers to assimilate in a welcoming manner.

With an eye toward continuous improvement, we are proud of our student body, and our team of staff members that have contributed to the character-rich environment here at Rio Vista. To ensure that we remain in a state of continuous improvement, we have created a strong team of staff and other stakeholders. They meet regularly to monitor the implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), review data of student behavior, plan for reward activities and interventions, and provide communications to the staff and community.

## **SCANDINAVIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Fresno Unified School District**

**3232 N. Sierra Vista**

**Fresno, CA 93726**

**Julie Goorabian-Ellis, Principal**

Scandinavian Middle School continues to evolve as a learning community which holds high and attainable expectations and ensures high achievement and growth for ALL students. Together we embrace learning through meaningful collaboration and collective responsibility toward continuous improvement. The mission of Scandinavian Middle School is to prepare ALL students socially, emotionally, and academically to be College and Career Ready Graduates. As a 2009 and 2011 Virtues and Character Award recipient, Scandinavian Middle School has made strides in strengthening our school culture by practicing transparency with both adults and students. It is important to be honest with our students about the reality of what they face beyond the four walls of the Scandinavian Campus. As educators at Scandinavian, we have made a commitment to tear down the walls of the adversity that stands in our way, and we take full responsibility to armor our students with knowledge and the skills that they will need to be powerful contributors of society.

Scandinavian has established many programs and activities to give ALL students the opportunity to take moral action and experience success through trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. It is our priority and commitment to develop students of character who lead by example and live these core ethical values every day at school and in their community. Scandinavian recognizes students of exemplary character every month, in addition to recognizing students who are making growth through the Student of the Month Character Pillar Awards. As part of this award, students are recognized at a luncheon with the East Fresno Rotary. Other student recognitions include quarterly academic and athletic awards assemblies and music award.

The Peer Mediation Program has emerged as a focal point in providing for our students a place where students can feel safe to discuss situations and problems that arise between students. We teach our students that if there is a problem that is occurring, to let a teacher know so that a peer mediation circle can be facilitated. The Character Counts Student Academic Planners are an important resource and reference for our students and staff. Our staff recognizes the importance to continue to implement the Character Counts Student Academic Planner. We start each school year with a 3 week School Success Start-Up Plan. During Advisory Period, students are introduced to the Parent/Teacher/Student Handbook and the Character Counts Academic Planner.

This year, our Character Education goal is to commit to building healthy student and adult relationships that establish safe, caring, and a respectful learning community. As part of achieving this goal, our work at Scandinavian has been centered on democracy, giving our students a voice and using Restorative Practices and Socratic Seminars while teaching the six Character Pillars. In 2007 Scandinavian Middle School opened our doors to incoming 7th grade students with the WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) Program for

the first time in FUSD. Scandinavian's WEB Program has become "the" model for FUSD. WEB is a national middle school transition program that helps incoming students feel more comfortable, connected to the school's culture when paired with an eighth grade leader, and is able to develop a positive attitude toward their new school. WEB is built on the belief that students want to and can help other students succeed and it is the students who will take ownership for promoting core ethical values amongst their peers and teachers.

Our students are provided with leadership opportunities, study trips, and exciting adventures that they would not have the opportunity to do in other places. Our WEB program students and our Young Men's and Women's Alliance students, not typically classified as students who are academic leaders, are involved in college field trips; providing these students with an entirely different outlook on life, and inspiring them to strive towards something better in life. In addition, they are involved in many service projects such as Operation Christmas Child, Red Ribbon Week, Jingle Bell Run, Angel Babies, The Fresno Rescue Mission, and in the spring our Alliance groups will be fundraising for Heifer International, a program that sends goats, pigs, cows, rabbits, chickens, honey, llama, buffalo, bees, and fish to underdeveloped countries.

Scandinavian Middle School is in its sixth year of participating in the Safe and Civil School Program offered by Fresno Unified School District and Dr. Randy Spricks. The goal of the program is to create a safe, civil, and productive school. A Safe and Civil School's team was formed and has trained staff in a comprehensive approach that facilitates good decisions about behavior and discipline. With the thoughtful meaning of "STOIC" in mind: "someone respected and admired for patience and endurance in the face of adversity", a five step systematic approach is being implemented: Structure/organize all school settings for success, Teach students how to behave responsible in those settings, Observe student behavior (supervise); Interact positively with students, Correct irresponsible behavior calmly, consistently, and immediately in the setting in which the infraction occurred.

Over the past seven years since the WEB program was established, we have continued to expand and provide new opportunities for students. This year WEB is working toward building servants' hearts in the lives of our leadership students. The goal is to learn to put others' needs before our own. WEB students work toward developing a friendly, safe environment that kids want to be a part of. The focus is that differences create life challenges that open the door to discovery.

As a 2009 and 2011 Virtues and Character Award recipient, Scandinavian Middle School continues to develop and implement new programs with the pillars of character woven throughout. As a staff, both new teachers and veteran teachers, we have reflected deeply about our commitment to evolve and strive every year to offer new and expanded opportunities for our students. In our reflection of the application for the Bonner Award, we have realized that Scandinavian has long been known as place where many leadership opportunities are available for our students.

These children are OUR children and we treat and teach them as such. As educators, here at Scandinavian, our Warrior family collectively teaches the art of “transparency” as a way for growth to occur academically, behaviorally, and socially. In the outside world, we know that not everything is perfect and practicing restoration is a way to teach our students that mishaps can occur, but can be fixed with the relationship being restored. Here at Scandinavian, it is truly about being authentic...being real. This shift in thinking has brought our Warrior family closer and more trusting of one another which is what makes Scandinavian a place where students thrive, changes lives and all around, an amazing place to be.

**SEQUOIA MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Fresno Unified School District**  
**4050 E. Hamilton Avenue**  
**Fresno, CA 93702**  
**Mr. Matt Ward, Principal**

**Sequoia Middle School is a Community of Scholars.** Every administrator, teacher, office staff, custodian, cook, parent volunteer, and student contributes to and advances our Lumberjack community focused on building the connection between academics, character and success. An essential goal of Sequoia Middle School is to teach, model, practice, and celebrate an intense character education program. This directly supports Fresno Unified School District's mission of "Preparing College and Career Ready Graduates." This mission is anchored in four goals and includes excelling in reading and math, engaging students in the arts, activities, and athletics, character education, and staying on target to graduate. Through our site commitment to these goals and the principles taught and reinforced through Character Counts!, we strive to develop, strengthen and encourage core ethical values that can be seen in and out of the classroom.

Our staff works diligently to foster an intervention framework to guide us as we implement our improvement actions. Our expectations for behavior are clearly defined, included in our student agenda, and revisited on a regular basis. Included in these expectations are Sequoia's Guidelines for Success (Choose to give respect to get respect, Choose to be a better person every day. Choose to get involved in something positive, and Choose to challenge yourself to work hard for success), Anti-Bullying Rules, CHAMPS expectations as well as the Character Counts! Pillars of Character. Students exhibiting significant behavior difficulties are placed on an individualized behavior plan which may include appointments with our academic counselor, guidance learning coordinator, and/or social worker.

Two goals we set early on were to decrease the number of suspensions and reduce the number of Ds and Fs thereby increasing GPAs. Our summary report of suspensions for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, show our total number of suspensions decreased by 22%. The percentage of students with one or more D or F grades has decreased 11.3% from 40.6% during the first quarter in 2012-2013 to 29.3% for the first quarter of 2014-15. The percentage of students with two or more F grades has decreased 11.3% from 10.6% to 2.8% during the same time frame. Also noteworthy is the percentage of students with an academic GPA of 2.0 or below has decreased 13% to 5.2%. It is encouraging to see significant improvement in these areas.

Sequoia has a yearlong school wide focus on celebrating diversity each quarter which includes class projects, school wide contests, assemblies and lunch activities. We devote learning to Hispanic, Asian and African-American heritages as these are the cultures our community represents. . By understanding diversity, students can learn to Care, Respect, and treat all people with Fairness. Students and staff alike look forward to showcasing their own cultures as well as their knowledge of other cultures within our Community of Scholars.

Our Language Arts Department develops Common Core lessons based on essential questions that expand on our motto “Students Making Successful Choices” and promote a deep connection to core values and ethics. Our History Department challenges students to “think like a historian” to build and practice Citizenship, Responsibility and Fairness. In addition, teachers guide students to read closely and analyze primary and secondary sources relating to units of study. For example, students analyzed the Bill of Rights and determined how our country would be different if some of the amendments were excluded. In these ways, history moves beyond dates and facts to the integration of content and critical thinking incorporating values and virtues.

We recognize and celebrate our students in all phases of school life in an effort to increase participation and connectedness to school. Sequoia recognizes students each week who have demonstrated the individual pillars: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Additional areas are also rewarded which include but are not limited to student leadership, teamwork, academics, and good sportsmanship. The Character Counts! Tickets continue to be one of our most powerful tools in reinforcing successful choices and acts of kindness. Sequoia’s Awesome Characters Pursuing Academics and Character (SAC PAC) celebrates multiple phases of success as a Lumberjack. Character Counts! Award is a prestigious award that we began in 2006. This award is presented to one eighth grade boy and girl who demonstrated exemplary character throughout the year.

Sequoia’s Junior Doctor’s Academy (JDA) was created to identify, educate and advance annual cohorts of disadvantaged students from middle school through college and health professional schools. Further reinforcement of Responsibility and Caring through JDA strengthens our students to become competitive applicants to advance to the esteemed Doctor’s Academy program at Sunnyside High School. Safety and student support procedures continue to be a focus at Sequoia. Our Safe and Civil Schools Team meets regularly to assess current actions and to develop and implement positive policies and procedures to ensure continued safety for all members and visitors to Sequoia Middle School. Each morning, students dressed in compliance with the dress code are greeted by several teachers and administrators.

Sequoia is committed to strong parent involvement. Communication with parents is crucial and a high priority. We set aside necessary funding to assist in translating information to our parents in their primary languages. Sequoia has a home school liaison that assists students during and after school, translates materials and assists during parent meetings. Having a secure and psychologically safe and caring school requires an explicit and intentional way to address bullying. Our Safe and Civil Schools Committee and Student Leadership helped develop Sequoia’s Anti-Bullying Rules along with Class Meeting ground rules during advisory to promote student participation, communication and relationship building.

Sequoia Middle School is both proud and humbled to have previously received the Bonner Center’s Virtues and Character Award. We know that success has no finish line so we have not rested on our achievements but continue to evaluate, plan for

improvements and implement positive changes to our various programs with the ultimate goal of providing a challenging and comprehensive academic and character curriculum. Sequoia Middle School is a Community of Scholars. Together we have the charge to model and exhibit all of the Character Counts! virtues. We will all continue in the process of cultivating exemplary characters equipped with tools to be lifelong learners and pillars in their communities every day.

**SUTTER MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Fowler Unified School District**  
**701 E. Walters Ave**  
**Fowler, CA 93625**  
**Mr. Gary Geringer, Principal**

Sutter Middle School promotes core ethical values in its day to day activities, as this is the expectation of the leadership at not only the site but the district level. The staff of Fowler Unified, including the staff at Sutter Middle School, feels that the character development of our students is essential to their success, the success of our community, and our society. It is important that we play an essential role in this development as we are often the strongest support system our students encounter.

Character Education goals are developed from various sources at Sutter. The goals are often guided by the district goals created by the district Character Education Committee. This committee is made up of district personnel, including our Superintendent, parents, students, and representatives from each school site.

Character education goals are also created by the staff at Sutter as it is a top priority at our site. Discussions may be prompted by looking at discipline data or simply noticing changes in behaviors or expectations that we feel need greater focus. These goals are recommended by teachers or site leadership and discussed at staff meetings.

We realized that although we have always emphasized the character standards, students may not really grasp what those standards look like, sound like, etc. We have seen great impact in not only the number of students being recognized for their character, approximately 25 per month, but also involvement of staff members in the process which encourages everyone on campus!

Service learning is another character education goal that Sutter strives to implement. One goal is to provide each student an opportunity to experience a service project before they leave our campus. We want student to find the intrinsic motivation to serve others and their community.

A clean, secure learning environment is evident when you enter Sutter's Campus. This is achieved by building school pride and responsibility in our students. When students take ownership in their school, they go the extra mile to ensure it looks good and is welcoming for guest and new students.

Building a psychologically safe and caring school beings with the rapport that our staff builds with our students. From maintenance and cafeteria staff, to classroom aides and teachers, to office staff and administration, everyone works to communicate and have meaningful conversations with our students. We want all students to make connections on campus and know that we are here to support them.

Sutter has a full-time counselor on staff available to serve students as well as plan student activities. The counselor is currently working with a group of students called B.R.E.A.L which stands for Be Respectful, Encourage, Appreciate, and Listen. This group has presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in the district about treating others respectfully and encouraging one another. The B.R.E.A.L. group plans to continue their presentations and education for encourage, appreciate, and listen as well as organizing a disability awareness event, and mix-it-up at lunch event.

The staff on our campus promote and model the character traits and behaviors daily by treating each other and their students with respect, caring, and fairness. We have transitioned as a team into celebrating our successes and the successes of our students. The Sutter staff also leads by example by participating in activities on campus and sharing with students their own service projects. The Sutter staff often spends time outside of school hours, on weekends and evenings, supporting our students in their activities and helping them organize and supervise service projects.

Portfolio Day is another way Sutter strives to make our students efforts meaningful. This event is an opportunity for every student to showcase their hard work and utilize their character training to members of the community. Every student is provided with a binder in which they build a portfolio of their work for the school year. They choose 1-2 pieces from each class and write a reflection addressing why they chose the piece, what they learned, and how they can apply their knowledge in the future.

Overall, through our discussions about values and character education at Sutter, we recognized that we intentionally do we wide variety of activities that promote and encourage our character expectations. Some of these things are well-planned events, but what impacts our students the most are the day to day happenings that we address in what we call “the Wildcat Way”. Students are also reminded daily to “Stride with Wildcat Pride”. These mottos and their meaning are embedded in Sutter Students. Sutter’s character development is displayed in various ways with a big emphasis on community service learning. Creating character development and successful members of society through service is at the heart of Fowler Unified, Sutter Middle School, and defines “The Wildcat Way”.

**TEHIPITE MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Fresno Unified School District**  
**630 N. Augusta**  
**Fresno, CA 93701**  
**Yvonne Zysling, Principal**

Beyond “academic standards”, Tehipite students have the opportunity to develop their social awareness and the opportunity to practice appropriate social conduct. Tehipite Middle School teachers believe that an articulated, intentional, and proactive system of character education and the teaching of character expectations will ultimately lead to fewer discipline problems, less student to student conflict, and more productive interactions between students and between students and teachers.

Tehipite Middle School staff, in line with the district’s core belief, believes that every student can and must learn at grade level or beyond and that our purpose is to “Prepare college and career ready graduates”. Tehipite is a place where diversity is valued, educational excellence and equity are expected, individual responsibility and “learning by doing” is required, collaborative adult relationships are essential, and parents, students, and the community as a whole are vital partners. C.A.T. P.R.I.D.E. captures the character traits that the Tehipite staff members have identified as essential: C. Caring A. Attitude (Citizenship) T. Trustworthiness P. Preparation (Responsibility) R. Respect I. Integrity (fairness) D. Determination E. Engagement/Teamwork. These values are intertwined into every aspect of school life. Students are challenged daily to “Always have the Courage to try!”

The CHAMP’s system has profoundly influenced the way teachers and students operate in the classroom and in the public places on campus. CHAMP’s ....Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, and Participation. Knowing that middle school students need structure and consistency, teachers establish routine class procedures and define and explicitly state what learning and class activity looks like. For example, during direct instruction by the teacher, the poster would state: Conversation: No talking-Level 0; ALL eyes on the teacher; Help: Raise your hand; wait for me to call on you. The CHAMP’s posters are individual to each classroom; however, you will see many similarities in expectations from classroom to classroom.

In order to ascertain whether or not school-wide goals are being met in the area of character education, the TCC monitors data including referrals to the office, tardies to class, attendance, number of suspensions, student academic achievement, and academic preparedness. As students arrive at school each morning and enter the gate, they are greeted with a handshake by an administrator and a dress code check is done. The school day begins with a welcome to the class of 2019 and 2020. A leadership student leads the flag salute and reads the daily bulletin. The “Character Trait of the Month” is memorialized each day via quotes generated by the students. Every Monday a “binder and agenda check” is conducted. Data is reported out weekly. Advisory classrooms with 100% participation quarterly earn an incentive.

Character education is addressed throughout the curriculum and at all grade levels; Tehipite ensures a clean and secure learning environment, as well as a psychologically healthy, secure, and caring environment for students at our school; The adults at Tehipite promote and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect for others. The academic content areas and elective areas are the ideal setting for students to learn the intrinsic curriculum necessary to become positive members of Tehipite Middle School and FUSD and ultimately the global society.

A well-disciplined, psychologically healthy, clean and secure learning environment provides the best atmosphere for students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities. Students are expected to observe high standards of conduct, respect the property of others, and comply with the regulations of the school. Students are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and courteous manners. Maintaining a safe campus equates to high visibility of staff. The administrative team is committed to being at their door, in the hallways during passing periods during the school day. This action supports the goals of the TCC and “Operation Start on Time”. The physical features of the Tehipite campus are typical of a school built in the 70’s; thus, placement of supervision personnel is strategic.

Tehipite’s diverse and socioeconomically challenged student population requires teachers and staff to focus on building relationships with students. As a staff, we have spent time sharing our “why”...why we became educators. Each person’s ‘why’ is at the core of what drives them each day. At Tehipite, we know that the majority of our students need reading fluency and reading comprehension intervention.

Tehipite teachers provide equity in the classroom in the following ways: Ensure that ALL students have the proper materials to succeed academically, Create and deliver meaningful, relevant, complex/rigorous, engaging lessons, Allow sufficient wait time for student responses and engage students through a variety of learning modalities; all students engage in writing, reading, speaking, listening in the content areas, Scaffold the instruction without compromising the rigor and complexity level at which ALL students must be challenged to perform; scaffold means ‘support’, not ‘simplify’ and many more.

Tehipite Middle School makes it a priority to engage students in service learning through a variety of volunteer, after-school and during-school related events. The middle school years are challenging for every student. Peer pressure is always present! Middle school students are experiencing many changes, physically, socially, & emotionally. Students are out of their comfort zone when we involve them in class meetings and character building activities. It is the role of our teachers to institutionalize character development practices that allow students to safely participate – we must continue to hold character development as a PRIORITY on our campus and in the development of our students.

## **WASHINGTON ACADEMIC MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Sanger Unified School District**

**1705 10<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Sanger, CA 93657**

**Jamie Nino, Principal**

The Sanger Unified School District's motto this year is "All in Together". This motto is a guiding vision at Washington Academic Middle School (WAMS) as well. This principle drives our staff to be role models, and to lead our students to go beyond academic success. Our staff has a daily commitment to expanding our culture of respect and instilling a desire in students to be True Warriors, which means students live up to their full potential in order to be college and career ready, and productive members of society.

The behavioral expectations and character values through our PBIS system are as follows: Prepared, Respectful, Integrity, Dedicated, Excellence or Warrior PRIDE. Each August, WAMS spends a week dedicated to "Warrior PRIDE Days", which is a complex rotation system that allows each and every student to explicitly learn the behavioral expectations in each area of the school.

The WAMS PBIS team meets monthly to review data from referrals/suspensions, discuss our Pyramid of Academic Success, our current rules for specific settings, overviews of interventions for specific students, staff feedback, rewards, lessons that are taught within advisory, and attendance trends and rewards. This past year, our site was the proud recipient of the highest achievement available through the county, which is the Gold Level award. As a result of this positive focus, student behavior has improved and we have seen a decrease in student suspensions.

WAMS' program continues to achieve its goals each year. Our goals are measured by the following tools: parent surveys, which allows parents to rate our school and provide feedback regarding satisfaction with character education programming; Olweus Bully Prevention Survey, data obtained from this survey helps us refine our PBIS system and delivery of anti-bullying and anti-violence messages; Attendance –It is important for students to be at school every day to have access to both academic and social experiences; School Safety Survey– this survey was completed the past 2 years by staff members and provided information regarding the safety of our campus and systems that we have in place to address issues of concern; District-Wide Student Information System (Powerschool) – helps track student discipline and referrals; and California Health Kids Survey, data obtained from this survey also aids our site in targeting goals for further improvement and measuring progress in student connectedness and student safety.

We also actively teach our PBIS behavior expectations and instill anti-bullying values in our students through weekly classroom meetings during advisory; these classroom meetings utilize the research-based Olweus classroom meeting system, whereby teachers seat students in a circle and pose a common situation. Our students then talk through the scenario to come up with solutions and action plans for occurrences of bullying. Our

PBIS Warrior PRIDE values and expectations are explicitly linked and taught during these sessions as well. We also have 6 teachers piloting the Second Step anti violence curriculum in their classroom meetings as an additional tool this year to support classroom meetings.

We are able to ensure that we have a safe environment for our students because of the dedicated adults that reward students when they make the right decisions and intervene when there are problems. Students have the opportunity to earn blue PBIS PRIDE tickets for good behavior and demonstration of our behavioral expectations in all areas of the campus each day.

Our transportation department and custodial staff are an extension of our school as well. At the beginning of the year, administration meets with all the bus drivers to present information on our school-wide PBIS system. Furthermore, an in-service is held with all the bus riders to explain expected behaviors and incentives. This displays the partnership between WAMS and transportation to ensure safety to and from school. Our custodial staff meets within their own Professional Learning Community (PLC) and discusses how to improve their practices. This year they added the “Golden Broom Award,” which goes to one class in each grade level that has the cleanest room each week.

The staff at WAMS believes students who are engaged in enrichment and extracurricular opportunities will apply positive character choices both in and out of the classroom. This year, WAMS has participated in numerous activities within our community and all students are encouraged to join in our efforts. One such event that our entire student body embraces is the “Warrior Within” event that happens every November; this event helps bring understanding and empathy to our campus. In small groups, students participate in exercises and activities that encourage them to open up with one another and help them appreciate their similarities and differences in an effort to create a more positive campus climate.

The WAMS community also embraces our annual Multicultural Night, which is an opportunity for students to share their culture with their classmates. It is also a time to show off our performing arts and multicultural club with their performances, and a way to encourage parent involvement through the understanding of one another’s cultures.

Students are also encouraged to join in our extracurricular clubs and activities. One such opportunity is our Game Club, which allows students with an interest in gaming to get together to play various high interest games with one another while creating a sense of community among themselves through a shared interest.

One of the more sophisticated highlights of our school is our Pyramid of Academic Success. Our PBIS team meets every month to discuss the progress of the pyramid. The goal of this pyramid is to ensure that students do not have the option of failing behaviorally or academically. Systems and monitoring tools are in place to ensure that we are meeting the individual needs of every student. A permanent sticker is placed within a student’s planner to preface the expectations for the known behavior.

Overall, WAMS is a school of academic and behavioral excellence where all students belong and learn. Our entire staff has the belief that it is all about the kids. Decisions are based on students, not adults. We have a collaborative culture where adults are the ones that are making the difference in student's lives. Our staff knows that without a culture that promotes good character, learning cannot happen. They know and believe that it is important, and that every staff member is involved to demonstrate exemplary character education on a daily basis.

**WAWOMA MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Fresno Unified School District**  
**4524 N. Throne**  
**Fresno, CA 93704**  
**Carlos Castillo, Principal**

The mission of Wawona Middle School is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment that engages students with challenging academics, and fosters the development of lifelong learners who will demonstrate the character and competencies for workplace success. Wawona Middle School, as part of the Fresno Unified School District, supports the Character Counts! model of character education. We promote the core ethical values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship as the basis of good character. We also follow the guidelines of The Human Element which was developed and presented to the middle and elementary schools by our District's High School ASB students.

The character education goals for Wawona were developed by the entire Wawona staff under the guidance of our Safe and Civil School Team and School Site Council. These groups include certificated and classified staff, parents, students and administrators. Our guidelines for success are called the "W7" and are referenced every morning during announcements and are posted for student review in every classroom. The "W7"

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

Wawona teachers participate in several programs to support character building. The Student of the Month Award is always based on the character pillar of the month. The teachers are also given character coupons for the month that they can give to any and all students who show good character. Each of the core curriculum areas have character education infused in their curriculum, and the special assemblies, presentations, and rallies, have their own topics on character. ("Walk in My Shoes", "Be a Hero" Rally, The Human Element Assembly, Mix-it-up-at-Lunch)

We traditionally (2003) start our school year, with a school wide program called Mission: Possible. All students are given the opportunity to learn and understand our school

norms and expectations. Special workshops are held for routine things like how to properly line up for the buses, and how to walk on the right side of the hallway. Knowing these expectations help our students to be respectful and courteous. Students are provided “passports” where they can reflection on their learning and take notes about the norms and expectations.

In Physical Education the California State Standard #5, in both 7th and 8th grade is a focus of our teaching and included in all assessments. Students must “show responsibility” (5.6) in a physical education setting as well as, “express encouragement”, (5.4) and “demonstrate an acceptance of differences.”(5.3) The Physical Education Department models and teaches these standards consistently. Language Arts teachers use Middle School Literature to teach kindness, acceptance and problem solving. J.R. Palacio wrote in Wonder, “When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind.” Social Studies Classes regularly provide forums for students to discuss matters of ethics, current events and social justice. We encourage our students to be open-minded, balanced and reflective.

Wawona’s campus is clean and inviting to guests. From the custodians to the Principal, from the athletes and the Functional Skills students, all are responsible for keeping the campus clean and secure. We have expectations of our students to “tell an adult” if there are any problems. Our cafeteria workers, office staff, and custodians take the responsibility of modeling and expecting good behavior from our students seriously. They wear “Spirit Shirts” and support the Campus Culture activities presented by the staff.

It is a priority for students at Wawona to contribute to our school and our community in meaningful ways. Our expectation is that each student strives to provide 20 hours of service each year. We understand that Middle School Students have a great capacity to give, but do not yet have the skills to do so on their own. We provide opportunities for students to donate volunteer hours by helping at school and in the community. Wawona students and teachers participate in local and national programs to help others. We have donated time, money, and goods to Community Food Bank of Fresno, Dakota House, Valley Children’s Hospital Kid’s Day Newspaper sale, American Heart Association and the Red Cross.

What we would like others to know about Wawona Middle School is that we believe in ourselves. Our school has gone from 1200 students in 2011, to 380 students this year. We have lost many staff members and we have new administration in place. However our staff and teachers are resilient and working harder than ever to provide a successful environment for all of us. We have hopes to be a model school in the Fresno Unified School District in the areas of values and character education. We are proud to say we are from Wawona Middle School.