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Character counts! incentive program : implementation and evaluation

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Abstract

In order to better serve the school population, the school counselor is often called upon to deliver the counseling curriculum to all students. Data often drives the curriculum the counselor will present to the students. As a result of a program audit and perception data, a school counselor at West Elementary chose to implement a character education piece to the curriculum. Furthermore, an incentive program was added to encourage positive behavior and to recognize student achievement. Due to the age of accountability, the school counselor created a survey to assess the program. In addition to the survey, other sources of information were utilized to determine the level of program success. A comprehensive look at Character Counts! Incentive Program includes rationale for the program, the action plan, and program evaluation.

CHARACTER COUNTS! INCENTIVE PROGRAM:
IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

A Research Project

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,

and Postsecondary Education

University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

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by

Julie A. Rouse

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This Research Paper by: Julie A. Rouse

Entitled: CHARACTER COUNTS! INCENTIVE PROGRAM:
          IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Education.

Linda Nebbe

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Abstract

In order to better serve the school population, the school counselor is often called upon to deliver the counseling curriculum to all students. Data often drives the curriculum the counselor will present to the students. As a result of a program audit and perception data, a school counselor at West Elementary chose to implement a character education piece to the curriculum. Furthermore, an incentive program was added to encourage positive behavior and to recognize student achievement. Due to the age of accountability, the school counselor created a survey to assess the program. In addition to the survey, other sources of information were utilized to determine the level of program success. A comprehensive look at Character Counts! Incentive Program includes rationale for the program, the action plan, and program evaluation.

In effort to improve the school environment and promote good character, West

Elementary adopted the Character Counts! program during the 2006-2007 school year.

The program served as a guide for character education in collaboration with the

Independence Community School District antiviolence program, Respect and Protect. In

effort to improve student behavior and strengthen the character education program, an

incentive program was created and implemented during the 2007-2008 school year. The

purpose of this paper is to provide rationale for the program, highlight the action plan,

and report program evaluation data.

<div align="center">Rationale</div>

Respect and Protect

The *Respect and Protect Violence Prevention and Intervention Program* was

developed by the Johnson Institute in the early 1990's in response to an ever increasing

amount of violence and disrespect in the educational system. The program is based on

the violence intervention and prevention model developed by Carole Remboldt. The

model serves as a vehicle to educate students, staff, and parents about violence/disrespect

and it operates on the basis of choices and consequences. Intended to be delivered

collectively by school personnel, *Respect and Protect* is the foundation for consistent

intervention. The Independence CSD was the recipient of the Goals 2000 Planning Grant

in the fall of 1998. The $20,000 grant assisted the district in educating staff and parents

on the antiviolence program. An additional $50,000 was awarded to the district in the

spring of 1999 to support the integration of *Respect and Protect*. To further understand

the *Respect and Protect* program, an explanation of the program's framework and goals

has been included.

Program framework. The intervention process is carried out based on "student-centered choices, consequences, and contracts" represented in the *Respect and Protect* matrix. The matrix categorizes degrees of violence in five levels. Remboldt (1998) describes the five levels as follows: "(1) minor, (2) repeat, (3) serious, (4) severe, and (5) intractable" (p. 35). The West Elementary *Respect and Protect* matrix designates specific behaviors to one of the five levels. Furthermore, the matrix highlights the consequences for the behavior, responsible staff members, and the intervention. Each behavior is documented according to policy. Level one behavior is documented by the classroom teacher and levels two through five warrant a discipline referral form.

Level one behaviors include acts that are disrespectful to other students and the learning environment, such as, talking during instruction, name calling, and incomplete assignments. If the behavior continues, the student moves along the continuum to the next level. With each increasing level, the consequences become more severe and the intervention process is more extensive. Repeat offenders of level one behaviors move to level two. Level two behaviors also consist of disrespectful body gestures, moderate disruptions to learning, and rough/horse play. A recommended intervention for the repeat offender is to meet with the school counselor for individual or group counseling services. Level three includes more serious behaviors of stealing, vandalism, verbal and physical threats, and physical aggression. During this stage of the intervention process, a behavior contract is developed and the student has a restricted schedule. Level four includes acts of bullying, harassment, and possession of a weapon. Consequences for these behaviors include out of school suspension and the intervention may include an outside agency, such as, law enforcement or counseling services. Finally, level five consists of intent to

harm or harm with a weapon and consistent escalating behavior. Expulsion and law enforcement referral are likely outcomes of level five behavior.

Program goals. Independence Community School District communicates yearly the results of the program survey to the staff and community. The publication highlights the four main goals of the program as:

> 1) To reduce the severity and frequency of, and work toward eliminating all incidents of violence in the school setting, 2) to ensure safety and well being of all students and staff, 3) to eliminate enabling and the tolerance and entitlement that enabling allows, and 4) to create a safe, supporting, and nurturing atmosphere highly conducive to learning (Independence, 2008, p. 1).

Although *Respect and Protect* had been implemented in the district for ten years, the West Elementary staff believed that it had lost focus of the goals. The building Respect and Protect team analyzed perception data from the 2006-2007 school year, and selected several key areas of interest to address in following school year.

First, the building team wanted to decrease incident reports at all levels of the Respect and Protect matrix. Next, the team was concerned at the number of bullying, verbal, and physical acts of violence reported by the student population. All West Elementary students participate in the survey; therefore, it is the most comprehensive information available for perception data. Survey results indicated that 10 percent of the student population worried about being bullied everyday and 12.9 percent witnessed six or more acts of bullying a month (Independence, 2008, p. 45-46). An additional concern was the students' perception of how staff responded to disrespect/violence. Violence/disrespect is defined as "any mean word, act, sign, or look that threatens or

hurts another person's body, feelings, reputation, or things" (Independence, 2008, p. 2). Less than half the participants would tell a staff member about bullying. Overall, the team believed action needed to take place to improve on the school climate.

<div align="center">Action Plan</div>

Character Counts!

"*Respect and Protect* is not so much about controlling what happens as about how we choose to respond to what happens" (Remboldt, 1998, 38). Although *Respect and Protect* has an educational component, the program was serving as a reaction to the problem. The West team wanted to be more preventative in nature and less punitive. Sugai and Horner (2008) listed several possible outcomes when aversive strategies are the primary means for behavior control including: "(a) increases in antisocial behavior, (b) more coercive interactions among adults and students, and (c) decreases in academic achievement and social behavior displays" (p. 68). The Character Counts! program was adopted to bring a positive component to the education piece.

History. In 1992, Character Counts! evolved through the efforts of the Josephson Institute, 30 character education experts, and several educational organizations during a private three day meeting. The group created the Aspen Declaration of Character, which highlights "eight principles about the nature, content and importance of character education" (Josephson, 2001, p. 1). Another component of the declaration denotes core ethical principles known as The Six Pillars of Character: trustworthy, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Character Counts! Coalition. The Character Counts! Coalition was formed in October, 1993, to develop character education resources. Today, with 850 member

organizations, the coalition serves as a supportive network to promote and aid character education. Many schools and organizations utilize Character Counts! resources without joining the coalition. In the state of Iowa, eight communities, 18 school districts, 12 schools, and several agencies are coalition members. The T.E.A.M. philosophy indicates the ethical values need to be "conscientiously, continually, and competently taught, enforced, advocated, and modeled" (Josephson, 2001, p. 3).

The coalition continuingly creates strategies based on the Six Pillars to promote character development. Common vocabulary is a key element to delivering the program. The framework is not to be viewed as an add-on or "curriculum" but as an interwoven, cross-curricular effort. Additionally, the coalition believes character education is a collaborative effort between families, schools, faith organizations, businesses and community services. "Adherence to and advocacy of collaboration and community unity based on a common vocabulary permits major economies, promotes partnerships and yields the best possible chance of creating effective and sustainable character education initiatives," (Josephson, 2001, p. 3). Although the coalition stresses collaboration, it places emphasis on the home and encourages schools and other members to enable parents in character education.

Effectiveness. According to the coalition beliefs, evaluation of character education effectiveness is vital to developing a successful program. Several coalition members have conducted their own studies to determine the success of their programs and to identify strengths and weaknesses. The Character Counts! organization provided a research summary of the coalition member's work. Two studies indicated that Character Counts! attributed to improved academic achievement. Twenty-four other reports

indicated significant positive adjustments in behavior and attitude.   One longitudinal study was conducted by South Dakota University 4-H Foundation from 1998 – 2000. Over 8,000 participants completed surveys on conduct and attitudes. Throughout the study, researchers indicated a decline in several categories, including criminal activity, alcohol and drug use, cheating, absenteeism, physical violence, and teasing.

Fourteen studies were conducted to determine if classroom disruptions decreased after Character Counts! implementation. Of the fourteen cases, 13 indicated positive results. One study conducted at Clegg Park Elementary School in West Des Moines, Iowa, reported a decrease in time-outs and detentions fell from 94 to 10 in the course of four years of introducing Character Counts! Parent and teacher surveys also show continued support of the program.

Incentive Program

Continuing with the proactive, non punitive mind set, the West Elementary Respect and Protect team created an incentive program to promote good character. The purpose of the Character Counts! Incentive Program is to encourage students to build character and to acknowledge students' behaviors that demonstrate good character. The overall objective is students will show appreciation for their peers' good character efforts.

The entire school will observe one pillar during a set period of time. During this time, students catch their peers committing acts that demonstrate good character. The student completes a TeRRiFiCC (Trustworthy, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship) News slip indicating who and what they witnessed. For each TeRRiFiCC News slip received, the student earns a ticket to be added to the raffle.

Raffle prizes include pencils, backpack pulls, free ice cream cones, movie rentals, and wristbands. Raffles are held at the Character Counts! assemblies.

Classrooms are also eligible to win the Classroom of Character Award (one/grade). Faculty and staff have the responsibility to acknowledge classrooms that exhibited appropriate behaviors. Areas of interest are lunchroom, specials, hallway/recess lines, and room cleanliness. Classrooms receive Classroom of Character certificates (equal one point) and the classroom with the most points earns a movie/popcorn party, free recess, and the Classroom of Character banner.

Additionally, classroom teachers nominate one student from his/her classroom as the Kid of Character. The school and community will acknowledge and commend these students for their character leadership through recognition in the district newsletter and Kid of Character luncheons provided by community businesses.

Counselor Role

"The mission of the ISCD school counseling program is to foster the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed for academic, career, and personal/social development to be life-long learners and respectful, responsible citizens" (Adams, et al., 2008). Lapan (2001) calls for school counselors to "exert a leadership role in any effort to improve the school environment" (p. 296). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recognizes character education as an integral factor in promoting success in the areas of academics, career development, and personal/social skills. "The professional school counselor promotes the inclusion of character education in the school curriculum and takes an active role in promoting character traits within the comprehensive school counseling position" (ASCA, 2008).

The West Elementary school counselor played a leading role in developing and managing the incentive program. Character education can be found in all areas of the comprehensive school counseling program. First, the foundation and beliefs highlight core vales associated with character development. Throughout the delivery of the program, character education is a component of every classroom guidance lesson. Important skills such as conflict resolution, time management, study skills, and bullying all reflect one or more of the Six Pillars. Additionally, responsive services such as small group or individual counseling help students focus on important skills. Two examples of groups that stress the importance of the Six Pillars are the anger management group and the friendship group. Moreover, certain individuals may not be motivated by the incentive program. The counselor often meets with repeat offenders and helps collaborate with parents and staff to create behavior plans.

During the management component of the model, the school counselor reviewed the aforementioned data and collaborated with a team to derive this action plan. Finally, the Character Counts! survey is a prime example of the accountability phase. The survey evaluated the program and the counselor performance of managing the program.

Program Evaluation

Incentive Program Survey

The overall purpose of the survey was to answer the research question: how effective is the Character Counts Incentive Program at West Elementary? Additional goals of the survey were to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program, as well as, gain insight on how to improve the program.

Survey description. Two surveys were created to assess the Character Counts

Incentive Program at West Elementary: a staff survey (Appendix A) and a student survey

(Appendix B). Both surveys were composed of three sections: identification, personal

experience with the program, and the opinion of the program. The staff survey included

a fourth section for classroom teachers only. Each survey consisted of 20 closed

questions. Most of the questions provided a Likert or frequency response scale. The

staff survey had an additional open-form question about specific suggestions to improve

the program. Seventeen staff members participated in the survey. The breakdown of the

staff participants is as follows: ten classroom teachers, two special education teachers,

three specials teachers (art, P.E., etc.), one associate, and one administrator. The sample

of classroom teachers was 83 percent. Two classroom teachers did not participate in the

survey. The sample size provided information from 33 percent of the special education

staff, 50 percent of the specials teachers, 14 percent of the associates, and 100 percent of

the administration population.

Sixty students participated in the Character Counts Incentive Program survey.

West Elementary is a third grade through fifth grade facility. Twenty students from each

grade level completed the survey, which equates to 22.5 percent of the total student

population. Five students from each classroom were randomly selected to participant in

the survey. Eleven males and nine females were surveyed from the third grade class,

which is equivalent to the overall boy/girl ratio. Additionally, 11 males and nine females

were surveyed from the fourth and fifth grade classes, providing a sample that was

consistent with the population.

Survey results. The results were fairly consistent between the staff and student surveys. The majority of the staff participants (N-12) reported that they sometimes (N=8) to often (N=4) discuss the Six Pillars of Character with the students (Appendix A – Question 3). Five participants rarely discussed the pillars with students. Other questions strived to gather information about staff encouragement and follow through of the program. Eight of the 17 (47%) staff surveyed stated that they encouraged students to complete TeRRiFiCC News slips, the peer recognition component of the program, *sometimes (N=7) to often (N=1) (Appendix A – Question 4). Additionally, eleven staff* members surveyed (61%) reported encouraging classrooms to earn points sometimes or more (sometimes = 7, often = 3, always = 1, Appendix A – Question 6).

In comparison to the staff survey, the students also reported favorably that staff members discuss the pillars of character in the classroom. Seventy-two percent of the 60 students reported that staff members sometimes (N=29), often (N=13), or always (N=1) discuss the pillars (Appendix B – Question 4). The program would be greatly enhanced if extension activities were created to serve as a guide for teachers and other staff members to promote character development. Over a quarter (28%) of the students surveyed communicated that staff members rarely (N=16) or never (N=1) converse about character.

Questions 5 and 7 exposed a weakness in the program. Over the course of the six months the program had been running, staff members had not written many TeRRiFiCC News slips for students or classrooms. Six participants reported writing zero slips for students and an additional five participants had not awarded a classroom of character point. Moreover, the majority of participants awarded less than six points to students or

classrooms. Two participants had written more than seven TeRRiFiCC News slips for students and one staff member had awarded 10 or more classroom of character points.

After reviewing the results, there was an evident connection between question 5 and student attitudes of the incentive program. If a student experienced encouragement from staff members to acknowledge positive peer behaviors or to earn classroom of character points, the students answered questions more favorably. For example, in one fifth grade classroom all five students reported the teacher discussed the pillars sometimes or more, three stated the teacher encouraged them to write TeRRiFiCC News slips often, and four students marked that the teacher encouraged the class to earn classroom of character points. As a result, the students from this classroom were more than likely to write TeRRiFiCC News slips (4-6 = 1, 10+ = 4, Appendix B – Question 8), all agreed it was very important to continue the program and all rated the program good or higher. It should also be documented that the researcher has noted that this particular classroom has the most effective display of the Character Counts! materials and the incentive program materials are easily visible and accessible to students.

The final section of the survey provided positive program results. Ninety-four percent of the staff reported that they agreed (N=15) or strongly agreed (N=1) that the Character Counts program had improved student behavior (Appendix A – Question 11). All teacher participants agreed with the aforementioned statement. Additionally the respondents agreed (N=14) or strongly agreed (N=2) that the program had improved the school environment (Appendix A – Question 12). The sole participant that did not agree with statements from questions 11 and 12 was the principal. The principal stated that he was criticizing his efforts rather than the program. The results were also favorable for the

program rating (good = 11, very good = 3, excellent = 3, Appendix A – Question 13).

The classroom teachers accounted for seven of the 11 participants that rated the program

good. Finally, 59 percent of the staff believed it was very important to continue the

program (Appendix A – Question 20). The other 41 percent reported it was somewhat

important to continue the program.

According to question 16, students overwhelming (88%) agreed (N=41) or

strongly agreed (N=12) that the program had improved their personal behavior. The

result is consistent with staff reports. Students were less likely to perceive their

classmates' behavior as improved. Six participants (10%) strongly disagreed and 21

(35%) students disagreed that the program improved their classmates' behavior

(Appendix B – Question 17). A slim majority (55%) perceived the program as improving

their classmates' behavior. Seventy-three percent of the students surveyed believed the

school environment had been improved as a result of the program (agree = 25, strongly

agree = 19). The staff was more favorable when assessing the school environment than

the students.

Fifty-one of the sixty (85%) student participants rated the Character Counts

program as good or higher (good = 9, very good = 23, excellent = 19, Appendix B –

Question 19). Forty-four (73%) students determined it was very important to continue

the program, eleven (18%) viewed continuing the program as somewhat important, and

five (8%) stated it was not important to continue the program

An open-form question was included in the staff survey to provide feedback on

how to improve the program. Three themes were evident with the staff's responses.

First, several participants believed that the staff needed to be more consistent in

rewarding classroom of character points, as well as, discussing each pillar. Two
participants suggested providing Character Counts! training to staff and asked for
extension activities from guidance lessons. A second theme was tied to gaining
community support of the program. Parent and business involvement were two
suggestions that would create a stronger foundation of the program and additional
educators of good character. Finally, several participants believed the reinforcement was
good but expressed concern for students that were repeat discipline offenders. Although
it was not suggested, the overall impression of the responses seemed to call for additional
services for those students.

Respect and Protect Survey

The West Respect and Protect committee set a goal to improve data from the
Respect and Protect Survey. Results indicated that the percentage of students who
worried about being bullied everyday declined from 10 percent to 6.6 percent
(Independence, 2008, p. 45). Additionally, the 2008 results indicated students witnessed
acts of bullying less frequently than the pervious year. In 2008, 53.9 percent of the
students would report bullying to a staff member as compared to 44.8 in 2007
(Independence, p. 46).   Additional information can be found regarding the survey results
in Appendix C. Although the survey was not directly assessing the Character Counts!
Incentive Program, several positive outcomes occurred after it was implemented.

Discipline Referrals

Finally, the committee strived to reduce incident reports as a result of the
incentive program. According to Lyons (2008) the number of repeat offenders declined
11 percent from the 2006–2007 school year to 2007–2008. Documentation was not

available for Level 1 incidents, but Level 2 and 4 incidents declined, Level 3 remained

the same, and zero Level 5 reports were filed for either school year. The classroom

teachers, administration, and support staff were the same for both school years. One fifth

grade classroom had a new teacher during the 2007-2008 school year. Although other

factors could contribute in the change the majority of the individuals writing incident

reports remained consistent each year.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Character Counts! Incentive program was implemented to

counteract concerns addressed by survey results and to decline incident reports. The

program is proactive and utilizes positive reinforcement to encourage good character.

Character Counts! drives the character education program in conjunction with the

Respect and Protect program. Students receive character education though the

collaborative effort of parents, community members, and school staff and faculty.

Additionally, the Six Pillars developed by the Character Counts! organization directs

classroom guidance instruction. Positive results were indicated from three sources of

data: the Character Counts! Incentive Program Survey, *Respect and Protect Violence*

Prevention and Intervention: 2008 Survey, and discipline referral documentation.

Overall, the program has reached significant success and addressed the concerns

presented by the committee.

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Appendix A

Character Counts Program Survey - Staff

This survey was developed to assess the Character Counts Incentive Program at West Elementary. Your answers will help improve the program. Your answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

I. Identification – Please check the appropriate answer.

  1. Position

      3rd Grade Teacher _____   Special Education _____   Associate _____
      4th Grade Teacher _____   Specials Teacher _____   Administration _____
      5th Grade Teacher _____   Custodian _____   Other (specify) _____

  2. Years of Service at West Elementary

      1-2 _____   3-5 _____   5-10 _____   10-15 _____   15-20 _____   20+

      _____

II. This section will ask questions about your experience with the Character Counts program. The questions will be followed by a set of possible answers. Please answer each question the best you can.

  3. I discuss the Six Pillars of Character with students.

      Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

  4. I encourage the students to write TeRRiFiCC News slips for classmates.

      Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

  5. How many TeRRiFiCC News slips have you written for individual students this school year?

      0 _____   1-3 _____   4-6 _____   7-9 _____   10+ _____

  6. I encourage classrooms to earn Classroom of Character points.

      Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

  7. How many TeRRiFiCC News slips have you written for classrooms this school year?

      0 _____   1-3 _____   4-6 _____   7-9 _____   10+ _____

III. This section is for **Classroom Teachers.** If you are not a classroom teacher you can skip ahead to Section IV.

8. I (or a student) read the TeRRiFiCC News slips out loud.

    Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

9. I provide students with time to write TeRRiFiCC News slips.

    Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

10. I (or a student) read the Classroom of Character slips we receive out loud.

    Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

IV. This section will ask for your opinion of the Character Counts program and how it has impacted the school. The questions will be followed by a set of possible answers. Please answer each question the best you can.

11. The Character Counts program has improved student behavior.

    Strongly Disagree _____   Disagree _____   Agree_____   Strongly Agree
    _____

12. The Character Counts program has improved the school environment.

    Strongly Disagree _____   Disagree _____   Agree_____   Strongly Agree
    _____

13. I would rate the Character Counts program at West Elementary as

    Poor _____   Fair _____   Good _____   Very Good _____   Excellent _____

20. How important is it to continue the Character Counts program?

    Not Important _____   Somewhat Important _____   Very Important _____

V. This section asks for additional information about the Character Counts program.

21. In your opinion, what improvements need to be made to the Character Counts program?

Appendix B

Character Counts Program Survey - Student

This survey was developed to assess the Character Counts program at West Elementary. Your answers will help improve the program. Your answers will not be shared with others. Thank you for your participation.

I. Identification – Please check the appropriate answer.

1. GRADE

    3rd Grade _____   4th Grade _____   5th Grade _____

2. Class – Please write your classroom teacher's name in the space provided.

3. GENDER

    Male _____   Female _____

II. This section will ask questions about your experience with the Character Counts program. The questions will be followed by a set of possible answers. Please answer each question the best you can.

4. My teacher discusses the Six Pillars of Character with the class.

    Never _____ Rarely _____ Sometimes _____ Often _____ Always _____

5. My teacher encourages the class to write TeRRiFiCC News slips for classmates.

    Never _____ Rarely _____ Sometimes _____ Often _____ Always _____

6. My teacher or classmate reads the TeRRiFiCC News slips out loud.

    Never _____ Rarely _____ Sometimes _____ Often _____ Always _____

7. My teacher provides me with time to write TeRRiFiCC News slips.

    Never _____ Rarely _____ Sometimes _____ Often _____ Always _____

8. How many TeRRiFiCC News slips have you written for you classmates this school year?

    0 _____   1-3 _____   4-6 _____   7-9 _____   10+ _____

9. My teacher encourages the class to earn Classroom of Character Points.

    Never _____ Rarely _____ Sometimes _____ Often _____ Always _____

10. My class works towards earning Classroom of Character Points.

Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

11. The specials teachers (art, P.E., etc.) encourage my class to earn a point.

Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

12. Lunchroom supervisors encourage my class to earn a point.

Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

13. Recess supervisors encourage my class to earn a point.

Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

14. I help/encourage my class to earn a Classroom of Character point.

Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

15. My teacher or classmate reads the Classroom of Character slips we receive out loud.

Never _____   Rarely _____   Sometimes _____   Often _____   Always _____

III. This section will ask for your opinion of the Character Counts program and how it has impacted the school. The questions will be followed by a set of possible answers. Please answer each question the best you can.

16. The Character Counts program has improved my behavior.

Strongly Disagree _____   Disagree _____   Agree_____   Strongly Agree _____

17. The Character Counts program has improved my classmates' behavior.

Strongly Disagree _____   Disagree _____   Agree_____   Strongly Agree _____

18. The Character Counts program has improved the school environment.

Strongly Disagree _____   Disagree _____   Agree_____   Strongly Agree _____

19. I would rate the Character Counts program at West Elementary as

Poor _____   Fair _____   Good _____   Very Good _____   Excellent _____

20. How important is it to continue the Character Counts program?

Not Important _____   Somewhat Important _____   Very Important _____

Appendix C

Character Counts!

Program Survey Results
West Elementary
2007-2008

Program Purpose

To encourage students to build character and to acknowledge student behaviors that demonstrate good character.

Survey Purpose

Assess the Character Counts! Incentive Program
- evaluate experiences and opinions of the program
- pinpoint program strengths and weaknesses
- determine goals for program improvement
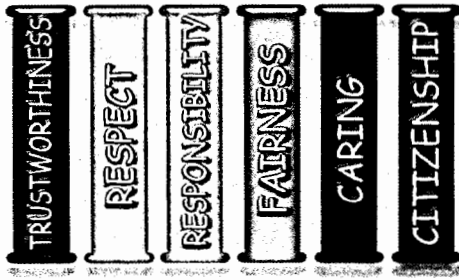

Participants

Students	Staff
- 60 students total	- 17 staff members
- 20 per grade	- 10 classroom teachers
- 5 per class	- 2 special education
- proportionate boy/girl ratio to class population	- 3 specials teachers
	- 1 associate
	- 1 administrator

Survey Results

TRUSTWORTHINESS RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY FAIRNESS CARING CITIZENSHIP

My teacher discusses the Six Pillars

Legend: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always
Categories: 3rd Grade, 4th Grade, 5th Grade
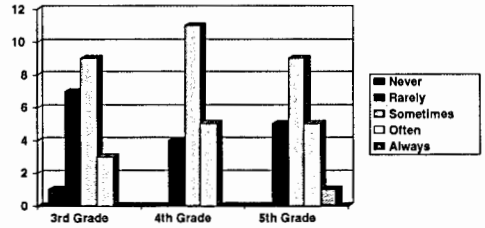
I (the classroom teacher) discuss the Six Pillars with students

Legend: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always
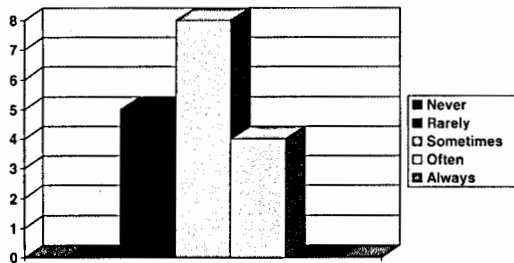
Important Points: Student Results

- Students who reported being encouraged to write TeRRiFiCC News slips acknowledged their classmates positive actions on a consistent basis
- Time to write slips did not dramatically impact numbers

Important Points: Student Results

- Reading the TeRRiFiCC News slips for individuals and classroom points influenced student perceptions of the program
- 5th grade students had a more positive perception of enforcement of the program in the lunchroom

Important Points: Student Results

- 58% of students reported that they were never (8) or rarely (27) encouraged to earn points during recess
- The majority of participants stated that specials teachers sometimes encouraged the class to earn a point

Important Points: Student Results

- 88% agreed or strongly agreed that the program had improved their personal behavior
- 55% perceived the program as improving their classmates' behavior
- 73% believed the school environment had been improved
  (agree = 25, strongly agree = 19)

Important Points: Staff Results

- 47% stated they encouraged students to complete TeRRiFiCC News slips
- 61% reported encouraging classrooms to earn points sometimes or more
- Classroom teachers were more likely to read the Classroom of Character point slips than the individual TeRRiFiCC News slips

Important Points: Staff Results

- 35% of staff had written 0 TeRRiFiCC News slips
- 30% of staff had awarded 0 Classroom of Character points
- 2 staff members had written more than 7 individual slips
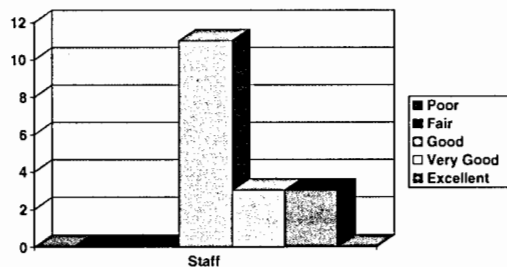- 1 staff member had awarded 10 or more Classroom of Character points

Important Points: Staff Results

- 94% agreed (15) or strongly agreed (1) that the program had improved student behavior
- 94% agreed (14) or strongly agreed (2) that the program had improved the school environment
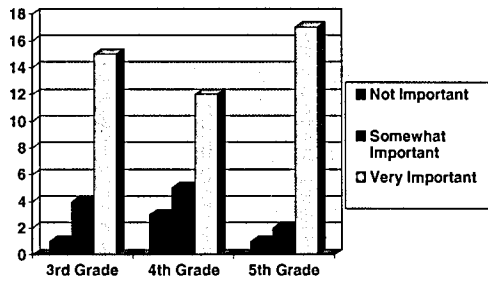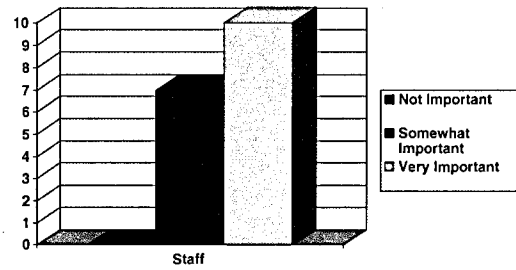
Character Counts Program Rating by Students
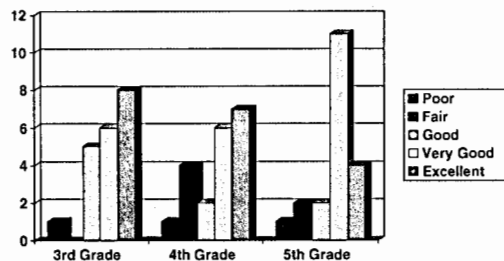
Character Counts Program Rating by Staff

How important is it to continue the Character Counts Program?

Legend: ■ Not Important ■ Somewhat Important □ Very Important

X-axis: 3rd Grade, 4th Grade, 5th Grade

How important is it to continue the Character Counts Program?

Legend: ■ Not Important ■ Somewhat Important □ Very Important

X-axis: Staff

Staff Suggestions for Program Improvements

- Provide more time for each pillar
- Be consistent with implementation (lunchroom, recess, specials)
- Write/Read more about character in the classroom
- Provide extension activities for classrooms
- Read the TeRRiFiCC News

Staff Suggestions for Program Improvements

- Involve more community members
- Provide incentives in a more timely fashion
- Grade level celebrations
- More student involvement
- Work on reaching ALL students

Additional Data

Respect and Protect Survey Results (2008)

Discipline Referrals

Respect and Protect Survey: Student Results

Have you been bullied by others at school?

	2007	2008
Never	41%	45.6%
1 to 2 times	44.5%	41.7%
3 to 5 times	9.8%	8.8%
6 + times	4.7%	3.9%

Independence Community School District. (2008). *Respect and Protect Violence Prevention and Intervention: 2008 Survey Results*, p. 45. Independence, IA: Author.

Respect and Protect Survey: Student Results

How often have you seen students bully others in school during the last month?

	2007	2008
Never	36.9%	43%
1 to 2 times	41.5%	39%
3 to 5 times	8.7%	11.4%
6 + times	12.9%	6.6%

Independence Community School District. (2008). *Respect and Protect Violence Prevention and Intervention: 2008 Survey Results*, p. 45 Independence, IA: Author.

Respect and Protect Survey: Student Results

- Students reported decreased incidences of physical and verbal acts of violence.
- The percentage of students who felt safe at school increased from 54.8% to 67.5% (p. 50).
- Students were more likely to report bullying to staff members (44.8% to 53.9%) (p. 49).

Independence Community School District. (2008). *Respect and Protect Violence Prevention and Intervention: 2008 Survey Results*. Independence, IA: Author.

Respect and Protect Survey: Staff Results

How many student disciplinary write-ups/referrals do you issue each week?

	2007	2008
None	57.6%	70.8%
1 or 2	42.4%	29.2%
3 or 4	0	0
5 or more	0	0

Independence Community School District. (2008). *Respect and Protect Violence Prevention and Intervention: 2008 Survey Results*, p. 52. Independence, IA: Author.

Respect and Protect Survey: Staff Results

- 25% of the staff reported less disrespect/violence than the previous year (p.55).
- 16.7% of the staff perceived the school was more safe. No one believed the school was less safe than the previous year (p.55).
- Staff indicated less incidents of physical and verbal acts of violence (p. 52).

Independence Community School District. (2008). *Respect and Protect Violence Prevention and Intervention: 2008 Survey Results*. Independence, IA: Author.

Discipline Referral Tracking

	2006-2007	2007-2008
August	5	3
September	10	9
October	15	6
November	9	5
December	10	4
January	15	4
February	8	3
March	8	9
April	12	2
May	10	8
TOTAL	102	53

Number of Level 2 Incident Reports

Lyons, J. (2008).

Conclusion

- The Character Counts! Incentive Program has data to support its effectiveness.
- The Respect and Protect teams plans to utilize the resources to make appropriate changes.